
**SURVEY OF VERMONT LIBRARY DIRECTORS
REGARDING PATRON CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY
AND PRACTICE**

Conducted for the Vermont Library Association

by

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Revised

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BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Background and Research Goal

This study was designed to meet the research needs of two organizations: The Vermont Department of Libraries and the Vermont Library Association. Because both entities needed information from the same target population, they decided that a collaborative study rather than two separate studies would be most efficient for the respondents.

The goal of the Vermont Library Association was to gather information to answer the following research questions. This document reports study results related to these questions.

- How many libraries have a written confidentiality policy?
- How current are those policies?
- How many policies prohibit release of patron information without a court order; how many policies call for attorney review of court orders?
- How comfortable are library directors with their ability to handle inquiries for patron information?
- How confident are library directors that their staff will follow the confidentiality policy?
- How many inquiries have libraries received in the past year, and from whom did those inquiries come?
- In what ways are librarians working to protect patron confidentiality?
- What are Vermont librarians' greatest education/training/support needs related to confidentiality?
- Do Vermont librarians support the idea of strengthening the Vermont law relating to confidentiality of library records?

Target Population

The study sought information from directors of public and academic libraries in Vermont. Because this universe is relatively small (213), the entire target population was surveyed. Library directors were selected because they are more likely than other library workers to know about library policy and practices and are therefore in a position to offer useful information.

Approach

The study used a quantitative approach to gather information that can be generalized to the target population. Respondents were also invited to offer additional written comments regarding confidentiality of library patrons.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a three-part mail questionnaire. Part I included questions pertaining to the Department of Libraries, Part II included questions pertaining to the research goals of the Vermont Library Association, and Part III included questions about the respondents and their libraries (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was reviewed by both sponsoring organizations and pre-tested by five librarians in the respondent pool. Several minor but important modifications were made to clarify the wording of the questions and instructions based on the feedback of the pre-testers. The University of Vermont Institutional Review Board also reviewed the survey methodology, instrument, and cover letter.

The surveys were mailed January 11, 2006, along with cover letters explaining the purpose of the study, identifying the sponsoring organizations, and assuring anonymity of respondents (see Appendix B).

Numerous efforts were made to boost the response rate, including the following:

- Messages describing the study and encouraging people to watch for the survey in the mail and respond were posted to the Department of Libraries' electronic discussion lists reaching public and academic libraries on January 11, 2006.
- A pre-addressed return envelope bearing a postage stamp was enclosed with each survey.
- Cover letters were personally addressed and individually signed by the researcher.
- Reminder postcards were sent to all people in the target population two weeks after surveys were mailed.

Survey recipients were given a deadline of February 1, 2006, to respond, but surveys were received through March 13, 2006, and all surveys received were included in the analysis.

Response Rate

Using a mailing list supplied by the Department of Libraries, surveys were mailed to 213 library directors at the following types of libraries: municipal and incorporated public libraries (177); college and university libraries (25); and combined public and school libraries (11). Of this target population, 151 people returned surveys. Two surveys were returned uncompleted, one with a note explaining that the library had closed and the other with a note saying that the library director had only just recently arrived in Vermont and was unable to offer any opinions. These two surveys were removed from both the total target population and from the number of respondents for a final total of 149 responses out of 211, a response rate of 71%.

A high response rate is important in minimizing non-response bias in the survey results. Non-response bias occurs when the opinions of the people who respond are significantly different from the opinions of those who do not. According to Hager et al., several research methods textbooks suggest that researchers should strive to achieve response rates of 50%, 60% or 75%.¹

Data Analysis

The survey included closed-ended questions, with additional space for respondents to offer comments if desired.

