The use of selection tools in New Zealand secondary school libraries

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate the use of selection tools in New Zealand secondary schools, specifically which selection tools are used, how satisfactory the tools are, and which criteria secondary school librarians use in assessing selection tools. Particular attention was paid to the status of evaluative and alerting selection tools in school libraries.

A mail questionnaire was sent to a random nationwide sample of 186 secondary school librarians. To gain a richer understanding of the context of selection in secondary schools, 4 focus groups were also held in the Wellington, Horowhenua, Palmerston North, and Wanganui areas. The resulting data was analysed alongside the questionnaire data to provide more comprehensive answers to the study's research questions.

The study found that alerting tools were more widely used and considered more valuable than evaluative tools, with the ability to preview an item a key concern for school librarians. Tools supplied by the book selling and publishing industries were the most common tools used, and the features of selection tools considered most important focused on a tool's performance as an alerting tool. Online tools were not widely used, with connectivity problems and lack of time cited as the most common reasons.

Keywords: collection management, school libraries, selection tools.

1. Introduction

1.1 Selection in New Zealand schools

In 1996, an article appeared that asked the question: "Do New Zealand primary school teachers with library responsibility have the time, skills and available product [selection tools] to select books which meet the needs of pupils and staff?" (Direen 1996, 1). The answer appeared to be no, with the author describing book selection in most of the surveyed schools as "...hit or miss" (4).

This article caused concern among those interested in school libraries because professional librarians know that selecting resources to form a library collection is a demanding task. The aim is to create a library collection that is the best possible match for its users. This requires detailed knowledge of three main areas: the user population, its preferences, requirements and abilities, and relationship with the library; the sector of the publishing industry that serves them; and the tools available for obtaining authoritative information about possible purchases (Johnson 2004, 50-52).

Direen's article suggested that many teachers with library responsibilities tended to be purely reactive in their selection – choosing solely from what was offered by visiting booksellers' representatives (Direen 1996, 1).

However, Direen's study was concerned only with primary schools' libraries. There has been no similar research done into selection in New Zealand secondary school libraries. There are important differences between secondary school libraries and primary school libraries in New Zealand. A recent survey found that secondary schools are more likely to employ qualified library staff than primary schools, and usually have larger budgets for resources, staffing, and other spending (Slyfield 2001, 41). However Slyfield also reports wide disparities among secondary school libraries in the areas of resourcing and the employment of qualified staff (Slyfield 2001, 8-9).

The greater likelihood of qualified staff should mean that selection in secondary school libraries is more professionally carried out than in primary schools, and the

larger resource budgets would tend to increase the necessity of planned selection. While no research has been done, these must remain assumptions only. The present study aims to provide some insight into the state of selecting in secondary schools.

2. The Problem

2.1 Rationale

No research similar to Direen's has been undertaken for New Zealand secondary school libraries. This project aimed to fill this gap. The research will also provide information that support organizations for school librarians - such as the National Library of New Zealand and the School Library Association of New Zealand/Aotearoa (SLANZA) – can use to provide professional development for school librarians.

There are many selection tools available to librarians today, both print and electronic. Some are available at no cost, others are charged for. Many have been specifically designed for librarians to organize the flood of information about published material, and make the selector's task more manageable. Knowledge of the selection tools most appropriate for their particular type of library is a core requirement for librarians engaged in selection. Do secondary school librarians have this knowledge? And if they do, do they have access to these tools, including those that are not free?

A year 2000 survey, performed by the National Library of New Zealand, indicated that the median funding for resources for a secondary school library was \$10,000 out of a median total library budget of \$34,000 (with the rest of the budget going to salary, administration and Information and Communications' Technology (ICT)) (Slyfield 2001, 8). With only \$10,000 per year, the school librarian must build the collection to meet the needs and requirements of:

- Teachers
- Students (including English as a Second Language students; as well as wide range of abilities and/or special needs)
- The Ministry of Education (MOE) (new and revised curricula).

Most school libraries' collections also aim to support students' recreational reading requirements.

In order to fulfil these needs, a school librarian needs access to *quality* selection tools. A standard definition of a selection aid (tool) is "...a publication used by librarians to develop a balanced collection of materials to meet the information needs of library users" (Reitz 2004).

Quality selection tools excel at serving at least one of two functions. They may act as an alerting tool, "...identify[ing] the item, and provid[ing] the selector with enough information to allow him or her to decide what the item is..." (Clayton and Gorman 2001, 103). The other function is as an evaluating tool, "...tell[ing] the selector whether the item is any good for its stated purpose, and if it is not, in what particulars it fails..." (Clayton and Gorman, 2001, 103) The most useful selection tools fulfil both functions.

Recommended selection tools for schools, would ideally include reviewing journals (e.g. *School Library Journal*), specialist subject periodicals, annotated bibliographies, curriculum guides (Linning 2003, 136-138), access to the national bibliography, and current sources for books in print (Evans 2000, 107), as well as free online directories such as Acqweb (Clayton and Gorman 2001, 117), publisher catalogues and other advertising, and finally, input from teaching staff and students (Van Orden 1995, 121).

Discussion with a former National Library Advisor (to Schools) (Heather Manning) confirmed the importance of much of the preceding list. She added that in her experience, other important selection tools for secondary school librarians were school librarian networks, and access to good bookshops. She also commented that

she had found that it was rare for secondary school libraries to subscribe to reviewing journals, apart from generalist magazines that carried reviews for the general public (e.g. *NZ Listener*) (Manning to Chisholm, 14th May 2004).

This scarcity of reviewing (evaluating) tools in school libraries implies that librarians may have few tools to help them filter the large amounts of information about published material available from sales representatives, bookshops, and publishers' advertising. In effect, school librarians may be information rich in terms of alerting tools, but information poor in terms of evaluating tools.

Although New Zealand librarians now have a guide in the form of the recently published *The School Library and Learning in the Information Landscape: guidelines for New Zealand schools* (from now on referred to as *Information Landscape*) (MOE and National Library of New Zealand (NLNZ) 2002), it does not provide concrete examples of affordable tools for school librarians to use.

Some of the tools suggested above can be presumed to be easily accessible to them, such as advertising from both publishers' and booksellers, and input from teachers and students. However many of the others may not be available to them for a variety of reasons. Therefore, one of the aims of this research was to discover which tools are used to identify and evaluate items for purchase.

A further aim is to try and make an assessment of the 'quality' of the tools they use. Part of this question will be answered by knowing which tools are and are not used, and establishing how common use is of the specialized selection tools recommended in the collection management literature. The other part will be answered by examining the viewpoints of the librarians themselves – what makes the tools that they use useful to them, and what they consider important in a selection tool. Do they consider the tools they use to be of high quality?

The research aim of this study, therefore, was to survey secondary school librarians to see which tools they do use, how satisfied they are with the tools they use, and what makes these tools valuable to them.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The focus of the research is the collection management activity of selection. However the research is focussed on a particular context for selection: the secondary school library and its users' various needs. This context means that theories regarding these needs will be relevant, insofar as they have an impact on collection management - in particular the collection management of children and young adult resources.

Collection management, in general, is core business for libraries. It is the process of building and managing a collection of resources that will meet the needs of the community the library serves. This process is often viewed as a cycle, consisting of community analysis, which forms the basis of collection development policies, which in turn govern the selection of resources. Libraries must then organize the acquisition of these resources. Concurrently, other resources will be deselected as they outlive their usefulness. The collection will then be evaluated - using the knowledge gained through community analysis (Evans 2000, 17-19). This process is necessary in school libraries, as in any other type of library (Van Orden 1995, 24).

The types of resources actually selected are often influenced by the different philosophies held by librarians towards the needs of their users. Katz (1981) describes these as liberal, traditionalist, and pluralist. In terms of selection, the liberal viewpoint aims to select in order to draw in non-users as well as users, and to select material that the users themselves want to use. The traditional viewpoint tends to select for the benefit of current users only, and also may be less likely to select popular fiction and non-fiction. The pluralist viewpoint is the 'middle ground' between these two extremes, and in Katz' view, is the viewpoint represented by the majority of librarians (16-19).

Katz' opinion is borne out when examining the older 'book selection' theories of McColvin (1925), Drury (1930), Haines (1950), Ranganathan (1952; Rpt. 1990), Broadus (1981) and Curley and Broderick (1985) - as quoted in Evans (2000, 92-93). The liberal viewpoint is expressed in such statements as: "Prefer an inferior book that will be read over a superior one that will not" (Haines, 1950); "Make some provision for serving the needs of potential users in the community" and "Be aware of the

impact of publicity that may stimulate demand” (Broadus, 1981). The traditional viewpoint comes through in statements such as: “Duplicate the best rather than acquire the many” (Drury, 1930), and “include a reasonably high percentage of standards and classics in the collection” (Broadus, 1981). The pluralist viewpoint is the awareness of the need for compromise between the two extremes, and the clearest example of this comes from Haines (1950):

“7. Avoid selecting books that are not in demand: withdraw books that are no longer useful.

8. Select some books of permanent value regardless of their potential use.”

Selection is also dependant on the approach to decision making taken by librarians. Lukenbill (2002) discusses different approaches to decision making, contrasting the systematic approach widely taught in library schools, with its emphasis on guidelines, criteria, policies and planning, and “naturalistic decision making” characterized as “less analytical” and “messy” (114). This approach acknowledges the other biases of culture and society and their influence in the selection process. Negative effects of this type of decision-making reported by Lukenbill are a tendency to pre-censor materials when selecting (114).

Other writers describe the tension between these two modes of decision making in a more positive light. Johnson (2004) writes:

“Selection is both an art and a science. It results from a combination of knowledge, experience, and intuition. An experienced collections librarian is hard-pressed to explain exactly how he or she decides what to add and what to exclude” (103).

As well as these aspects, the collection development process in schools is influenced by considerations regarding the particular educational needs of their users. One key concept in the recent literature is the need to develop the information literacy skills of students (Van Orden 1995), (American Library Association 1998), (Henri and McGregor 2003). Information literacy is one of the “guiding principles” laid down by *Information Landscape* (MOE and NLNZ 2002, 17). It is also a focus of the New

Zealand curriculum, which lists “information skills” as one of the essential skills for New Zealand students (MOE 1993, 17-20).

Research evidence quoted by Todd (2001) shows that “...students who learn through [an information literacy] process approach:

- are better able to master content material;
- develop more positive attitudes towards learning;
- respond more actively to the opportunities in the learning environment;
- are more likely to perceive themselves as active, constructive learners.”

(MOE and NLNZ 2002, 8).

Linked to information literacy is the concept of resource-based inquiry, “...an educational model that provides deliberate opportunities for teachers and students to be involved actively in the meaningful use of a *wide range of learning resources*” (Henri and McGregor 2003, 8) (emphasis mine). This approach requires collaboration between the teaching staff and the library staff in achieving school goals, an approach heavily emphasised in the current literature (Moore 2003, 31-35). *Information Landscape* includes “working collaboratively” as a critical success factor for school libraries (18). However collaboration appears to be valued more highly by library staff than by teaching staff, with one researcher commenting: “teacher librarians are struggling to be teaching partners with teachers who don’t want them” (Small 2002, quoted in Moore and Trebilcock 2003, 31).

To summarize, this research is informed by an eclectic theoretical framework taken largely from the fields of Library and Information Science (LIS) and Education. From LIS there is the view of collection development as a cyclical process, informed by the philosophies of the librarians involved, and how decisions are made. From Education come the theories on how learning takes place, and the role of information sources in that process.

2.3 Statement of the problem

The problem is that it is unknown which selection tools are used by New Zealand secondary school librarians to identify and evaluate resources for their libraries, how these compare with the set of 'ideal' selection tools recommended in the literature, and how their effectiveness is viewed by the librarians themselves.

2.4 Research questions

1. What criteria do secondary school librarians use in assessing a selection tool?
2. Which selection tools are used by secondary school librarians, and why are these particular ones used?
3. How satisfied are they with the selection tools they use? What aspects do they find satisfactory/unsatisfactory?

