Planning for 2015: The Recent History and Future Supply of Librarians

A Report Prepared for the American Library Association Senior Management and Executive Board to inform its 2015 Strategic Planning Activities

Released June, 2009

Compiled by Denise M. Davis
Director, Office for Research & Statistics
Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 4

The Recent History and Future of Librarians: Implications for Retirement by 2015 6

Introduction 7

Today’s Credentialed Librarian 9

Figure 1: Credentialed Librarians by Age, 2005 9

Men are From Classics, Women from Reference? 10

Figure 2: Credentialed Librarians by Employer Type and Gender 11

The Recent History of Librarian Age Composition 11

The Aging of Librarians 11

Figure 3: Credentialed Librarian Median Age by Gender, 1980-2005 12
Figure 4: Number of Credentialed Librarians by Age, 1980-2006 13
Figure 5: Tracking Baby Boom Credentialed Librarians, 1980-2005 14

A 25 Year Perspective by Age and Gender 14

Figure 6: Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 1980 15
Figure 7: Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 1990 15
Figure 8: Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 2000 16
Figure 9: Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 2005 16

Tracking Librarians Forward in Time 18

Estimating Net Joiners and Retirees 19

1980 – 1990 19

Figure 10: Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 1980 20
Figure 11: Credentialed Librarians by Growth, 1980-1990 21
Figure 12: 1980 Credentialed Librarians Aged to 1990 21

1990 – 2000 22

Figure 13: Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 1990 23
Figure 14: Credentialed Librarians Growth 1990 – 2000 24
Figure 15: 1990 Credentialed Librarians Aged to 2000 24

1995 – 2005 25

Figure 16: Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 1995 26
Figure 17: Credentialed Librarians Growth 1995-2005 27
Figure 18: 1995 Credentialed Librarians Aged to 2005 27
Annualized Rates of Change
- Figure 19: Credentialed Librarian Annualized Growth within Age Group
- Figure 20: Male Credentialed Librarians Annualized Growth within Age Groups
- Figure 21: Female Credentialed Librarians Annualized Growth within Age Groups

Gender, Retirement, and Part-time Work
- Figure 22: Male Credentialed Librarians: Hours Worked Per Week by Age, 1980-2005
- Figure 23: Female Credentialed Librarians: Hours Worked Per Week by Age, 1980-2005

Librarian Projections
- Total Counts of Librarians
- Table 1: Projection Scenarios for Credentialed Librarians 2015

Future Age Structure
- Figure 24: Number of Credentialed Librarians 2005 and 2015 Projected Using Rates from Three Past-time Periods
- Table 2: Changing Age of Distribution of Credentialed Librarians, 1980-2015

Projected Retirements
- Table 3: Retirements by Decade Among Credentialed Librarians

Supply of Librarians and Degrees Conferred
- Figure 25: Library Science Master’s Degrees Conferred 1969-2005 by Gender

Projections of ALA Member Retirements
- Table 4: Summary of ALA Membership Counts Used in Member Retirement Projections
- Table 5: Projected Retirements of ALA Members
- Figure 26: Working U.S. Based Members, 2009
- Figure 27: Projected Working Status in 2015 of U.S. Based Member 2009 Workforce
- Figure 28: Projected Working Status in 2020 U.S. Based Member 2015 Workforce
- Figure 29: Census Credentialed Librarian vs. ALA Membership Age Distributions

References

Appendix A: Librarian Retirements Loom Large: A Presentation to the American Library Association Executive Board, Monday, July 13, 2009 (Slides)
Acknowledgements

The ALA wishes to thank Stephen J. Tordella, President, Decision Demographics and Thomas E. Godfrey, Research Demographer (http://decision-demographics.com/html/index2.html) for their continued work on behalf of libraries and librarians.

The ALA Office for Research & Statistics wishes to thank the ALA senior management team and John Chrastka, Director, Membership Development for their contributions to this project.
The American Library Association (ALA) establishes and operates within a 5-year strategic plan. Each plan is developed with extensive environmental scanning, member participation, and staff coordination. Assessment of the most recent strategic plan, *Ahead to 2010* (2005-2010), employed a variety of activities involving members, member leaders the public, and the research community to inform the ALA of its performance.

Among the activities used was a survey of membership to understand perception of importance and performance for each strategic goal (gap analysis) administered by the ALA; a member satisfaction survey administered by Harris Interactive in summer 2008; analysis of the overall librarian workforce using 26 years of Census data administered by Decision Demographics; analysis of ALA membership trends during the strategic plan period administered by the ALA Director of Membership Development; a household survey of the public administered by KRC Research in January 2009; and, 40 ALA member focus groups coordinated by the ALA Office for Chapter Relations. The information gathered from these assessment efforts was used to determine ALA’s overall performance during the *Ahead to 2010* strategic plan period (2005-2010), to inform ALA planning at all levels, including divisions and operational units, and in its development of the 2015 strategic plan goals and objectives.

Recognizing the impact of retirements on the profession and ALA member leadership, ALA engaged Stephen J. Tordella, President, Decision Demographics and Thomas E. Godfrey, Research Demographer to undertake detailed analysis of the workforce data available from the US Census Bureau and develop a methodology for future “trending” of librarian employment. Under the direction of the ALA Office for Research & Statistics, Tordella and Godfrey conducted the detailed analysis, developed a methodology for projecting the librarian workforce for all types of libraries, and applied that to the Census and most current ALA membership data to establish an employment trend model to 2015.

That work - study design, methodology, analysis and projections – comprise the full report herewith. The full report was prepared for ALA senior management; a summary of the full report was developed for the ALA Executive Board and presented at its July 2009 meeting in Chicago, IL [Librarian Retirements and ALA Membership Study, ALA Executive Board Document # 12.58.]. Both are included in this document; the summary slides appear as an appendix.