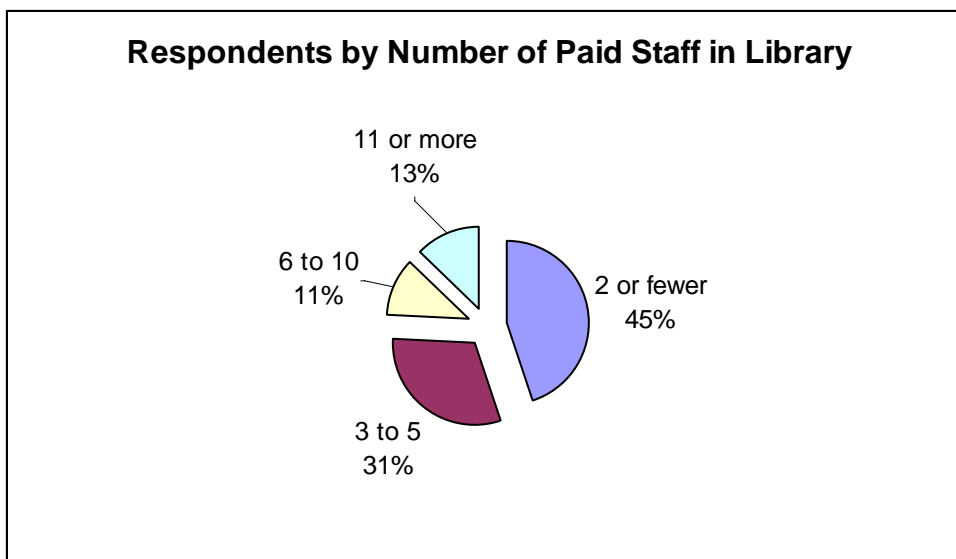
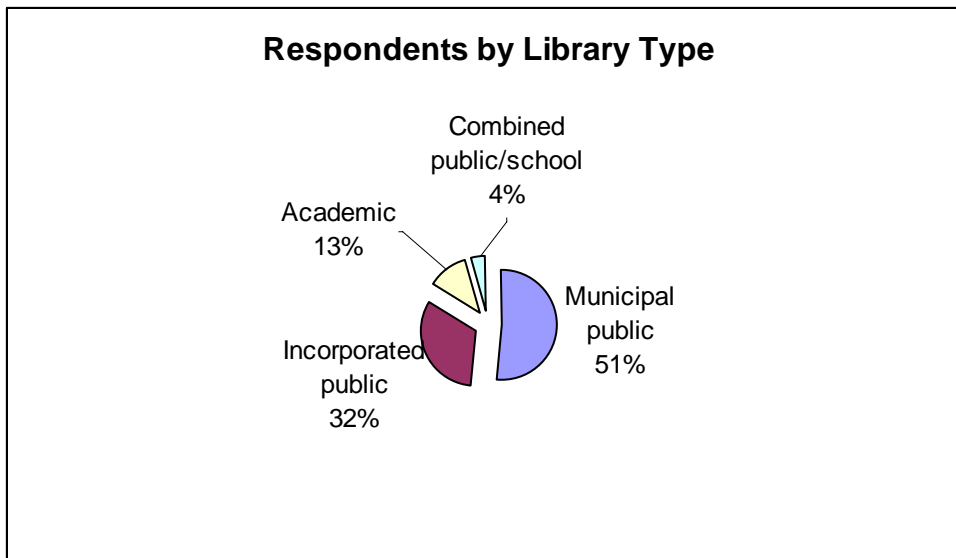
Responses to close-ended questions were coded, and the data were entered into a spreadsheet. After entry, all data were proofread and exported to the software program SPSS, in which descriptive statistics were calculated.

Respondent comments were typed and included in the appropriate places in this report.

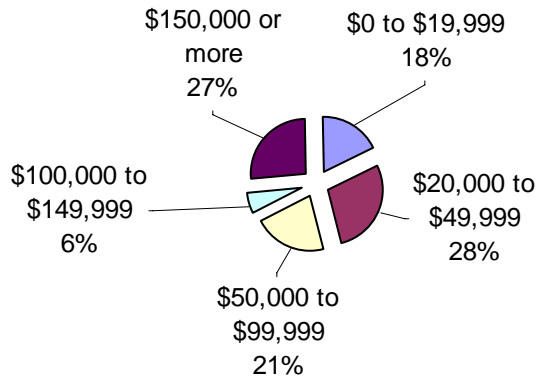
¹ Hager, M., Wilson, S., Pollak, T., & Rooney, P. (2003, June) "Response rates for mail surveys of nonprofit organizations: a review and empirical test." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 32(2), 252-267.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