2.5 Delimitations and limitations

2.5.1 Delimitations:

- a. This research is focused on selection tools, and does not cover other aspects of the selection process, such as selection criteria for the resources to be added to the collection, or the process of curriculum mapping.
- b. This research is not concerned with the acquisitions process in school libraries.

2.5.2 Limitations:

- a. The main data collection method for this research was a mail questionnaire. Mail questionnaires do not allow for clarification of questions that may be confusing, so misinterpretations of questions by the respondent, and of answers by the researcher are a risk.
- b. The study was limited by a tight time frame, due to meeting the requirements for the INFO 550 course.

- c. The project was limited by financial constraints, as the researcher funded the entire project.
- d. Some schools with secondary students were excluded, as the population excludes composite schools (schools catering to Years 1 to 13 or Years 7 to 13).

2.6 Definition of terms

Collection development and collection management

Collection development and collection management both refer to the process of building and maintaining a library collection that serves the needs of its users.

Collection management is generally considered the broader term, including:

“...the activity of *planning and supervising* the growth and preservation of a library's collections based on an assessment of existing strengths and weaknesses and an estimate of future needs” (Reitz 2004) (emphasis added).

Collection development is defined as:

“The process of planning and building a useful and balanced collection of library materials over a period of years, based on an ongoing assessment of the information needs of the library's clientele, analysis of usage statistics, and demographic projections, normally constrained by budgetary limitations. Collection development includes the formulation of selection criteria, planning for resource sharing, and replacement of lost and damaged items, as well as routine selection and deselection decisions.” (Reitz 2004)

Product driven and market driven book selection

These terms are used by Direen and defined by her as follows:

“[Book selection] is *product driven* when a publishing firm has the major input into book selection...The choice for teachers is only whether or not to purchase...[M]arket driven book selection occurs when a teacher/librarian

decides what material is needed and demands of the book seller the type of material desired” (1996, 1).

Selection

Selection is defined as “the process of deciding what materials are to be added to the collection” (Van Orden 1995, 111).

Selection tools

For the purposes of this survey, ‘selection tools’ are defined broadly. They include the traditional bibliographies, reviews and advertising material, both print and digital, as well as people and services. A publisher’s representative is considered as a selection tool, as are recommendations from students, staff and other librarians, and visits to bookshops. They are all used as alerting and/or evaluating devices for the purposes of selection (Refer to the Rationale for a definition of alerting and evaluating selection tools, and further discussion of selection tools).

School librarian

The people who work in school libraries in New Zealand have a broad range of qualifications. Some have no formal library training at all. The definition of ‘school librarian’ in this study is therefore a functional one: the person who fulfils the functions of the librarian (in this case, selection of resources; other functions include answering reference queries, supervising student librarians) is the school librarian, regardless of formal qualifications.

3. Review of the literature

3.1 Aim

The purpose of this literature review is to provide an examination of the literature relating to the use of selection tools and school libraries. Three specific areas of interest will be considered: firstly, distinctive features of selection in the context of school libraries; secondly, what are the recommended selection tools for school

libraries; and finally, whether any studies have been done on the use of selection tools in libraries, with of course, a particular interest in the New Zealand context.

3.2 Background reading

Reading in general works on collection management and selection confirmed that there were distinctive features in selecting for school libraries. Some of these were not surprising, such as the emphasis on selecting resources to support the school curriculum, and the importance of selecting a range of formats (e.g. books, videos, DVDs, CD-ROMs, posters). All sources confirmed this (Van Orden 1995), (Evans 2000), (Katz 1980), (Spiller 2000), (Clayton and Gorman 2001).

Somewhat less intuitive was the characterization of school libraries as "...probably the most closely monitored of all types of libraries" (followed by children's libraries in the public library system) (Evans 2000, 102). Other sources agreed, with Spiller expressing the most ambivalence about this tendency, commenting that:

"...their special group of users...certainly need...more spoon-feeding than an adult clientele...[but] children's librarians who are too bossy can exclude...material which users want to read...(Spiller 2000, 152).

Lukenbill (2002), in contrast, accepts the prescriptive role of school librarianship (2), and goes into considerable detail about the various theories about the roles of literature that school librarians may feel they need to monitor. The most long-standing of these is literary and aesthetic theory, reflecting the prescriptive desire to make available only 'good' literature. Other approaches to the evaluation of literature listed by Lukenbill are moral, sociological/cultural, psychological, community psychology, feminist, cognitive theory, and book design (31-43). All of these theories prompt questions that the selector should consider before making his/her decision. The librarian's own judgment must be the main evaluative tool. Lukenbill comments that "...a selection decision may often combine elements from several theories. Good theory leads to good practice..."(43).

'Close monitoring' clearly has an impact on the selection process in schools, and the selection tools used. Clayton and Gorman state:

"Selectors in school libraries rely heavily on published reviews.... In addition...school librarians in Britain and elsewhere rely on recommendations and evaluations by teachers, on approval plans and other means of previewing materials" (2001, 82-83).

Van Orden, writing for North American school libraries, agrees, discussing at length the various reviewing journals available, their advantages and disadvantages, whether relying on published reviews or local reviewing by library or teaching staff is more effective, and ways of obtaining materials for local reviewing (1995, 115-126).

Lukenbill, also North American, largely ignores ways to preview items, and concentrates more on describing the different selection tools available, particularly recommending those strongly evaluative, such as review journals, 'best book' lists, book awards, and guides for building standard collections (123-127). Material provided by the book publishing industry is also discussed, but librarians are warned to put little reliance on it (140).

Linning (2003) emphasizes a different type of evaluative selection tool again. These are annotated bibliographies produced by departments of education, produced to "...enable schools to locate resources for designated curricula or topics across the curriculum" (137). These can indeed be extremely useful when compiled carefully and when they are current, but they can date extremely quickly (Evans 2000, 108), with the danger that newer (and better) material can be overlooked in favour of older material. This can be a particular problem when there is a lot of publishing in an area, as there is in many school curriculum topics.

To compare with the recommendations given in the texts discussed above, three sets of guidelines for school libraries were examined to see if they made recommendations on selection tools. The guidelines were from the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. As is perhaps in the nature of guidelines, the recommendations tended to the general.

The U.S guidelines advised that school librarians:

“Maintain and use a variety of appropriate, up-to-date tools and techniques – *for example, reviewing sources, published evaluations and selected Internet sites* to locate and select materials” (American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) 1998, 91) (emphasis mine).

The Australian guidelines stated: “Recognized reviewing tools are used to provide quality information to guide selection” (Australian School Library Association (ASLA) and Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) 2001, 29).

Information Landscape does not mention selection tools specifically, but states as a “critical success factor” that:

“Collection development is planned...includ[ing] policies and criteria for assessing and ‘weeding’ the collection and for budgeting for resources, selecting them and buying them. The teaching staff and student have input into all these processes” (MOE and NLNZ 2002, 36).

More specific suggestions for New Zealand school librarians are available as recommendations from National Library Advisors to Schools, but these are not formal publications. One such lists suitable selection journals for school libraries. With the exception of one U.K. journal (*Books for keeps*), the journals are Australian and New Zealand. Most journals cover both children’s and young adults’ literature. The list also alerts librarians to reviews in newspapers and the *New Zealand Listener*, and Radio New Zealand’s book discussions and reviews (Brooker 2004).

3.3 Studies of selection tools in school/children's libraries

Another major area of interest in this literature review was studies of actual selection tool use in school libraries. Unfortunately, there appeared to be little available, only two such studies being identified. The first was Direen's, and the second was a project discussed by Spiller (2000, 152). A third study of New Zealand school library teams (Moore and Trebilcock 2003) included collection development and is also considered.

In Direen's study the book selection tools considered most useful were: book reps (13%), retail shops (6%), networking groups set up by the National Library (37%), a local expert in children's literature (18%), and "own experience" (?) (13%). Thirteen percent did not have a "most useful resource for book selection" (1996, 3).

However, Direen's study has serious shortcomings in its small sample of only 16 schools. The study was also of primary schools, where selection was largely carried out by teachers with library responsibility, 63% of whom stated that their allocated non-contact time for library responsibility, per week, was zero hours (1996, 2)! Secondary school libraries are more generously staffed, with nearly two thirds of schools in 2000 having 2 library positions, and the median number of total library staffing hours per week being 40 hours (Slyfield 2001, 9).

The study quoted by Spiller is from the U.K. and focused on children's librarians in public libraries rather than schools. However the results bear out the concept of 'close monitoring' referred to above, with the most important tools being approvals from library suppliers, internal reviews, selective bibliographies, and journals (The Place for Children project, Library and Information Statistics Unit, 1998, quoted in Spiller 2000, 152).

Moore and Trebilcock did case studies of three Auckland schools (one primary, one intermediate, and one secondary) to identify activities undertaken by the School Library Teams that influenced teaching and learning. They focused on six principles from *Information Landscape*, one of which was information resources. The interviews therefore provide some insight into selection in those schools, which were chosen for

the study because of their reputation for excellence in school librarianship (41). However, the picture is incomplete, as the degree of collaboration between teaching staff and the School Library team in collection development was the main point of interest.

In this respect, the primary school was the most effective, with classroom teachers being expected to supply the library with an overview of the year's unit plans (52). The intermediate school did not have this explicit requirement, but curriculum teams were expected to be involved in the selection of relevant resources, and they seemed to do so (89). In contrast, the secondary school's teachers' role in selection was reactive, involving input into final selection from a range of bookseller and publisher supplied material. There seemed to be no mechanisms for ensuring teacher input at an earlier level (120).

The only other selection tools mentioned in passing were a local bookseller (52), and approval loans from suppliers (90), booksellers, and publishers (120).

4.4 Theoretical context

The literature review identified two theoretical or conceptual ideas that were important to this research. These were:

1) Direen's concepts of selection as "...product driven or market driven..." (1996, 1). These concepts relate to the collection management process of community analysis and drafting of selection policies (Evans 2000, 17-18). Direen found that 44% of her sample did not have a buying plan. If the hypothesis that reviewing journals are rarely used in New Zealand secondary school libraries is correct, then a market driven approach when dealing with book sellers would be paramount, in order to ensure that the librarian has some control over the material offered to her/him for sale. This indicates that while this research is not focused on selection policy documents, the question as to whether the school has such a policy, or a buying plan is still an important one to ask.

2) Clayton and Gorman's distinction between evaluating and alerting selection tools (2001, 103) is also a key one for the proposed study, particularly in view of Evan's concept of school libraries as "closely monitored" (2000, 102). Closely monitored libraries are likely to have a great interest in evaluative tools, as indeed the literature suggests (Van Orden 115-126) (Spiller 2000, 152). If the hypothesis that school libraries do not usually purchase reviewing journals is correct, then it is important to find out what they do use as evaluating tools.

The small number of studies identified in the literature review did not yield examples of innovative methodologies, but both Direen's study and the Place for Children project appeared to use straightforward survey methods, which this project also used.

4. Research procedures

4.1 Research methodology

This study used a mix of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The quantitative research methodology used was survey research, and used a mail questionnaire as the data collection method. The qualitative research methodology used a phenomenological study, using focus groups as the data collection method.

These two methodologies have similar aims. Survey research is used when the aim of the research is to "...determine the current status of a phenomenon..." (Powell 1997, 57), while the aim of phenomenological study is "...to understand people's perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a particular situation" (Leedy and Ormrod 2001, 153).

This combination of methods was chosen because this investigation of selection tools in New Zealand schools has aspects to it that required the different approaches. For some of the research questions, straightforward, concrete answers, ideally from a broad range of librarians to enhance validity, were required. For these questions, a quantitative approach was most suitable. For other parts of the research problem, the

aim was to describe in more depth the librarians' experiences of selection; and for this, the qualitative approach was preferable (Leedy and Ormrod 2001, 102). The overall aim was to provide a multidimensional picture of selection in secondary school libraries, which gave both hard data, and a context with which to interpret that data.

