RESULTS OF THE ACMLA MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEY JANUARY 2010

Colleen Beard
(Brock University)
ACMLA Past President

THE MEMBERS HAVE SPOKEN… and although generally satisfied, ACMLA has work to do! We highly value our networking; we like our *BULLETIN*; our website needs work; and we are all faced with similar challenges. So, how can the Association respond to the needs and challenges of its members? This article presents the results of the survey, recognizes some pressing issues, and discusses some of the actions in response to these results. There will also be an opportunity to "speak up" to these results at the upcoming CARTO 2011 Conference in Quebec City, June 7– 10, as Andrew Nicholson (ACMLA President) will be facilitating a Fireside Chat to discuss the future directions of ACMLA.

The idea of a member survey was conceived at the 2009 ACMLA conference in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, over a glass of wine—as is every good idea! It was the first step to attempt to answer the question: How do we make the Association more attractive to new members and those that are starting to build geospatial/GIS collections and services? However, the survey quickly revealed that, regardless whether you are a new member or a seasoned member, the challenges are very similar. With the design assistance of ACMLA member Grace Welch (retired Map Librarian from the University of Ottawa), the survey was posted to the ACMLA listserv on January 19, 2010 and closed on March 19, 2010. The survey was posted in both French and English.

Who responded?

A response rate of 54% (46 of 84 full members) is a good indication of the members' commitment to the Association, and your participation is applauded. One of the best results of the survey is that it captured the responses of newer members. Of the 46 respondents, almost half have held a membership for less than 5 years, with the next largest group of respondents in the category of over 10 yrs. For the sake of this article, they are referred to as our "seasoned" members.

5 years or less = 41% 6-10 yrs = 24% over 10 yrs = 35%

1. How long have you been a member of ACMLA? Create Chart Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 2 years	21.7%	10
2 - 5 years	19.6%	9
6-10 years	23.9%	11
More than 10 years	34.8%	16
	answered question	46

Personal Value of ACMLA Activities—*The Importance of Networking!*

An overwhelming 74% responded that "networking with other professionals" was the most valued ACMLA activity. This is not surprising due to our specialized profession and its related challenges. Also, many map/geospatial data collections are staffed by just one professional librarian. And not to mention the geographical challenges to meet face-to-face. The importance of holding annual conferences was conveyed for this reason.

All seven activities listed received a majority response of being "very important", with the exception of the website, 35%. Responses to Professional development/continuing education received a 72% response. A comment to collaborate with joint [data] purchases was suggested. This is in fact the mandate of the newly established Geospatial Data Access Committee. (Their report can be viewed on the ACMLA website.)

2. Please indicate the personal value of the following ACMLA activities: Create Chart Download

	Not Important	Neutral	Somewhat important	Very important	Response Count
Advocacy (e.g. lobbying for free data)	9.1% (4)	4.5% (2)	25.0% (11)	**61.4% (27)**	44
Professional development/continuing education	0.0% (0)	8.7% (4)	19.6% (9)	**71.7% (33)**	46
Forum for communication (e.g. ACMLA listserv)	2.2% (1)	6.7% (3)	22.2% (10)	**68.9% (31)**	45
Annual conference	0.0% (0)	8.9% (4)	22.2% (10)	**68.9% (31)**	45
ACMLA publications (Bulletin, facsimiles, monographs)	0.0% (0)	6.5% (3)	37.0% (17)	**56.5% (26)**	46
ACMLA website	4.3% (2)	17.4% (8)	**43.5% (20)**	34.8% (16)	46
Networking with other professionals	0.0% (0)	4.7% (2)	20.9% (9)	**74.4% (32)**	43
				Other (please specify) Show Responses	3
				answered question	**46**

We Value our *BULLETIN*!

Members agree that our flagship publication, *ACMLA Bulletin,* is a valued benefit of their membership; is relevant to their profession; and delivers timely information. Despite these results, members somewhat downplayed the importance of publishing in the *Bulletin* to their professional development. Only 50% agreed that it is important.

Could it be that publishing in general is not important to our profession, or that publishing in a peer-reviewed journal is preferred? Apparently not so! Only 23% strongly agreed to the statement, "I would contribute articles if the *Bulletin* was peer-reviewed"; 54% sitting neutral.

Instead of the expected strong membership support for an online journal, we are definitely split on this issue. 39% say "nay", 37% say "yay", and 24% are undecided.

However, in response to requests for better access to back issues, the Association has recently initiating a *Bulletin* digitization project beginning with the very first issue. This should be completed very soon.

3. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the statements below about the ACMLA Bulletin: Create Chart Download

	Completely disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely agree	Rating Average	Response Count
The information is relevant to my professional activities.	0.0% (0)	2.3% (1)	2.3% (1)	45.5% (20)	**50.0% (22)**	4.43	44
The information is timely.	0.0% (0)	9.1% (4)	18.2% (8)	34.1% (15)	**38.6% (17)**	4.02	44
I always make time to read the Bulletin.	0.0% (0)	4.4% (2)	13.3% (6)	33.3% (15)	**48.9% (22)**	4.27	45
The Bulletin adds value to my ACMLA membership.	0.0% (0)	2.2% (1)	4.4% (2)	17.8% (8)	**75.6% (34)**	4.67	45
Publishing in the Bulletin is important for my position.	13.3% (6)	13.3% (6)	**37.8% (17)**	26.7% (12)	8.9% (4)	3.04	45
Publishing in the Bulletin is important for my personal development.	6.5% (3)	8.7% (4)	**34.8% (16)**	**34.8% (16)**	15.2% (7)	3.43	46
I would contribute articles if the Bulletin was peer-reviewed.	9.1% (4)	0.0% (0)	**54.5% (24)**	13.6% (6)	22.7% (10)	3.41	44
I would prefer an online subscription to the Bulletin.	15.2% (7)	**23.9% (11)**	**23.9% (11)**	19.6% (9)	17.4% (8)	3.00	46
					answered question		46

Question 4: Do You Have Suggestions for Improving the Content and/or Organizing of the ACMLA Bulletin?

- "Having TOC on ACMLA Web page."
- "I think I recall that the Bulletin was going to be better indexed [online] - I hope that is going ahead."
- "Love It!!!! If it was peer-reviewed it would count for so much more. I don't honestly think the "standard" would go up (I'm delighted with the standard) but for career development purposes it carries so much more oooomph if it is peer-reviewed. I actually think about publishing in less interesting places than the Bulletin just because they are peer-reviewed. I'd target the Bulletin if it were peer-reviewed; honest! "
- "Include a column that profiles new members."
- "Peer-reviewed research articles"
- "Incorporate colour images, esp on the cover"

The ACMLA Website Needs Work!

Perhaps a bit humbling, especially as Chair of the Web Committee, is the fact that the website receives "occasional use" by the membership. Seeking conference information from the website is the most frequent use! An astounding 44% never use the tools that are available from the Cataloguing or Toolkit pages. Although members are generally "satisfied" with the website, the numbers speak for themselves. The goal of the Web Committee is ultimately to boost the numbers in the "Regularly" column!

5. How often do you use the ACMLA website to find the following: Create Chart Download

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never	Response Count
Contact information for executive	17.8% (8)	**51.1% (23)**	31.1% (14)	45
Committee reports	15.6% (7)	**57.8% (26)**	26.7% (12)	45
Conference information	**57.8% (26)**	33.3% (15)	8.9% (4)	45
Cataloguing tools and the Toolkit	15.6% (7)	40.0% (18)	**44.4% (20)**	45
ACMLA Publications	8.7% (4)	**73.9% (34)**	17.4% (8)	46
Links to other map libraries	13.3% (6)	**46.7% (21)**	40.0% (18)	45
Information on Canadian data agreements	6.7% (3)	**55.6% (25)**	37.8% (17)	45
		Other (please specify) Show Responses		5
		answered question		**46**
		skipped question		**0**

6. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects of the ACMLA website: Create Chart Download

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Response Count
Overall impression of site	18.2% (8)	**56.8% (25)**	20.5% (9)	4.5% (2)	0.0% (0)	44
Ability to navigate within the site	22.7% (10)	**56.8% (25)**	9.1% (4)	11.4% (5)	0.0% (0)	44
Ease of finding information	8.9% (4)	**57.8% (26)**	20.0% (9)	13.3% (6)	0.0% (0)	45
Logical organization of information	11.1% (5)	**60.0% (27)**	15.6% (7)	13.3% (6)	0.0% (0)	45
Amount of information	8.9% (4)	**51.1% (23)**	22.2% (10)	17.8% (8)	0.0% (0)	45
Currency of information	6.7% (3)	**60.0% (27)**	17.8% (8)	11.1% (5)	4.4% (2)	45
Links to other resources	13.3% (6)	**44.4% (20)**	31.1% (14)	11.1% (5)	0.0% (0)	45
					answered question	45
					skipped question	1

Question 7: Do You Have Suggestions for Improving the Content and/or Organizing of the ACMLA Website?

