

## **EAHIL Survey of European Health Information Professionals**

Paper presented at the 9<sup>th</sup> European Conference for Medical and Health Libraries, Santander, Spain, 22-25 September 2004.

Arne Jakobsson, University of Oslo Library, Library of Medicine and Health Sciences.

E-mail: [p.a.jakobsson@ub.uio.no](mailto:p.a.jakobsson@ub.uio.no)

A total of 346 health information professionals completed the survey. It is very encouraging that we reached both EAHIL members (111) and non-members (168). 67 respondents skipped the question and did not state if they are a member or not.

I think that the response has been overwhelming, even though it is hard work filling in a survey. Some of the questions were comprised of many points and responding to these took some time and thought.

The survey was based on the CHLA/ABSC (Canadian Health Libraries Association) Survey of Canadian Health Science Information Professionals – 2002. Some questions were deleted or changed and some were added. The CHLA/ABSC has generously given EAHIL permission to base the EAHIL survey on their own survey. We decided to use the same web-based survey tool (SurveyMonkey) since its respondents found it easy to use and preferred it to a paper survey. Another advantage with a web-based survey is that you just press the “analyze” button and then you get the results. Before we released the survey it was tested by three test pilots from EAHIL Council, Patricia Flor, Peter Morgan and Pirjo Rajakiili. The three test pilots and the EAHIL Board gave me invaluable input.

The survey was available between 15<sup>th</sup> December 2003 and the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2004 ( a 3-month period).

The survey consists of the following parts.

1. Introduction
2. Continuing education & professional development
3. Issues
4. EAHIL newsletter, EAHIL web & EAHIL discussion list(s)
5. Virtual EAHIL
6. Accreditation system
7. General comments
8. Demographics
9. Employment

This is not science, but a simple survey. When you judge the results of the survey you must keep in mind that they only reflect the opinions of those who actually responded. In spite of this the survey has given EAHIL valuable input. I will not be able to present the answers to all the questions in the survey, but the complete results of the survey will be available on the EAHIL website next month.

### Countries

The number of respondents from 26 different countries in alphabetical order:

Austria 2, Australia 1, Bangladesh 1, Belgium 3, Croatia 1, Czech Republic 2, Denmark 10, Estonia 1, Germany 9, Greece 1, Finland 12, France 5, Hungary 13, Iceland 2, Ireland 20, Italy 24, the Netherlands 25, Norway 21, Peru 1, Poland 7, Slovenia 3, Spain 12, Sweden 13, Switzerland 6, United Kingdom 72, U.S.A 5.

### Gender

- 82.1% (230) of the respondents were female
- 17.9% (50) were male
- 65 did not state gender

### **Continuing education & professional development**

One of the difficult multiple questions was Question no 1, but only three respondents skipped this question.

Please indicate the primary areas in which you and/or your staff need continuing education. Check a maximum of 5:

The five most requested continuing education courses were:

- Evidence-based librarianship 40.2 % (138)
- Evidence-base health care 39.9 % (137)
- User education 37% (127)
- Licensing electronic information resources 35.6 % (122)
- Copyright 32.1 % (110)

Both EAHIL members and non-members agreed on:

- Evidence-based librarianship
- Evidence-base health care
- Licensing electronic information resources

The five most requested continuing education courses for EAHIL members also included:

- Knowledge management
- Searching the Web effectively

The five most requested continuing education courses for non-members also included:

- User education
- Reference or research skills

Do you receive any support for attending professional conferences?

	<b>EAHIL members</b>	<b>Non-members</b>
<b>Full funding for conference registration</b>	78% (85)	68.5% (113)
<b>Full travel funding</b>	67% (73)	57% (94)

Please indicate the primary factors influencing your decision whether or not to attend the annual EAHIL conference/workshop. Check a maximum of 4.

- Availability of institutional funding to attend 48% (160)
- Location – cost of travel 44.7% (149)
- Quality of scientific programme 36.6% (122)
- Cost of accommodation 32.4% (108)

### Issues

During the EAHIL Council Focus Group session at the EAHIL workshop in Oslo 2003, 25 important issues facing health science librarianship were identified. The respondents were requested to rank these issues from 1-5 where 1 was “Unimportant” and 5 “Most Important”. We received 296 replies to these points. Only 50 respondents skipped this question. The most important issues which the respondents ranked as a 5 (“Most important”) were:

<b>1.</b>	Continuing professional development	46 % (134)
<b>2.</b>	Electronic resources – licensing/negotiation issues	44 % (127)
<b>3.</b>	Instruction – teaching adult end-users	39 % (113)
<b>4.</b>	Electronic resources document delivery	38 % (109)
<b>5.</b>	Evidence base health care – support of	37 % (107)

The most important issues which the respondents ranked as a 4 (“Quite important”) or a 5 (“Most important”) were:

<b>1.</b>	Continuing professional development	87 % (254)
<b>2.</b>	Electronic resources – licensing/negotiation issues	83 % (240)
<b>3.</b>	Electronic resources document delivery	83 % (237)
<b>4.</b>	Instruction – teaching adult end-users	79 % (230)
<b>5.</b>	Library users’ expectations – changing and increasing demand	79 % (227)