4.1.1 Mail questionnaire

A mail questionnaire is a series of structured questions sent out to the sample. Its advantages are low costs, anonymity for the respondents, and lack of questioner bias. A low response rate can be a problem with mail questionnaires to the general public; but those aimed at specific audiences have a response rate comparable to telephone and personal interviews. One disadvantage is that they are most suitable for collecting relatively uncomplicated information (Powell 1997, 116).

4.1.2 Focus groups

Focus group discussions are semi-structured interviews with a small number of participants. They are flexible and open-ended. Due to the ability of participants to interact with each other and the researcher to note non-verbal communication, rich and complex data can be collected in a short space of time (Gorman 1997, 146-147). A disadvantage is that results may have limited generalizability, and are vulnerable to interviewer bias (Powell 1997, 114).

4.2 Specific procedures

The research proceeded in the following stages:

1. The mail questionnaire, interview schedule for the focus groups, and accompanying correspondence and information/consent sheets were drafted. These are attached as Appendices A, B, and C.

2. As the proposed research involved gathering information about individuals' work practices, Human Ethics Committee (HEC) approval was needed. This was granted with only minor revisions to the original research design required.

The two data collection methods proceeded concurrently, but are described separately below.

4.2.1 Mail questionnaire

The questionnaire was mailed out in mid August 2004. The posting consisted of the questionnaire, a covering letter/information sheet, and an addressed, stamped envelope for returning completed questionnaires. The questionnaire did not require the respondent to identify themselves, but the questionnaires were numbered to enable this, in the event that a questionnaire required following up for any reason.

As the questionnaires were returned, the codes were used to cross respondents off the master list of the sample; the questionnaires were sight-edited, a consecutive number added to each received questionnaire and the data was entered onto an Excel spreadsheet.

4.2.2 The focus group sessions

The prospective participants were invited to participate by telephone. A call for volunteers using e-mail was originally considered but telephone invitations were chosen to make the approach more personalized and increase the likelihood of a positive response. Being able to speak to the prospective participants also meant that questions about the process could be easily asked and answered. Extra motivation to attend was offered in the form of provision of afternoon tea at the venue. If the librarian was willing to participate, they were sent by post or e-mail confirming details of the venue, the information sheet, the consent form, and a copy of the interview schedule.

The focus group sessions took place in early September 2004. Sessions were held in Wellington, Levin, Palmerston North, and Wanganui. The Palmerston North and

Wanganui sessions were held at the local National Library offices, the Wellington and Levin sessions at local high schools. Sessions ran after school from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., with afternoon tea provided beforehand.

At the beginning of the session participants handed in their signed consent forms. The sessions were taped. After the first session, no notes were taken during the sessions, as it was found to be too difficult to take notes and to facilitate the discussion.

After the sessions, an abridged transcript of the session was prepared and a copy sent via e-mail to participants for checking. Participants were asked to contact the researcher if they noted any errors, and a date given by which this had to be done.

4.3 Research population and sample

4.3.1 The population

The population for research was the school librarians of New Zealand secondary schools, excluding those employed in composite schools (schools that include primary and/or intermediate students).

This population is somewhat diverse. As well as the private/public divide, there are rural and urban schools, small and large schools, schools at all levels of the socio-economic spectrum, schools with widely varying ethnic make-ups. However the diversity had been decreased by the exclusion of composite schools, which are often small and/or in rural areas (Statistics New Zealand 2000). The number of New Zealand secondary (Year 9 to 15) schools is 248, according to the sample frame described below.

4.3.2 Sample frame:

The sample frame for this research was generated from the database of schools maintained by the National Library's School Services, who had given permission for this (Thomson to Chisholm 28th April 2004). This database consists of information

supplied by the MOE (e.g. address and decile rating) and information supplied by the schools themselves (e.g. name of librarian).

4.3.3 The mail questionnaire sample:

Questionnaires were sent to a random sample of 186 schools. This equalled 75% of the sample. This percentage was chosen in consideration of Gay's guidelines recommending that 100% of the population be surveyed when that population was

Table 1. Number of participants in the 4 focus groups.

<u>Focus group</u>	<u>Participants (excluding facilitator)</u>
Wanganui	3
Horowhenua	3
Wellington	9
Manawatu	5

4.4 Instrumentation

The data collection instruments for this study were a mail questionnaire (Appendix A); and an interview schedule for the focus groups (Appendix B).

4.5 Pre-testing

The mail questionnaire was pre-tested by being sent to a small group of local secondary school librarians for evaluation. This was a non-random sample. Feedback on the questionnaire was also sought from selected National Library advisers to schools. Few changes were made as a result of the pre-test, with two exceptions. The term used in Question 2 was changed to 'written collection policy' as this is the more commonly used term among New Zealand school librarians. More explicit instructions were also written for Question 10, when feedback indicated that this question was confusing, as librarians might not be used to thinking of some types of tools (such as student and teacher recommendations) in terms of evaluation criteria.

4.6 Data Collection

4.6.1 Mail questionnaire

Background questions

Question 1 gathered basic information about who is involved in selection within the school. Question 2 asked whether schools have a written collection policy and/or a buying plan. This will provide an indication of whether the school library takes a planned approach to collection management in general.

Selection tools used

Questions 3 to 8 related to which selection tools librarians have used. Question 3 asks which reviewing journals the school subscribes to. Question 4 is a multi-response question, with librarians noting the tools used. The list of tools was formed from the literature. Loans from the National Library Curriculum Information Service were included as a selection tool from anecdotal evidence that they were occasionally so used. Questions 5 to 8 enquired further into which tools are preferred, which are not, and why in each case. The responses allowed percentages to be calculated of which tools had been used.

Evaluation criteria for selection tools

Question 9 measured how important various criteria were to the librarians when assessing a selection tool. Each criterion was rated on a linear-numeric scale. The percentages of librarians ranking these at the various levels were calculated and a ranking of importance could be made. Question 10 elaborated on Question 9 by asking librarians to rate their preferred tools (as identified in Question 5) against these criteria using a linear-numeric scale.

Overall satisfaction

Question 11 asked for an opinion of overall satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the selection tools available to them, and also asked for comments as to why/why not.

4.6.2 Focus groups

The interview schedule for the focus groups is included as Appendix B, and the questions were similar to the questionnaire, but were not directive. The aim of the questions was to stimulate discussion, rather than result in quantitative data.

4.7 Treatment of the data

All the data from the completed questionnaires was entered on a Microsoft Excel 2001 spreadsheet. This included the written responses to Questions 6, 8, the second part of Question 11 and other comments written on the questionnaires. These were entered verbatim. The spreadsheet was set up so that the responses from Questions 1-

5, 7, and the first part of Question 11 could be entered as simple tally marks, with 1=tally mark. The data from these questions was exclusively nominal data. Simple totals and percentages were then calculated to show the general distribution of the data. For the Likert scales of Questions 9 and 10, both measures of central tendency (the mean) and variability (the standard deviation) were calculated.

Several inferential analyses were carried out on the data, in order to test significance and test degrees of relationship. These tests consisted of:

- Testing whether the presence or otherwise of a) a written collection policy or b) a buying plan affected the selection tools preferred by librarians (Chi-square).
- Testing the relationship between the most widely used selection tools (Question 4) and the most preferred tools (Question 5) (Gamma).
- Testing the relationship between the rankings of most preferred selection tools (Question 5) and the ranking they received from the data in Question 10. (Gamma).
- Testing the relationship between the rating of selection criteria in the abstract (question 9) and the rating of the 8 highest ranked selection tools (Question 10) (Gamma).

The resulting correlations were assessed using Cohen's (1988) ranking of correlations as small (0.1 to 0.29) (positive or negative), medium (0.3 to 0.49) or large 0.5 to 1 (129). Only those 0.5 (positive or negative) and greater have been treated as statistically significant.

The qualitative data from Questions 6, 8, and the second part of Question 11 and from the focus groups sessions were analyzed using the "long table approach", described and recommended by Krueger (2000, 132-7) for those new to focus group research. This approach is a systematic, visual and 'hands on' approach, involving "...cutting, sorting, and arranging through comparing and contrasting" (137).

Using this approach the focus group interview questions were written on separate sheets of newsprint. The transcripts were then cut up, with each comment being entered under the question to which it referred. During this process, like responses were grouped together to form categories.

After this process was complete, a brief summary of the responses was written for each of the questions, and examined for common themes. These summaries form the basis of the discussion below.

Quotations from focus group participants and questionnaire respondents are given in italics.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Survey response rate

118 completed and useable questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 63.4%.

5.2 Background findings for selection in schools

5.2.1 Involvement in selection

Question 1 of the survey asked which individuals or groups were involved in the selection process in their library. Respondents could tick as many options as were relevant. The results for this question are given in Table 2.

It should be emphasized that this question was an 'impressionistic' one - the question did not require respondents to specify how the different groups contribute to selection, or to what extent. This was left unspecified deliberately in order to get the broadest possible picture of who was seen to be involved. However, the lack of specificity is also a limitation of this data.

Table 2. Groups involved in selection.

Individuals/groups involved in selection	Percentage (n=118)
Librarian	97%
Other library staff	59%
Teaching staff	77%
Students	62%
Other	13%

The percentage who listed a category in 'other' is high, and an examination of these responses indicates that the categories were sufficiently clear. Most importantly, it was not clear into which category TLRs should be put – as library staff, or as teaching staff. Nearly half of the responses for 'other' listed the TLR. Other responses under 'other' involved library or teaching groups such as heads of department (HODs), library managers, and teacher librarians. Taking these out left the 'other' category at 2.5%.

The librarian, as would be expected, has a role in selection in almost all of the schools responding. Those 3% of schools that did not list a librarian as involved in selection, one listed the TLR, another put 'library manager' under 'other', and the other ticked 'other library staff' commenting that they did not have a librarian.

The relatively low percentage of schools where 'other library staff' were involved in selection probably reflects the fact that staffing for many secondary school libraries consists of the TLR and the librarian (Slyfield 2001, 9).

The representation of teaching staff in selection is high, but could be higher, given the emphasis placed on collaboration between teaching staff and librarians discussed earlier. The problem of where to include the TLR also makes it possible that the number is artificially high, if respondents included them in this category.

Student involvement in selection was less than that of teaching staff. The involvement or not of students, as the library's key user group, may be an indication of the

longstanding philosophical divide between 'prescriptive' and 'responsive' selection as described above.

Several comments indicated that student or teacher involvement was 'occasional' or consisted of making suggestions for purchase. This was explored further in the focus groups, when questions were asked about the involvement of students and teachers in selection. The resulting discussions throw light on the data obtained from the questionnaire regarding these groups.

Student input as discussed in the focus groups revolved around recreational reading. Specific requests for titles or authors were mentioned, for example Anne McCaffery, Walter Farley, and Lemony Snicket. Only one librarian indicated that there was a filter at work: ("*We'll have a look at whether we want it here*"), but it is extremely probable that this would hold true for other school libraries.

Other involvement of students in selection was the analysis of what was already popular in the library: "*Once you know something's working your best selection tool is actually your issue statistics*". Or what kept going missing – one librarian commented that 'The Diary of Anne Frank' had to be replaced regularly as copies were stolen.

As an example of more structured involvement in selection, a couple of librarians mentioned involving student librarians in selection by getting their opinions on approval loans received: "*I set my [student] librarians loose on a box of books I've received – they love that*". However it would appear that this sort of involvement in selection was carefully restricted to certain groups, and librarians were cautious about possible damage to the books: "*I occasionally let the students look at the books that the bookseller brings – I'm very reluctant because I'd hate to lose anything or damage anything.*"

In contrast to the questionnaire findings, in the focus groups many librarians expressed frustration over the lack of input from teachers and the difficulty of ensuring that they were involved. One graphic example of the lack of input was given by one librarian who said:

"We've got a really big budget this year, ...and it was approved just before the end of the first term. We told all the teachers, all the heads of departments that we've got all this extra money, and if they went to the bookshops and saw things that they thought would be useful to let the bookshop know to give us a ring and we'd hook it in. And out of all the teachers, only one department did it."