- "Information regarding past conferences and committee reports further back than what is currently there."
- "Contact info for committee chairs"
- "Information requires re-organization and easier accessibility. Canadian data is not complete. The website needs more content."
- "A general search box or an A to Z search feature would be great."
- "Could we have a wiki-type set up for part of the site that is open to ACMLA members only where we can build a resources section on maps and geospatial data? This can be a resource that everyone can point to instead of us all replicating these things on our own web sites."
- "The splash page has too much information…"
- "What I like is, it's very clear, uncluttered and nicely organized. The typeface is good. Personally I am not a fan of the dark background style, and linkages aren't as readily apparent, but it looks very professional."
- "Use a content management system for consistency and ease of restructuring; and have a wiki for members to add material, comments, links, etc."

- "Enhance the content, such as tools for teaching and learning geospatial literacy. Organize the content better to improve finding information. Keep it up to date by changing the main page frequently to reflect current issues and events. Adding a blog! Ask a librarian in such in such a topic? Who are the experts in historical maps; website creation; digitization, GIS, cataloguing, etc."
- "- Don't like the main page banner image or 3-column layout; too much text on main page ; need lists/links to digitized map websites"
- "The new design … should help things a lot! It is really looking so much better!"

In response, the website has undergone a re-organization and now includes easier accessibility to much more content:

- The *Useful Tools* page now includes a substantial list of GIS Help Guides for teaching and learning geospatial literacy, a cartographic citations document, and cataloguing tools
- Information on all past conferences
- Committee information includes all members and Chairs, contact information, and terms of reference
- A search function has been added
- All the Data pages have been updated with additional content

The Web Committee continues to consider all other suggestions, including a wiki.

Committees do Good Work!

Although most members understand the Association's committee structure, those who do not are relatively new to the ACMLA. As well, 38% indicated that committee activity is not communicated widely, leaving members uninformed as a result. This indicated the need to increase the presence of committee members and reporting. In response, the newly organized website has been updated to reflect the names of current committee members and Chairs, terms of reference, and reports.

Of greater concern for the future of the Association are results revealing that members did not have the time for committee work; 46% responded a lack of interest with the current committees; and an overwhelming 53% responded that committee activity is not really important for their professional development.

Perhaps this warrants some thought and discussion for questions such as:

- Do we need different committees/working groups to address the more current issues of geospatial data and literacy?
- Can the mandate and tasks of committees be better shared among members to not make it so time consuming?
- How do we populate committees and make them attractive to new members?

8. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements below about the Association's committees: Create Chart Download

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Completely agree	Response Count
I understand the existing committee structure	2.2% (1)	15.6% (7)	24.4% (11)	**44.4% (20)**	13.3% (6)	45
ACMLA committees perform extremely important work	2.2% (1)	2.2% (1)	21.7% (10)	**39.1% (18)**	34.8% (16)	46
Committee participation is important for my professional development	0.0% (0)	13.0% (6)	**39.1% (18)**	30.4% (14)	17.4% (8)	46
I don't get enough information about committee activities	0.0% (0)	25.0% (11)	**38.6% (17)**	34.1% (15)	2.3% (1)	44
I don't have time to participate in ACMLA committees	2.2% (1)	33.3% (15)	**44.4% (20)**	17.8% (8)	2.2% (1)	45
The existing committees don't interest me	8.9% (4)	**44.4% (20)**	31.1% (14)	15.6% (7)	0.0% (0)	45
I don't see the benefit of participating in ACMLA committees	24.4% (11)	**51.1% (23)**	20.0% (9)	4.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	45
					answered question	46

In What Areas Can ACMLA Help Us Do a Better Job?

Responses to how the Association can provide more help to members definitely provided fuel for the upcoming Fireside Chat at CARTO 2011. Clearly, the Association needs to attend to issues of geospatial literacy; provide tools for teaching and learning; keep up-to-date; and develop avenues for sharing our instructional resources and expertise.

A closer look revealed a difference in the responses from "seasoned" vs newer members. Consider these outcomes:

- the need for personal geospatial literacy: 78% of seasoned members (membership over 6 yrs, n=27), vs 53% of new members (membership less than 5 yrs, n=19) responded. Could this be an accurate indicator that newer members have better developed geospatial literacy skills? It could!
- The #1 response of newer members was in the category of developing and sharing guides (63%); and a greater percentage of these members responded to the need for metadata and cataloguing activity vs seasoned members.
- the #1 response of seasoned members was in the category of information on new developments, with geospatial literacy and the need for teaching and learning tools closely followed.