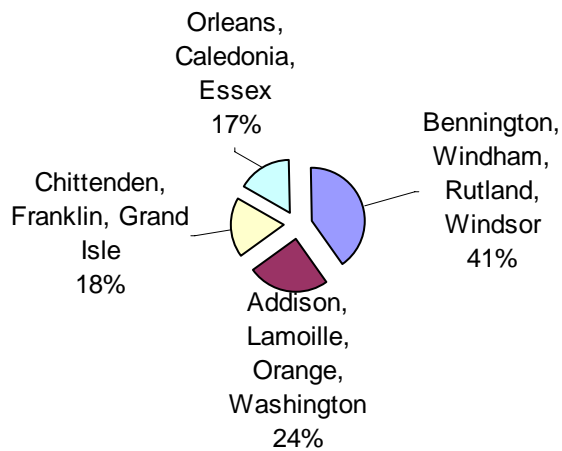
The following charts show the characteristics of the group of 149 respondents.



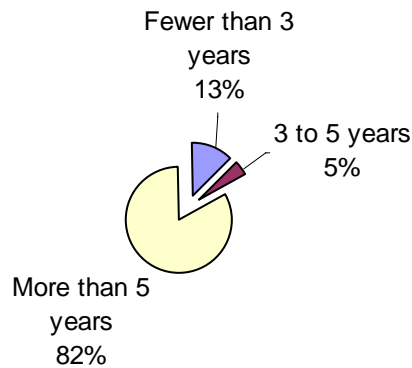
Respondents by Total Annual Library Budget



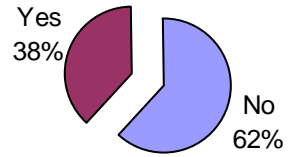
Respondents by Area of Vermont



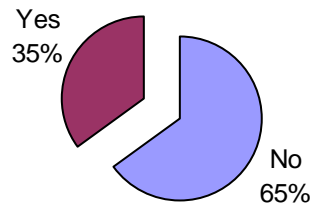
Respondents by Years Employed in Libraries Anywhere



Respondents who Hold Master of Library Science Degree



Respondents Who Hold DOL Certification



MAJOR FINDINGS

1. Library directors estimate that in the last year they received at least 1,228 requests for personally identifiable information about patrons' use of library materials, use of services, or reading interests. Most of the requests came from parents or guardians of library patrons (558), spouses or partners of library patrons (462), and teachers or professors of library patrons (100). Members of law enforcement agencies (local police, state police, or FBI) made an estimated 14 requests. [Page 11.] 54% of respondents reported receiving zero inquiries.
2. Almost half (48%) of the respondents' libraries have written policies or procedures about how they will handle requests for personally identifiable information or records about library patrons' use of materials, use of services, or reading interests. Libraries that employ larger numbers of staff and libraries at which the director holds the Master of Library Science degree are more likely to have written policies than are libraries with smaller staffs and libraries at which the director does not hold the MLS degree. [Page 12.]
3. Of the libraries without policies, about a third (35%) are currently developing a written policy or plan to do so within the year. [Page 13.]
4. Of those libraries with policies, a vast majority (85%) have either written or reviewed/updated their policies with the last three years. Almost half (46%) of the libraries with policies have either written or reviewed/updated their policies within the last year. [Page 14.]
5. A vast majority (86%) of library policies prohibit the release of patron information unless the library is presented with a court order or other binding legal document. [Page 14.] Library directors holding either the Master of Library Science degree or the Vermont Department of Libraries certification are more likely (93%) to have policies including such a prohibition than are directors who hold neither credential (58%). [Page 15.]
6. About half (52%) of library policies require that an attorney review any court orders or other binding legal documents presented to the library. Larger libraries with three or more paid staff are more likely to have this provision included in their policies. [Page 15.] Library directors holding either the Master of Library Science degree or the Vermont Department of Libraries certification are more likely (62%) to have policies including such a requirement than are directors who hold neither credential (8%). [Page 16.]
7. Only a third (34%) of the respondents are "very confident" their library workers (including volunteers and student workers) would follow their library policy if they received a request for information about a library patron. About half (57%) of library directors are "somewhat confident" their library workers would follow policy. [Page 17.]
8. About two-thirds (69%) of the respondents are "very comfortable" with their own ability to follow their library policy if they received a request for information about a library patron. About a quarter (27%) are "somewhat comfortable." [Page 17.]
9. A small number of respondents (16%) say their libraries mail postcards to patrons giving the titles or names of items that are either overdue or available for pick-up. [Page 19.]
10. A large number of respondents (91%) say their libraries make phone calls to patrons to notify them about items that are either overdue or available for pick-up. This practice is significantly more prevalent in public libraries (97%) than in academic libraries (44%). Of the libraries that make such phone calls, more than a third (36%) leave the title/name of the item on an answering machine or give it to a person other than the patron. [Page 19.]

