

Developing a Library Association Membership Survey: Challenges and Promising Themes

Mary Dunne

Volume 17, numéro 3, 2022

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1092531ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.18438/ebliip30157>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

University of Alberta Library

ISSN

1715-720X (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Dunne, M. (2022). Developing a Library Association Membership Survey: Challenges and Promising Themes. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 17(3), 3–36. <https://doi.org/10.18438/ebliip30157>

Résumé de l'article

Objective – Many of us involved in the library and information sector are members of associations that represent the interests of our profession. These associations are often key to enabling us to provide evidence based practice by offering opportunities such as professional development. We invest resources in membership so we must be able to inform those in charge about our needs, expectations, and level of satisfaction. Governing bodies and committees, therefore, need a method to capture these views and plan strategy accordingly. The committee of the Health Sciences Libraries Group (HSLG) of the Library Association of Ireland wanted to enable members to give their views on the group, to understand what aspects of a library association are important to librarians in Ireland, and to learn about the reasons for and against membership.

Methods – Surveys are a useful way of obtaining evidence to inform policy and practice. Although relatively quick to produce, their design and dissemination can pose challenges. The HSLG committee developed an online survey questionnaire for members and non-members (anyone eligible to join our library association). We primarily used multiple choice, matrix, and contextual/demographic questions, with skip logic enabling choices of relevance to respondents. Our literature review provided guidance in questionnaire design and suggested four themes that we used to develop options and to analyse results.

Results – The survey was made available for two weeks and we received 49 eligible responses. Analysis of results and reflection on the process suggested aspects that we would change in terms of the language used in our questionnaire and dissemination methods. There were also aspects that show good potential, including the four themes that were used to understand what matters to members: expertise (professional development), community (connecting and engaging), profession (sustaining and strengthening), and support (financial and organizational supports). Overall, our survey provided rich data that met our objectives.

Conclusion – It is essential that those who are governing any group make evidence based decisions, and a well-planned survey can support this. Our article outlines the elements of our questionnaire and process that didn't work, and those that show promise. We hope that lessons learned will help anyone planning a survey, particularly associations who wish to ascertain the views of their members and others who are eligible to join. With some proposed modifications, our questionnaire could provide a template for future study in this area.

© Mary Dunne, 2022



Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>



Research Article

Developing a Library Association Membership Survey: Challenges and Promising Themes

Mary Dunne
Information Specialist
Health Research Board
Dublin, Ireland
Email: mdunne@hrb.ie

Received: 25 Apr. 2022

Accepted: 8 July 2022

© 2022 Dunne. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons-Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike License 4.0 International (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly attributed, not used for commercial purposes, and, if transformed, the resulting work is redistributed under the same or similar license to this one.

DOI: 10.18438/ebli30157

Abstract

Objective – Many of us involved in the library and information sector are members of associations that represent the interests of our profession. These associations are often key to enabling us to provide evidence based practice by offering opportunities such as professional development. We invest resources in membership so we must be able to inform those in charge about our needs, expectations, and level of satisfaction. Governing bodies and committees, therefore, need a method to capture these views and plan strategy accordingly. The committee of the Health Sciences Libraries Group (HSLG) of the Library Association of Ireland wanted to enable members to give their views on the group, to understand what aspects of a library association are important to librarians in Ireland, and to learn about the reasons for and against membership.

Methods – Surveys are a useful way of obtaining evidence to inform policy and practice. Although relatively quick to produce, their design and dissemination can pose challenges. The HSLG committee developed an online survey questionnaire for members and non-members (anyone eligible to join our library association). We primarily used multiple choice, matrix, and contextual/demographic questions, with skip logic enabling choices of relevance to respondents. Our literature review provided guidance in questionnaire design and suggested four themes that

we used to develop options and to analyse results.

Results – The survey was made available for two weeks and we received 49 eligible responses. Analysis of results and reflection on the process suggested aspects that we would change in terms of the language used in our questionnaire and dissemination methods. There were also aspects that show good potential, including the four themes that were used to understand what matters to members: expertise (professional development), community (connecting and engaging), profession (sustaining and strengthening), and support (financial and organizational supports). Overall, our survey provided rich data that met our objectives.

Conclusion – It is essential that those who are governing any group make evidence based decisions, and a well-planned survey can support this. Our article outlines the elements of our questionnaire and process that didn't work, and those that show promise. We hope that lessons learned will help anyone planning a survey, particularly associations who wish to ascertain the views of their members and others who are eligible to join. With some proposed modifications, our questionnaire could provide a template for future study in this area.

Introduction

Library associations are professional organizations formed to bring together those involved in library-related work who share common interests in subjects, types of services, or other factors, such as geographical location (Librarianship Studies & Information Technology, 2020). At the local, national, regional, and international levels they play an important role in the development of subject fields; provide opportunities to enhance skills and knowledge, and a platform for discussion; unite and give voice to professionals; and keep members up to date with new developments (Dowling & Fiels, 2009). To be successful, library associations need to fulfill the goals and expectations of their members, so it is crucial that those managing association strategy and making decisions understand these factors.

The Health Sciences Libraries Group (HSLG) has been a special interest group of the Library Association of Ireland since 1982, with a recent average of about 50 members. We have an annual conference, annual general meeting, virtual journal club, email discussion list, e-newsletter, website, and hold regular continuing professional development (CPD) and networking events. The committee manages governance and activities on behalf of members. To meet expectations, we needed to obtain their views on the resources and services provided by the group, the aspects that are most important to them, and their reasons for membership. We also wanted to understand why some health librarians in Ireland are not members of our group. We conducted a literature search and developed an online survey that was made available in November 2021.

Literature Review

A search of ProQuest Library Science database in September 2021 using the term "library association" gave a useful overview of available literature. This was followed by checking of reference lists, and a search of library association websites. Two aspects were of particular interest: the questions used in past survey studies and the themes that emerged from texts. Four identified themes related to what members may expect to contribute and receive through association membership: (1) expertise - professional

development, (2) community - connecting and engaging, (3) profession - sustaining and strengthening, (4) support - financial and organizational supports.

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals' (n.d.-c) five-year action plan has four value propositions—community, expertise, representation, and recognition—that are similar to our first three themes. Although “support” may be subsumed within the other themes, for the purpose of examining membership, keeping it separate is useful for highlighting potential barriers or facilitators to joining or engaging in an association.

Themes were identified in a range of articles. Some were descriptive commentaries or desk research about the value of library associations (Broadly-Preston, 2006; Chase, 2019; DiMauro, 2011; Joint, 2007; Lumpkin, 2016; Morrison, 2004; Wise, 2012). Other articles involved primary research, including studies that indirectly referenced the role of library associations, such as Corcoran & McGuinness (2014) who interviewed academic librarians about CPD, and studies that directly researched the subject. For example, in their 2020 study, Garrison and Cramer (2021) received 140 complete responses when surveying business librarians about what they wanted from their professional associations. Henczel (2014) used a phenomenological approach to study the impact of library associations. She conducted 52 semi-structured interviews with members of national library associations, providing a wealth of information. Spaulding & Maloney (2017) also looked at impact, asking how belonging to and participating in a professional association as a student impacted careers. They reported on 1,869 responses from their online survey. Frank (1997) conducted focus groups on the value of being active in professional organizations. In the same year, Kamm (1997) received 116 responses to her U.S. survey on how members make decisions about their library association.