Inquiries about the demographic analysis should be directed to the ALA Office for Research & Statistics (ors@ala.org).
The Recent History and Future Supply of Librarians: Implications for Retirement by 2015

Stephen J. Tordella, President
Thomas E. Godfrey, Research Demographer

Prepared for the
American Library Association

June 12, 2009
About 178,000 people identify themselves as librarians in Census Bureau population data. Of these, about 105,000 are presumed to be “credentialed” librarians, meaning they have completed a master’s or doctorate degree. In the last two decades of the 20th century the number of credentialed librarians increased rapidly, but this was followed by a slight decline between 2000 and 2005. More important for the profession, however, is the potential impact that retirement could have during the next ten years. The age structure of librarians is unique. This mostly-female profession has a long-standing pattern whereby people join it at what would be the middle or latter part of many careers. This pattern gained strength as the first half of the baby boom ascended through the profession. Today, this large group of early boomers is in their 50s. They make up over 40 percent of the profession, and they are perched on the precipice of what most think of as the retirement years.

As early as 2002, an *American Libraries* article reported on an expected wave of retirements in an article titled “Reaching 65: Lots of Librarians Will Be There Soon” (Lynch, 2002). With so many librarians approaching retirement, there are many questions being raised. How many are going to retire? When will they retire? Is 65 the typical retirement age? How long is this retirement wave going to last? What does the future hold?

The primary goal of this report is to project the expected number of librarian retirements out to 2015. In doing so, Decision Demographics has documented the underlying structures that will determine the number of librarians expected in 2015. These factors will be examined in the context of historical trends and used to make forecasts to 2015.

Data are drawn from the decennial Census Public Use Microdata (PUMS) files from the 1980, 1990, and 2000 Census of Population and Housing as well as the 2005, 2006, and 2007 American Community Survey PUMS data. By combining the information in these datasets and adapting demographic projection methods, future trends are predicted and analyzed.

This report begins by examining the latest profile of librarians from the 2005-2007 American Community Surveys (ACS). For simplicity, the 2005-2007 ACS period data are referred to simply as “2005” data throughout the report. The year 2005 also is the launching point for the
ten-year projections to 2015. An extensive analysis of the implications of age adjustments was undertaken before placing the reference year at 2005. Next, an historic portrait of librarians is presented, drawing on the 25-year series of Census and ACS data. The age composition of librarians is examined with a particular focus on the baby boom generation of librarians. Finally, this report turns to projecting trends forward to 2015 with a detailed discussion of underlying factors that will shape both the number and composition of librarians into the future.
Today’s Credentialed Librarian

Currently there are 104,600 credentialed librarians, down slightly from 105,700 in 2000. Credentialed librarians are defined as persons who report their occupation in the Census or ACS as librarian, and also report having completed at least a master’s degree. Since 2000, the overall number of librarians in Census data has been nearly level after a history of strong growth from 1980 to 2000. However, a number of very important underlying dynamics are playing out within the librarian workforce. To start understanding these dynamics, it is useful to examine the current demographics of the librarian workforce.

The most striking fact is that 41 percent of librarians are in their 50s, as shown in Figure 1. This age group is at the center of the “librarian bubble,” which is the focus of much of this analysis. This bubble is probably the combined result of unprecedented demand and a large reserve supply of librarians. Among librarians currently in their 50s, progressively more and more have joined the profession through their working years.

Figure 1: Credentialed Librarians by Age, 2005
Less surprising is the fact that the librarian workforce is largely female: over eight of every ten librarians are women, a ratio that is relatively consistent among all age groups. As might be expected, older librarians are more likely to be married. In fact a full 68 percent of librarians in their 50s are currently married. As retirement decisions are made, many librarians are likely to find their decision to be influenced by factors within their marriages.

Federal, state, or local units of government employ over two-thirds of librarians, with the remainder working for non-profits or for a business. Most librarians working for a unit of government will make retirement decisions that are greatly influenced by their government pension plans. These plans typically provide full benefits, given that a minimum number of service years and age requirements are met—a threshold that is reached by many before the traditional retirement age of 65. Yet, retirement decisions for the 68 percent who are married will also be greatly influenced by their spouses’ working and retirement situation, in addition to their family financial situation. In sum, there are many confounding factors involved in retirement timing. Assuming all librarians will retire on the day they turn 65 is clearly simplistic.

**Men are From Classics, Women from Reference?**

The men who make up 17 percent of all credentialed librarians are more likely to be found in some settings than others. About 45 percent of men are found in higher education and another 35 percent work in libraries and archives. K-12 schools, both public and private, are largely the domain of women, as Figure 2 illustrates.

Besides different employment patterns, men and women tend to have different career paths. As will be shown in greater detail, men tend to follow a more typical career path, starting their professional career at a young age upon graduation from library school. Women, on the other hand, have a more varied set of transitions. As will be shown, a significant share of women join (or rejoin) the profession in their 30s or 40s.
The Recent History and Future Supply of Librarians

Figure 2: Credentialed Librarians by Employer Type and Gender

The Recent History of Librarian Age Composition

The recent history of age composition reveals much about the current and future supply of librarians and librarian retirees. While individual librarians may join, leave, and possibly rejoin the profession over their careers, these individual transitions cumulate to create fairly unique patterns by age. This section starts with the most general information about age—the median age of librarians—and becomes more specific, tracking key age groups and finally single years of age to see what the data can tell us about when librarians have joined and left the profession over the past 25 years. It is these patterns that will set the stage for potential librarian retirements between now and 2015.

The Aging of Librarians

Figure 3 shows the median age of librarians by gender over the past 25 years. Median age has risen by over ten years for both sexes, a fairly rapid pace. Women went from a median of 41 in 1980 to 52 by 2005, while men’s median rose in a virtually parallel track from age 39 to 51. As we will see, the increases during the 1980s and 1990s came at a time of rapid growth in the
library profession, implying that net new hires are relatively older. Once built up, the profession has aged forward during the 2000s.