11. Library directors need various types of support regarding patron confidentiality. Overall, library directors indicated the greatest need in these areas:

- need to know where they can get legal advice if they receive a request from law enforcement (selected from a list of needs by 79 respondents)
- need help developing/writing library confidentiality policy or procedures (selected by 61 respondents)
- need advice about issues relating to the confidentiality of library patrons who are minors (selected by 52 respondents)
- need help educating library employees and volunteers about patron confidentiality issues (selected by 51 respondents)
- need help explaining the importance of patron confidentiality to people who use the library (selected by 49 respondents)

More than a third (37%) of respondents from academic libraries indicated that they need help educating their college/university administrators about patron confidentiality issues.

[Page 20.]

12. Almost three quarters (74%) of library directors would support a change in Vermont law to make it clear that personally identifiable information about library patrons is confidential and to prohibit public libraries of all types from sharing that information except when presented with a court order. One quarter of library directors are not sure they would support the change and would need more information before making a decision. Support for a change in the law is consistent across the regions of Vermont. [Page 21.]

13. Several respondents raised questions about the confidentiality rights of minor patrons. [Pages 21-24.]

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Identify and publicize sources of legal advice for librarians who do not have ready access to an attorney. Possibilities include the American Library Association and the American Civil Liberties Union.
2. Write and post to the VLA Web site model confidentiality policies for academic and public libraries, and encourage use and adoption by all libraries. Collaborate with Department of Libraries on promotion of this. Include specific guidance on handling confidentiality of minor patron information.
3. Create a question-and-answer handout that explains why library patron confidentiality is important. Post to the VLA Web site, and encourage librarians to duplicate and distribute to patrons, staff, town officers, administrators, and friends.
4. Draft language for a Vermont statute on confidentiality of library records. Work with the VLA Board and the VLA Government Relations Committee to determine strategy and timing of lobbying for change in the law.
5. Collaborate with VLA section chairs and the Vermont Library Conference Committee to plan educational programming on confidentiality. Consider developing a 10-minute "infomercial" promoting confidentiality and the adoption of library policy that can be delivered at VLA programs about other topics throughout the year.
6. Write a regular column for *VLA News* highlighting patron confidentiality. Use mini case studies or question-and-answer format.

DATA AND RESULTS

NUMBER OF REQUESTS FOR PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION

QUESTION: Please think back over the last year. To the best of your knowledge, how many times have the following people asked for personally identifiable information about a patron's (or patrons') use of library materials, use of services, or reading interests?

Estimated Number of Requests for Personally Identifiable Information Last Year— by Library Type *			
	Academic Libraries	Public Libraries	Total
Parent or guardian of a library patron	17	541	558
Spouse or partner of a library patron	18	444	462
Teacher or professor of a library patron	79	21	100
Administrator of my college or university	12	0	12
Person representing a company or non-governmental organization	0	1	1
Person representing a government agency (but not law enforcement)	0	4	4
Member of a law enforcement agency (e.g. local police, state police, FBI)	4	10	14
Other **	1	76	77
Total	131	1,097	1,228

* The totals are understated because some respondents chose to use words like “many” or “countless times” rather than a numeral. It is impossible to know how many is meant by “many,” but it certainly means at least “one,” so each of these types of responses was counted as “one.”