Identified Themes Related to Library Association Membership

Expertise - Professional Development

One of the common themes in the literature on library associations is the provision of continuing professional development (CPD), including access to training and skills building through attendance at courses, workshops, conferences, and webinars (Henczel, 2016b). New knowledge, competencies, and skills gained through this CPD were viewed as a means of boosting resumes (Schwartz, 2016). While active participation in associations demonstrated engagement, leading to career enhancement (Frank, 1997; Garrison & Cramer, 2021; Spaulding & Maloney, 2017) and opportunities for research and publication (Chase, 2019; Wise, 2012). Lachance (2006) remarked that “No library association can survive, sustain, grow, or remain relevant in the modern age if it does not address members' educational needs and provide innovative learning solutions that lower barriers to access” (p. 9).

Most associations facilitate professional accreditation pathways that encourage CPD and provide specialist professional competency standards to guide learning. Henczel (2014) found that professional registration was regarded by her study participants as a reason for joining associations, retaining membership, and becoming more participative in association activities. Registration and certification are available through associations such as the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), CILIP (UK), and the Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA). These schemes list multiple benefits for participation, including increasing the standing of the profession, recognising professional excellence and CPD, and providing a mechanism for employers to coach and develop staff (LIANZA, n.d.), increased status, earnings, and recognition of abilities, skills, and experience (CILIP, n.d. -

e). Changes in skills and competences also came about through participation in association activities (Henczel, 2014).

Community - Connecting and Engaging

Studies frequently report it is important for those involved in the library or information sector to have opportunities to connect through networking and collaboration (Davidson & Middleton, 2006; Frank, 1997; Kamm, 1997; Saucedo, 2018; Spaulding & Maloney, 2017). Garrison & Cramer (2021) described networking as vital, saying that healthy organizations must provide ample opportunity for members to share experiences (good and bad), insights, suggestions, and to build friendships and have fun. They assert that library associations should support members through sharing expertise, connecting members in various roles, and “creating a network of supportive colleagues and mentorship” (p. 35).

Specific groups of people have been identified as sometimes needing more support in their practice. The ability to participate in an informal network of colleagues can be of enormous benefit, especially for solo or specialist librarians according to Chase (2019). Bradley et al. (2009) contended that new professionals can benefit from simply observing and interacting with colleagues, and seeing their peers being treated with professional respect. Associations have been found to make a difference through their support of members moving across sectors, students and new graduates, those in non-traditional roles, living in rural or geographically isolated areas, and those nearing retirement (Henczel, 2014). As Spaulding and Maloney (2017) assert, we need to connect with people through transitions.

Profession - Sustaining and Strengthening

Progress and cohesiveness within our profession is being achieved by setting and monitoring of global values and professional standards, accrediting courses and curricula, active recruitment, and disseminating research and professional information that will enhance our reputation as a profession (Agee & Lillard, 2005). Henczel’s (2016a, 2016b) major thesis considers library association impact on individuals, employers, and the profession. Her research concluded that five perceived impacts related to the profession: social inclusion and cohesion, information and education, promotion of the profession, and the sustainability of the profession. Although much of the literature on the value of associations is based on the personal attitudes of members, some associations have produced literature to demonstrate their impact. For example, researchers Streatfield and Markless (2019) have worked closely with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) to evaluate the impact of its international programs: Freedom of Access to Information, International Advocacy Programme, and Building Strong Library Associations. The latter program, in turn, focused on helping associations build capacity and meet their goals (IFLA, 2016a).

Beyond the specific knowledge required to practice, librarians have acknowledged the benefits of being aware of what is happening in the profession and preserving our professional cultural heritage for future generations (Henczel, 2014). The altruistic view of contributing to our profession is mentioned throughout the literature (Chase, 2019), with many seeing membership as an obligation or “the right thing to do” (Kamm, 1997, p. 299) and a way of “giving back to the profession” (Henczel, 2014, p. 131). Library associations have also been described as a forum to champion our values, such as open access to information (Morrison, 2004).

Political action, particularly lobbying, has been cited as an important role of our associations (Agee & Lillard, 2005; Kamm, 1997). Some librarians have expressed the importance of having a single, united,

and strong representative voice (Henczel, 2014). Ahmadian Yazdi and Deshpande (2013) viewed it as essential for professionals “to meet and plan their activities to safeguard and promote the interests of their particular profession” (p. 92).

Support - Financial and Organizational Supports

A fourth theme that was seen as potentially important in relation to library association membership related to costs and employer support. Some associations, such as the American Library Association, have reported declining membership (ALA, 2020). One of the main concerns, or reasons for non-membership, has been cited as cost (Frank, 1997; Kamm, 1997). Although financial incentives in terms of grants and member discounts were referred to as a frustration when access is limited (Garrison & Cramer, 2021), it has also been suggested as a positive reason for joining (Schwartz, 2016). The extent of employer support of their activities, either by paying dues or expenses for conferences and meetings, has also been cited as an important factor in the selection of an association (Kamm, 1997).

Barriers to participating in CPD include time, financial costs, and lack of support from employers (Thomas et al., 2010). Corcoran & McGuinness (2014) have suggested that professional library organizations must be innovative and consider incentives to participate that resonate with members. This theme of “support,” therefore, involves some of the practical barriers and facilitators to membership that associations must consider.

Aims

We began with an iterative process that involved the setting of our aim and objectives, a literature search to assess what was known about the subject, and a review of emerging themes. The HSLG committee want to retain current members but also to understand why some of those involved in relevant positions have never joined or have left us. The overall purpose, therefore, was to enable evidence informed decisions by the committee leading to a strategy based on the views and needs of members and that tackles potential barriers to membership. We focused primarily on the views of those involved in health settings but also wanted to be guided by those from other sectors.

Survey aim: To gain insight into the issues of relevance to membership of our group and association.

Our objectives were to

1. enable HSLG members to give their views on the group,
2. understand what aspects of a library association are important to librarians in Ireland, and
3. learn about reasons for and against membership.

Methods

Questionnaire Design

A survey is a quick way of gathering data and allows everyone in a defined population to contribute. Online survey providers enable easy creation of various question types and answer options (Ball, 2019; Nayak & Narayan, 2019). For a cost, there are also advanced features such as skip logic (questions offered

depend on the previous answers so participants skip irrelevant questions) and crosstab analysis (useful when comparing the answers of participant sub-groups).

However, self-completed surveys do not generally allow for in-depth interrogation or clarification of answers. The wording of questions may also be interpreted differently by participants (particularly if care is not taken during design; French, 2012). Where time and costs allow, a qualitative method such as focus groups or interviews would provide additional data and real-life examples to improve understanding (Granikov et al., 2020).

In line with good questionnaire design, we only included a question if it could provide important context or useful application (the answers could enable action; National Care Experience Programme, n.d.). For example, new librarians have been identified as potentially having different views and needs to others (Chase, 2019; Joint, 2007); therefore, a question on length of service was warranted. The number of questions asked depended on the association membership status of participants. Questionnaires with more items tend to have a lower return rate (French, 2012), so we asked most questions of those who belonged to our group, as they may be more invested and receive the greatest benefit from providing responses. No personal data (such as age) were necessary.

To facilitate skip logic and analysis by population, we organized our questionnaire into sections. Section 1, which was answered by everyone, contained contextual questions based largely on the four variables used by Henzcel (2016) in her study on library association impact: association, sector affiliation, career stage, and activity levels. This included information on the work or study status of participants, how long they had worked in the sector, whether they received financial support to join a *library association* or attend events, whether they had ever been on a committee, and their association membership status. The latter (Q7, Table 1) was primarily used to direct respondents to further questions. (See Appendix A for survey instrument.)

Table 1
Survey Skip Logic Questionnaire Flow ^a

Q7. Please tick the most appropriate option for you:	If yes, then directed to:
1. I am a HSLG member	Sections 2 and 5
2. I am a Library Association of Ireland member (but not the HSLG)	Section 5
3. I belong to another professional library association, instead of the Library Association of Ireland	Sections 4 and 5
4. I am a former library association member	Section 6
5. I have never belonged to a library association	Section 6

^a Section 3 asked why someone working in a health setting was not a member of the HSLG. This required additional skip logic in Question 1.

