

ALCTS/LITA/LLAMA Member Survey Analysis

June 6, 2018

Overview

The ALCTS/LLAMA/LITA Steering Committee created the ALCTS/LITA/LLAMA Member Survey and opened it for responses on April 25, 2018. Responses were collected through May 20, 2018. Messages about the survey were sent to members of each division and non-members were also encouraged to respond.

The goal of the survey was to learn more about members' jobs, work environments, educational needs, and professional aspirations. There were 1,101 total respondents, 545 identified themselves as ALCTS members, 274 as LITA members, and 364 as LLAMA members. Some respondents may have been members of more than one division.

Demographics

65% of respondents were from academic libraries, and 19% worked at public libraries. Other workplace types were government, special, and school libraries, as well as vendors and consultants.

When asked for a primary job function, 20% chose Administration. The next largest categories were Cataloging (17%), Management (9%), and Collection development/management (6%). 6% identified with one of the library technology categories (Technology, Systems and network services, and Emerging technologies).

Supervisors, managers, and administrators counted for a total of 67% of respondents. Most of the managers supervised 1-5 people (44%), 19% managed 6-10 workers, and 10% managed more than 10 employees.

Using the same areas as the question for job function or area of study, respondents were asked to list their top three interests. These did not necessarily have to match with current job functions. The following areas each earned over 15% of the selections:

- Cataloging – 29%
- Administration – 23%
- Collection development/management – 22%
- Management – 21%
- Metadata – 19%
- User experience – 18%
- Electronic resources – 16%

Work and Trends

Survey respondents were asked to express their favorite parts of their work, as well as what frustrates them. The survey sought to examine how a membership association might help members to excel in their workplace, and what services and programs might be of interest to members.

The most common favorite part of work was helping users. Whether this was through instruction, the design of user interfaces, or the creation of bibliographic records, respondents took pride in the services they provide to their users. Respondents also rated working with coworkers and colleagues highly on the survey, showing a strong tendency towards teamwork. Respondents were also proud of their functional expertise and what these skills bring to the larger institution.

Survey respondents found the lack of funding, resources, and time to be their biggest frustrations. They mentioned management issues with staff and with administration, many of them self-associating as middle-managers. There was a feeling that their library was not valued by their communities, whether it was academic or public.

When asked about the issues or trends that will impact their work in the next three years, funding and budgets were mentioned the most times. Close behind budgets were the changes in the makeup of library collections with the movement to open access, open educational resources, eresources, and digital collections. The third most common responses were emerging and developing library standards, such as linked data, BIBFRAME, and the RDA 3R project.

Another concern that was repeated is the “graying of the profession” and staff changes. The loss of positions as retirements come, and the lack of up-to-date skills for some library staff, will affect many library departments. Other topics of interest for the next few years are: privacy, net neutrality, trends in student education, big data, artificial intelligence, and equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The survey asked what inspires people about the work that they do. The overwhelming answer: people. They are proud of the impact that their libraries have on their communities. Through programs and services, they truly believe that they are making a difference for their users and their communities. Many are aware of their contribution to the scholarly record for generations to come. Others feel that they are contributing to the library profession at large with their daily work.

Association Membership Needs

The survey asked to select up to three aspects that are important when considering association membership. The overwhelming majority of respondents chose “Collaborating with colleagues/peers who share my interests” (70%), displaying that identity and connections are important to association membership. The next top options that were selected by 25% or more of respondents were:

- Online education programs – 43%
- Meeting with colleagues/peers at in person events – 39%
- Online connection to colleagues/peers – 36%
- Influencing standards and competencies – 25%

Less important to respondents were publications (18%), volunteering (10%), and legislative advocacy (5%).

