

YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Seattle  
January 25 – 29, 2013

**Topic:** September Survey Results & Implications

**Background:** As part of the marketing project, YALSA surveyed three groups in Sept. 2012: members, lapsed members and nonmembers. Susan Harris from NorthStar Strategies, Inc. has put together an executive summary of the surveys, which is provided below. The board will want to review the results and determine what appropriate next steps are in terms of pursuing any recommendations or further exploring key issues.

**Action Required:** Discussion

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## I. Methodology

Survey distribution counts were:

- Member e-newsletters 4,700
- Lapsed member emails 775
- Non-member emails 9,897

The internet survey was open from September 11 to 30, 2012.

Survey response rates for each subgroup were:

Subgroup	Distribution	Responses	% Response
Members	4,700	750	15.9%
Lapsed Members	775	161	20.8%
Non-Members	9,897	1,376	13.9%

## II. Summary of Findings

### YALSA Members

#### Member Attitudes

YALSA members highly regard their association and give it high marks. There are a few areas for improvement and opportunities.

- Members' primary interests are staying current with young adult literature/media and learning about best practices.
- The most important activities provided by YALSA support the library services for teens field in the national forum, specifically:
  - Advocacy

- Placing a national importance on teen reading
- Promoting excellence via awards
- Providing up to date information on young adult literature and media via selected lists
- Activities where YALSA's performance is considered strongest:
  - Promoting excellence via awards
  - Providing up to date information on young adult literature and media via selected lists

### **Member Behavior**

- Members participated in YALSA mostly via:
  - Usage of YALSA's selected lists and awards
  - Read or posted a message via YALSA's listservs and/or blogs
  - Celebrated Teen Read Week™

### **Member Opportunities**

- Members suggest the YALSA website could be improved and some adjustments to email communications would be welcomed
- There is a lack of awareness among members for the YALSA Facebook page, webinars and e-courses, and the mobile app
- There are member requests for more virtual opportunities and an increased local/regional presence for YALSA
- YALSA is given lowest performance ratings on promoting research and providing face-to-face networking opportunities

### **Member Issues**

- There are frequent complaints about the login requirement to access YALSA lists.
- There are numerous mentions of changing the YALSA fee structure or proposing other ways to create cost relief.

### **Type of Library**

Almost 60% of the respondents are from public library systems while 28% are from school library systems.

### **Primary Interests in YALSA**

- A wide majority of members use YALSA to help them stay up to date on young adult literature and media.
- Over half expect YALSA to inform them of best practices.

### **YALSA Activity Involvement**

- A wide majority of members have used YALSA lists/awards in the past two years.

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- Other frequent activities include using blogs and discussion lists, voting in elections and participating in Teen Read Week™.
- The YALSA Licensed Institute, monthly ALA Forum, Academy videos and the Mentoring Program are least frequently used.

<b>Members: Participation in YALSA Activities</b>	
	<b>% of Total N=750</b>
Used YALSA's lists or awards for readers' advisory or collection development	87%
Read or posted messages on a discussion list or blog	60%
Voted in the YALSA/ALA Election	55%
Registered for and celebrated Teen Read Week	51%
Used YALSA's national guidelines or competencies	39%
Attended a YALSA program at an ALA Conference	38%
Followed YALSA on Twitter	34%
Used YALSA's Teen Book finder mobile app	34%
Friended YALSA or left a comment on our Facebook page	32%
Registered for and celebrated Teen Tech Week	32%
Participated in a YALSA e-course or webinar	26%
Served on a committee, taskforce, advisory board or jury	24%
Read or added content to YALSA's wiki	23%
Nominated a book or media for a list or award	21%
Participated in a discussion or interest group	13%
Attended a YALSA program at a state or regional conference	13%
Attended the YA Literature Symposium	12%
Applied for a member grant or award	12%
Donated to Friends of YALSA, Books for Teens or the Leadership Endowment	11%
Participated in an advocacy effort, like Legislative Day or District Days	8%
Participated in YALSA's Mentoring Program	7%
Watched a YALSA Academy video	7%
Participated in a monthly Forum in ALA Connect	5%
Attended a local Licensed Institute	1%