Closed questions, with options provided, were primarily used for ease and speed of completion, but in case options were not exhaustive, “other, please specify” and open questions were added where appropriate. Choices were listed alphabetically to prevent researcher bias in terms of order. Only Question 1 (on eligibility and status) and 7 (required for skip logic) were mandatory. Evaluative questions provide a baseline measure and an opportunity for governing committees to review areas that are working and those that need improvement. These questions can be asked at regular intervals to monitor progress. Therefore, we asked participants to rate the value they place on membership, how well we are currently meeting their needs and expectations, and to identify gaps in services. Wording of these

questions and the options provided were inspired by those used in previous library association survey studies (Garrison & Cramer, 2021; Henczel, 2016a; IFLA, 2016b). However, to make items salient to our members and to meet our objectives we developed our own survey tool.

Questionnaire Testing

Questionnaires require testing to assess reliability and validity of questions. Reliability refers to how well data can be reproduced, with a reliable survey resulting in consistent information. Validity is how well a questionnaire measures what it is intended to measure, with a valid survey producing accurate information (Fink & Kosecoff, 1998; Meadows, 2003). Both can be obtained by ensuring that definitions and models used to select questions are grounded in theory or experience (Fink & Kosecoff, 1998, p. 6), thus underpinning the importance of the literature review and researcher discussions.

Using skip-logic requires additional time for testing as each potential option needs to be followed to ensure appropriate flow. One HSLG committee member devised the questionnaire and the other five members previewed and filled it in multiple times to check that questions and answer options were appropriate, comprehensive, and made sense (face and content validity).

Survey Dissemination

We made the survey available online in the first two weeks of November 2021 and sent the link via our group membership list (49 recipients), discussion email list (85 recipients, including members and non-members working in health librarianship), the library association newsletter (approximately 570 personal members), our website, and via three invitations to participate from our Twitter account. As an incentive, and a means of thanking participants, we offered eligible respondents the chance to enter a draw for a €50 voucher. To ensure that responses remained anonymous, we set up a separate survey for the draw. Those who wanted to participate could click on, or copy, a link to the draw survey and enter their email address at any time during a three-week period. Researchers were only allowed access to the one survey to which they were assigned, which also ensured that results could not be connected to individuals.

Results

We had 49 valid responses: 21 HSLG members (response rate of 46% for the group), 21 other library association members, and 7 non-members of an association (including 6 former members). Just two participants worked as an information professional for 0–5 years (4%), 12 (25%) worked 6–11 years, and 35 (71%) worked 12 or more years. As this article focuses on the development of our survey, we primarily present results that highlight issues of importance to design.

To learn about current financial supports, we asked if respondents' organizations or libraries paid towards membership or attendance at CPD events and courses. Considerably more of them paid towards CPD than membership (Figure 1).

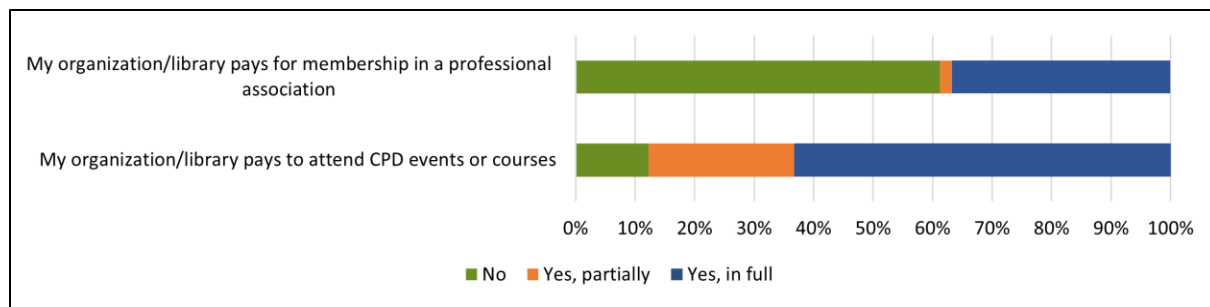


Figure 1

Payment towards membership and events by organizations or libraries.

(From survey questions 4 & 5.)

Themes

Having developed new question options, it is usual to look for assurance that these are appropriate and comprehensive. Our four themes were useful in setting and analysing two core questions. We asked participants for up to three reasons for their membership, or non-membership, of a library association, then we asked them to rate the importance of 20 options related to membership. Asking the open question first allowed participants to provide answers that occurred to them instinctively (before viewing researcher-defined choices).

Forty respondents provided one or more reasons why they were a member of a library association (Table 2). For non-members, six respondents gave at least one reason why they were not a member. It is difficult to draw conclusions from the small number of responses; however, there appears to be a feeling of disconnect among some of those who are not members of a library association. They were also more unsure of the benefits (see Appendix B for responses).

Table 2

Number of Reasons For or Against Library Association Membership by Theme ^a

Theme	Members (n=40)	Non-members (n=6)
Community	47	2
Expertise	42	1
Profession	23	2
Support	3	2

^a Respondents could give up to three reasons. (From survey questions 14 & 21.)

Figure 2 provides results on the importance of membership factors for association-member respondents, coded by theme. All five options for the theme *community* were in the top half of results and the five options for *support* were in the lower half. In Figure 3, results from non-members show the themes are spread more evenly. Again, note the low number of respondents, which restricts our ability to use statistical analysis and to generalize results.

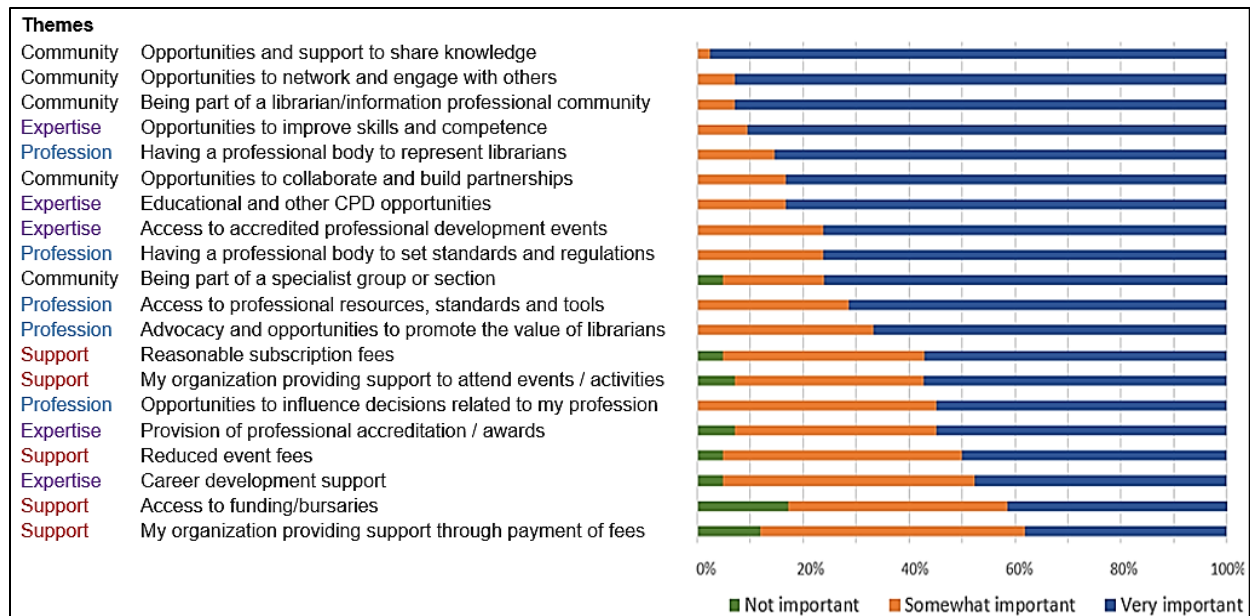


Figure 2

The importance of factors in terms of membership in a library association. All members, n=40.