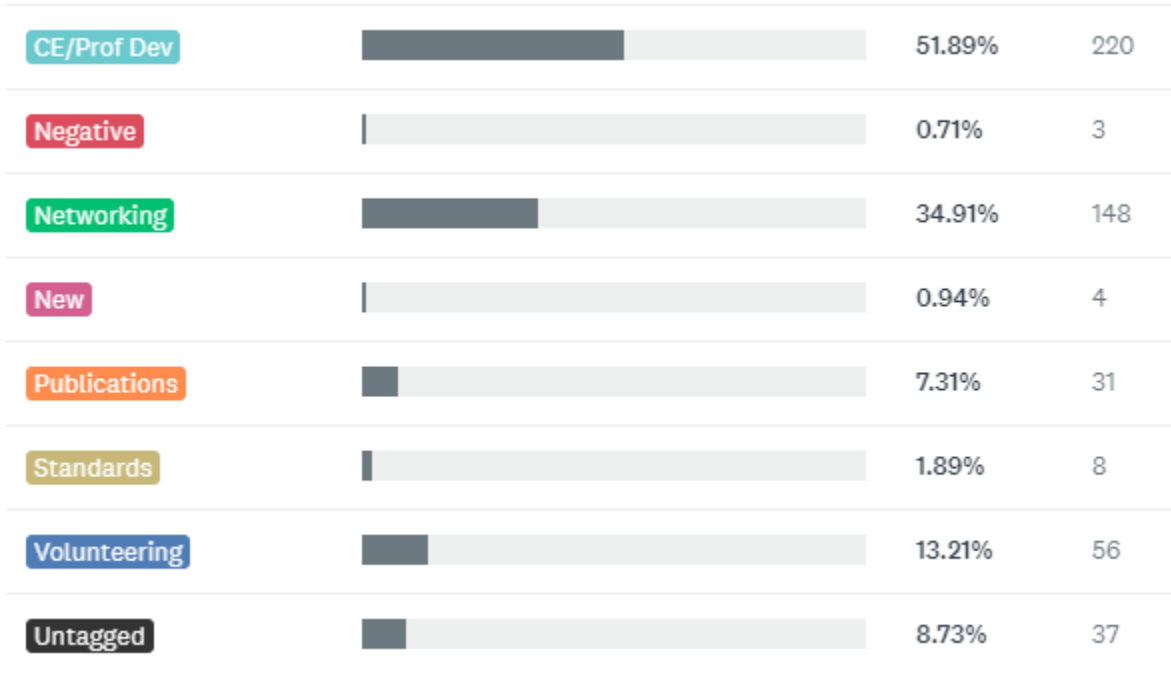
One basic definition of a member association is a group of people who voluntarily come together to solve common problems, meet common needs, and accomplish common goals. It is evident that finding

a common ground through collaboration and connection with colleagues and peers was most important to the survey respondents, whether this is done online or in person.

For each of the three divisions, members were asked what they value most about their membership, and one thing they might improve. A short summary for each division is below.