Community analysis information was the type of input that librarians desired from teachers most - information regarding what they were teaching, and what they thought the library should be collecting in their areas, both in terms of general topics and specific titles. Getting this input from teachers was seen as extremely important for the effectiveness of the library: *"because yes you could really deliver"* [if all HODs supplied the library with a list of topics being taught]. It also reflected on the image that the library had with students: *"Even if the teachers are not communicating with you, the students are still being sent to the library to research the topic. I'm always on the back foot."*

Librarians who felt that they did manage to get useful information from the bulk of departments were proud of this and described in some detail the methods they used. These tended to be at roughly annual intervals, involve one on one meetings (either with the individual teacher or the department), offer inducements such as afternoon tea, and require the librarian to be very proactive:

"I find the best way is to get them in is to make an appointment – invite them in, make them feel a bit special on a one to one basis. Get them in and show them the collection – afternoon tea is a good idea too."

Apart from community analysis information, input was most commonly sought by seeking opinions on specific items that had come in. In some cases this could be a substitute for lack of the more formal input: *"I get more response that way...if I see something that I think will be really good for a particular department I will trot it over there."*

In other cases, it was useful to confirm information received. Differences in departmental needs were discussed and clearly it was important for the librarian to have some idea of the department 'culture': *"Our art department's [so particular about what it wants]. If you see something that you think they might want you'd better check it with them first"*; and: *"The maths department isn't quite sure what sort of books they need in the library – I'm constantly encouraging them to suggest things for the library"*. However inconsistency, with some teachers or departments being co-operative, and others not, was also a source of frustration.

5.2.2 Selection planning and policies

Question 2 of the questionnaire asked whether the library had a) a written collection policy and b) a buying plan.

Table 3. Collection policies and buying plans.

	Yes	No
Written collection policy (n=115)	71.3%	28.7%
Written buying plan (n=114)	66.7%	33.3%

Given the emphasis in the literature on the importance of collection policies, it is a cause for concern that nearly 30% of respondents did not have one. And as guidance for selection, some collection policies may not be particularly useful, as several respondents commented that their collection policy or buying plan was: *"informal"*, *"unwritten"*, *"loose"*, or currently being drafted or updated. Buying plans were only slightly less used, with exactly two thirds of respondents having one.

In the focus group discussions, there was a certain amount of ambivalence towards buying plans and collection development plans. Very few participants stated that they worked closely to a written buying plan or collection development plan. One participant saw it as *"not worth it"* because her budget was so small. Another said: *"We usually just buy to the curriculum. ...we basically know what [the teachers] are doing, so you can keep your eye out for such and such."*

The ability to keep the buying plan in one's head is only really possible if no one else (that is, others selecting for the same library) is going to need to look at it, and in many school libraries the buying is concentrated in the hands of one person.

The curriculum as de facto buying plan was common, with the addition of recreational material and, in the words of one participant: *"things outside the curriculum – for everybody's 'good'"*. For one participant at least this was the written collection policy: *"just cater for the curriculum and the leisure needs of the students"*.

Another participant commented that she didn't have a buying plan or collection policy, but she had written extremely clear objectives tied to the school goals and the curriculum. These took the place of the other documents, giving her guidance.

Other participants did feel that a buying plan was desirable. Two librarians, both relatively new in their positions were in the process of developing or updating them, but were conscious that at present they could not describe themselves as working to a buying plan: *"At the moment I'm buying a lot that is outside the buying plan, but as time goes on, I will be sticking more to the buying plan"*.

Another participant described the creation of a document detailing the strengths and weaknesses of the library's collection:

"The National library librarians came in, and they went through the collection, they literally turned over every book... They didn't do the fiction but they crawled all around the shelves. They gave me a list, they typed it all up, and then they talked to all the HODs. So now I know where we have a gap and where we're well resourced."

The participant clearly had found this useful, and she showed the document to the group, but it also seems clear that this was seen as a fairly time-consuming process.

Obviously one of the important factors in developing a buying plan for the collection was getting information from the teachers about what they would be teaching, what was needed and what was lacking. This has been discussed in more detail above.

Planned collection development, with appropriate (presumably written) policies and criteria is a critical success factor in the recently published guidelines for NZ school libraries. There was an element of defensiveness in some participants' responses when discussing buying plans: *"there wasn't one when I arrived and I haven't had time, or you might say I haven't prioritised it"*, and *"so maybe I'm missing something but it seemed to me that a collection development policy became redundant"*. It is possible that some of the participants were not convinced of the desirability of written policies, but felt that it was something they 'should' have.

5.3 Selection tools used in secondary schools

This section considers which selection tools have been used in secondary schools in the recent past, and which tools librarians used most often to find resources.

Question 4 of the questionnaire listed various selection tools and asked respondents to tick those they had used to select resources in the last 6 months. This data, reflecting how widely across the sample a given tool was used, is displayed in Table 3, along with the data from Questions 5 and 7, listing the tools used most and least often.

After recommendations from teachers and students, the 3 most widely used tools were publishers catalogues and advertising, publishers' sales representatives, and visits to bookshops; all selection tools provided by the book publishing/selling industry. The highest ranked tool containing reviews (evaluative information) was general serials, used by just over 80%. Evaluative tools produced by or for the library sector (review journals, bibliographic lists) ranked much lower, being used by two thirds or less of respondents. Informal library produced selection tools, such as recommendations from other librarians and National Library loans were also ranked low.

This gives a picture of the most commonly used tools being alerting tools, and these tools are largely those produced by the book industry. Selection itself is not necessarily product driven, but evaluative tools are much less widely used, raising the question as to what the librarians do use to evaluate the resources they are alerted to.

Table 4. The usage of selection tools.

Selection tool	Percentage used by (n=118)	Most preferred (n=117)	Least preferred (n=116)
Recommendations from teachers	100%	49%	11%
Recommendations from students	97%	32%	15%
Publishers' catalogues and publicity material	96%	55%	13%
Publishers' sales representatives	96%	63%	8%
Visits to bookshops	94%	56%	20%
Other serials e.g. NZ Listener, Newspapers.	82%	25%	28%
Approval loans from booksellers	73%	49%	15%
Review journals e.g. Magpies, School Library Journal	66%	41%	24%
Recommendations from other librarians	62%	9%	35%
Online booksellers e.g. Amazon	45%	5%	55%
Publishers' websites	41%	3%	60%
Bibliographical lists of suggested/recommended resources for specific curriculum topics.	39%	9%	37%
National library loans	37%	2%	50%
Other	25%	9%	1%

Unlike their overseas counterparts, New Zealand secondary school librarians appear not to rely 'heavily' on published reviews but they do indeed rely on teacher recommendations and "...other means of previewing materials" (Clayton and Gorman, 2001, 82-83). The evaluative tools promoted by Lukenbill (2002) and Linning (2003) are also not favoured highly by New Zealand secondary school librarians. The answer appears to be that they are extremely reliant on their own judgment to evaluate resources, hence the importance of those tools that allowed them to evaluate resources personally.

The correlation between the ranking of tools used over the last 6 months and the most preferred tools was large ($\gamma = 0.66666667$). That is, it is possible to say that the most widely used tools correlated strongly with the most commonly used tools. The notable exception to this correlation is recommendations from teachers and students, the 1st and 2nd most widely used tools, but the 4th and 6th most preferred tools.

It was considered to be possible that librarians who worked to written collection policies or to buying plans might prefer different tools to those who did not. The chi-square test was used to test this hypothesis, but to avoid violating the assumptions of the chi-square test; only the 8 most preferred tools were included in the test. When comparing the preferred tools of those librarians with a written collection policy and those without, the chi-square statistic was 0.97. With degrees of freedom (df) = 7, this was not statistically significant at the 0.5 level, as the critical value in this case is 14.06714 (StatSoft, 1984-2003). When the test was done comparing those with buying plans and those without, the chi-square statistic was 0.55. Again this was not statistically significant. It therefore appears that, whatever the impact written policies have on other aspects of the collection development process, they have little impact on which selection tools are used.

At 25%, the percentage of respondents listing a source under 'other' was relatively high, and a wide variety of sources were named. The most common were:

- Prepaid standing orders selected by a supplier e.g. Ashton Scholastic. 7 mentions.
- Radio reviews. 5 mentions.
- Visiting booksellers. 2 mentions.
- Other forms of 'recommended resources' lists. Two examples mentioned were 'The Reading Bug' by Paul Jennings, and recommendations from conference speakers.
- Online review sites. 2 mentions.

Other sources mentioned here were:

- The EPIC databases as a source for book reviews,
- Visiting book warehouses,
- The NZ school librarians' listserv, schoollib.
- Library websites. The two mentioned were those of the Christchurch City Library and the National Library.
- The School Catalogue Information Service (SCIS) website.
- 'Hot reads' on the English Online website.
- Displays at National Library courses.
- Recommendations from National Library advisors.
- Online databases searched by a local bookseller for resources on particular topics.

The high percentage for the 'other' category, and the variety of the above list show that librarians are using a very wide range of selection tools. Further analysis of the data from Question 4 also supports this conclusion. The table below summarizes this. Those tools listed under 'other' have been omitted from the table as some respondents listed more than one in this category.

Table 5. Number of selection tools used in the past 6 months.

	Range	Interquartile range	Mean	Mode
Number of selection tools used (excluding 'other')	3 to 13	8 to 11	9	10

This use of many selection tools implies a desire to know as fully as possible the range of resources available, and other parts of the studies support the conclusion that this is very important for school librarians. Even tools not commonly used were widely used, such as publishers' websites, which did not receive many positive comments, had still been used by over 40% of the sample. General reflections on

selection tools in answer to question 11 of the questionnaire also suggested that librarians view having and using a wide range of tools as important (see 5.6).

However, the use of a large number of tools may be a result of the imbalance between the amount of alerting material available compared with the scarcity of evaluating material. One librarian wrote: *"Too many selection tools can cause you to get confused, muddled etc. few, good quality is better"*.

Librarians may be using a large number of tools, not from choice, but from a lack of tools that truly meet their needs. Other librarians expressed a wish for better quality evaluative tools, such as more bibliographic lists relevant to their needs, being able to subscribe to more reviewing journals, or reviewing journals specifically for secondary schools.

5.4 Selection tools by type

Question 5 and 7 of the questionnaire asked respondents to list the 4 selection tools used most and least often, respectively.

Questions 6 and 8 of the questionnaire asked respondents to list the major reason why a particular selection tool was used or not. The advantages and disadvantages of the most common tools were also discussed at length during the focus group sessions. Each selection tool is discussed separately below, from most commonly used to least.

5.4.1 Publishers' sales representatives

Sales representatives were the most used/preferred way to select, and there were quite a few reasons given for their popularity. Several respondents commented on the product, subject, or market knowledge of the representatives, and others on the back up service provided, or the established relationships with the reps. The ability to see the physical item and make a personal judgement was unsurprisingly a common response, as was the ability to involve staff and students by getting opinions on particular items. For some it compensated for their isolation from physical bookshops, and many appreciated the fact that they did not have to leave the library. It was seen

as a good way of keeping up to date. The resources offered were usually tailored to their client base, there was a wide choice, and there was coverage for tricky topics. The books brought by sales representatives' were often ones not seen elsewhere.

There were only a few negative comments here about publishers' sales representatives, and most of these probably reflected on the qualities of the individual representatives. Some were considered 'pushy', others were considered to have poor knowledge of their product, and to be a biased source of information – one response was "*bias – they want to sell you ANYTHING!*" A couple of respondents complained that the books could take a long time to arrive.

Comments from the focus groups supported the survey results. Sales representatives were very commonly used, and most comments were positive, citing examples of good service and good products.

From both the focus groups and the questionnaire responses, it appeared that many of the librarians knew the limitations of relying on sales representatives, behaved as discriminating consumers, and their selection was market rather than product driven.