(From survey question 17.)

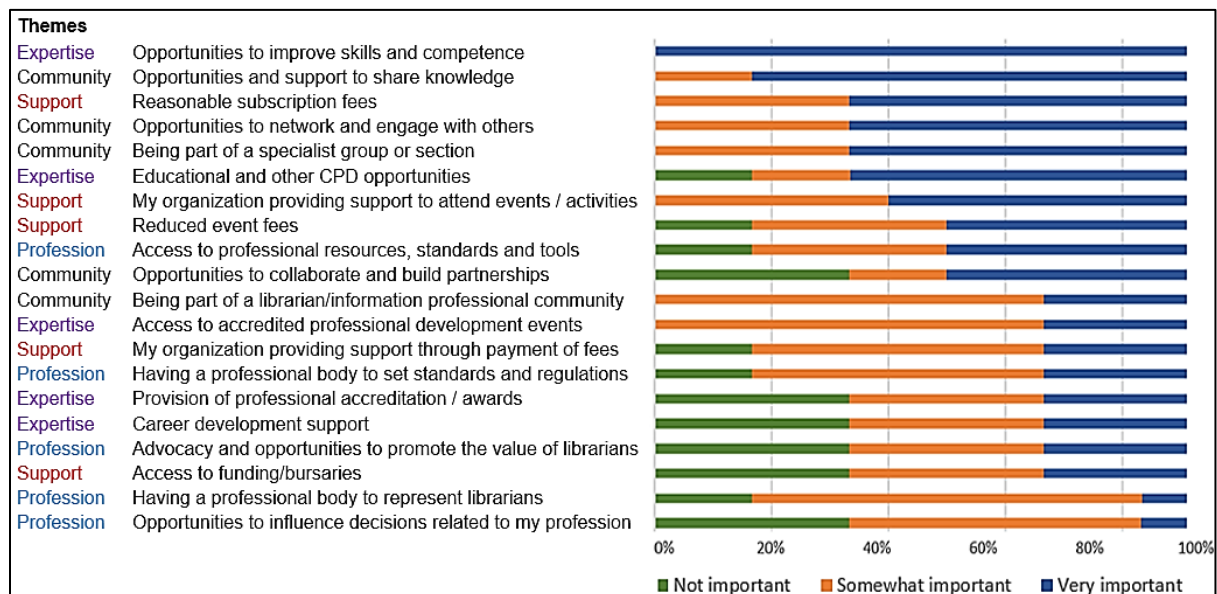


Figure 3

The importance of factors in terms of membership of a library association. Non-members, n=6.

(From survey question 21.)

These results show that there is consistency in responses across our two core questions. For both members and non-members, the reasons for and against membership mirror the subsequent responses for what is important, which provides some confidence in internal consistency for this aspect of the questionnaire. To further check for reliability, we can examine results by subgroup. We might expect more similarity among member subgroups compared to non-members.

Looking at the importance of themes, dividing members into HSLG members and non-HSLG association members shows similarity, and these differ from non-members (Figure 4). To visually compare the themes across groups we used the NHS Survey Programme partial credit scoring system that allows data relating to a question's options to be summarized by a single number (Care Quality Commission, 2015). The most positive answer option (very important) is scored as 10 and the least positive (not important) is 0. Intermediate answer options are scored with intermediate values (somewhat important is scored 5). Calculations are then made based on the number of responses. The method has been tested and enables organizational performance on a survey question to be summarized and, when required, compared across organizations.

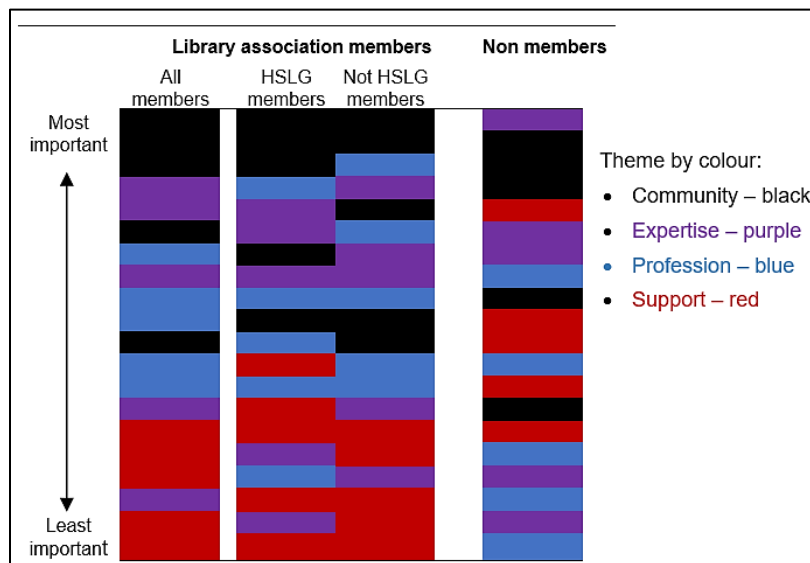


Figure 4
Themes ranked by importance and by library association member-status.
(From survey questions 17 & 21.)

Although not tested for significance, a simple visual examination of results within and across the results of core questions show what we might expect from a reliable questionnaire. Factor analysis and significance testing would be useful to confirm these findings. The option of “other” was very rarely used in the survey, which gives us some confidence that we didn’t exclude important options in our questions. This suggests reasonable content validity.

Discussion

Despite obtaining a relatively small number of responses, our questionnaire performed as expected and enabled us to meet our aim and objectives. We now have a much better understanding of what is

important to members and can use this knowledge for planning. In particular, by identifying themes, we understand that our association group members want to be part of a community where they can engage with others as much as they want educational activity. We have already begun to develop a CPD framework that incorporates a more structured approach, but which also focuses on connecting and engaging members.

We learned that financial concerns were not particularly prevalent among members, though it would be interesting to know if this only applied to our respondents. One may speculate that those who take time to complete a survey are more invested and active than others. Financial considerations may be more prevalent among those who do not belong to a library association. Knowing that most respondents did not have financial support to join an association but did have support to attend events has implications for those deciding on costs. If this is true of the wider library and information service population, it would suggest the importance of keeping costs of joining associations low and recouping costs through events, which are more likely to be subsidized. Keeping questions related to financial support is therefore recommended in follow-up surveys.

Defining Our Target Population

The language used in surveys is crucial as it determines how results can be interpreted. A challenge in this survey involved defining our population. There were three main cohorts of interest: those involved in library and information services based in Ireland who were (1) HSLG members, (2) other members of library associations, and (3) non-members (former association members or never joined).

Membership in a library association is generally open to a range of people. In Ireland, this includes those with or without a professional library qualification who are or have been employed in the field of librarianship; those enrolled on a course leading to a professional qualification in library and information studies; and those with an interest in the work, welfare, and progress of libraries, but who are not employed in the field (Library Association of Ireland, 2012). Similarly, the American Library Association (2021) allows a broad spectrum of membership, which is open to “individuals, organizations, and non-profits, and businesses interested in working together to change the world for the better through libraries and librarians.” And, in the UK professional association, CILIP, individual membership is “open to everyone working in knowledge, information, data or librarianship” (CILIP, n.d.-b); with those not working in these areas still eligible to join as non-practitioners (CILIP, n.d.-d). Most associations allow personal and organizational membership.