**Figure 3: Credentialed Librarian Median Age by Gender, 1980-2005**

Figure 4 shows credentialed librarians by five-year age group from under age 25 through ages 70 and over for 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2005. Each bar represents the count of librarians in a five-year group. The growth of the total profession from 1980 to 2000 is reflected by the increase in almost all the bars. Also clear from the chart is that there is a peak, or boom, in the number of librarians who progressively continue to join the profession on a net basis, even as they age forward. The overall aging of the profession, witnessed in the increases in median age, is reflected as the larger bars shift from left to right over the 25 years.
The core of the librarian boom is a group who are drawn from the first half of the U.S. baby boom, or “early boomers.” These two five-year age groups, the largest groups of librarians in the modern history of the profession, were born between 1946 and 1955. They are a subset of the baby boom, which by most demographic reckoning stretched from the end of WWII through the mid-1960s, specifically 1946 through 1964. In this report, this group is referred to as the “librarian bubble,” because they are early boomers, not simply baby boomers.
The librarian bubble is clearly illustrated in Figures 4 and 5. They form the two biggest bars in Figure 4 for 1990, 2000, and 2005, and the first and third largest bars in 1980, when the younger group was just beginning to build. The larger of the two librarian bubble age groups is those who were born from 1946 to 1950—they peaked at nearly 25,000 librarians in the year 2000. Figure 5 shows that those born from 1951 to 1955 have moved almost in parallel to the older group, albeit numbering 1,500 to 3,500 fewer, peaking at over 23,000 in 2000. The librarian bubble age groups are about 60 percent larger than their older or younger counterparts. They are unprecedented in size historically and will remain so in the forecasts made herein—the next older group, and the forecasted younger groups, all peak at about 15,000 members.

**A 25 Year Perspective by Age and Gender**

Figures 6 through 9 present a uniquely demographic way of examining librarian age and gender structure at the same time: the population pyramid. Each bar represents the single year of age count of librarians of each gender, from age 25 and under through 85 and over. It comes as no surprise that men are relatively rare, reflected in these charts where men appear on the left and women on the right, with zero for both groups being in the middle. Looking at these four charts in succession creates a striking portrait of the growth and aging of the profession from 1980 through 2005, and the librarian bubble’s progress through the ranks.
There is some statistical “noise” in these portraits when the focus is narrowed to single years of age. Variation from one age to the next is to be expected due to the somewhat small underlying sample sizes available in the Census data. Despite this limitation, the general trends across time and age are clear.

**Figures 6 & 7: Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 1980 and 1990**
Figures 8 & 9: Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 2000 and 2005
In Figure 6 for 1980, the librarian bubble made its first entry into the profession, visible in the bars for those under age 35. This is particularly evident for women, but the men are also disproportionate to their elders. Women ages 35 to 39, the pre-boomers born during World War II, also made their mark, building in numbers from 12,000 in 1980 to what in 1990 became the first five-year age group to reach 15,000. Above age 40, there are relatively even numbers of librarians across each age through nearly age 60. Starting with the 60-year-olds, the numbers drop off, doubtless due to retirement. These observations generally hold true for both men and women.

The modern pattern of age distribution appears for the first time in clear relief in Figure 7 for 1990. The bulge from the mid-30s through late 40s represents the pre-boomers and librarian bubble—especially evident among women. The numbers of librarians under age 35 has dropped off significantly compared to 1980, since the early-boomer librarian bubble has passed out of the entry-level ages. In the total U.S. population, the early boomers and late boomers are split nearly 50:50 (Census, 1996), but among librarians, it is the early-boomers—the librarian bubble—that predominates in 1990 as well as subsequent years. The librarian bubble took the major share of growth that occurred from 1980 to 1990 as well as 1990 to 2000, possibly clogging the pipeline for their slightly younger peers.

In 2000, Figure 8 shows a pattern similar to that seen in 1990, with the librarian bubble moving up the chart as they age. However, rather than staying steady or declining slightly in size, the librarian bubble grew significantly, again particularly among women. Early baby-boomer women in their 40s spent the 1990s becoming librarians. They may have been mothers who had earned an MLS at a younger age and returned to the workforce, or they may have been career changers with new MLS degrees. Some may have entered the workforce for the first time in middle age. Regardless of the cause, the librarian bubble expanded during the decade; their younger counterparts also increased, but not to the same extent.
Finally, Figure 9 shows the age and gender makeup of librarians in 2005, the most recently available Census data in this series. Clearly the pre-boomers and the librarian bubble are progressing toward retirement. Indeed, the leading edge may have even begun to retire. There are also signs of growth among many of the ages under 40.

**Tracking Librarians Forward in Time**

The next step in developing an understanding of the current and future composition of librarians is to combine the data from the four points in time shown in Figures 6 through 9. By “aging” librarians forward 10 years and comparing their distribution with age data from the next census, the net changes over a decade can be deduced. These net changes in counts of credentialed librarians are the combined result of many factors, including people being hired, people leaving positions, people retiring, positions being created, positions being eliminated, people dying, and even changes in measurement procedures in the underlying census data.

In the interpretation of net changes, this paper makes simplifying assumptions that the net additions that occur through the middle ages are the result of new people joining the profession, while the net declines at older ages are due to retirements. The advantage of these aggregate data is that they can be used to quantitatively forecast future age composition and retirements among librarians. The complement to analyzing broad extracts of Census data is studies focused exclusively on librarians. For those who are interested in data that follow the arc of individual careers, the WILIS study has begun collecting data that track library and information science graduates in the state of North Carolina, and soon many other programs. Some combination of tracking data such as WILIS with the census-based demographic approach will be needed to fully understand the working life course of librarians and anticipate future changes.
Estimating Net Joiners and Retirees

The next nine charts illustrate the changes that have taken place among the credentialed librarian population by single years of age. Although the forecasts in the latter portion of this paper actually use data by five-year age groups for stability in the calculations, these single year of age charts powerfully portray what has happened and what is about to happen in the field.

Essentially, charts from two adjoining censuses are overlaid with librarian ages offset by ten years, allowing the estimation of net additions to and departures from the profession from 1980 to 1990, 1990 to 2000, and 1995 to 2005. Each group of three charts shows the situation at the beginning of the decade by repeating an earlier chart, and then moves that group forward ten years of age and displays two additional charts for joiners and retirees. As noted earlier, when showing patterns by single years of age, there is likely to be some noise in the data.

1980-1990

Figure 10 shows 1980 librarians; it is identical to Figure 6 and is shown here for convenience. Figure 11 shows this same population of librarians aged forward by ten years (the blue bars) with retiring librarians removed. Take note how the librarian-bubble bulge has moved up by ten years. Then the actual 1990 Census librarian counts are overlaid. The difference between the expected count from aging the 1980 librarians forward and the actual count found in 1990 yields the estimate of net growth from 1980 to 1990. This is shown in the dark purple bars.