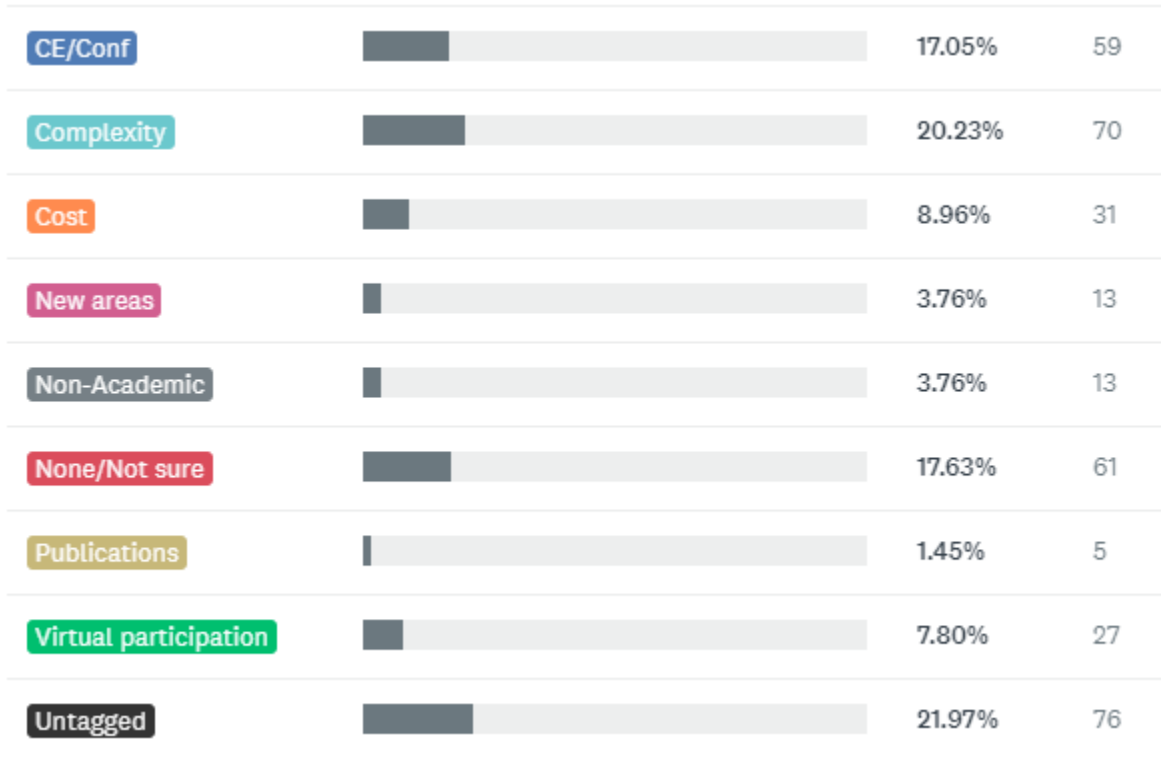
ALCTS

545 respondents identified as an ALCTS member. 211 were members for 3-10 years, 110 were members for 11-20 years, and 109 were members for 1-2 years. 85 have been members for over 20 years.



Value

The opportunities for continuing education and professional development were most valued by respondents, with networking with colleagues as a close second. These two topics were often intertwined in the answers, as members tend to learn from each other. Others saw value in the service opportunities and serving on committees. Publications and influence on standards were also mentioned.



Improve

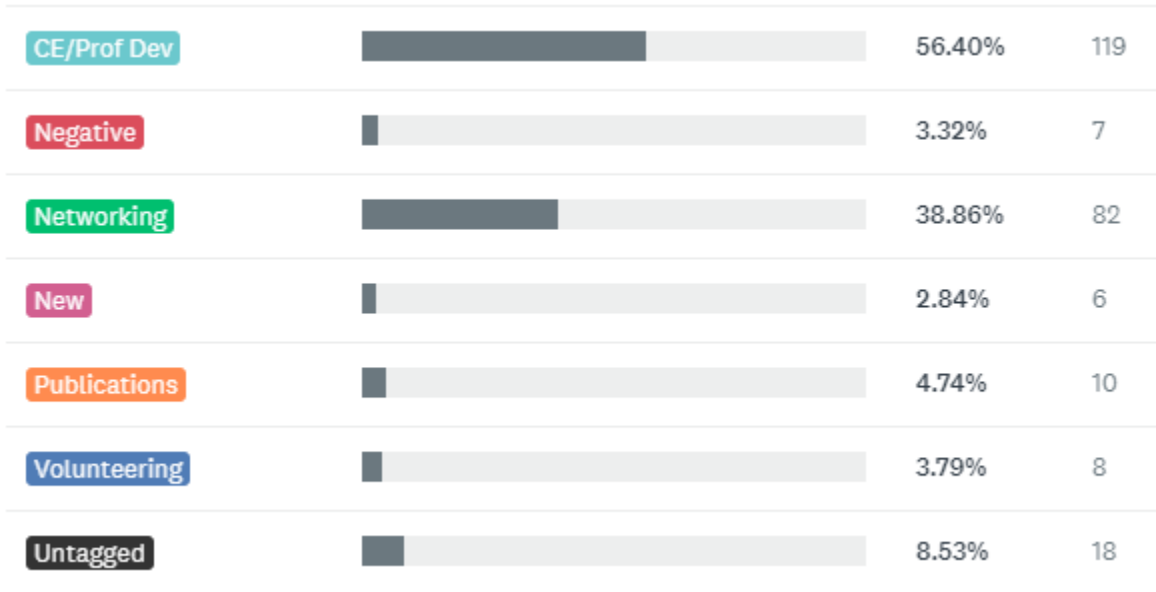
About 15% of respondents feel that ALCTS is too complex, citing bureaucratic processes and difficulties getting involved as a volunteer. Many cited that they could not go to two conferences a year to serve on committees, even though this is no longer a requirement for the majority of committee service. There were clear requests for more virtual engagement through networking and meetings, while others asked for in-person regional workshops. A few members also pointed out that ALCTS needs to embrace digital scholarship and shift its interest groups to newer topics.