5.4.2 Visits to bookshops

Bookshop visits were usually very popular. One respondent simply wrote "*wonderful to browse through bookshops!*" More specific reasons for their popularity were being able to see a range of resources and to be able to choose the most suitable resource(s) from that range, being able to see the physical book and assess its usefulness. It was seen as a 'convenient' way to select. It was seen as a way of keeping up to date with what was available and what was popular. Several commented on the expertise of the staff in their favourite bookshops, and appreciated being able to discuss books with them ("*can talk to bookshop owners about what's new*"). Again using bookshops broadened the range of selection tools and reduced the chance of useful resources being missed. On a more practical note, respondents sometimes noted the discount offered by the shop, or the sales, as a reason for using them. Good service was also an important factor when considering bookshops as a selection tool.

Given their popularity, bookshop visits appeared quite often in the list of least used selection tools. The main reason given was lack of time, with comments that they could not visit bookshops in their paid time, as they were required to be in the library. Others said that their local bookshop's stock was limited, and larger ones were too far away. Others cited cost, commenting that they got better discounts elsewhere. However some respondents also expressed dissatisfaction with bookshop visits as a way of selecting, feeling that they had a lack of information to go on, a lack of reviews. One commented that it was *"too ad hoc"*, another that the choice was *"overwhelming"*. This respondent highlighted the importance of planning ahead when visiting bookshops and that s/he preferred to go with a list of requirements.

In the focus group sessions, bookshops were the most discussed selection tools, and unsurprisingly, the different groups had diverse experiences due to their geographical locations. The Wellington focus group recognized that they were lucky in the range of bookshops (including second hand bookshops) available to them, and spent time swapping impressions of different bookshops. At the other end of the spectrum, the Wanganui librarians lamented the *"dearth of good bookshops"*. One commented that in the past she had regularly visited Borders while on holiday in Auckland:

"I used to visit Auckland regularly and would spend time in the very large bookshops up there.[...]to actually look for stuff in a bookshop like Borders, where you have 2 full shelves on one topic and you have a hand-on check through a book, is incredibly useful."

The Levin and Manawatu librarians seemed more satisfied with the range of bookshops available to them. The Manawatu librarians talked the most about working relationships they had built up with specific booksellers, citing examples of good service.

Discussions of second hand bookshops arose in two focus groups, Wellington and Wanganui, and were considered a useful source for: *"New Zealand books that are out of print, Wellington history stuff [and] we get a lot of fiction, art books, design books."*

Second hand bookshops would certainly play a role in sourcing items cited in bibliographic lists. One participant's comments summarise their value: "*They will take lists from you, of things you're looking for and let you know. Things on the Springbok Tour, things on gangs – Staunch* [by Bill Payne]".

5.4.3 Publishers' catalogues and publicity material

These were an extremely popular tool with questionnaire respondents. They were seen as up to date, and easy to use. They provided information about new and upcoming material, and acted as a good alerting tool. The information given was seen as useful in evaluating: "*usually enough of a description to make a decision with the curriculum in mind*". They felt confident that the books would be easily available. Unlike sales representatives or approval loans, there was no time pressure associated with catalogues, and the librarians could take time to find out more about the resource, compile 'want lists' and confer with other librarians, or get opinions from relevant teaching staff. They broadened the selection range for those at a distance from large bookshops. Respondents appreciated being able to select without having to leave the library, and the fact that much of the material arrived without having to be specifically requested (or bought) was seen as an advantage. Typical comments: "*free, come all the time...*", "*they make themselves easily available, don't have to leave the library.*" The catalogues were seen as well focused on the library needs and its client base, and a good source for curriculum related resources and non-fiction.

However there were reservations, mainly focused on the (in)ability to treat the material as an evaluating tool. Many commented that they would rather see the book itself. Given the popularity of publishers' sales representatives, this was probably an option, and other comments indicated that this was the case: catalogues were redundant because they had already seen the books when the reps visited. Others felt that the catalogues were biased or unreliable – things were not as useful as described. One response was simply "*information overload!*" perhaps indicating that too many passed across his/her desk.

Focus group comments about catalogues and advertising indicated that these were seen as worthwhile, and were well used, with specific mentions made of Heinemann, Reed, and fliers from the Children's Bookshop in Wellington.

No specifically negative comments were made about these, although bias was recognized: *"you know they're only going to say good things about them. You have to be a bit cautious."*

Another participant commented that she found the volume *"overwhelming"*. In response to this, another participant commented: *"I do always flick through them because sometimes something will catch my eye"*. This comment supports other comments in the questionnaire responses indicating that seeing as wide a range as possible of current publishing was considered highly desirable.

5.4.4 Approval loans from booksellers

Approval loans were commonly used for many of the same reasons as visits from publishers' sales representatives, such as the ability to see the physical item, specialist knowledge on the behalf of the selector, and the established good relationship with the firm, and the backup service offered. Again the ability to confer with students and staff was an advantage, as was the convenience of not having to leave the library. It was seen as reliable, there was a lack of time pressure to make the decision, and again it overcame the problems of isolation from physical bookshops. One respondent specifically commented that it allowed her *"to shop in my paid time – we don't have an opportunity to visit bookshops except in my own free time."*

Several respondents commented on the ability to ask for a loan to be targeted to a particular curriculum area or topic, which gave similar advantages to going to a bookshop. Often books had not been seen elsewhere, and again it broadened the range of resources available for selection. Reliability varied from firm to firm, but some were very highly thought of, and were considered reliable. Good discounts were also mentioned.

Some librarians did dislike using approval loans, a common complaint being the inconvenience of posting the loan back. A couple felt that the loan was too 'preselected' and limiting. Some loans arrived unsolicited, which was not appreciated.

Approval loans were mentioned frequently during the focus group sessions, with participants discussing them in some detail. Comments were generally approving, but some negative comments focussed on the poor quality of stock carried by some providers (particularly datedness), and being pressured to buy. One librarian found this particularly unpleasant, others were less bothered but commented on the need to be 'firm', one librarian saying: *"I always make sure they have an appointment...I'm quite firm. But you do have to be selective about who you choose to come in."*

Librarians disliked booksellers turning up unannounced, and they preferred to be able to keep the books for a couple of days at least. This gave them time to show particular items to particular teachers (or students), but also reduced pressure to buy.

The most frequently mentioned type of approval loan was the standing orders of fiction supplied by Scholastic books. This firm was highly regarded both for their selection and for their service. Other specific names that were mentioned frequently were Top Class Books, Jay Books, and Wheelers. Some firms mentioned had different strengths, which was appreciated, for example: *"She's got a list of poetry, she's a poet herself"*, and: *"she looks out for things like multicultural fiction."*

One librarian commented: *"It's amazing how little duplication there is from the book reps"*. The librarians were asked whether the booksellers asked for profiles from the schools. It appeared that they didn't, although one commented: *"I'm sure he's got his own profiles on the schools."* Others put success down to good market knowledge and experience: *"He's very good at selecting books a school would want."* Librarians also gave examples of booksellers who would work to track down specific items, for example: *"When our food tech teacher wanted all these books on fast food and obesity and so on...[the bookseller] found 3 of them for her – gone to a lot of effort. But she got them for us from Australia."* One librarian when discussing approval loans said: *"Just having them all in one place and having someone to talk to – it's just so easy to say 'I'll have that'".* This could be seen as expressing a sense of isolation, or a concern about the possibility of being affected by soft sell.

5.4.5 Recommendations from teachers

The most common reason given for using teacher recommendations was the teachers' knowledge of their curriculum areas, the topics taught, and the information the students were required to find. A focus group participant commented:

"you need to have someone who knows about these things to make the buying call...especially when they're so expensive". Respondents felt that items recommended by teachers were likely to be well used. A desire to demonstrate the library's responsiveness and to involve the teaching staff in the library was also evident: *"library is seen to respond", "requesting means they feel involved"*.

Questionnaire respondents gave three main reasons for not using teacher recommendations. The most common was their infrequency, with several comments that they did try to elicit them, a response supported by the focus group participants (see above). For a couple of respondents, the recommendations were not suitable or too vague. For other respondents there was a clear demarcation between library resources and those bought by teachers as classroom resources.

This was also an issue raised during the focus group discussions. One librarian commented: *"The teachers buy their own stuff, and I buy what I think we need for the library, but there's not a lot of input"*. Another (in a different group) said: *"But I do think there's a lot of stuff that could be in the library collection and there could even be double ups"*. Clearly, the demarcation between library collections and departmental collections would be an important thing to define in a collection development policy.

Another necessary limitation on using teacher recommendations was the need to balance the needs of all the departments, which might mean that requests couldn't be met. *"You've got to do the best that you can with the money you've got and if you overspend in one area, the rest suffers"*. An example of this was given by one librarian:

"I had a new design teacher who gave me a list of all the books she wanted, so I tried National Library and [only] got one, so I thought I'd buy one for her, so I looked it up on the art supplier in Auckland and it was like 80 bucks so I thought sorry chickie but!"

5.4.6 Review journals

Respondents were asked if their school subscribed to any review journals (Table 6), and to list those that they did subscribe to (Table 8). Bibliographic details of these journals are given in Appendix D. In reply to this question, some respondents mentioned newspapers and the *New Zealand Listener*. These have not been included here, as these were considered 'general interest' serials with peripheral book reviews, rather than serials with books and reading as a major focus.

Table 6. Percentage of schools subscribing to reviewing journals.

	Yes	No
Does your school subscribe to any reviewing journals? (n=118)	61.9%	38.1%

The data was also analyzed to find out how many journals libraries subscribed to.

Table 7. Number of journal subscriptions held by individual libraries.

<i>Number of Journals subscriptions</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage of 62%</i>
		<i>(n=74)</i>
1	28	37.8
2	24	32.4%
3	13	17.5%
4	5	6.7%
5 or more	4	5.4%

The highest number of reviewing journals subscribed to by a school was 8.

The findings from question 3 tend to bear out the perception that review journals were not widely used by school librarians, with nearly 40% not subscribing at all, and 37.8% of those who did only subscribing to one journal. Access to traditional evaluative tools is therefore very limited.

Table 8. Reviewing journals subscribed to by schools.

<i>Journal title</i>	<i>total</i>	<i>% of sample</i>	<i>% of 62%(n=74)</i>
Magpies	47	39%	63.5%
Around the bookshops	34	29%	45.9%
New Zealand books	30	25%	40.5%
Booknotes	7	6%	9.4%
The Literature Base	6	5%	8.1%
Viewpoint	6	5%	8.1%
Scan	4	3%	5.4%
Talespinner	4	3%	5.4%
Fiction focus	3	2.5%	4%
Storylines	3	2.5%	4%
Reading time	2	1.7%	2.7%
Good reading	2	1.7%	2.7%
Too good to miss	2	1.7%	2.7%
Good book guide	2	1.7%	2.7%
Librarian (unidentified)	1	0.8%	1.3%
ALAN review	1	0.8%	1.3%
VOYA	1	0.8%	1.3%
Infochoice (no longer published)	1	0.8%	1.3%
New Zealand books abroad (unidentified)	1	0.8%	1.3%
Teacher librarian,	1	0.8%	1.3%
London review of books	1	0.8%	1.3%
Literary review	1	0.8%	1.3%
Landfall.	1	0.8%	1.3%

Looking at Table 8, New Zealand content is clearly important, as of the first three journals, (the only ones subscribed to by more than 10% of respondents) 2 are New Zealand published, and the other (*Magpies*) has significant New Zealand content. However, areas of concern are that none are specifically aimed at young adults, as *Magpies* and *Around the bookshops* are both for children and young adults, and *New Zealand books* is aimed at an adult audience. Reviews of fiction are also more common than non-fiction in most of the journals listed above.