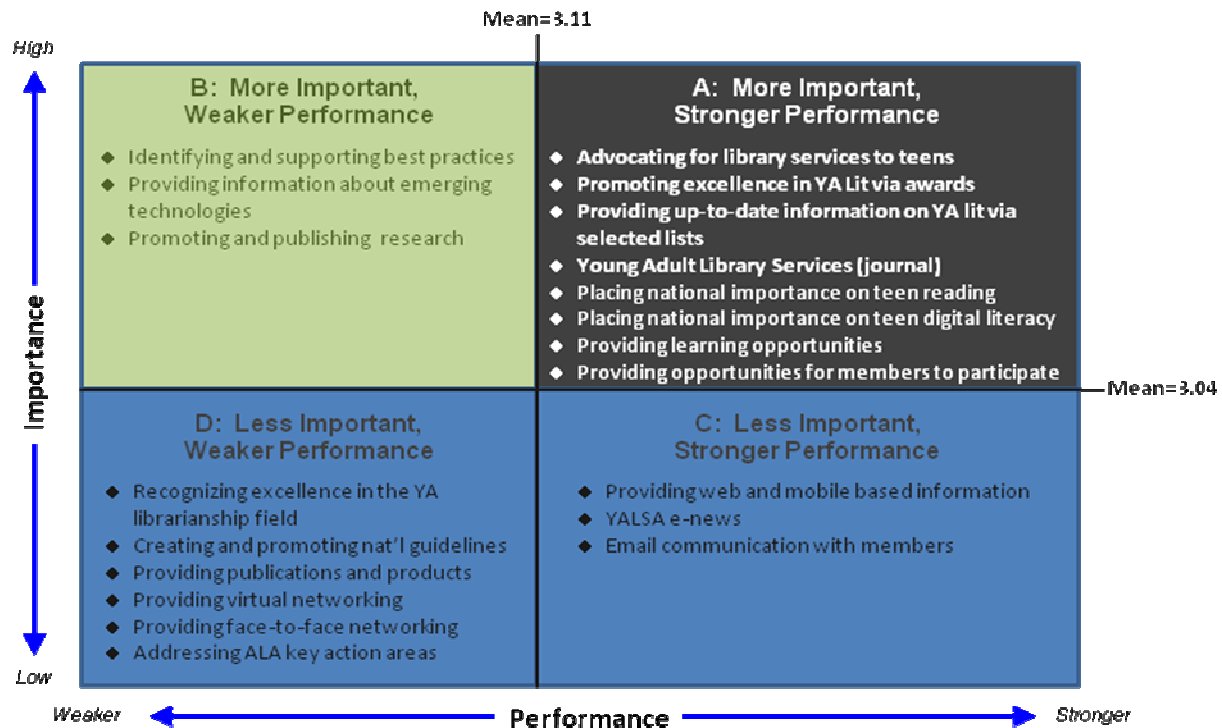
**Activity Importance**

- 94% members think advocacy is an important activity for YALSA, followed closely by placing a national importance on teen reading, YA literature lists and book awards.

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<b>Members: Importance of YALSA Activities</b>					
	<b>% of Total (n=676)</b>				
	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	<b>No Answer</b>
Advocating for library services to teens	68%	26%	5%	0%	0%
Placing national importance on teen reading	67%	26%	5%	0%	2%
Providing up to date info on YA lit via selected lists	67%	26%	5%	1%	1%
Promoting excellence in YA literature via awards	66%	26%	7%	1%	1%
Identifying and supporting best practices	57%	36%	7%	1%	1%
Placing national importance on teen digital literacy	51%	37%	9%	1%	1%
Providing learning opportunities	39%	45%	14%	1%	1%
Providing info about emerging technologies	38%	46%	13%	1%	2%
Providing opportunities for members to participate in YALSA	36%	42%	18%	2%	1%
Young Adult Library Services (journal)	32%	46%	19%	3%	1%

## YALSA Attribute Importance vs. Performance



Lapsed Members

This chart helps define priorities: Charcoal indicates YALSA's positions of strength. Green indicates those activities that need to have improved performance.

### Lapsed Members

Lapsed member can be an opportunity area for YALSA. Many express intentions to return.

#### Behavior

- More than 75% of lapsed members were YALSA members for 3 years or less. Almost a third were only members for a year.
- 40% of respondents left within the past year.
- Over half of the respondents still belong to ALA and two thirds belong to a local or regional association.
- YALSA services used most often by lapsed members are: lists and awards, discussion lists or blogs, and Teen Read Week™.
- YALSA purchases made by respondents are most likely to be Teen Read Week materials and the ALA conference.
- 59% of respondents made no YALSA purchases in past 2 years.

- Half of respondents had used a YALSA student discount for membership. The majority were not aware of other discounts.

#### **Attitudes**

- More than half of respondents claim they will return to YALSA.
  - Twenty percent plan to return soon
- Reasons for departure were related to fees and finances.
- YALSA activities deemed most important by respondents are: providing current information on young adult literature, advocacy, promoting excellence via awards and placing national importance on teen reading.

#### **Type of Library & Lapsed Members**

62% of respondents come from a public library system, while 21% came from a school library.