Of note was the feeling of non-academic librarians that it's hard to find a place within ALCTS as many publications and programs are geared towards academia.

There were also comments of the lack of diversity within leadership, and a suggestion to create retention efforts within the division and to build a more inclusive organizational culture.

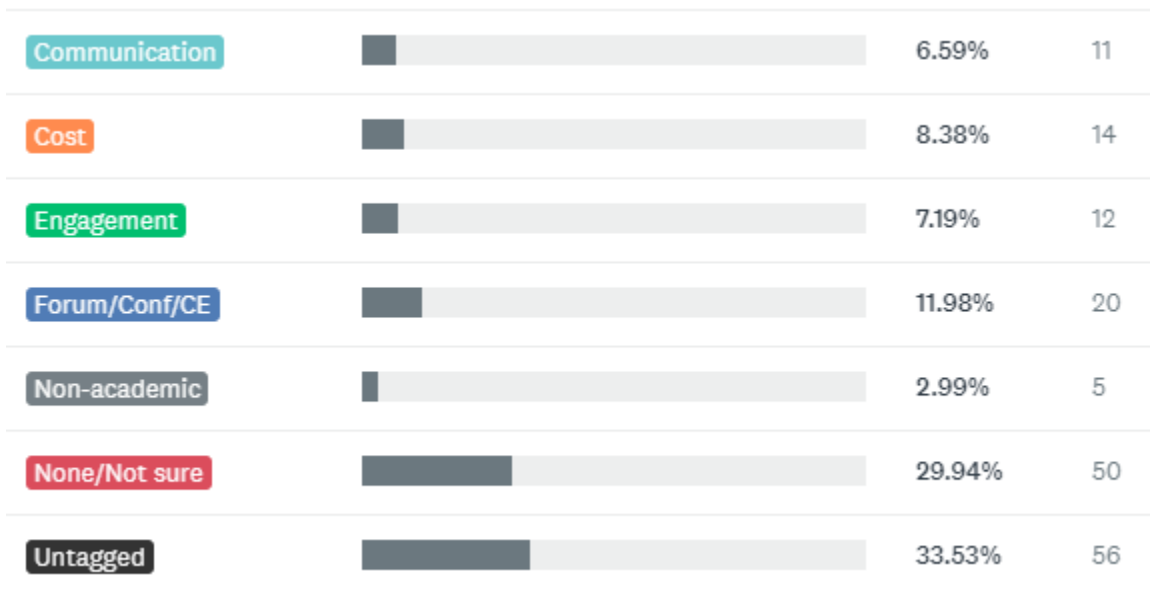
LITA

276 respondents identified as a LITA member. 123 were members for 3-10 years, 56 were members for 1-2 years, and 54 were members for 11-20 years. 21 have been members for over 20 years.



Value

As with ALCTS, opportunities for continuing education and professional development were most valued by respondents, with networking with colleagues close behind. LITA Forum, Top Technology Trends, and the LITA-L listserv were highlighted as valuable aspects of LITA membership. Opportunities to volunteer and publications were cited by fewer respondents.