** “Respondents were asked to specify what “other” types of people made requests. Responses included:

- President of friends group
- Caretakers of disabled or homebound patrons.
- Sometimes if a child has an overdue book, parents requests title to help find the book! If it was a “sensitive” title we could not divulge it
- Parent of another child/patron
- Casual questions arise from other patrons—has ____ read this book? Did she/he like it?
- Friend of patron
- Book group participant
- Other patrons
- Caregiver for the elderly
- People picking up reserves

PREVALENCE OF LIBRARY POLICIES

QUESTION: Does your library have a written policy or procedure about how it will handle requests for personally identifiable information or records about library patrons' use of library materials, use of services, or reading interests?

Does Library Have Written Policy?— by Type of Library			
	All Libraries	Academic Libraries	Public Libraries
Yes	48%	56%	47%
No	52%	44%	53%

Does Library Have Written Policy?— by Number of Paid Staff				
	2 or fewer	3-5	6-10	11 or more
Yes	36%	41%	59%	95%
No	64%	59%	41%	5%

Differences are statistically significant (p < 0.001)

Does Library Have Written Policy?— by Number of Years Director Has Been Employed in Libraries		
	5 or fewer	More than 5
Yes	40%	50%
No	60%	50%

Does Library Have Written Policy?— by Whether or Not Director Holds MLS Degree		
	Has MLS Degree	Does Not Have MLS Degree
Yes	64%	38%
No	36%	62%

Differences are statistically significant (p = 0.002)

Does Library Have Written Policy?— by Whether or Not Director Holds DOL Certificate		
	Has DOL Certificate	Does Not Have DOL Certificate
Yes	43%	51%
No	57%	50%

QUESTION: If you answered “NO,” are you currently developing a written policy/procedure or planning to do so within the next year?

YES: 35%

NO: 65%

CURRENCY AND CONTENT OF POLICIES

QUESTION: IF YOUR LIBRARY DOES HAVE A WRITTEN POLICY/PROCEDURE, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING:

QUESTION: When was the last time the policy/procedure was written or updated or officially reviewed and reaffirmed?

When Was Policy Written or Updated?	
Within the last year	46%
Between one and three years ago	39%
More than three years ago	15%

QUESTION: Does the policy/procedure prohibit the release of patron information unless the library is presented with a court order or other binding legal document (e.g. subpoena or search warrant)?

Does Policy Prohibit Release of Information Without Binding Legal Document?— by Library Type			
	All Libraries	Academic Libraries	Public Libraries
Yes	86%	89%	86%
No	14%	11%	14%

Does Policy Prohibit Release of Information Without Binding Legal Document?— by Number of Paid Staff at Library				
	2 or fewer	3-5	6-10	11 or more
Yes	81%	89%	78%	94%
No	19%	11%	22%	6%

Does Policy Prohibit Release of Information Without Binding Legal Document— by Number of Years Director Has Been Employed in Libraries		
	5 or fewer	More than 5
Yes	78%	88%
No	22%	12%

Does Policy Prohibit Release of Information Without Binding Legal Document— by Whether or Not Director Holds MLS Degree		
	Has MLS Degree	Does Not Have MLS Degree
Yes	94%	78%
No	6%	22%

Does Policy Prohibit Release of Information Without Binding Legal Document?— by Whether or Not Director Holds DOL Certificate		
	Has DOL Certificate	Does Not Have DOL Certificate
Yes	91%	84%
No	10%	16%

Does Policy Prohibit Release of Information Without Binding Legal Document?— by Whether or Not Director Holds Formal Library Credential		
	Has <i>either</i> MLS Degree or DOL Certificate	Has <i>neither</i> MLS Degree nor DOL Certificate
Yes	93%	58%
No	7%	42%
<i>Difference is statistically significant (p = 0.007)</i>		

QUESTION: Does the policy/procedure require that an attorney review any such court orders or other binding legal documents (e.g. subpoenas or search warrants) presented to the library?