Unsurprisingly, a major reason given by questionnaire respondents for using review journals was simply that they contained reviews. Those librarians who liked using review journals felt that they were an objective or an authoritative source, reviews being written by knowledgeable professionals who did not have a financial interest in the success of the book. They felt the reviews were reliable and a reasonable substitute for seeing the physical item, and gave them the information they needed, for example the age range the book was aimed at. *"highly likely these books prove to be popular"*. One librarian noted *"because we are a Christian school I have to be careful about the content of fiction."* A couple noted *Magpies* in particular as being good for fiction. They appreciated the fact that the review journals were specifically targeted at their client group – young adults. Other reasons given was their broader use in keeping up to date with what was happening with young adult (YA) publishing and literature, and to broaden their awareness of the resources available, particularly things that missed by the other selection tools used.

A common reason given for not using review journals was that the library did not subscribe. Other common responses, which still rather begged the question, were a lack of time, and the cost of subscription, and that other sources were adequate for their needs. A more telling response, and the most common, was that the journals rarely alerted them to new material – a recognised problem with reviews (Spiller 2000, 27). The typical comment: *"more often than not, we have already bought the resources featured"*. Another common response was the preference to see the physical book. A couple commented that the books were *"hard to get"*, and one librarian commented *"the books they recommend just don't appeal to my borrowers (adolescent boys)."*

Review journals got a more lukewarm response from the focus groups, where *Magpies* and *Around the bookshops* were the only two journals mentioned by name. Some felt that they were worthwhile from a selection point of view: “*I find Around the bookshops quite good...I’ll go through it and then when books come through I think oh yes I saw something about this.*”

One participant expressed reservations about the relevance of the reviews: “*the*

The philosophical difference between responsive and prescriptive selection was clearly visible in some of these questionnaire responses. On the other hand, participants of the focus groups usually expressed a willingness to respond to student requests, even when they did not have a high opinion of the material bought. The importance of encouraging young adults to read, supporting literacy, and building relationships with the students were seen as very important in this regard. Requests were often specific titles or series. The participants didn't report difficulties in getting students to make recommendations.

The participants discussed what selection criteria were important to the students, and the most commonly mentioned aspect was visual appeal. This was considered to be of critical importance, and the librarians themselves treated it as such: *"You will see books – that you or I might like – with such bad covers that you know no one will pick them up, so you don't buy them."* Other criteria mentioned were popularity and publicity: *"things that have just been on TV"*, and *"When the reserve list at the public library gets too long and they realise they're going to have to wait."*

5.4.8 General serials

Easy access to these was a common reason given for use, as they were often things seen or read anyway. Their reviews were often considered to be reliable and useful, particularly for New Zealand material, but some also were singled out for useful young adult reviews. They were seen as a good source of information on very up to date material. Again they were seen as a way to broaden out the range of resources selected from. One respondent wrote at the end of his/her list of journal subscriptions (Question 3): *"plus every magazine and newspaper review I come across."*

However, a key disadvantage was that resources reviewed were not always suitable for secondary schools as these serials were aimed more at an adult readership. Lack of time to go through them, and comments that their needs were met by other sources indicate that they are not seen as essential! Again some respondents commented that they preferred to see the physical book.

All of the focus groups mentioned other review sources besides specialist review journals. These included newspapers, informal reviews from network meetings and radio reviews (in particular Kate De Goldi's regular reviews on National Radio). However they were not discussed in detail.

5.4.8 Recommendations from other librarians

Positive comments on recommendations from other librarians focussed on the similarities of interest among school librarians, their reliability, and the advantages of getting feedback on different resources, and being alerted to other possibly relevant resources – that is, they were used as both alerting and evaluative tools.

However, recommendations from other librarians were not greatly used as a selection tool, and the major reason given was lack of contact, or infrequency of contact. A couple commented that the schoollib listserv was their main or only source of recommendations from other librarians. Others felt that recommendations from other librarians were not necessarily reliable, or that the differences between schools in regard to student population or the curriculum topics taught meant that recommendations from other librarians were not particularly relevant to their own situation.

5.4.9 Bibliographical lists of suggested/recommended resources for specific curriculum topics.

The few positive comments on these from questionnaire respondents focussed on their authoritativeness, and their high relevance to the curriculum. They were also seen as useful in keeping up with knowledge of the curriculum in general, and increasing awareness of the range of resources available.

Against this, there were a high number of responses indicating that these are not seen by school librarians, or not seen often, or not passed on to them by the teaching staff – another example of communication problems between the library and teaching staff.

Other reasons given were recognized disadvantages (e.g. Evans 2000, 108) such as their tendency to date quickly, and the resources to become unavailable. Another disadvantage, cited by a couple of respondents was that they could not afford to buy too many resources on the same topic, so only one or two might be bought from a list, if used.

Others felt that they didn't contain enough information to help them make a decision (that is, their evaluative value was limited), an opinion probably shared by many of those who commented that they prefer to see the actual book. Several commented that they preferred to deal directly with the teaching staff to establish what they needed. Several responses indicated they were seen as supplementary or useful rather than essential.

Bibliographic lists in this context were only discussed in one focus group, and in particular focused on suggested resource list for National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) topics. Their comments were extremely negative, citing out of print or unavailable books. A summarising comment was made by one of the participants:

"Bibliographical lists of resources for schools need to be done properly. The material needs to be actually available, and the lists need to be distributed to all schools in good time, so we can actually get the resources."

5.4.10 On-line booksellers

There were a few positive comments about using online booksellers from the questionnaire respondents (see section 5.4.11 for discussion of the focus groups comments on online tools). These noted their breadth of coverage, and the fact that they included reviews. One respondent wrote that they were used to find senior secondary material, or material on topics that were hard to resource. Another used them to find other authors who were similar to ones already known and popular. Another used them as a current awareness tool – *"to see what's new and popular"*.

However, many commented that they were not set up to order online, or there were other Internet issues, such as lack of access, or interruptions to it. There were suspicions about the reliability of the information given and the likelihood of bias, and a preference to see the physical item itself. Others were wary of costs, particularly of packaging and postage, and a preference was expressed for using local booksellers. “*Lack of time*” was a common response. Those who did use them commented that they used them for checking details, rather than browsing. One bookshop site that was mentioned as being used was Wheelers. Many felt no need to use this option as their needs were met elsewhere.

5.4.11 Publishers’ websites

Only 3 respondents listed publishers’ websites in their 4 preferred selection tools. One used them to compare details such as price and reading level for different resources. One commented simply that they were “*time consuming but rewarding*”. The other mentioned online reviews, and that they were used for finding both curriculum related material, and to follow up student recommendations.

Publishers’ websites were the questionnaire respondents’ least used selection tool, and by far the most common reason given was simply “*lack of time*”. They were seen as time-consuming and cumbersome to use, particularly when compounded with information technology issues such as limits on Internet access and computer unreliability. Many felt that using the online site was redundant if they had the hardcopy catalogue, which was easier to use; a typical comment being “*time consuming, prefer hard copy so can read leisurely at home*”. There were concerns about a lack of objectivity because the information was being put out by the publisher, and again a reluctance to buy material not actually sighted by the librarian.

Several of the reasons given applied to acquisition issues rather than selection, such as not being set up to buy online; the resources not being available in New Zealand; concerns about cost and the exchange rate. A few responses did note occasions when websites would be used. These tended to be when looking for hard to source material, checking details (such as price) on specific titles.

In the focus groups, online selection tools were singled out with the direct question 'do you use online selection tools'. The aim was to find out the impact of these new tools for selectors, particularly the increased amount of information now available. Since online selection tools were not rated highly by the questionnaire respondents, but some comments had indicated that they were used, the focus group discussions provide useful background information on the role they play in selection. As the question did not make the distinctions that the questionnaire did, and the types of tools discussed were broader than those given in the questionnaire, online tools are discussed below as a group.

Specific sites/tools mentioned were Literature Resource Center, one of the Thomson Gale databases available to schools as part of the EPIC group of databases, Amazon.com, Wheelers, TradeMe, Achuka, the schoollib listserv, the online catalogues of big libraries such as the National Library and the Wellington City Library, and the SCIS website. Publishers' websites were used occasionally, and one participant commented that being able to find second hand bookshops on the Web *"had made a huge difference"*.

Uses of online tools were: buying titles (TradeMe, Wheelers, Amazon), reviews (Literature Resource Center, Publishers' websites, and Amazon.com), recommendations (Achuka, schoollib) and checking details (OPACS, Amazon, publishers' websites, SCIS). Checking details was the reason most often given. This could include significant details such as title:

"You get 'oh the latest one by such and such has come out.' 'What's it called' 'don't know – I think it was blue'. That's when you hit the 'Net to find it. ...So it's good for those vague messages you get."

Buying online was fairly rare. Amazon was mentioned quite often, but was used more for checking details and gathering more (evaluative) information about the book. Websites that carried graphics (e.g. of covers) and reviews were useful. The customers' reviews on Amazon were not necessarily trusted, but did serve to increase the information available:

"-Well, customer reviews [are terrible].

-Yes, I know, but you get a general idea."

Only one participant said that he actively searched out reviews on the Internet, and the rest of his focus group were surprised and curious. He said:

"...I do try and find reviews actually because I'm new, I've only been in the job a couple of months, some areas I just don't know, certain authors, and I do try and find reviews. ...mainly the fiction because I just don't know it."

It is also possible that being somewhat younger than many of the other participants and having recently completed the Masters in Library and Information Studies (MLIS), he was more comfortable using the Internet, and may have been aware of sources that the others did not. However this was not followed up and remains speculative.

In any case, again the issue of what was freely available versus what is charged for arose:

"It's often difficult because the real good reviews are like from the TLS or something and you can't get access to that, and other review sources like the Atlantic Monthly or the newspapers, you can't see the latest issue, you might be able to see the archive."

As with print review journals, subscriptions to online journals and serials are likely to be rare.

Without access to tools created by professionals and only available through subscription, librarians clearly have to be selective in the sites they use and for what reasons, to make them worth the time taken. Used carefully, it appeared that the Internet was a useful tool, but was usually used with a specific question in mind, such as *"what Oxford School Shakespeares there are"*. It was a backup and addition to their preferred tools, because even with graphics and customer reviews, the item could still disappoint:

“One of the first things I bought from Amazon, and it was drama, and I was disappointed in the books that arrived, though having said that, they’ve been in the drama department for the last year or so... But I do like to handle the books first, unless I know I’ve had something before.”

The desire to ‘handle something’ was extremely common in the questionnaire responses. However, apart from this half example (given that there was reason to believe the drama department had found them useful), there were no instances given of dreadful mistakes made through relying on online tools.

5.4.12 National library loans

National Library loans had been used in selection by 37% of librarians over the previous 6 months, but only one respondent included these in the 4 most commonly used selection tools. This respondent commented that they were useful for direction for hard to resource areas of the curriculum. In the focus groups, discussion of the role in National Library loans in selection tended to revolve around the ability to be informed of collection gaps from the requests that were sent to the National Library, as in this example:

. “You’ve got to watch that you don’t race out and buy something expensive and then discover that they’re not doing that anymore because the topic can change the focus can change. ... I tend to use requests to National Library to focus in mostly”.

However, there were also references to seeing useful resources in a loan, for example: *“We had one example of a series that came in a National Library loan: The road to globalisation.”*

Otherwise, these were not preferred as a selection tool. The main reason given was that the school seldom used the National Library, or that loans went directly to the requesting teacher. Other reasons reflected the National Library’s supplementary role in that it was used to resource senior or individual requests that the school would not normally buy for. One respondent succinctly said: *“why buy when we can borrow?”*

Other reasons focused on the resources held by National Library as: already held by the school, dated, hard to get, or out of print. One commented that the resources she had seen tended to be aimed at primary schools. A few commented that National Library loans were 'occasionally' useful for ideas. One respondent commented that s/he had used National Library more in the past; another that s/he would use the online catalogue as a selection tool instead.

5.5 Evaluation criteria for selection tools

5.5.1 General evaluation criteria for selection tools

Question 9 of the questionnaire asked respondents to rate the importance of 10 evaluative criteria for selection tools on a scale from 1 (unimportant) to 5 (essential). The mean rating for each criterion is given in Table 9 below, listed from highest to lowest rating. Range and the standard deviation from the mean are also shown.