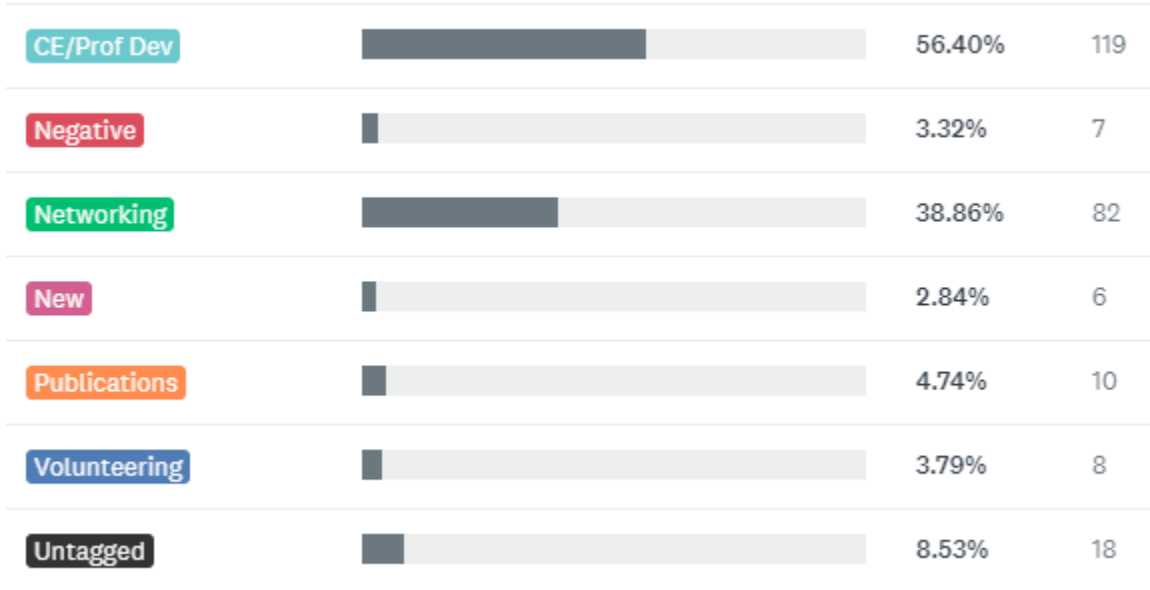


Improve

Respondents asked for more online and in-person training opportunities. Communication was cited as an area that needs improvement. Others were seeking easier ways to get involved and mentioned a high barrier to entry. A few respondents asked for more content for non-academic librarians in public libraries and schools.

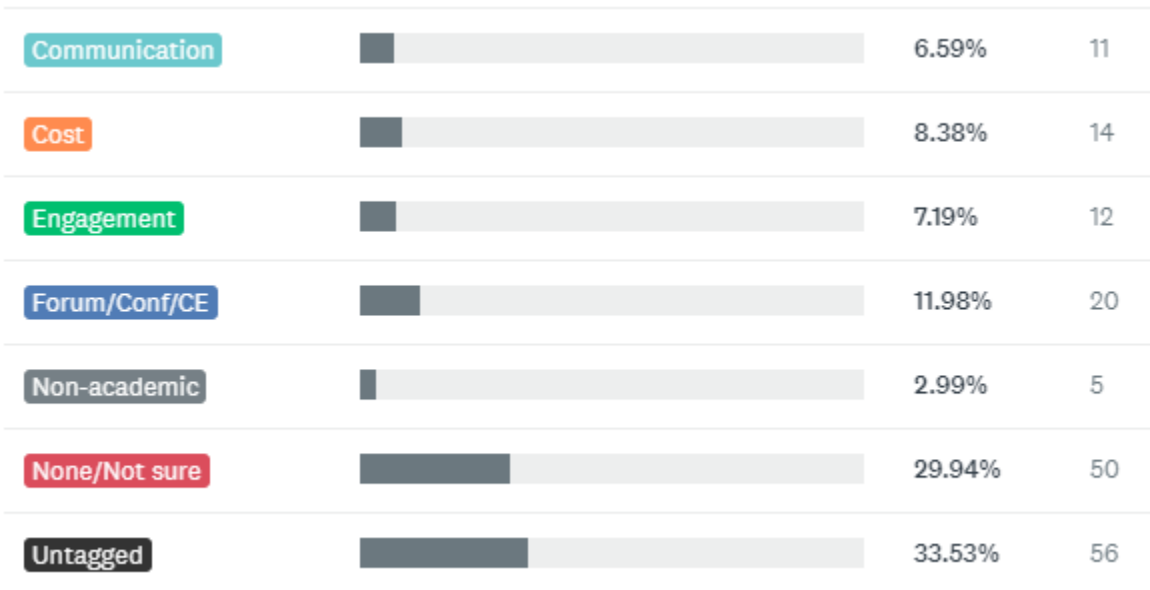
LLAMA

366 respondents identified as a LLAMA member. 160 were members for 3-10 years, 129 were members for 1-2 years, and 41 were members for 11-20 years. 17 have been members for over 20 years.



Value

Continuing education and professional development were valuable to a majority of the respondents, with networking following close behind. The mentoring program is highly valued as a member benefit, and those who have been involved are very enthusiastic about the program. Volunteering on committees and publications were also mentioned as programs of value to members.