Both EAHIL members and non-members agreed on the four most important issues

EAHIL members also ranked

- Evidence-based health care – support of

Non-members also ranked

- Library users’ expectations – changing and increasing demand

Unimportant issues which very few ranked as 4 (“Quite important”) or a 5 (“Most important”) were:

<b>25.</b>	Isolation – geographic	16 % (44)
<b>24.</b>	Alternative health – providing information and services	19 % (52)
<b>23.</b>	Language barriers – national and international information delivery	22 % (61)
<b>22.</b>	Consumer health information – providing information and services	37 % (104)
	Both EAHIL and non-EAHIL members agreed on the unimportant issues	

### EAHIL newsletter

Do you see issues of EAHIL newsletter?

	<b>EAHIL members</b>	<b>Non-members</b>	<b>Total respondents</b>
<b>Yes</b>	94.6% (105)	19.9% (33)	50.5% (147)

Would you support discontinuing publication of the print version of EAHIL newsletter if it were available electronically in an easily printable format?

	<b>Out the 147 readers</b>
<b>Yes</b>	70.1% (101)
<b>Disagree</b>	18.1% (26)
<b>No opinion</b>	8.3% (12)
<b>Skipped the question</b>	(8)

Should the EAHIL newsletter be more oriented towards scientific aspects of medical librarianship and information sciences?

	<b>Out the 147 readers</b>
<b>Agree</b>	57.2% (83)
<b>Disagree</b>	22.8% (33)
<b>No opinion</b>	16.6% (18)
<b>Skipped the question</b>	(13)

### EAHIL web

- 21.7 % (63) visit the EAHIL website at least once a month
- 53.8 % (156) visit the EAHIL website seldom.

Those who visited the EAHIL website look for:

- Conference/workshop information 62.4 % (156)
- EAHIL newsletter 31.2 % (78)
- Information about EAHIL 30.4 % (76)

### Shaping the future of EAHIL – Virtual EAHIL

Please indicate the level of support you receive from your employer for personal membership in professional associations

	<b>EAHIL members</b>	<b>Non-members</b>	<b>Total respondents</b>
<b>Employer pays in full for more than one membership</b>	24.5% (27)	11.4% (19)	17.7% (59)
<b>Employer pays in full for one membership</b>	21.8% (24)	18.6% (31)	19.5% (65)
<b>Employers provide no support</b>	41.8% (46)	58.1% (97)	50.5 % (168)

### EAHIL membership fee

<b>Would you still continue to be a member even if EAHIL abolished the membership fee?</b>	<b>Responses from the 111 EAHIL members</b>
<b>Yes</b>	91.7 % (99)
<b>Don't know</b>	8.3 % (9)
<b>No</b>	0 %
<b>Skipped the question</b>	3

<b>Would you become member if EAHIL abolished the membership fee?</b>	<b>Responses from the 168 non-members</b>
<b>Yes</b>	69% (107)
<b>Don't know</b>	27.1 (42)
<b>No</b>	2.6% (4)
<b>Skipped the question</b>	(15)

63 EAHIL members had comments on the possibility of EAHIL's becoming an entirely web-based organization with no annual subscription fee, publishing the Newsletter online and offering a range of web-based services. 48 EAHIL members skipped this question. Comments varied from "This would be excellent" to "Do not agree with this at all". 33 EAHIL members had comments that were in favour of the proposal of a virtual EAHIL and 29 EAHIL members had comments that were not in favour of this proposal.

78 non-members also had comments. Comments varied from "This is an excellent idea" to "It's a horrific idea...". 68 non-members agreed with the proposal and 10 non-members disagreed.

Would you be willing to help build an active EAHIL membership in your country or region?

	<b>EAHIL members</b>	<b>Non-members</b>
<b>Yes</b>	57.8% (63)	28.7% (43)
<b>No</b>	11.9% (13)	20.7% (31)
<b>Don't know</b>	25.7 % (28)	43.3% (65)

Is your internet link good enough to allow you to benefit and participate?

	<b>EAHIL members</b>	<b>Non-members</b>
<b>Yes</b>	89.8% (97)	87.6% (141)
<b>No</b>	1.9% (2)	1.2% (2)
<b>Don't know</b>	6.5 % (7)	9.3% (15)

### **Accreditation system**

If EAHIL developed an effective and credible system of accrediting members' experience and qualifications in health information would you find this useful in your professional life?

	<b>EAHIL members</b>	<b>Non-members</b>
<b>Yes</b>	71.8% (79)	59.5% (97)
<b>No</b>	8.2% (9)	8.6% (14)
<b>Don't know</b>	18.2% (20)	9.3% (46)

Would you seek to register for such a qualification?

	<b>EAHIL members</b>	<b>Non-members</b>
<b>Yes</b>	60.4% (64)	47.9% (78)
<b>No</b>	11.3% (12)	13.5% (22)
<b>Don't know</b>	26.4% (28)	37.4% (61)

I would like to thank all EAHIL members and non-members who took the time to respond to the survey.