Since the 24 year olds from 1980 are 34 in 1990, all librarians younger than 34 are shown in purple, as net additions since 1980. The biggest story in Figure 11 is the very strong net growth evident at all ages from 34 all the way up to age 55, especially among women. This portrayal of net change during the 1980s shows that mid- to late-career entry is a well-established pattern among librarians, one with a long history. It also shows the role that later career entry has played in the formation and growth of the librarian bubble (they are ages 35 to 44 in 1990) and the pre-boomer group just older than the bubble. Again, this pattern is especially evident among women.
Figure 12 is the complement to Figure 11—it shows net loss of librarians by age and gender between 1980 and 1990, which is presumed to be due to retirement. The lighter blue portions of the bars indicate retirements at older ages. Some retirement is evident among those who turned 60 in 1990, and that pattern becomes much stronger at older ages.

Figure 10: Credential Librarians by Gender and Age, 1980
The situation of the 1990s is portrayed in Figures 13 through 15. Similar to the information shown for the 1980s, Figure 13 shows 1990 librarians; it is identical to Figure 7. Figure 14 shows this same population of librarians aged forward by ten years (the blue bars) with retiring librarians removed.

Growth of the librarian bubble was strong during the 1980s; but what is so notable about Figure 14 is that it shows that these bubble age groups continued their rapid growth for yet another decade (they advance in age to 45 to 54 in 2000). Strong net growth in the 1990s again extends well into middle ages, including women who entered their 50s during the decade. While the biggest group is still the librarian bubble, their smaller successors are nonetheless benefiting from additional jobs. By 2000, even the under-35 age groups, who are all new librarians, are bigger than they were in 1990.

The interpretation of these “net” change figures can be confusing—taking the example of 40-year-old women in 1990 who became 50-year-olds by 2000 may help to clarify what is known about the timing of the net change. In 1990, 2,772 40-year-old credentialed, female librarians responded to the census. Ten years later, 4,401 of their counterparts responded at age 50. This means that sometime during the 1990s, 1,629 women who were aging from age 40 to age 50 joined the profession on a net basis. So the 50-year-old found in 2000 may have joined the profession anytime between when she was 40 and 50. Despite the diffuseness inherent to net change data, the resulting patterns are undeniable in their size and impact on the profession.

Again, Figure 15 is the complement to Figure 14—it shows net loss of librarians by age and gender between 1990 and 2000, which is presumed to be due to retirement. The lighter blue portions of the bars indicate retirements at older ages. Retirement appears to take hold at a slightly younger age in the 1990s than in the 1980s. Retirement among both women and men can be seen starting below age 60. Men’s retirement patterns appear fairly consistent up the age scale and women appear to retire at higher ages. More specific rates with regard to retirement will be shown below.
Figure 13: Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 1990
1995-2005

The most recent data available is for 2005, and in order to utilize that information and keep comparisons consistent, another decade of change should be examined. Thus the 1995 population of librarians was estimated so that data could be assembled for the 1995 to 2005 decade. Figures 16-18 illustrate the patterns in effect for the 1995 to 2005 period. The 1995 estimated librarian population forms the basis of the calculations; it is displayed in Figure 16.

Figure 17 shows that the librarian bubble, now ages 50-59, has largely stopped gaining librarians on a net basis, but it remains dominant and very visible. While the profession as a whole was not gaining jobs on a net basis, there is still net growth among librarians in their mid 30s through their 40s. Based on this series of charts, growth at these ages could almost be considered “entry level.” Entry at the youngest ages, under 35, is also strong.

Again Figure 18 shows net loss of librarians (presumably retirements) by age and gender between 1995 and 2000. The light blue bars appear similar in length to those in Figure 15 for 1990, but with the larger pre-boomer bubble continuing to work, the implicit retirement rates have declined, as will be shown in the following section.
Figure 16: Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 1995
Figures 17 & 18: Credentialed Librarians Growth 1995-2005 and
1995 Credentialed Librarians Aged to 2005
Annualized Rates of Change

While the series of population pyramids is very useful for illustrative purposes, for forecasting a summary of net joining and net departure is needed. The following charts show the annual rate of change for each of the three decennial periods. These rates are shown in five-year age groups to ensure that the groups being compared are sufficiently large to smooth out the anomalies of individual age and gender groups.

The population pyramids clearly show the librarian bubble aging through the ranks of the profession. The rates charts take into account the relatively large size of the librarian bubble and the smaller size of the librarian age groups following that bubble. Remember that the bubble corresponds to the first half of America’s baby boom, and that even the second half of the boomers did not get to participate in the rapid growth of the profession as much as those who were older. The rates of change among the older age groups will also provide a basis for predicting the retirement patterns that will apply to the librarian bubble, which is just beginning to experience the retirement process. Although the actual retirement patterns of the librarian bubble cannot be known until they all retire, the past 25 years of retirement behavior offer clues about what is to come.

Figure 19: Credentialed Librarian Annualized Growth within Age Groups
Figure 19 shows the annual rate of change for each age group tracked over the course of the three ten year periods examined—1980 to 1990, 1990 to 2000, and 1995 to 2005. For example, the first bar tracks the 25-29 year-olds from 1980 forward to 2000 when they become 35-39 year-olds. Each group of bars represents the three time periods, with blue for 1980-90, maroon for 1990-2000, and yellow for 2000-2005. A positive annual growth rate indicates growth, or librarians joining the profession on a net basis, which occurs across the younger and middle-aged years. A negative annual growth rate indicates decline, or librarians retiring from the profession on a net basis, which occurs among the older age groups.

Those who join before age 35 do not appear in these charts because they cannot be tracked across two censuses. The youngest age group that can be tracked is those 25-29 becoming 35-39 ten years later. The youngest two age groups, 25-29 and 30-34 would have been 15-24 ten years earlier—an age at which virtually no librarians are hired.

As the population pyramids showed, librarians continue to join the profession until they are well into their 30s, 40s, and even possibly their 50s. The shrinking annual rates for those aging from 35-44 to 45-54 imply that this may be slowing somewhat. On the left, younger end of the chart, the first two sets of bars shows increasing rates of joining over the decades among early to mid-career librarians.