Improve

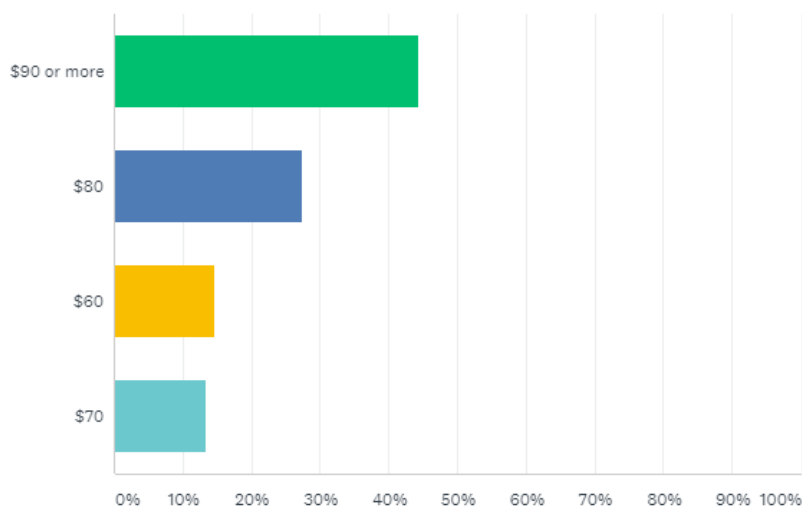
Many respondents found it difficult to get engaged with the division and other members. A recurring theme that was also mentioned by other division members was a want for more regional, in-person continuing education events. Some members were looking for more communication, and a few felt that they didn't know enough about the LLAMA reorganization.

New Division

Respondents were asked at what price they would consider the new single division too expensive to join. 972 people (88%) answered this question. 15% felt that \$60 would be too expensive, and 13% felt \$70 would be too expensive. 72% felt that over \$80 in annual dues would be too expensive to join.

Currently the annual regular member dues for each division range up to \$75. At what price would you consider the new single division too expensive to join?

Answered: 972 Skipped: 129



Respondents were asked to give free-text feedback about the possibility of ALCTS/LITA/LLAMA creating a single, new division. 572 (52%) people chose to answer this question. Trends were found for answers that had positive, negative, and mixed answers:

- Positive – 50%
- Negative – 18%
- Mixed – 8%

Selected quotes – Positive

I have at times been interested in LITA and LLAMA but have not been willing to spend the money on two or three divisions. While I'm wary of losing or diluting what I like about ALCTS, I think there is potential to create something that brings more value to the divisions' respective members.

I think the merger is a wonderful idea. The lines between technical services and technology are blurring, and in many cases, librarians are in a managerial role in these areas. Yet it's difficult to afford the cost of membership in all three organizations, even though the focus and content of all three are relevant.

Having separate dues to join each has detracted and is why I dropped LITA membership. A combined division will allow for greater participation and networking especially since many issues impact all 3 divisions.

Merging would be great from my perspective. I belong to ACRL in addition to ALCTS and LLAMA, so I pay a lot of membership dues! I have oversight responsibilities for IT in my library, but I haven't joined that division since I feel like I already pay enough in dues and technology isn't my area of strength.

Selected quotes – Negative

I'm afraid a single division would be too broad in topics. That's what ALA is for. I like the more focused division.

I am skeptical of this proposition. When this type of thing happens, things can get watered down and identifiable characteristics of a group can be lost. I can see something with ALCTS/LITA more easily, though I have always seen those two as different and unique from each other.

Do not do this. I doubt I would join a combined division. If you combine the three, librarians will need to recreate separate interest groups--whether that's inside or outside ALA.

I would be concerned about the particular issues/areas of interest in information technology taking a back seat to other areas of concern; whereas LITA's sole focus is technology.

I wouldn't want to see LLAMA overwhelmed by the technical divisions. I realize everything is technical anymore, however the majority of my time is spent dealing with personnel, budget and working with other campus administrators.

I think you're going to end up with a hybrid creature that will leave all parties dissatisfied. There's too little overlap between the three areas. I advise against this kind of merger. Instead of creating this three-headed hydra, look instead to streamlining the operations and cutting costs at the three existing divisions.

Selected quotes – Mixed

I think it's a good idea if more priorities overlap than don't. Eliminating redundant areas is important. Still, you need to ask: What are you hoping to focus on by joining together? What improves by such a consolidation? Do you have conflicting views or priorities?