All of the criteria were rated above 3, the mid-way point, indicating that all of these criteria are considered of some importance. The variation between the highest and the lowest rated was small, as is the variation in the highest and lowest standard deviation. The range of responses for each criterion was the widest possible, but the standard deviation gives a valuable indication of spread: this was widest for 'includes reviews', 'appear regularly' and 'includes NZ resources', indicating that there is more diversity of opinion in how important these are.

The most highly rated criteria were non-evaluative, relating more to a tool's role as an alerting device. The 2 most important criteria were 'price information, and 'available in New Zealand'. The next, 'easy to use', is perhaps neutral, but the next two, 'includes New Zealand resources' and 'good coverage of current publishing' are alerting criteria. 'Coverage' was most consistently rated highly, with the lowest standard deviation of 0.78. The desire for good coverage is also borne out by the range of tools used (question 4), and the many comments in discussions of the separate tools about hearing about/seeing new and relevant resources.

The two specifically evaluative criteria, 'authoritative source' and 'includes reviews' were rated at 4.11 and 3.8 – not low, but 6th and 8th out of the 10 criteria.

A surprising result was the relatively low ranking given to 'ability to preview items'. A common theme in the focus group sessions and the responses to Questions 6 and 8 in the survey was the preference for seeing the physical item, and it might have been expected that this criteria would receive a higher rating. This is particularly so considering the high ranking in Question 5 of selection tools that allowed them to do this, i.e. approval loans, sales representatives, and visits to bookshops.

Table 9. Importance of various criteria in evaluating selection tools.

Criterion	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Price information	4.2	0.89	1-5
Items identified are available within NZ	4.18	1.05	1-5
Easy to use: e.g. well organized searchable.	4.15	0.91	1-5
Good coverage of current publishing	4.14	0.78	1-5
Includes NZ resources	4.14	0.91	1-5
Authoritative source	4.11	1	1-5
Appears regularly/regularly updated	4.07	1.15	1-5
Includes reviews	3.8	1.03	1-5
Ability to preview items	3.73	1.04	1-5
Includes examples of cover art layout etc.	3.22	0.91	1-5

5.5.2 Evaluation criteria for specific selection tools

Question 10 of the questionnaire attempted to measure how commonly used selection tools performed when measured against the criteria of Question 9. Respondents were asked to rate their 4 preferred resources as selected in Question 5 on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

This question was the most complex in the survey, and there may be concerns about its validity, as some respondents found it difficult to relate certain 'selection tools'

(e.g. student/teacher/librarian recommendations) to the criteria listed. Respondents were instructed to leave the cells blank if they felt this was the case, and a high number did so. 12 respondents (10%) did not complete this question, with 4 (3.3%) adding comments to the effect that they did not understand the question, or found it too confusing.

The number of responses (n) for each selection tool was determined by the number of respondents who listed it in their answers to question 5. This resulted in very low n numbers for the 5 selection tools that received the lowest ratings in this question (bibliographic lists, National Library loans, recommendations from other librarians, online booksellers, and publishers' websites). For this reason, they have been omitted from the tables and discussion below. For purposes of comparison, the importance rating given to each criteria is given in the first column of Table 10.

Table 10. Performance of commonly used selection tools against selection criteria.

Criterion	Importance (N=117)	Publishers' sales representatives (N=63)	Bookshop visits (N=58)	Catalogues and publicity material (N=59)	Approval loans (N=51)	Teacher recommendations (N=45)	Review Journals (N=42)	Student recommendations (N=30)	General serials (N=24)
Price information	4.2	4.77	4.8	4.64	4.98	2.08	4.15	1.81	4.3
NZ Availability of items	4.18	4.74	4.89	4.28	4.73	3.27	4.3	3.41	4.37
Easy to use: e.g. well organized, searchable	4.15	4.26	4.23	3.88	4.03	2.65	4.33	2.47	4.06
Coverage of current publishing	4.14	4.24	4.46	4.39	4.15	2.33	4.31	2.19	4.25
Includes NZ resources	4.14	4.23	4.62	4.15	4.23	3.28	4.39	2.95	4.61
Authoritative source	4.11	3.44	3.91	3.47	3.56	3.68	4.72	2.96	4.13
Appears regularly/regularly updated	4.07	3.95	4.24	4.29	4.17	3.09	4.62	3.21	4.7
Includes reviews	3.8	2.51	2.38	3.46	2.25	2.43	4.78	2.29	4.74
Ability to preview items	3.73	4.62	4.44	3.03	4.94	2.03	2.31	2.25	2.38
Includes examples of cover art etc.	3.22	4.2	4.51	3.59	4.59	1.55	3.62	1.53	2.95
Mean rating across all criteria	N/A	4.10	4.25	3.92	4.16	2.64	4.15	2.51	4.05

Only 2 of the selection tools fall under the mid-way point of 3. Those two are recommendations from teachers and students, and the difficulties on the behalf of respondents in viewing these as 'selection tools' and applying the criteria may have been a factor in this.

The sense of frustration regarding teachers expressed by librarians elsewhere in the study is likely also a factor in their low rating overall. This is perhaps most evident in the rating for 'authoritative source'. Teachers' knowledge of their subject and the school curriculum, commonly cited in the answers to question 5, would seem to predict a higher rating in this question. The rating of 3.68, while over the mid-way mark, seems low.

The low scores for both students and teachers as selection tools are also likely to reflect the nature of their input: simple recommendations of titles or authors (or subjects), with following up on bibliographic details, availability, and suitability the task of the librarian.

Leaving aside these two, the other tools have similar average ratings, from 3.92 to 4.25. The highest rated tool was bookshop visits, followed by approval loans and review journals. At 4.15, review journals rated higher than several more popular tools, such as catalogues and advertising. Gamma was calculated to see if there was a correlation between the ranking of preferred tools and highly rated tools. The value of gamma was found to be 0.3103, which is only a medium correlation according to Cohen (129). This indicates that how the tools are perceived is not strongly related to how much they are used. This is an intriguing finding, as in an ideal world a selector would prefer to use the most the tool(s) they rate as the most effective.

Looking at Table 10, however, we can see that most of these tools have had their average reduced by one score significantly under the mid-way point. This is usually the lack of reviews. Lack of reviews is in itself one of the lower ranked criteria, so overall satisfaction with these tools may be even higher than the mean rating suggests. Conversely, although 'ability to preview items' at 3.73 is rated even lower than 'reviews', the responses from other parts of the questionnaire and the focus groups

show that it is highly important to secondary school librarians in New Zealand. Gamma values were also calculated for these two criteria to see if either correlated with the most preferred tools. Although the correlation for 'ability to preview items' was positive, and the correlation for 'includes reviews' was negative, the values (0.4285 and -0.1428 respectively) were only medium or low.

Gamma was also calculated to see the degree of correlation between the rankings of the criteria in order of importance, and how this matched the rankings of the criteria for each of the 8 selection tools. With one exception, only low correlations were found (Table 11), indicating that there was little relationship between the rankings of the criteria for any one selection tool, and the rankings of the criteria in the abstract. This increases the validity of the data from Question 9 as a reflection of the importance of these criteria unrelated to how well their preferred selection tools performed on those criteria.

Table 11. Correlation of ratings and rankings of selection tool criteria.

Selection Tools	Gamma
Publishers' sales representatives	0.12903226
Visits to bookshops	0.28888889
Publishers' catalogues and publicity material	0.58139535
Approval loans from booksellers	0.15555556
Recommendations from teachers	0.24444444
Review journals e.g. Magpies School Library Journal	-0.2
Recommendations from students	0.15555556
Other serials e.g. NZ Listener, Newspapers.	0.06666667

The only negative correlation (and again it was small) was for review journals, which scored highest for the 'includes reviews' and 'authoritative source' criteria – criteria ranked as less important. The closest match of ranked criteria was for catalogues and publicity material, and this was the only one with a statistically significant score. This might indicate that the priorities of the producers of this material most closely match

the priorities of the school librarians, even if their performance on these aspects is not among the highest.

5.6 Overall satisfaction with selection tools

Question 11 of the questionnaire asked respondents whether they believed that the range of selection tools available to them was adequate. Question 12 then asked them to elaborate on their answer.

Table 12. Satisfaction with range of selection tools available.

	Yes	No
Are you satisfied with the range of selection tools you have available? (n=110)	80%	13%

While 80% of respondents reported that they believed the range of selection tools available to them was adequate, the responses to the second part of the question gave more indication of how they felt. Many respondents simply commented that they were satisfied with the resources available to them, or that they were adequate for their needs. One commented: “ *[Our] library book budget is very limited. With so little money at the library’s disposal it is NOT AT ALL difficult to find good ways to spend it!*” However, other themes did emerge.

Themes that had arisen in other parts of the questionnaire were reiterated or were expressed more fully. One of these was the importance of actually seeing the material. Another was the frustration over lack of input into selection by teachers. One wrote:

“ ... what [we] consistently lack is information from the school about what they are and will be TEACHING! We could do so much better if we weren't last in the drip-feed and seen as top of the line for information - still remnants of the idea that the library is a 'parking place' rather than an information resource!”

However, several respondents commented on their good relationships with the teaching staff, or with specific suppliers. There was a desire for more input from students, and an appreciation of recommendations from other librarians, or a wish for more recommendations.

Bearing out the conclusion that the respondents used a large number of selection tools, several respondents wrote explicitly that they felt that using a broad range of tools was important, and it did often require an effort to do this. One respondent wrote:

"You have to be aware of the range of options and be proactive about following up on them. It is always better to use a range of tools as opposed to only one or two, to ensure as balanced a collection as possible."

Another wrote: *"There is a good variety of resources available and they have different strengths."* One respondent felt that things had improved in this regard in recent years: *"Much better now than it was 10 years ago especially with the advent of www and publishers' now having websites and being able to order online"*.

However, many wrote that while there was no shortage of information available about resources (some found the amount too much), there was a lack of time to go through it or to devote to selection in general.

Some comments did express a desire for 'better' selection tools, often focusing on evaluative information. Several respondents wanted to be able to subscribe to reviewing journals – one respondent who did wrote that s/he was satisfied because s/he was *"able to spend money on quality review journals"*. For others, these tools were unknowns, with several respondents expressing a desire for an 'independent', unbiased source of information, that would not hesitate to report flaws. Others wanted more review journals that focused on secondary schools, or review material that better covered New Zealand material, and/or non-fiction. Several regretted that the National Library no longer put out a review journal for New Zealand schools (*New and Notable*). Others commented on a lack of tools to locate resources in some areas

where publishing was limited. This was where it was felt bibliographic lists might be useful, but at present were inadequate.

Some respondents commented that they were working to make their selection processes more systematic.

In the focus groups, two questions in particular provoked discussions indicative of participants' general satisfaction with selection. The sessions' introductory question asked participants for their general impressions of selection: easy, hard, enjoyable? The sessions' concluding question asked respondents what their 'ideal' selection tool would be.

Participants' immediate responses to the first question were usually very positive, reflecting enjoyment in shopping and buying new books. Typical comments were: "*I think it's the fun part*", and: "*Really enjoy it, going through the new books I find it a real pleasure.*" Similarly, initial responses were often that they considered it (reasonably) easy. As the conversation progressed, different views would be expressed, disagreeing with comments that had been made before. The two following exchanges are examples of this:

"-Even reading the reviews is enjoyable.

-I don't enjoy reading the reviews, but I enjoy the shopping trips."

And:

- *"Really enjoy it, going through the new books I find it a real pleasure.*
- *I enjoy spending money, and I love looking at new books, but I would have to say that now I'm in a position to spend quite a bit of time on it I do find it hard work."*

Bearing in mind this basic enjoyment of the process of selection, concerns were expressed at different points during the sessions. One was lack of money, another was lack of time, although librarians who were lucky enough not to suffer from the former, pointed out that it took more time to spend more money: "*My budget's pretty*

good now, and I'm spending a lot more time on selection than I did when it was smaller."