At the high end of the age spectrum librarian numbers decline as they age during the decade and retire, resulting in negative rates of change. However, the older age groups appear to already have seen their greatest early retirement rates prior to 2000. There are significant differences in how men and women in the library labor force act, so further interpretation of these patterns is specific to gender.

Distinct differences in career paths are indeed evident in Figures 20 and 21, which repeat Figure 19 by gender. While men do join at mid-career ages, they join at rates one-half of or even less of women’s. There has been a slight upturn for the growth rate of men becoming ages 40-44, however. In general, male librarians are continuing to follow a more typical career path, joining the profession at a young age out of school, before age 35. One possible result of earlier entry is
earlier retirements. Many are likely to be eligible for full-pension retirement by the time they reach their mid- to late-fifties. In recent decades, men 45-49 reaching 55-59 on net are retiring, while the women librarians at the same ages still show slight annual growth. Early retirement for men, however, reached its maximum during the 1990s (the maroon bars), and declined in the early 2000s.

**Figure 20: Male Credentialed Librarians Annualized Growth within Age Groups**

![Male Credentialed Librarians Annualized Growth within Age Groups](image1)

**Figure 21: Female Credentialed Librarians Annualized Growth within Age Groups**

![Female Credentialed Librarians Annualized Growth within Age Groups](image2)
In contrast to men, Figure 21 shows the high rates at which women join the profession well into middle age. Although no group is going to assume the ultimate size of the librarian bubble, the percentage of women who are new to the profession when they turn 35-44 is rising. Those aging from ages 35-44 to 45-54 (the third and fourth group of bars) actually show some drop-off in annual rates, especially for those becoming 50-54. It could be that these oldest late-career joiners came predominantly from the librarian bubble group. It is important to note, however, that women’s growth rate remains just positive through the 25-year period even for those becoming 55-59. This means that on a net basis women continue to join the profession through to their 50s.

This pattern of joining at mid- to late career also appears to have some consequences on retirement patterns. Women never reached the same early retirement rates that men did, and their annual retirement rates uniformly dropped across the three time periods, showing a distinct trend toward further delaying retirement. Nevertheless, women’s retirement rates for the oldest two age groups in the most recent time period are fairly comparable to men’s, at about 6 percent annually for those becoming 65-69, and nearly 12 percent annually for those becoming 70 and over.

**Gender, Retirement, and Part-Time Work**

One factor that might underlie differences between male and female career patterns is the preference for and availability of part-time work. Overall, librarians working part-time (less than 30 hours a week) have been stable for 25 years at about 11 to 12 percent. Women are more likely to work part-time, however. In 2005, 12.3 percent of women and 6.9 percent of men worked less than 30 hours.

Figures 22 and 23 show the breakout of hours worked for men and women by age since 1980. The youngest age group, under 30, shows a steady decline of part-time work for both genders, possibly reflecting increasing opportunity as the librarian bubble group ages. The mid-career ages of 30 to 54 among both men and women are shown as a single age group, because there are virtually no part-time work distinctions within the age group. Mid-career women are only
slightly more likely to work part-time, having nearly converged with men over time: 30 percent of women work part time versus 27 percent of men. Within part-timers, women are more likely to work fewer hours. Nevertheless, the vast majority works at least 30 hours each week. There is little difference by gender at mid-career.

**Figure 22: Male Credentialed Librarians: Hours Worked Per Week by Age, 1980-2005**

**Figure 23: Female Credentialed Librarians: Hours Worked Per Week by Age, 1980-2005**
Male and female librarians remain dedicated to their profession as they age. A large share of credentialed librarians works full-time right into their late 60s, and that percentage is growing over time for both men and women. Only at age 70 or older does part-time employment become the norm among working librarians. In 2005, nearly two-thirds of working librarians 65 or older put in at least 30 hours a week.

For some mid-career joining librarians, continuing to work may be an economic advantage. They may be accumulating pension or other benefit eligibility after having joined at later ages. Others may be filling an economic gap created by spousal death, retirement, layoff, or employer-offered buyout.

**Librarian Projections**

All of the data presented to this point form the basic tools used for projecting the number of librarians to 2015 and estimating the retirements that will occur between 2005 and 2015. The forecasting methodology is straightforward: “surviving” or aging librarians from the year 2005 forward ten years to 2015. The rates at which librarians will join or leave the profession, presumably getting hired or retiring, are the growth rates presented above. Trends observed over the past 25 years are also employed to postulate the number of young graduates joining the profession under age 35. The total counts of librarians that result from these projections were also compared with independent forecasts of the total size of the profession.

While historical retirement and growth rates may not hold for the future, they provide a range of outcomes that may be reasonably expected to occur. The librarian profession was projected by age and gender using four different observed growth and retirement rate scenarios:

1) 1980-1990 rates, 
2) 1990-2000 rates, 
3) 1995-2005 rates, and finally 
4) an average of these three rates.
One confounding factor to consider in this assumption of using past patterns to project the future of all age groups of librarians is the fact that all these rates were based on decades when the baby-boom generation was moving through the ranks of the profession and the general workforce and women’s overall labor force participation was rising rapidly. Baby boomers have a way of disrupting established patterns. It may be due to the sheer size of this generation or any of a host of social and cultural factors.

Another issue is how the librarian bubble and the rest of baby boomer librarians will retire. Will they follow the patterns observed for the past 25 years? Will they create some new pattern that reflects their unique retirement situation, savings patterns, availability of spousal pensions, and adjustments to the recent economic collapse? Most likely none of these scenarios created here will be what librarians will follow, but the correct scenario will not be known until after fact. Nevertheless, applying retirement and joining rates observed in the past creates some reasonable parameters and likely outcomes.

**Total Counts of Librarians**

Table 1 shows the results of applying the four basic scenarios without any external correction for the total size of the profession. That is, the scenarios apply the basic growth rates by age and gender. The results range from a 1.4 to 6.2 percent decline in librarians from 2005 to 2015. External factors will probably have much more influence on the total count of librarians in 2015 than will the internal age structure and demographic momentum of the profession. However, there is an undeniable inertial mass of librarians in the librarian bubble in their 50s as of 2005, and relatively large groups preceding and following them who are going to retire in some form.