#### **Length of Previous Membership**

- Over 75% of respondents were part of YALSA for less than three years.
- Almost one-third were members only for one year.
- Forty percent of respondents claim to have left as recently as within the past year.

#### **Reasons for Lapse**

- The majority of respondents cite finances as the reason.
- Almost 30% do not feel the cost benefit equation is favorable.

#### **Future YALSA Plans: Lapsed Members**

More than two thirds of respondents claim they will/may return. Almost 20% plan to return soon.

#### **Other Memberships: Lapsed Members**

- The majority of respondents belong to another professional association, typically regional or local.
- Almost half of lapsed members are current ALA members.

#### **YALSA Activity Involvement: Lapsed Members**

The YALSA services most frequently used by respondents are the lists/awards, discussion lists/blogs and Teen Read Week™.

#### **YALSA Resources Purchased: Lapsed Members**

- YALSA resources most frequently purchased include Teen Read Week materials and programs available at the ALA conference.
- However, almost 60% claim no purchases of YALSA materials.

#### **Discount Plan Awareness: Lapsed Members**

- Half of respondents used the YALSA student discount.

- Over half are unaware of other discounts, except for retiree.

## **Non-Members**

Non-members are not as familiar with YALSA offerings, but they share many of the same needs and attitudes as members.

### **Non-Member Behavior**

- The majority of non-members are members of professional associations at the local/regional level.
- 20% purchased YALSA Teen Read Week™ materials
- 70% of non-members claim to have not made any YALSA purchases.
- Non-members have highest awareness and usage of the following free activities: lists/awards and Teen Read Week.
- They are most likely to have purchased Teen Read Week materials.

### **Non-Member Attitudes**

- Reasons for not joining YALSA focused on financial issues.
- Being new to the field also has a correlation with non-membership.
- The majority are not aware of any YALSA discounts.
- One third of respondents expressed interest in joining YALSA at some point.

### **Type of Library**

47% of non-member respondents are from public library systems, while 34% came from school libraries.

### **Non-Membership Rationale**

- Reasons for not joining YALSA focus on finances.
- There is lack of knowledge about YALSA for 10%+ non-members.

### **Discount Plan Awareness: Non-members**

- Most respondents are not aware of YALSA membership discounts.

### **Future YALSA Membership Plans**

- One-third of non-member respondents intend to join YALSA.
- Majority are unsure. But only 10% admit to no interest.

### **Other Memberships**

- The majority of non-member respondents belong to professional associations at the regional or local level.
- Almost a third of respondents are current ALA members.
- About 15% (half of “other”) belong to no associations.

### **Free YALSA Activity Awareness**

- Non-members most frequently use lists/awards and Teen Read Week™.
- There is little awareness of the mobile app and Academy videos.

#### **Additional YALSA Resources Purchased**

The most frequently purchased YALSA offering is Teen Read Week™ materials.

### **III. Observations and Implications**

#### **YALSA Members**

Expand E-Resources in Key Areas

- 80% of respondents supported the idea of a searchable database of teen programs
- 63% of respondents supported the idea of a full, text online YALS

Focus on Local

- 70% of respondents want regional or local F2F networking opportunities

Leverage Member Recommendations

- Utilize permission-based responses from this survey on the website, in marketing materials, etc. to reinforce membership value and to encourage non or lapsed members to join.
- Explore the feasibility of creating a structured referral program for members to cultivate new members.

#### **Lapsed Members**

Lapsed members needs/attitudes closely mirror existing members.

Re-join Program

- Create a targeted marketing program for recent lapsed members with follow up reminders to re-join.

New Members/Student Transitional Members

- Research indicates that these members are particularly vulnerable.
  - Create targeted marketing to address their specific needs.
  - Provide programming that addresses their unique situation.
  - Leverage the mentor program or create new venues to deliver this same kind of support.

#### **Non-Members**

There is an opportunity to move them along the ladder of engagement by understanding their interests, past participation and purchases. Ladder of Engagement:

- Non-members were most likely to be involved in YALSA via use of selected lists and Teen Read Week™. Explore ways to leverage those to expand non-member activities in other areas of YALSA.



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- They are interested in technology which is an ever-changing topic that YALSA could use to engage them in long term.
- They are interested in programming/marketing which can be addressed with fee-based products.
- Communications with non-members need to provide information about membership discounts to build awareness as they become more engaged.
- Many are involved in state associations, so reach them through those venues

**Additional Resources:**

- Member Survey results, <http://ow.ly/gGkF8>
- Lapsed Member Survey results, <http://ow.ly/gGkMh>
- Non-member Survey results, <http://ow.ly/gGkQI>