An openly available online survey needs to clearly describe eligibility to ensure you reach those who you want to include, that you avoid wasting the time of those who you want to exclude, and ultimately, that you get meaningful results. Association members may be easily identified through membership lists, but identifying and targeting non-members is difficult. If repeating our survey, we would make significant changes to the language used in our introduction, our questions, and dissemination.

Question 1 established the work or study status of respondents. Although not intentional, use of the term “librarian / information specialist” in our introduction and in that question is likely to have made some eligible people feel excluded. There has been interest in finding a respectful and inclusive term for those who work in library settings who do not have an accredited professional qualification. “Library staff” was the term preferred by respondents in a recent survey aiming to find an agreeable term for staff in non-librarian roles (Schilperoort et al., 2021). However, it is difficult to find an encompassing title for those working outside traditional library settings. CILIP (n.d.-a) believes that “What makes someone a

professional is the knowledge, skills, attitude, behaviours and values that they bring to their work.” To acknowledge the wide-ranging roles and focus of the sector it seems advisable to avoid titles or labels in a survey.

In the future, we may define our population as all current members of our library association, and anyone else working, seeking work, retired from work, or studying for a qualification, in the library or information (knowledge, data) sector in Ireland. Although this excludes some non-members eligible to join associations, it does include the key groups primarily required for planning purposes. (See Appendix C for revised survey instrument.)

The options for question 1 could be the following:

- I am currently working in the library or information sector.
- I am currently seeking work in the library or information sector.
- I am currently studying on a course leading to a qualification in library or information studies.
- I have retired from work in the library or information sector.
- I am a member of a library association and have an interest in the work, welfare and progress of library and information services but have never been employed in the sector.

Follow-up questions may be required to establish eligibility or for contextual analysis:

- I am based in Ireland. Y/N
- I am working or seeking work in a health-related setting or where health is a significant component of my work. Y/N
- I have a professional library or information qualification. Y/N (if yes, please specify)

Each option needs to have a purpose. If results are going to be used for reporting and planning, then it is necessary to know the status of respondents. For example, the views of those working or seeking work in the sector may be prioritized when planning CPD and other events, and will provide the most meaningful data from non-members. Knowing the views of students will be important for future planning and recruitment. For a baseline survey, one may also want to check that the needs and expectations of specific groups, such as those with and without professionally accredited qualifications, are similar. If so, future surveys can omit any distinction. If they provide significantly different responses, then this may have implications for service provision.

Clear definitions and appropriate language should help attract those who want to participate in a survey. These are also important for meaningful analysis of responses. The purpose of the survey must guide decisions about who to include. For an openly available survey, which is required to capture non-member views, clear language around eligibility is especially important.

Other Lessons and Limitations

An obvious limitation to the interpretation of our results is the small number of respondents. The use of membership lists by groups and associations for dissemination would enable calculation of response rates. However, using a broad definition for our eligible population and a survey openly promoted through several sources, means that it was not possible to calculate response rates for everyone. Attracting participation of non-members would require a more structured approach; for example, contacting a sample of libraries and library schools. There are online listings of libraries by country and

sector, such as the IFLA (n.d.) library map of the world. Although often incomplete, they may be used to increase reach. Researchers must decide what is most important when reaching their goals: comprehensiveness (sensitivity) versus precision. Narrower definitions and routes may enable more precise and calculable data but also limit the diversity of responses.

Social media likes and retweets didn't necessarily lead to participation, so this method of dissemination cannot be relied upon alone. Tagging key groups and individuals and adding a picture may increase interactions, but ensuring eligible populations view individual communications, such as a tweet, is unpredictable. Making the survey available for a longer period and sending the link directly to all association member lists should increase response rates.

Although the idea of offering a reward for completion is attractive, the openness of social media communication means that it may attract those who are not eligible to take part. In our case, following a tweet that mentioned the draw, we received several (52) inappropriate responses which had to be removed. To ensure transparency, two researchers independently reviewed the spreadsheet of results and highlighted those deemed to be ineligible based on content of answers (such as repeated or inappropriate phrases). Agreement was easily reached as the identified responses had been filled consecutively overnight. Ensuring inclusion of only valid responses is potentially a problem for all publicly available online surveys. We would not include a reward in the future.

Conclusion

Our research, including literature review and survey, provides us with information on which to plan strategy. We believe that our questionnaire could be adapted, with relevant elements utilized by other groups and associations. It is important that governing bodies and committees remember that our purpose is to guide and implement activity on behalf of members. We therefore need to understand how well we are doing, and how we should progress, based on the views of members. We also need to understand why people in our profession do not join any association so we can remove barriers and ensure benefits are appropriate, warranted, and clear. Six of the seven participants in our survey who weren't current members were former members. If that represents a broader trend, then we also need to know why people leave their representative associations.

It is also useful for members, and potential members, to consider what they want and expect from their library association. A survey questionnaire can be a useful means of reminding respondents of the range of benefits that is available to them. Above all, it should be an impetus for action. Our updated questionnaire will be a suitable tool to evaluate how well we are meeting our members' expectations and provide results that can act as a benchmark for progress. This valuable information will help us plan our activity, set goals, and maintain and grow membership. We are very grateful to those who took part in our survey as they have given us a clear direction and renewed purpose.

We have learned some useful lessons during the research process. Key points:

- Take time to define your population. Members of associations are easy to identify, but non-members (including former members, those who never joined, and those who may join in the future—such as students) will provide constructive insight into the value of an organization.
- Use language that is appropriate and inclusive. Some terms and titles may alienate potential contributors. It is important that those who you want to include know they are welcome to

participate. A clear description of eligibility in the survey introduction and in dissemination channels is required.

- Dissemination requires planning. Members can be reached directly through membership lists (enabling response rates to be calculated). Reaching non-members requires a targeted approach, which may involve an openly available survey that is promoted through a range of methods including social media and mailing lists, but should include a structured sampling of places where non-members work or study.
- The four themes identified through the literature and in this survey offer useful categories for assessment and planning.
- Decisions in relation to data collection tools should be based on what you want to achieve in the process.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all members of the HSLG committee, Niamh Lucey (Chair), Linda Halton, Noreen McHugh, Mairead Nelson, and Miriam Williams, who were instrumental in the organization of this research. Their work and dedication to evidence based decision making on behalf of those involved in health librarianship demonstrates how library association committees can bring about effective change for our profession.

References

- Agee, J., & Lillard, L. (2005). A global view of library associations for students and new librarians. *New Library World*, 106(11/12), 541–555. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03074800510635026>
- Ahmadian Yazdi, F., & Deshpande, N. J. (2013). Evaluation of selected library associations' web sites. *Aslib Proceedings*, 65(2), 92–108. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00012531311313952>
- American Library Association. (2020, February 14). *ALA responds to financial situation* [Press release]. <https://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2020/02/ala-responds-financial-situation>
- Ball, H. L. (2019). Conducting online surveys. *Journal of Human Lactation*, 35(3), 413–417. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0890334419848734>
- Bradley, F., Dalby, A., & Spencer, A. (2009). Our space: Professional development for new graduates and professionals in Australia. *IFLA Journal*, 35(3), 232–242. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0340035209346211>
- Broadly-Preston, J. (2006). CILIP: A twenty-first century association for the information profession? *Library Management*, 27(1/2), 48–65. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01435120610647947>
- Care Quality Commission. (2015). *NHS patient survey programme: Survey scoring method*. https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20151125_nhspatientsurveys_scoring_methodology.pdf
- Chase, S. (2019). Why join a professional association? *Public Libraries*, 58(5), 8–11.
- Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. (n.d.-a). *A definition of libraries, information and knowledge as a 'profession.'* Retrieved April 24, 2022, from <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/professionalismdefinition>

- Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. (n.d.-b). *Be part of your profession*. Retrieved April 24, 2022, from <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/JoinAsAMember>
- Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. (n.d.-c). *We are CILIP: 5 year action plan*. https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cilip.org.uk/resource/resmgr/cilip/campaigns/we_are_cilip/we_are_cilip_strategy_report.pdf
- Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. (n.d.-d). *We are here for you*. Retrieved April 24, 2022, from <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/BecomeAMember>
- Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. (n.d.-e). *Why become professionally registered?* Retrieved June 5, 2022, from <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/ProfessionalRegistration>
- Corcoran, M., & McGuinness, C. (2014). Keeping ahead of the curve: Academic librarians and continuing professional development in Ireland. *Library Management*, 35(3), 175–198. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LM-06-2013-0048>
- Davidson, J. R., & Middleton, C. A. (2006). Networking, networking, networking: The role of professional association memberships in mentoring and retention of science librarians. *Science & Technology Libraries*, 27(1–2), 203–224. https://doi.org/10.1300/J122v27n01_14
- DiMauro, V. (2011). Using online communities in professional associations. *Information Outlook*, 15(4), 18–20. https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/sla_io_2011/4/
- Dowling, M., & Fiels, K. M. (2009). Global roles of library associations. In I. Abdullahi (Ed.), *Global library and information science* (pp. 564–577). K. G. Saur. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783598441349.564>
- Fink, A., & Kosecoff, J. B. (1998). *How to conduct surveys: A step by step guide* (2nd ed). Sage Publications.
- Frank, D. G. (1997). Activity in professional associations: The positive difference in a librarian's career. *Library Trends*, 46(2), 307–319. <https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/8155>
- French, J. (2012). Designing and using surveys as research and evaluation tools. *Journal of Medical Imaging and Radiation Sciences*, 43(3), 187–192. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmir.2012.06.005>
- Garrison, B., & Cramer, S. M. (2021). What librarians say they want from their professional associations: A survey of business librarians. *Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship*, 26(1–2), 81–98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08963568.2020.1819746>
- Granikov, V., Hong, Q. N., Crist, E., & Pluye, P. (2020). Mixed methods research in library and information science: A methodological review. *Library & Information Science Research*, 42(1), 101003. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2020.101003>
- Henczel, S. (2014). The impact of library associations: Preliminary findings of a qualitative study. *Performance Measurement and Metrics*, 15(3), 122–144. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PMM-07-2014-0025>
- Henczel, S. (2016a). *The impact of national library associations on their members, employing organisations and the profession*. [Doctoral dissertation, RMIT University]. RMIT University Research Repository. <https://researchrepository.rmit.edu.au/esploro/outputs/9921863743101341>

- Henczel, S. (2016b). Understanding the impact of national library association membership: Strengthening the profession for sustainability. *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries*, 5(2), 277–285. <http://www.qqml-journal.net/index.php/qqml/article/view/340>
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. (n.d.). *Library map of the world*. Retrieved June 4, 2022, from <https://librarymap.ifla.org/map>
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. (2016a). *Building strong library associations programme manual*. <https://repository.ifla.org/handle/123456789/311>
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. (2016b). *Building strong library associations. Annex 16: Member and non-member survey–start of programme*. <https://repository.ifla.org/handle/123456789/311>
- Joint, N. (2007). Newly qualified librarians and their professional associations: UK and US comparisons: ANTAEUS. *Library Review*, 56(9), 767–772. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00242530710831202>
- Kamm, S. (1997). To join or not to join: How librarians make membership decisions about their associations. *Library Trends*, 46(2), 295–306. <https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/8149>
- Lachance, J. R. (2006). Learning, community give library and information associations a bright future. *Library Management*, 27(1/2), 6–13. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01435120610647901>
- Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa. (n.d.). *Professional registration*. Retrieved June 4, 2022, from <https://lianza.org.nz/professional-development/professional-registration/>
- Library Association of Ireland. (2012). *Memorandum and articles of association of Cumann Leabharlann na hÉireann (The Library Association of Ireland)*. <https://www.libraryassociation.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/MEMORANDUM-and-ARTICLES-OF-ASSOCIATION-of-LAI.pdf>
- Librarianship Studies & Information Technology. (2020, July 11). *Library associations*. <https://www.librarianshipstudies.com/2020/07/library-associations.html>
- Lumpkin, J. (2016). #Why membership? Professional associations in the Millennial Age: A call to action through mentorship. *OLA Quarterly*, 21(3), 5–7. https://journals3.oregondigital.org/olaq/article/view/vol21_iss3_1/1813
- Meadows, K. A. (2003). So you want to do research? 5: Questionnaire design. *British Journal of Community Nursing*, 8(12), 562–570. <https://doi.org/10.12968/bjcn.2003.8.12.11854>
- Morrison, H. (2004). Professional library & information associations should rise to the challenge of promoting open access and lead by example. *Library Hi Tech News*, 21(4), 8–10. <https://doi.org/10.1108/07419050410545861>
- National Care Experience Programme. (n.d.). *Survey hub*. Retrieved March 13, 2022, from <https://yourexperience.ie/survey-hub/>

- Nayak, M. S. D. P., & Narayan, K. A. (2019). Strengths and weaknesses of online surveys. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 24(5). <https://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%2024%20Issue5/Series-5/E2405053138.pdf>
- Sauceda, J. (2018). MLA personnel characteristics, 2016: Continuity, change, and concerns. *Notes: The Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association*, 359–371. <https://doi.org/10.7282/T30005GF>
- Schilperoort, H., Quezada, A., & Lezcano, F. (2021). Words matter: Interpretations and implications of “para” in paraprofessional. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, 109(1), 13–22. <https://doi.org/10.5195/jmla.2021.933>
- Schwartz, A. (2016, October). Why join a library association? *LibraryScienceDegree.org*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20161107013244/https://librarysciencedegree.org/why-join-a-library-association/>
- Spaulding, K., & Maloney, A. (2017, June 18–20). *The impact of professional associations on the careers of LIS professionals* [Paper presentation]. Special Libraries Association 2017 Annual Conference, Phoenix, AZ, United States. <https://www.sla.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/SpauldingMaloneyThe-Impact-of-Professional-Associations-on-the-Careers-of-LIS-Professionals.pdf>
- Streatfield, D., & Markless, S. (2019). Impact evaluation and IFLA: Evaluating the impact of three international capacity building initiatives. *Performance Measurement and Metrics*, 20(2), 105–122. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PMM-03-2019-0008>
- Thomas, V. K., Satpathi, C., & Satpathi, J. N. (2010). Emerging challenges in academic librarianship and role of library associations in professional updating. *Library Management*, 31(8/9), 594–609. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01435121011093379>
- Wise, M. (2012). Participation in local library associations: The benefits to participants. *PNLA Quarterly*, 77(1), 50–56. <https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/libraryfac/12/>

Appendix A

HSLG Library Association Survey – Original Version

Questionnaire flow	
HSLG members	Sections 1, 2, & 5
Library Association of Ireland member (but not the HSLG)	Sections 1, 5
Members belonging to another library association, instead of the Library Association of Ireland	Sections 1, 4, & 5
Former library association member	Sections 1 & 6
Have never belonged to a library association	Sections 1 & 6

Section 3 was asked of those who were working in a health setting but were not a member of the HSLG.

Note: See Appendix C for a revised version of this survey.

HSLG library association survey

Section 1. Welcome

The HSLG is a group of the Library Association of Ireland. The HSLG committee want to understand your views on the value of belonging to a library association. This may include national associations like the Library Association of Ireland, or specialist associations like the SLA. Not every information professional is a member of such an association and we want to hear from everybody based in of Ireland so that we can improve our focus and direction.