Even before the recent economic downturn, there were few indicators of growth in total librarian employment. Griffith and King’s 2008 study of public librarians present a model suggesting annual public librarian growth of 0.37 percent (Griffith and King, 2008). This is similar to the projected growth for all librarians in the BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). K-12 employment may take longer to show any effects of the economic
downturn but even with a lagged response, employment pressure could be seen within several years. Public employment may change faster as cash-strapped local units of government are forced to implement library branch closings and reduction of hours.

Table 1: Projection Scenarios for Credentialed Librarians 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>2015 Projected Count</th>
<th>Percent Change from 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980-1990 Rates</td>
<td>99,267</td>
<td>-5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-2000 Rates</td>
<td>98,184</td>
<td>-6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-2005 Rates</td>
<td>103,204</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Rate Average</td>
<td>99,878</td>
<td>-4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the three basic scenarios shown in Table 1, the one utilizing 1995-2005 rates could be considered the most likely for several reasons. Since it is the most recent, it has captured the most modern behavioral patterns. The 1995-2005 rates also reflect the decline of early retirement among librarians, something that has also occurred in the country as a whole. With the progressive rise of the qualifying age for Social Security payments, as well as the recent economic downturn, it seems plausible that retirement age will continue to rise.

Future Age Structure

While the total librarian count that results from the demographically-based projections is interesting, the state of the U.S. economy is more likely to determine how many librarians there will be in coming years. The age structure of those librarians will be shaped by an evolution of the same forces that have determined it in the past; these forces are largely demographic. The three scenarios for changing age structure are played out in Figure 24 and Table 2.
Figure 24 shows the projected age structure resulting from the three basic growth rate scenarios. The current 2005 data taken from Figure 5 are shown for comparison. The impact of delayed retirement implicit in the 1995-2005 scenario is clear. This delay adds significantly to the number of librarians in their 60s in 2015. All three scenarios predict an increase in the numbers of older librarians, but as librarians in the librarian bubble move into their 60s and start to retire and younger librarians increase in numbers, the age structure flattens out.

While the idea of a flattening age structure in Figure 24 may seem relatively pedestrian, Table 2 shows that librarians as of 2005 are at the leading edge of rapid and enduring changes that the librarian bubble will cause. Over 40 percent of librarians—the librarian bubble—are between the ages of 50 and 59 as of 2005. This represents nearly 42,500 librarians who are entering the age groups when retirement is more common. Not only will the composition of retired librarians...
change, but also currently employed librarians will be evolving rapidly. In 2000, ten percent of librarians were over age 60; five years later, 15 percent were above that age. By 2015 this percentage will double. Under the most likely scenario (1995-2005 rates), virtually 30 percent of librarians will be above age 60—over 30,500 librarians. It is this projection for 2015 that leads to the conclusion that changes in the profession will be enduring and continuous, because the vast majority of that 60+ group will retire between then and 2025.

Following the librarian bubble is the second half of the baby boomer librarians. Though not as big a group, by 2015 when they are 50-59, the projections anticipate between 26,000 and 30,000 at that age. Also on the horizon may be many more librarians age 70 and over, potentially doubling from two percent in 2005 to four percent in 2015.

How many librarian positions open up for new entrants to the field will depend on what the total size of the field becomes. If the relatively flat growth that was widely anticipated even before the downturn continues, then these projections can be used virtually unchanged. Declines in total employment and delays of retirement by the librarian bubble could depress the number of openings substantially.
### Table 2: Changing Age Distribution of Credentialed Librarians, 1980-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Under 40</th>
<th>40-59</th>
<th>60+</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Median Age</th>
<th>Under 40</th>
<th>40-59</th>
<th>60+</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Median Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 40</td>
<td>31,481</td>
<td>27,488</td>
<td>19,402</td>
<td>21,076</td>
<td>16,130</td>
<td>17,691</td>
<td>17,795</td>
<td>17,205</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>6,858</td>
<td>8,786</td>
<td>10,810</td>
<td>16,236</td>
<td>25,737</td>
<td>24,286</td>
<td>30,546</td>
<td>26,856</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65,633</td>
<td>86,694</td>
<td>105,661</td>
<td>104,643</td>
<td>98,268</td>
<td>97,185</td>
<td>102,205</td>
<td>99,219</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Under 40</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-59</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Projected Retirements**

The original motivation for this project was to project the number of librarian retirements that can be anticipated. At some point, delays in retirement for the librarian bubble and the groups who precede them will end. Some of that exodus is underway, and Table 3 shows the retirement history as well as what can be anticipated according to the 1995-2005 rate scenario. During the 1980s slightly over 11,400 librarians retired on a net basis. According to this analysis, nearly 15,000 retired in the 1990s and about the same number during the final, overlapping period of
1995-2005. In contrast, the number of retirements during the 2005-2015 period may almost double, to 28,200 for the decade. The profession may lose an average of 2,820 librarians each year to retirement.

Indications of some delay in retirement were already present during the 1995-2005 period. Looking forward, additional factors suggest a continued trend of later retirement. Librarians are largely public employees. Government pension systems are one of the few remaining sources where employees may qualify for full retirement benefits at ages as young as mid-50s. Even if these pension systems weather increased pressure to scale back, librarians face other pressures to continue working. For example, the two-thirds of librarians who are married have spouses who are approaching retirement in the face of nationwide decline in defined-benefit pensions from non-public employers, as well as the demands of ever-increasing health care costs. In addition, librarians and their spouses who have built 401Ks are quite likely to have suffered significant losses with the economic.

Table 3: Retirements by Decade Among Credentialed Librarians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Retirees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980-1990</td>
<td>11,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-2000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-2005</td>
<td>14,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2015</td>
<td>28,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supply of Librarians and Degrees Conferred

Despite this doubling of retirements, the profession may only suffer a small decline in total numbers. The delaying of retirements is easing the full brunt of baby-boomer retirements, and there are signs of renewed growth in the younger ages, especially those in the 30s. In 2000 there were 14,400 credentialed librarians in their thirties and by 2005 this had increased to 17,400.