I definitely see areas of overlap between the divisions. However, if the existing divisions combine to form a new division, what specific steps will be done to ensure that conference programming doesn't get watered down? How can future conferences really offer lots of depth, rather than too much breadth across three different areas?

I'm a little concerned that it a single division will be bulky, and not give everyone the same opportunities for leadership and volunteering as they currently have. But I also see the value in combining resources and joining forces (especially for people who belong to more than one division).

While I understand the need from an organizational standpoint and can see the benefits of overlap especially with LITA, I am concerned that it will become too broad to be useful for most day-to-day concerns. I have been attending conferences and regional conferences for technical services to target cataloging, serials management, and acquisitions all at one time. Other groups like ACRL are good, but do not really address my concerns or needs. I hope the merger will not make the division too broad.

Even though these three divisions work closely with one another, I'm not sure that combining them is the way to go. I want to avoid making the division so vague as to be meaningless. However, if the impetus for combining these divisions is because there's so much overlap in membership, and ALA wants to save members money, then I support that.

Appendix A – Survey Questions

1. Which of these best describes your workplace?

- Academic Library
- Government
- Library vendor/organization
- Not currently employed
- Public Library
- Retired
- School Library
- Special Library
- Student
- Other (please describe)

2. What is your primary job function or area of study? (Choose one)

- Access services
- Acquisitions
- Administration
- Assessment
- Cataloging
- Children's services
- Collection development/management
- Data curation/management
- Digital libraries
- Digitization
- Electronic resources
- Emerging technologies
- Government information
- Instruction
- Management
- Metadata
- Not currently employed
- Preservation
- Rare books/special collections
- Reference
- Scholarly communications/repository
- School librarian
- Serials
- Stacks maintenance
- Subject specialist
- Systems and network services
- Technical services generalist
- Technology
- User experience
- Web services
- Young adult services
- Other (please specify)

3. Which of these best describes your current position?

- Consultant
- Department head
- Director/dean/administrator
- LIS Educator
- Manager/supervisory
- Non-supervisory
- Not currently employed
- Student
- Other (please specify)

4. If you supervise anyone, how many people report directly to you?

- None
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 10+

5. What are your top 3 interests?

- Access services
- Acquisitions
- Administration
- Assessment
- Cataloging
- Children's services
- Collection development/management
- Data curation/management
- Digital libraries
- Digitization
- Electronic resources
- Emerging technologies
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- Web services
- Young adult services
- Other (please specify)

6. Which of the following are most important to you when considering an association membership?
(Choose up to 3)

- Collaborating with colleagues/peers who share my interests
- In-person educational programs
- Influencing standards and competencies
- Legislative advocacy
- Meeting with colleagues/peers at in person events
- Mentoring program
- My institution requires professional membership/engagement
- Online connection to colleagues/peers
- Online educational programs
- Product discounts
- Publications
- Volunteering
- Other (please specify)

7. What is your favorite part of your work? (open ended)

8. What frustrates you most about your work? (open ended)

9. What issues or trends do you think will most impact your work in the next 3 years? (open ended)

10. What inspires you most about the work you do? (open ended)

11. Currently the annual regular member dues for each division range up to \$75. At what price would you consider the new single division too expensive to join?

- \$60
- \$70
- \$80
- \$90 or more

12. Are you a member of the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS)?

- Yes
- No

IF YES

13. How many years have you been an ALCTS member?

- 1-2
- 3-10
- 11-20
- 21+
- Not sure

14. What do you value most about your ALCTS membership? (open ended)

15. What is the one thing you would improve about your ALCTS membership? (open ended)

16. Are you a member of the Library and Information Technology Association (LITA)

- Yes
- No

IF YES

17. How many years have you been a LITA member?

- 1-2
- 3-10
- 11-20
- 21+
- Not sure

18. What do you value most about your LITA membership? (open ended)

19. What is the one thing you would improve about your LITA membership? (open ended)

20. Are you a member of the Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA)?

- Yes
- No

IF YES

21. How many years have you been a LLAMA member?

- 1-2
- 3-10
- 11-20
- 21+
- Not sure

22. What do you value most about your LLAMA membership? (open ended)

23. What is the one thing you would improve about your LLAMA membership? (open ended)

24. Do you have any other feedback you'd like to share about the possibility of ALCTS/LITA/LLAMA creating a single, new division? (open ended)