We are not collecting any personally identifiable data. Some of the results, including comments, may be published anonymously. Any questions, please email us at xxx@xx.com

Question 1, your context:

1. Please tick the most appropriate status for you: * [mandatory question]

- ☐ I am an information professional / librarian working (at least partly) in a health-related area/setting in Ireland
- ☐ I am an information professional / librarian working in a non-health-related area/setting in Ireland
- ☐ I am an information professional / librarian in Ireland but not currently working
- ☐ I am information professional / librarian student in Ireland
- ☐ Other (please specify):

2. Which library sector(s) do you primarily identify with?

- ☐ Academic and research
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Public
- ☐ School
- ☐ Special (Government, corporate, law, prison etc)
- ☐ Other (please specify):

3. *How long have you worked as an information professional / librarian?*

- ☐ 0–5 years
☐ 6–11 years
☐ 12 or more years

4. *Does your organisation/library provide payment for membership in a professional association?*

- ☐ Yes, full membership
☐ Yes, partial membership
☐ No

5. *Does your organisation/library provide payment to attend continuing professional development events or courses?*

- ☐ Yes, full costs
☐ Yes, partial costs
☐ No

6. *Have you ever been a member of a professional association committee?*

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. *Please tick the most appropriate option for you: **

- ☐ I am a HSLG member
☐ I am a Library Association of Ireland member (but not the HSLG)
☐ I belong to another library association, instead of the Library Association of Ireland
☐ I am a former library association member
☐ I have never belonged to a library association

Section 2. HSLG members

In this section, the committee would like to understand what HSLG membership means to you and what we can do to meet your needs.

8. *How much do you agree with the following statements?*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Membership in the HSLG is important for my practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Membership in the HSLG has improved my practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Membership in the HSLG provides community support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The HSLG provides sufficient opportunities for me to contribute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The HSLG provides sufficient opportunities for me to learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The HSLG fulfils my expectations of membership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The HSLG is the most important reason for my association membership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Are there new activities, benefits or resources you would like the HSLG to provide for members?

10. Please rank the HSLG goals in order of importance:

Develop and support an evidence-based approach to professional practice	<input type="text"/>
Network, collaborate and share knowledge	<input type="text"/>
Promote and advocate for our profession	<input type="text"/>
Provide opportunities for members to engage in continuing professional development	<input type="text"/>

Comments:

11. Do you have other comments about the HSLG?

Section 3. Professional association member in health setting but not HSLG

We would like to understand if there are any barriers to you joining the HSLG.

12. Please give the main reason(s) why you are not a member of the HSLG.

Reason 1	<input type="text"/>
Reason 2	<input type="text"/>
Reason 3	<input type="text"/>

Comments:

Section 4. Professional association member but not of the Library Association of Ireland

We would like to understand any barriers there may be to joining the Library Association of Ireland.

13. Please give the main reason(s) why you are not a member of the Library Association of Ireland.

Reason 1

Reason 2

Reason 3

Comments:

Section 5. Membership of a library association

We would like to understand what membership in a library association means to you.

14. Please give the main reason(s) why you are a member of a library association

Reason 1

Reason 2

Reason 3

Comments:

15. How many library associations do you belong to?**16. How many library association special interest groups or sections do you belong to?****17. In terms of your membership of a library association, how important are the following?**

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
Access to funding/bursaries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to accredited professional development events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to professional resources, standards and tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advocacy and opportunities to promote the value of librarians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being part of a librarian/information professional community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being part of a specialist group or section	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career development support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educational and other CPD opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having a professional body to represent librarians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
Having a professional body to set standards and regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My organisation providing support through payment of fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My organisation providing support to attend events and other activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to collaborate and build partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to improve skills and competence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to influence decisions related to my profession	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to network and engage with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities and support to share knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of professional accreditation / awards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reasonable subscription fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced event fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify importance level)	<input type="text"/>		

18. In relation to your library association, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

(Note, if you are a member of more than one association, preferably focus here on the Library Association of Ireland)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Membership is good value for money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Membership is important for my work practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Membership is important for my career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Membership is important for my profession	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My association council/board engages well with members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My association group/section committees engage well with members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My association council/board meets my needs for professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My association groups/sections meet my needs for professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Association groups/sections are the most important reason for my membership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The work of my association council/board fulfils my expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The work of my association groups/sections fulfils my expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. Finally, do you have any comments about your library association?

Section 6. Non-membership of a library association

We are interested to know why you are not currently a member of a library association. This may help us to understand what you would need and expect from a professional body. Hopefully, we can use this information to improve our offering.

20. Please give the main reason(s) why you are not a member of a library associationReason 1 Reason 2 Reason 3

Comments:

21. In terms of your membership of a library association, how important would the following be?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
Access to funding/bursaries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to accredited professional development events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to professional resources, standards and tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advocacy and opportunities to promote the value of librarians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being part of a librarian/information professional community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being part of a specialist group or section	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career development support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educational and other CPD opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having a professional body to represent librarians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having a professional body to set standards and regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My organisation providing support through payment of fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My organisation providing support to attend events and other activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to collaborate and build partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to improve skills and competence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to influence decisions related to my profession	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to network and engage with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities and support to share knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of professional accreditation / awards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reasonable subscription fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced event fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (specify importance level)

22. Finally, can you briefly sum up. I would join a library association if...

7. Thank you

Thanks so much for completing our survey.

Best wishes

The HSLG committee

xxx@xx.com

Appendix B

Reasons For and Against Membership in a Library Association

Results of Q14: Reasons for membership in a library association by theme (n=40)

Community	Expertise	Profession	Supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A ready made community of peers that support and help each other without question • Access to specialist groups • As a solo librarian being able to access advice from other librarians matters • As a solo librarian, it provides me with a place/group to bounce my ideas/questions. • Being part of a community • Collaboration • Collaboration • Community • Community support • Connections, networking, advice, support • Excellent networking opportunity • [Our library association] - ability to join committee of subgroups • Meet and share with others • Moral support from other librarians • Network • Networking • Networking • Networking • Networking • Networking • Networking • Networking • Networking • Networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to good quality CPD resources (and sometimes funding) • Access to training and information resources • Continual Professional Development opportunities and events • Continuing professional development • CPD • CPD • CPD • CPD • CPD • CPD • CPD • CPD • CPD • CPD • CPD • cpd • CPD activities • CPD Opportunities • CPD opportunities • To avail of CPD • Hoped it would lead to professional development. • Professional development • Professional development - courses • Professional development and Information Currency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to professional resources, standards and tools • Advocacy our profession • Advocate for profession • A part of wider group advocating for libraries • Being a member of [our library association] is part of being a librarian • Being part of a body that represents our profession • Contributing to professional standards • Help promote the profession • I believe professional associations to be important • I think it is important to have a general register and to be noted there as a professional working in my sector. • Importance of being part of a professional body through membership • Increase visibility of our library in the wider community • It is a mark or professionalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to funding/ bursaries • Access to or discounts for attending CPD events • Cheaper to attend conferences

- Networking
- Networking
- Networking and staying up to date
- Networking opportunities
- Networking opportunities
- Networking with other professionals
- Opportunity to network with colleagues and meet new colleagues
- Peer support
- Share knowledge
- Shared experiences and a helping hand
- Sharing knowledge with other information professionals
- Sharing of knowledge
- Source of Collegiality
- Staying connected on developments within the profession
- Support and networking
- Support/Advice of peers
- To be part of a community of likeminded professionals
- To connect with the health librarian community
- To make contact with other library staff
- To network and support other members
- To share knowledge and experience
- To share/gain knowledge about the area I work in