Figure 25: Library Science Master’s Degrees Conferred 1969-2005 by Gender

Also on the supply side is the fact that library school enrollments and degrees conferred have been surging, as can be seen in Figure 25. Since 1999, the number of library degrees conferred each year has been rising; as of 2005 they reached nearly 6,300. This is the highest number of degrees conferred since 1977, when the baby-boom bubble was ending its time in library school for those who proceeded directly from the undergraduate level.
While the baby-boomers have caused disruption to the age structure of the librarian workforce, the delaying of their retirement along with currently rising enrollments in library school will ease the transition of the profession’s age structure back to a more evenly distributed form. As a result a more orderly and steady librarian labor market is expected in the foreseeable future.

**Projections of ALA Member Retirements**

The paramount question for the ALA is what the librarian retirement patterns derived from census data imply for ALA member librarians. By applying rates developed for the census analysis to the ALA membership, the number of ALA members who are expected to retire between 2009 and 2020 can be estimated. The process is as follows: first, current members by age are tabulated from the ALA database as of spring 2009; second, members are aged forward, adding or subtracting the net share that join or leave for each age group; third, the net leavers among retirement-aged librarians are calculated. Further details and results are presented below.

**Table 4: Summary of ALA Membership Counts Used in Member Retirement Projections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of ALA Membership Counts Used in Member Retirement Projections</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALA Membership 2009</td>
<td>62,762</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removed from analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not U.S. based</td>
<td>1,768</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>4,960</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking demographic &amp; years of membership data</td>
<td>2,481</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Removed</td>
<td>9,209</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total US-Based Working Members with Reported/Imputable Age</td>
<td>53,553</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported via Demographic Surveys</td>
<td>29,472</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imputed via Total Years of Membership</td>
<td>24,081</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first step in projecting ALA member retirements is establishing the current count of U.S.-based ALA members by age, as shown in Table 4. Almost 30,000 members have responded to the ALA’s on-going member demographic survey, which includes member year of birth information. These ‘year of birth’ data are employed to assign ages to the balance of the
membership after eliminating international and retired members. Table 4 shows that almost 15 percent of the ALA membership was excluded from the analysis because they were international, retired, or had insufficient information to determine their current age. This leaves a net U.S.-based group of 53,553, amounting to 85 percent of total ALA membership. For the 24,000 members who have not yet provided year of birth information, ages were assigned based on their total years of ALA membership.

Assigning age involved a two-step process. First, for each five-year age group of members with complete demographic information, the relationship between years of membership and age was determined. Second, for members without age information, an age was assigned based on their years of membership. While a long-term membership clearly implies a certain minimum age, shorter-term membership does not necessarily indicate a young member. For example, a member may have dropped and rejoined the Association, or as this report has found, may have joined the profession and Association at a mid-career age. To account for this, every term of membership is translated into a distribution of age groups, following the relationship observed for members for whom age and term of membership is known. Thus, some shorter-term members were allocated to younger ages while others were assigned older ages.

Gender could not be assigned accurately, so the projection of member retirements is not delineated by gender. Also, there is a small difference in the delineation of librarians between the census data and the ALA membership. Within the census data, only credentialed, or MA-educated librarians were included in the analysis. Within the ALA membership analysis, all librarians were included regardless of whether they have an MLS. The underlying assumption is that the non-MLS ALA members demonstrate a commitment to the profession through their membership, so their behavior is likely to resemble credentialed librarians found in the census.

Once every member was assigned to a five-year age group, the 2009 membership was aged forward six years to 2015. The net annual joining and leaving rates observed for each five-year age group between the 2000 Census and the 2005 ACS were used for this projection. Since the base period is five years and the forecast period is six years, the annual rates were applied six times, to move members forward from 2009 to 2015. As expected, the older age groups decline
in size, presumably from net retirements. The projected 2015 membership was then aged forward another five years to project the number of ALA member retirements between 2015 and 2020. These projected member retirements are presented in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Retirees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009 – 2015</td>
<td>8,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 – 2020</td>
<td>7,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,207</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 5 shows, a total of 15,207, or 28 percent of current U.S.-based working ALA members can be expected to retire in the next eleven years. The retirement projection model takes into account the differing sizes of each incoming age group, applying appropriate rates by age at the beginning of each period. Nonetheless, the projected annual number of retirements holds steady over the two time periods at about 1,400 retirements per year, about 2.6 percent of U.S.-based membership.
Figures 26 through 28 comprise a simplified illustration of the aging of currently-working librarians to 2015 and 2020, as well as how many are projected to retire from each age group. These charts are very similar to the charts shown earlier in this report demonstrating the retirements of librarians from decade to decade using census data, but with two significant differences: first, men and women are shown together, so there is only one set of bars to the right in each chart; and second, age is depicted in five-year groups, so fewer bars are shown in each chart.

Figure 26 shows the age distribution of working U.S.-based members as of 2009. Figure 27 shows these members after they age six years forward to 2015 (e.g., individual members essentially move up one bar to the next age group). The members who are projected to retire are shown in the lighter blue. Figure 28 shows the expected 2015 members after aging forward another five years.

As an example of how to read these charts, note how there are 6,107 members age 55-59 in 2015 who are still working (the other 648 members age 55-59 have retired). In Figure 30, these 6,107 members make up the entire age 65-69 bar. By 2020, however, a projected 1,521 of these 6000+ members are expected to be retired as shown in the light blue section, while 4,586 are still working.

During the next six years, nearly one-sixth of the current working U.S. membership base is likely to retire. Looking forward another five years to 2020, an additional 13 percent of members will retire. Therefore, by 2020 a full 28 percent of the current working membership base will have retired.
Perhaps more surprising than the large number and share of retirements is the expectation that by 2020, a full 3 out of 10 of today’s members age 59 or older may still be working. Today, there are 11,429 working domestic members age 59 or older. Of these, a projected 7,847 will retire by 2020, leaving 3,582 still in the workforce. As Figures 22 and 23 (depicting hours worked per week by age) demonstrated, while they may still be working, the majority will have cut back to part-time work. With so many librarians attaining an age where part-time work has been the norm, there is a question of whether institutions can or will provide part-time positions to all of them.