Does Policy Require That an Attorney Review Binding Legal Document?— by Library Type			
	All Libraries	Academic Libraries	Public Libraries
Yes	52%	60%	51%
No	48%	40%	49%

Does Policy Require That an Attorney Review Binding Legal Document?— by Number of Paid Staff at Library				
	2 or fewer	3-5	6-10	11 or more
Yes	20%	79%	50%	61%
No	80%	21%	50%	39%
<i>Differences are statistically significant (p = 0.002)</i>				

Does Policy Require That an Attorney Review Binding Legal Document?— by Number of Years Director Has Been Employed in Libraries		
	5 or fewer	More than 5
Yes	33%	55%
No	67%	45%

Does Policy Require That an Attorney Review Binding Legal Document?— by Whether or Not Director Holds MLS Degree		
	Has MLS Degree	Does Not Have MLS Degree
Yes	64%	39%
No	36%	61%

Does Policy Require That an Attorney Review Binding Legal Document?— by Whether or Not Director Holds DOL Certificate		
	Has DOL Certificate	Does Not Have DOL Certificate
Yes	60%	49%
No	40%	51%

Does Policy Require That an Attorney Review Binding Legal Document?— by Whether or Not Director Holds Formal Library Credential		
	Has <i>either</i> MLS Degree or DOL Certificate	Has <i>neither</i> MLS Degree or DOL Certificate
Yes	62%	8%
No	38%	92%
<i>Difference is statistically significant (p = 0.001)</i>		

CONFIDENCE REGARDING ADHERENCE TO POLICY

QUESTION: Are you confident that your library workers (including volunteers and student workers) would follow your library policy/procedure if they received a request for information about a library patron?

Are You Confident Library Workers Would Follow Policy?— by Library Type			
	All Libraries	Academic Libraries	Public Libraries
Not at all confident	9%	10%	8%
Somewhat confident	57%	60%	57%
Very confident	34%	30%	35%

Are You Confident Library Workers Would Follow Policy?— by Number of Paid Staff at Library				
	2 or fewer	3-5	6-10	11 or more
Not at all confident	22%	0%	10%	0%
Somewhat confident	57%	63%	50%	56%
Very confident	22%	37%	40%	44%

QUESTION: Are you comfortable with your own ability to follow your library policy/procedure if you received a request for information about a library patron?

Are You Comfortable With Own Ability to Follow Policy?— by Library Type			
	All Libraries	Academic Libraries	Public Libraries
Not at all comfortable	4%	10%	3%
Somewhat comfortable	27%	20%	28%
Very comfortable	69%	70%	69%

Are You Comfortable With Own Ability to Follow Policy?— by Number of Paid Staff at Library				
	2 or fewer	3-5	6-10	11 or more
Not at all comfortable	8%	0%	10%	0%
Somewhat comfortable	33%	32%	10%	22%
Very comfortable	58%	68%	80%	78%

Are you Comfortable With Own Ability to Follow Policy?— by Number of Years Director Has Been Employed in Libraries		
	5 or fewer	More than 5
Not at all comfortable	0%	5%
Somewhat comfortable	27%	27%
Very comfortable	73%	68%

Are You Comfortable With Own Ability to Follow Policy?— by Whether or Not Director Holds MLS Degree		
	Has MLS Degree	Does Not Have MLS Degree
Not at all comfortable	3%	6%
Somewhat comfortable	25%	29%
Very comfortable	72%	66%

Are You Comfortable With Own Ability to Follow Policy?— by Whether or Not Director Holds DOL Certificate		
	Has DOL Certificate	Does Not Have DOL Certificate
Not at all comfortable	9%	2%
Somewhat comfortable	22%	29%
Very comfortable	70%	69%

LIBRARY PRACTICES AFFECTING CONFIDENTIALITY

QUESTION: Does your library mail post-cards (not sealed letters) to patrons giving the titles or names of items that are either overdue or available for pick-up?

Does Library Mail Post-cards Giving Titles or Names of Items?— by Library Type			
	All Libraries	Academic Libraries	Public Libraries
Yes	16%	0%	18%
No	84%	100%	82%

QUESTION: Does your library make phone calls to patrons to notify them about items that are either overdue or available for pick-up?

Does Library Make Phone Calls to Notify Patrons About Overdue or Pick-up Items?— by Library Type			
	All Libraries	Academic Libraries	Public Libraries
Yes	91%	44%	97%
No	10%	56%	3%
<i>Differences are statistically significant (p < 0.001)</i>			

QUESTION: If you answered “yes,” what does your library do if you reach an answering machine or must leave a message with a person other than the patron? Do you give the name/title of the item that is overdue or available for pickup?