- I have benefitted from training opportunities that came with membership.
- Career development and learning
- Career development support
- Career Professional Development
- Career advancement
- Career progression [library association award]
- CILIP - courses, magazine, information
- Support working life
- Online resources
- To learn
- keep up to date with wider profession
- Keep up-to-date
- Keeping up to date
- Keeping up-to-date with professional issues
- To keep abreast of new developments
- To keep informed of trends and developments
- Staying up to date with what's happening in the Library world, in *[our country]* and abroad
- To stay in the loop

- Making the profession stronger (lobbying)
- More inclusive - 'Only *[our library association]* members are eligible for x.'
- Professional integrity
- Professional responsibility
- Professional responsibility
- Promotion of and lobbying for school libraries
- Seems to be what you're supposed to do.
- Shared interest
- Supporting the profession
- To advocate for the profession

Results of Q20: Reasons against membership by non-members of library associations by theme (n=6)

Community	Expertise	Profession	Supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel disconnected in the last few years • Feeling like I'd have nothing in common with existing members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited amount of relevant content • I'd also like to see more informal opportunities for learning, like shadowing. Some of the events felt too formal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just never thought of joining a PLA [Professional library association] • Not sure of the benefits] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very expensive for personal membership with no visible benefit • Didn't have time to attend events

Note: One respondent gave retirement as a reason for non-membership

Appendix C

HSLG Library Association Survey – Revised Edition

[Note: revisions are in red font]

Section 1. Welcome

The HSLG is a group of the Library Association of Ireland. The HSLG committee want to understand your views on the value of belonging to a library association. This may include national associations like the Library Association of Ireland, or specialist associations like the SLA. Not every information professional is a member of such an association and we want to hear from everybody based in Ireland so that we can improve our focus and direction.

We would like to hear from all current members of our library association, and anyone else working, seeking work or studying for a qualification, in the library or information (knowledge, data) sector in Ireland.

We are not collecting any personally identifiable data. Some of the results, including comments, may be published anonymously. Any questions, please email us at xxx@xx.com

Question 1, your context:

1.1 Please tick the most appropriate status for you: *[mandatory question]

- ☐ I am currently working in the library or information sector
- ☐ I am currently seeking work in the library or information sector
- ☐ I am currently studying on a course leading to a qualification related to library or information studies
- ☐ I have retired from work in the library or information sector
- ☐ I have an interest in the work, welfare and progress of library and information services but have never been employed in the sector

☐ Other (please specify):

1.2 I am currently based in Ireland

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

1.3 I am currently working or seeking work in a health-related setting

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

1.4 I have a professional library or information qualification

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes (please specify):

2. Which library sector(s) do you primarily identify with?

- ☐ Academic and research
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Public
- ☐ School
- ☐ Special (Government, corporate, law, prison etc)
- ☐ Other (please specify):

3. How long have you worked in the library or information sector?

- ☐ 0–5 years
- ☐ 6–11 years
- ☐ 12 or more years
- ☐ Not relevant

4. Does your organisation/library provide payment for membership in a professional association?

- ☐ Yes, full membership
- ☐ Yes, partial membership
- ☐ No

5. Does your organisation/library provide payment to attend continuing professional development events or courses?

- ☐ Yes, full costs
- ☐ Yes, partial costs
- ☐ No

6. Have you ever been a member of a professional association committee?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7. Please tick the most appropriate option for you: *

- ☐ I am a HSLG member
- ☐ I am a Library Association of Ireland member (but not the HSLG)
- ☐ I belong to another library association, instead of the Library Association of Ireland
- ☐ I am not a personal member but belong to an organisation that has membership of a library association
- ☐ I am a former library association member
- ☐ I have never belonged to a library association

Section 2. HSLG members

In this section, the committee would like to understand what HSLG membership means to you and what we can do to meet your needs.

8. How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Membership in the HSLG is important for my practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Membership in the HSLG has improved my practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Membership in the HSLG provides community support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The HSLG provides sufficient opportunities for me to contribute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The HSLG provides sufficient opportunities for me to learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The HSLG fulfils my expectations of membership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The HSLG is the most important reason for my association membership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Are there new activities, benefits or resources you would like the HSLG to provide for members?

10. Please rank the HSLG goals in order of importance:

Develop and support an evidence-based approach to professional practice	<input type="text"/>
Network, collaborate and share knowledge	<input type="text"/>
Promote and advocate for our profession	<input type="text"/>
Provide opportunities for members to engage in continuing professional development	<input type="text"/>

Comments:

11. Do you have other comments about the HSLG?

Section 3. Professional association member in health setting but not HSLG

We would like to understand if there are any barriers to you joining the HSLG.

12. Please give the main reason(s) why you are not a member of the HSLG.

Reason 1	<input type="text"/>
Reason 2	<input type="text"/>
Reason 3	<input type="text"/>

Comments:

Section 4. Professional association member but not of the Library Association of Ireland

We would like to understand any barriers there may be to joining the Library Association of Ireland.

13. Please give the main reason(s) why you are not a member of the Library Association of Ireland.

Reason 1

Reason 2

Reason 3

Comments:

Section 5. Membership of a library association

We would like to understand what membership in a library association means to you.

14. Please give the main reason(s) why you are a member of a library association

Reason 1

Reason 2

Reason 3

Comments:

15. How many library associations do you belong to?

16. How many library association special interest groups or sections do you belong to?

17. In terms of your membership of a library association, how important are the following?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
Access to funding/bursaries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to accredited professional development events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to professional resources, standards and tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advocacy and opportunities to promote the value of librarians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being part of a librarian/information professional community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being part of a specialist group or section	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career development support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educational and other CPD opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having a professional body to represent librarians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having a professional body to set standards and regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My organisation providing support through payment of fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
My organisation providing support to attend events and other activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to collaborate and build partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to improve skills and competence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to influence decisions related to my profession	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to network and engage with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities and support to share knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of professional accreditation / awards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reasonable subscription fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced event fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (specify importance level)

18. In relation to your library association, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? (Note, if you are a member of more than one association, preferably focus here on the Library Association of Ireland)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Membership is good value for money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Membership is important for my work practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Membership is important for my career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Membership is important for my profession	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My association council/board engages well with members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My association group/section committees engage well with members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My association council/board meets my needs for professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My association groups/sections meet my needs for professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Association groups/sections are the most important reason for my membership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The work of my association council/board fulfils my expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The work of my association groups/sections fulfils my expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. Finally, do you have any comments about your library association?

Section 6. Non-membership of a library association

We are interested to know why you are not currently a member of a library association. This may help us to understand what you would need and expect from a professional body. Hopefully, we can use this information to improve our offering.

20. Please give the main reason(s) why you are not a member of a library associationReason 1 Reason 2 Reason 3

Comments:

21. In terms of your membership of a library association, how important would the following be?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
Access to funding/bursaries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to accredited professional development events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to professional resources, standards and tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advocacy and opportunities to promote the value of librarians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being part of a librarian/information professional community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being part of a specialist group or section	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career development support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educational and other CPD opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having a professional body to represent librarians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having a professional body to set standards and regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My organisation providing support through payment of fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My organisation providing support to attend events and other activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to collaborate and build partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to improve skills and competence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to influence decisions related to my profession	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to network and engage with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities and support to share knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of professional accreditation / awards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reasonable subscription fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced event fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (specify importance level)

22. Finally, can you briefly sum up. I would join a library association if....

7. Thank you

Thanks so much for completing our survey.

Best wishes

The HSLG committee

xxx@xx.com