9. I would like the Association to provide more help in the following area(s) (check as many as apply):

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	Response Percent	Response Count
Geospatial expertise(e.g. developing personal geospatial literacy)	72.1%	31
Teaching and learning (e.g. tools for teaching geospatial literacy)	69.8%	30
Metadata creation	39.5%	17
Cataloguing	27.9%	12
Mentoring	23.3%	10
Information on new developments in field of map/gis librarianship	76.7%	33
Development/sharing of instructional or procedural guides	76.7%	33
Other (please specify) Show Responses		4
answered question		43
skipped question		3

Other Responses:

- "I need all the help I can get in starting our GIS library!"
- "I think that ACMLA does quite well in most of these areas!"
- "Although I personally do not need more help with metadata, cataloguing and mentoring, I still feel that the Association has an important national role to play in supporting these areas as well.

Question 10. What are the Most Important Iissues Currently Facing You in the Field of Map and GIS/Geospatial Data Information Management?

Some of the main issues:

- Keeping up to date was an echoed response with seasoned members
- Promoting our GIS collections and services; management of these collections
- Important to recognize there are members just starting to build GIS libraries that require help with data acquisition and GIS services
- Collection retention issues—digital OR print?
- Staffing issues

The responses (verbatim) to this question were organized according to length of membership:

Member <5 yrs

- Keeping the existing map collection in a steady-state, i.e. as new maps are added, other maps must be removed. Lack of resources for collection expansion. Having access to maps in storage by way of a digital image.
- My lack of GIS/geospatial data info
- Learning the field; … have only been a member since Jan.1 [2010]
- As a newcomer to the field, the most important issues for me are related to geospatial literacy and collection development. I would like to know how map and data libraries are working to meet the needs of their clients, what skills I should be developing to ensure those needs are capably met and what steps I should be taking to build future collections that will be sustainable over time.
- For me it is just starting one up, mostly where to get the data, how to store it and make it accessible
- Determining how to implement the NAP profile for geospatial metadata. 2) Trying to balance all the additional tasks of geospatial data along with more transitional tasks such as map cataloging
- Downsizing staffing

Member 6-10 yrs

- My own lack of knowledge; I kid you not. Working on my lonesome so ACMLA and contact with other organizations is extremely important.
- Coping with administration that does not really understand the value of replacing retired staff in the Map section of the library
- Digitization or print resources and collecting local unique GIS data
- Developing and maintaining a sustainable geospatial data service at the library that I work at. 2) Having the hardware available to provide services to my clientele
- Promoting the value of GIS to Library Administrators
- Promoting spatial literacy to students....communicating effectively with these easier to use map tools
- Letting users know the richness of the Map/GIS collection and how it may be able to help them? So marketing, or advocacy...
- Keeping current with new developments in software and geospatial data

Member Over 10 yrs

- Keeping current with new developments, software and literature; finding time to explore new ideas; understaffing; management issues; the changing role of the academic librarian; the changing character of the NetGen student and of teaching/learning in higher education
- Keeping up to date with new technologies, such as web tools; data availability; new acquisitions.
- Developing new services
- Keeping up with new info.
- Keeping up with new technologies. Time needed to learn new technologies.
- Technical support.
- Archiving - paper and digital collections.
- Staffing.
- Lack of staff support overall and need to improve geospatial skills.
- Funding & Staffing
- Making library users (students and faculty) aware of the potential uses for all map products

- Collaborative digitization projects. Ongoing access to 19th and 20th century materials.
- Encouraging and supporting LAC in providing better access and cataloguing for its maps

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IN SUMMARY

The Member Satisfaction Survey has revealed some interesting results for the Association to ponder:

Our newer members seem to possess technical expertise yet untapped.

Networking is an important activity that members value the most. Currently the annual conference is the only formal event for members to interact in person. How can communication and networking be improved?

Professional development and continuing education were also highly ranked. What other opportunities for sharing professional knowledge can be offered in addition to the annual conference?

The *Bulletin* is our one tangible commodity that sustains the membership. Regardless of the many excellent improvements suggested by members, there are several issues that determine its future. If survey results indicate that only half the membership considers publishing there to be important to their professional development, we will be hard pressed to sustain the academic content of the *Bulletin*. How can members be convinced otherwise? Is it the issue of peer-reviewed status; will online format or open source publishing appeal to a larger audience; or do we continue status quo?

Maintaining a website is a monster job! This has always been a job of a good-hearted member who receives an annual honorarium in return. Although the committee has responded to many of the suggestions put forth in this survey, the website's purpose to function as a resource to improve communication, networking, and professional development/training will require significant member collaboration and effort.

The Executive Board and other committee members constantly recruit for incoming members and chairs. How can more members become involved without expecting a major time commitment? Can other committees or working groups be established that appeal to the interests of members, not only for their participation but for the work that they do for the benefit of the membership?

And how do we attend to issues of staffing; the digital vs print debate; keeping up-to-date; promoting what we do, and ensuring that our members are getting the guidance they need that makes membership to ACMLA all worthwhile?

A Fireside Chat is a fine place to start!