When Reaching Answering Machine or Third Party, Does Library Give the Names/Titles of Items That Are Overdue or Available for Pick-up?— by Library Type			
	All Libraries	Academic Libraries	Public Libraries
Yes	36%	38%	36%
No	60%	50%	60%
Not sure	5%	13%	4%

NEED FOR SUPPORT AND EDUCATION

QUESTION: What are your greatest needs regarding library confidentiality? Please identify and rank the top three.

Greatest Needs				
I need. . .	Number ranking 1	Number ranking 2	Number ranking 3	Sum of responses
More information for myself about why library confidentiality is important	7	2	5	14
Advice about issues relating to the confidentiality of library patrons who are minors	18	17	17	52
Help developing/writing library confidentiality policy or procedures	33	17	11	61
Help educating library employees and volunteers about patron confidentiality issues	18	20	13	51
Help educating my library board about patron confidentiality issues	3	19	10	32
Help educating my town officers/town administrators about patron confidentiality issues	6	7	8	21
Help educating my college/university administrators about patron confidentiality issues	0	3	4	7
Help explaining the importance of patron confidentiality to people who use my library	12	17	20	49
To know where I can get legal advice if I receive a request from law enforcement	34	24	21	79

SUPPORT FOR CHANGE IN VERMONT LAW

QUESTION: Would you support a change in Vermont law to make it clear that personally identifiable information about library patrons is confidential and to prohibit public libraries of all types from sharing that information except when presented with a court order?

Support Change in Vermont Law?— by Library Type			
	All Libraries	Academic Libraries	Public Libraries
Yes	74%	83%	73%
Not sure—need more information	25%	11%	27%
No	1%	6%	0%
<i>Differences are statistically significant (p = 0.011)</i>			

Support Change in Vermont Law?— by Area of Vermont				
	Bennington, Windham, Rutland, Windsor counties	Addison, Lamoille, Orange, Washington counties	Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle counties	Orleans, Caledonia, Essex counties
Yes	74%	77%	74%	72%
Not sure—need more information	26%	21%	26%	28%
No	0%	3%	0%	0%

Respondent comments regarding changing Vermont law:

1. Challenged adults need to be included.
2. Would this cover private college libraries that are also open for public use and borrowing?
3. I would like some clarification of the case of parent or guardian of a minor; if there will be a difference form general patrons.
4. I would support it but I'm sure there are trustees who may not.
5. Sometimes the request is clearly legitimate and serves the best interest of the library (e.g., theft).
6. Workshops on topic needed.
7. What would be the liability of the library staff? It's not always a clear-cut decision.
8. I strongly support this change.
9. You can't legislate everything in life and work! It's not a big problem in our little town (yet).

10. We use the word “confidentiality” in our policy but nothing more specific.
11. I thought that was the existing provision—thanks for the information.
12. When we require parents to be financially responsible for their children’s materials, how can we refuse to tell them what they’re paying for?
13. I think libraries should destroy records daily whenever possible.
14. We do not keep records of patrons usage.
15. I’d want some info on how this would alter our current services and delivery of services, some of which might be impacted by this change.
16. Don’t feel compelled to buck law enforcement.
17. This law would be clear and protect myself and patrons
18. I support an emphasis on court order and clear delineation of what kind of court.
19. How would this affect a parent getting a list of items out on her four-year old’s card? How would this affect patrons who share cards or ask partners to pick up books?
20. Law officials v. “people,” that’s the concern.
21. I’m wondering what’s the middle ground?
22. Since 1991 when I joined the library staff, this has never come up.
23. I didn’t know this was a problem.
24. This is extremely important for intellectual freedoms.
25. Everyone should be free to think and read about anything privately.
26. There needs to be some leeway—can the Friends use the database to get addresses of members for mailings?
27. What do other state laws enforce?
28. Yes, but more information would still be helpful.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS REGARDING LIBRARY PATRON CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES

1. Believe it or not, the majority of my complaints is people who want their names written in the book they are checking out.
2. This survey brought to mind one or two issues that will need to be addressed when we review our policy this year.
3. It would be interesting to see a report on your findings from this survey.
4. This is not an issue for us (yet) so we have not put energy into developing a policy—guidance would be appreciated so we could avoid others' pitfalls.
5. Small rural libraries may not have a recent, written policy regarding confidentiality issues and may just be using common sense. In this age of the PATRIOT Act, we could all use a little more polish on our policies. They should be universal or at least statewide follow the same general format with a bibliography of sources for help and implementation.
6. Thanks for pushing the issue. Tends to be put on back burner here. Need more information and support. Small groups to discuss and share at VLA conference?
7. Although we have a written policy regarding confidentiality, it is not as “strong” as it should be.
8. While we believe and understand the freedom act and confidentiality are important, the DOL is spending too much time and energy on this single issue, as is VLA. We appreciate all the support given to us from DOL and VLA.
9. Have no problems as everything is manually done—no computer—no phone—we are there to serve the community, not act as their conscience.
10. No problem. I will stop using postcards, which has been the tradition.
11. Improving VT law to protect individual patrons confidentiality and creating pamphlets and posters to disperse to all libraries in state.
12. I'm amazed by the lack of public knowledge regarding the Patriot Act. I always feel like I am getting out a soapbox when I explain it to patrons. They seem to be very interested in it after we talk.
13. Have never thought about postcards or phone calls violating patron confidentiality! There are a lot more issues here than I ever thought. Would an article in our public library news answer some of these questions? Don't believe I've seen any.
14. We tried omitting titles from phone messages, but got objections. So we are still giving that info out.
15. Only one patron has asked/discussed confidentiality and her concerns in general. We use the postcards for “overdue” materials—we put the postcard in an envelope (sealed)!
16. Can't afford to make first class reserve responses and do not have time or staff to call everyone with a reserve. What about e-mail reserves?
17. Help is definitely needed for writing a policy on confidentiality.

18. This is very important, given the current political climate. However, I would request that the reality of day-to-day library service be considered. Is it so essential that we refuse to tell a child's mother that her book penguins has come it? Is she to make a trip only to find out that the book is no longer needed by the child?
19. We shred public access sign-up sheets daily; we purge computer records quarterly.
20. A clear statement of current law would be very helpful.
21. Our policy doesn't quite match what I learned in the Children's Library Policy workshop.
22. This is a stickler. Our library is very small (serving approx. 650 people) and the policy we drew up in 2003 is quite "loose." However, we firmly believe in the right of privacy of our patrons.
23. Don't feel like going to jail or hauled off to jail for refusing information to law enforcement.
24. Hats off to the state for keeping us informed on the Patriot Act.
25. Our written library policies include statements that patron information is confidential—but do not include procedures, directives of what to do is requested, other than broad statement: "this information is confidential."
26. We have seen some of our shortcomings and plan to improve our policies and procedures, especially procedures for circulation desk volunteers and staff.
27. Certain changes can make libraries harder to use at a time when libraries are being used less and less.
28. Confidentiality should not be abused in any way.
29. I think it would be helpful to have training workshops for writing policy and procedures. Good idea to have sample policies and tips for handling confidentiality issues on the VLA Web site.
30. We are such a small library it is hard to imagine issues involving confidentiality—however, I know it is important to ensure confidentiality as part of our freedom and safety as Americans.
31. Librarians need to protect intellectual freedoms and be able to articulate why, sometimes in an instant. Most people are not aware of confidentiality issues and it would be great to have discussions about it and intellectual freedom. It is important to a free society.
32. This needs more PR and standard procedures. We don't have to give up the small-town, personal, casual atmosphere, but we do need to respect and protect individuals' privacy. But how can we keep children's records private if the parents need or want to pay for overdue books?
33. We strongly respect/value confidentiality. But it is hard to keep all clerks "on board" with related issues at the front desk. More training (outside) would help, perhaps.
34. I am uncomfortable with providing any personal information about my patrons' reading preferences to anyone. I have no sensitive to security books, so I doubt national interests could ever be threatened. The only purpose it could serve would be harassment.