It bears repeating that these projected membership retirement patterns are based on rates drawn from an analysis of semi-independent census data. It is certain that the vast majority of members are classified as librarians in the census data, so using census-based analysis is reasonable. However “retirement” rates calculated from census data may be a conservative estimate of the rate at which ALA loses members at older ages. Comparing the age distributions of ALA members and credentialed librarians in the census data illustrates this point.

Figure 29 compares the age distribution of credentialed librarians in 2005 to the adjusted 2009 ALA U.S.-based working librarian membership. The age of ALA members has been adjusted to 2005 to be consistent with the census data. The percentage in each age group from the census data is shown in the blue bars, while the ALA membership is shown in the maroon and yellow bars with the yellow tips representing student members.
Two patterns are immediately apparent. First, the ALA membership tends to be younger than the total U.S. credentialed librarian workforce. However, unlike the census data in this analysis, the ALA membership distribution includes members who have not earned a MLS degree. The largest group lacking an MLS is students. Even after removing students from the distribution, however, the ALA membership is younger than census credentialed librarians.

The second notable pattern is that the 50-59 year-old librarian bubble corresponding to the first half of the baby boom is present in both the ALA and census data, confirming the census-based findings. However, membership apparently tails off more rapidly with age than does workforce participation above age 45.

In conclusion, this report has documented what it calls the “librarian bubble” and its impact on the U.S. librarian workforce. As this bubble begins its inevitable transition to retirement, it will continue to have a significant impact on the profession. Since much of the librarian workforce
belongs to the ALA, the Association also will face retirement-related transitions that interact with membership patterns and needs. Extending the retirement patterns observed for the past 25 years into the future is a logical step toward anticipating the range of likely outcomes, but these calculations alone cannot predict what will occur as such a large group ages in an environment of economic uncertainty.

How individuals, the profession, and the institutions that employ librarians respond to the coming wave of retirement transitions is difficult to predict. Librarians over 65 typically work part time, but having such a large group potentially wanting part-time work could change the relationship between librarians and their employers. This, in turn, will affect the opportunities available to those who want to join the profession. By commissioning these projections, the ALA has initiated the process of quantifying and acting on changes that are reshaping the profession.
References


Griffiths, José-Marie and Donald W. King, Fall 2008. A National Study of the Future of Librarians in the Workforce: Estimate of the Demand for Public Librarians with a Graduate Degree from an LIS Program Accredited by the American Library Association.


Appendix A: Librarian Retirements Loom Large: A Presentation to the American Library Association Executive Board, Monday, July 13, 2009 (Slides)

Slide 1: Librarian Retirements Loom Large
Slide 2: Librarian Age Composition
Slide 3: Credentialed Librarians by Age, 2005
Slide 4: GM Auto Workers by Age and Sex, 2006
Slide 5: Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 1980
   Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 1990
   Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 2000
   Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 2005
Slide 6: Net Joiners and Retirees
Slide 7: Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 1995
Slide 8: GM Auto Workers by Age and Sex, 2006
Slide 9: Credentialed Librarians Growth 1995-2005
Slide 10: Credentialed Librarians Aged to 2005
Slide 11: Projection Results
Slide 12: Historic Data: Number of Credentialed Librarians by Age 1980-2006
   Projected 2015 Data: Number of Credentialed Librarians 2005
      and 2015 Projected Using Rates from Three Past-time Periods
Slide 14: Percent of Credentialed Librarians Age 60+: 1980-2015
Slide 15: Estimated and Projected Credentialed Librarian Retirements by Decade, 1980-2015
Slide 16: Member Retirement Projections
Slide 18: Anticipated Member Retirements 2009 to 2020
Slide 19: Credentialed Librarians: Hours Worked by Age and Gender, 2005
Slide 20: Census Credentialed Librarian vs. ALA Membership Age Distributions
Librarian Retirements Loom Large

Stephen Tordella
Tom Godfrey

Presentation to the
American Library Association
Executive Board
Monday, July 13, 2009
Librarian Age Composition
The Recent History and Future Supply of Librarians

Slide 3 of 20

Credentialed Librarians by Age, 2005

Percent

Under 30  30-39  40-49  50-59  60+

Age
GM Auto Workers by Age and Sex, 2006

Age Distribution of April, 2006 GM Hourly Workforce by Sex

Source: “How the 2008 Special Attentions Package Bumped General Motors” Katherine A. Fehrenbacher, General Motors, Halie J. Karras, University of Michigan; Dana B. Kimseyd, General Motors

The Recent History and Future Supply of Librarians
The Recent History and Future Supply of Librarians

Slide 5 of 20

Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 1980

Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 1990
The Recent History and Future Supply of Librarians

Slide 6 of 20
Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 2000

Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 2005
Net Joiners and Retirees
The Recent History and Future Supply of Librarians

Slide 8 of 20

Credentialed Librarians by Gender and Age, 1995
1995 Credentialed Librarians Aged to 2005
Projection Results
Historic Data

Number of Credentialed Librarians by Age 1980-2006

- The chart shows the number of credentialed librarians by age from 1980 to 2006.
- The x-axis represents the age groups (e.g., 15-24, 25-34, etc.), and the y-axis represents the number of librarians.
- The data indicates a peak in the number of librarians in the 35-44 age group around 2000.
The Recent History and Future Supply of Librarians
Member Retirement Projections
The Recent History and Future Supply of Librarians

Slide 18 of 20

Anticipated Member Retirements 2009 to 2020

- Working US Based Members, 2009
- Projected Working Status in 2015 of US Based Member 2009 Workforce
- Projected Working Status in 2020 US Based Member 2015 Workforce
Credentialed Librarians: Hours Worked by Age and Gender, 2005

- Age <30
- 30-54
- 55-59
- 60-64
- 65-69
- 70+

- 40+ hours
- 30-39
- 20-29
- <20

Male
Female

Slide 19 of 20
The Recent History and Future Supply of Librarians

Census Credentialed Librarian vs. ALA Membership Age Distributions

- ALA Student Member
- ALA Member
- Census

Age Distributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>