A specific concern relating to lack of time was the lack of paid time to do selection work:

"-I would like to know who here is able to do their reviewing and background reading in work hours.

[General laughter]

-I think there's your answer – laughter!"

This exchange was from the Wellington group. The issue also came up in the Wanganui group, but their focus was on time to visit bookshops:

Some concerns were universal selection concerns, such as the need to balance the needs of different areas of the collection: the curriculum needs and the recreational needs. Budget constraints made this particularly frustrating and also made the desire to avoid mistakes particularly acute:

"Often it's really a case, when your budget is so small, buying purely to satisfy your clientele and what they're asking for. Even if it's not really what you should have – I find it quite difficult [...] You feel so terrible when you make a mistake."

Another universal selection challenge was trying to locate resources on certain topics where the publishing, particularly at the level required, was small or non-existent:

"The hardest part is those small parts of the collection you're trying to fill and the topics don't come round with the book reps...talking about science, there's oodles and you have the job of choosing between them, and then you get drama, which is so hard."

The participants' descriptions of their strategies were particularly interesting. Unsurprisingly, many commented on the value of experience in building up personal

knowledge of the industry and the group being served – key skills for selectors (Johnson 2004, 52): *“You get to know who you can rely on, which publishers, which authors. And when you get to that stage, it takes a while, it’s quite easy and quick.”* And: *“The longer you’ve been doing it, the easier it becomes, you’re more familiar while your ‘clientele’ and the collection, the gaps, the way the curriculum is taught”*

Several participants described selection in terms that indicated it was a process that was continuing on some level most of the time: *“I honestly think that after a while you become a sort of radar for authors and books – your ears are constantly pricked”*; and: *“And you remember what you did last week with the kids and you can think ‘oh yes’ [when you see something].”*

This behaviour was evident in the ways the participants treated the focus group sessions as an ‘information gathering exercise’ for themselves – noting things down, asking about specific books displayed in the host library! As one participant said: *“visiting each other’s libraries is always ...a good activity.”*

Again this tallies with descriptions of selection in the literature as an ‘art’, or an intuitive process, as well as a science. The possible disadvantages of this as a source of bias were expressed well by one participant:

“And I think that you as a librarian will have a sense for a particular type, and you think other librarians are the same, and of course we’re not the same. And you wonder am I casting my net too narrowly, do I need to cast my net wider – I think it’s something you do subconsciously.”

In a couple of the groups, participants had worked in public libraries, before moving to school libraries. They talked about the differences between the two, with their much smaller current budgets being the main difference. In one group, the ex-public librarian was asked whether she felt she had to be more or less careful about buying appropriate (i.e. non-controversial) material. She replied:

“Yes. Definitely harder in a school because you have this thing called ‘parents’, which you have in the public library as well, but not to the same

extent, because it's a public place, whereas a school is sort of owned – it's quite different."

This is an interesting comment, confirming as it does Spiller's theory of close monitoring, however it is an isolated occurrence as the question was not asked in the other sessions.

Responses to the concluding question were varied. One participant simply wanted *"More time!"* (a common theme in the questionnaire as well). One wished that more sources would *"put reading ages on things"*; that is, better evaluative information. One wanted *"a review journal just for secondary schools, New Zealand secondary schools"* This is quite a reasonable comment, given that both of the review journals discussed in the sessions (Around the Bookshops and Magpies) cover both primary and secondary schools but have a stronger primary focus than secondary, although both do have New Zealand content, and Around the Bookshops is New Zealand published. The response to this wish was significant: *"That would be my ideal as well – so you didn't have to wade through all the other stuff."*

The desire not to have to 'wade through' large amounts of dubiously relevant material was also a common theme in answers to Question 11 in the questionnaire, and is another classic selection challenge, given the enormous volume of published material that selectors have to choose from. It was almost certainly a factor in another participant's ideal: *"...being able to draw up a profile of my clientele and being able to supply that to somewhere like [bookseller] and have them send a lot of stuff out which would ideally comprise about 90% of what you purchase that year."*

It would be similar to the service supplied by Scholastic Standing Orders for fiction, but widens it to include non-fiction, and would involve a more focused service.

Other groups expressed a wish for specific guidance from the National Library. One participant said: *"I would like National Library to tell us what books we should buy and where to get them."* Another group had the following conversation:

"...it should be possible to have a list of good books for the different areas of the school.

-National Library should do it.

-And keep it up to date."

Again, this is recognition of the ideal potential of bibliographic lists, which in reality were rarely used. National Library was seen as the logical provider of this service partly because of its role in supporting school libraries (interestingly the Ministry of Education was not mentioned), and also because in some cases the librarians knew that relevant information (such as the order lists generated by the National Library's Schools Collections own selectors, or in-house bibliographic lists generated by individual National Library offices) existed, but was not centrally organized or available to those outside the National Library. The listserv was also recognized as a potential source of information that could be collated into a more usable form by someone.

A participant in one group perhaps voiced one of the drivers behind the above idea when she said: *"each one of us is beaver away in isolation reconstructing the wheel every time. I'd like something that's shared."* She recalled a time working in North America where the schools did bulk purchasing, and had better access to pre-publication information.

Many of the comments expressed in response to this question are an attempt to deal with the time consuming nature of the selection work that good quality selection tools are designed to help with. This indicates that school librarians are aware of their need for these, but it is significant that responses did not identify concrete tools such as access to particular review journals or databases.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to be able to draw a broad picture of how New Zealand secondary school librarians used selection tools to build their library collections. To

this end, a mail questionnaire was sent to a nationwide sample to identify which standard types of selection tools that were used, which weren't, and the reasons why in both cases. Respondents were also asked which criteria were important to them in the abstract when it came to assessing the value of a selection tool. The results of the mail questionnaire yielded data that could be generalized to the population of New Zealand secondary school librarians. In order to gain a richer understanding of the context of selection in secondary schools, 4 focus group sessions were also held. The resulting data was analysed alongside the questionnaire data to provide more comprehensive answers to the study's research questions.

In general it seems that librarians enjoy selection and feel confident about it. 80% of questionnaire respondents reported that they were satisfied with the range of selection tools available to them, and focus group participants initial response to questions about their experience of selection were generally positive.

However, further questions disclosed areas of dissatisfaction, and many gave definite opinions on what would make selection easier or more effective. Frustration, despite the apparent satisfaction, was commonly expressed about such things as lack of (paid) time, and the lack of input from teachers. These factors may change and improve as the role of school libraries, and the value of professional school librarians, achieves greater recognition. Other frustrations arose regarding the tools available to them. The paradox is that what the LIS literature would regard as being 'quality' tools – evaluative tools such as reviewing journals and bibliographic lists, were perceived by New Zealand school librarians as being less useful (lower quality) than those provided by the book trade.

The study found that the librarians used a wide variety of selection tools, but the four most commonly used tools were: visits from publishers' sales representatives, visits to bookshops, publishers' catalogues and other advertising, and approval loans. This raises the concern that secondary school librarians are overly reliant on the information supplied by the publishing and book-selling industries. However, the other characteristic of three of the four most commonly used tools was that they all enabled the librarian to examine the item personally, and if need be, seek opinions from teachers or students. This allowed the librarians to counteract the inherent bias

of the tools, but it can also be a time-consuming way to select. It also supports the theory in the literature that school librarians are the most protective group of librarians.

School librarians overseas also prefer to be able to preview resources before buying, but it appears that New Zealand secondary school librarians do also have limited access to evaluative tools that would give a 'second opinion' for their own judgement. Of evaluative tools, reviewing journals were the 6th most commonly used selection tool, but were subscribed to by only 61.9% of questionnaire respondents, with only 37.8% of those respondents subscribing to more than one. Bibliographic lists of suggested/recommended resources, often discussed favourably in the literature had been used by only 40% of respondents in the last 6 months, and only 9% listed them as a preferred tool. Respondents and participants complained that reviewing journals were too costly, items took too long to be reviewed, or their scope was inadequate (e.g. not enough non-fiction, not aimed at secondary students). Bibliographic lists dated quickly and were often unreliable (with items being out of print) or not trusted. Some of these complaints are unavoidable disadvantages of these media (Evans 2000, 107-108), but others are valid criticisms of the tools available to them.

Other well-used tools were less than satisfactory. In the questionnaire, librarians were asked to rate their preferred selection tools against various criteria. While the study found a high reported satisfaction with the tools available to them, three of the 8 most preferred selection tools rated under the mid-way point (teacher recommendations, student recommendations, and general serials).

The biggest expressions of frustration applied to recommendations from teachers, and to a lesser degree recommendations from students, which in this study were treated as selection tools. These were rated the two highest when librarians were asked which tools had been used in the last 6 months, but their ratings dropped to 5th and 7th place when librarians were asked to list their most commonly used tools. Teachers in particular were a source of very ambivalent feelings among librarians. The most commonly given reason for using their recommendations was their knowledge of their teaching plans, their subject, and the curriculum – that is, they were seen as an authoritative source in these matters. However, when the librarians were asked to rate

their preferred selection tools against specific criteria, teachers were rated third as an authoritative source, below review journals and bookshops. This perhaps represents the reality of librarian frustrations with the difficulty of getting teacher co-operation (another common theme in the focus groups and questionnaire responses).

Students also suffered a split in attitude, scoring the lowest in their effectiveness as a selection tool, but ranking high in how many librarians did use them, and middling as a common source. The need to maintain a close watch on the material entering the collection conflicted with the desire to ensure that the collection reflected student interests, and librarians clearly varied as to what side of the fence they came down on.

A common theme in discussions of the value of different tools was that different tools exposed them to a different range of resources, which in turn gave them a broader picture of relevant publishing and reduced their chances of missing useful material. This concern again suggests a lack of well-focussed tools. The 'coverage of current publishing' criteria ranked highly (4.14 out of 5) in important considerations. Most librarians did use a wide range of tools – the average number of tools used in the last 6 months was 9- but comments suggested that this was perceived to be both a good thing (for the reasons above) and a bad. Many librarians complained of a lack of time, and others complained of an overabundance of selection tools taking a long time to go through.

Currency of information was also a highly rated aspect of tools such as bookshops, catalogues, and general periodicals. Many of the tools used by librarians were based around a working relationship with a person, such as a traveling bookseller, their local bookseller, or publishers' sales representatives. In these cases, good service factors were important, and an appreciation for their subject and market knowledge were evident. This is not to say that they were considered an authoritative source – it was commonly acknowledged that their statements had to be treated as biased.

Of the criteria relating to selection tools that were listed in the questionnaire, all received ratings higher than the mid-point, but the most important aspects were that the tool contained price information and that the items referred to were available in New Zealand. That the tool contained New Zealand items was considered slightly less

important than their availability within New Zealand. These are very practical criteria, and fit the picture of librarians working largely on their own, and largely without the aid of professional selection tools. Criteria that would give the librarian advice in evaluating a resource, such as the authoritativeness of the source and whether it contained reviews were rated as less important.

The importance of various criteria was also apparent in the reasons librarians gave for the usage or not of particular tools. The ability to examine an item personally (and gain a second opinion from teachers or students) was mentioned many times, and the inability to do this was a serious disadvantage for many conventional selection tools, such as bibliographic lists and reviewing journals. However, when librarians were asked to rate, as an abstract criterion, how important being able to preview was, it rated second to last. This mismatch suggests that the respondents may be ambivalent about their preference for previewing material

The inability to examine an item personally was a particular disadvantage for online tools. Questionnaire respondents in general did not, or did not like to use online tools. This may reflect the extent to which the survey questions were not sensitive enough to pick up the uses made of online resources, as focus group participants reported more positive attitudes to online tools. However online tools may become more important as familiarity with the Internet increases, and school connectivity improves.

The picture of selection given in this report indicates that most New Zealand secondary school librarians state that they are satisfied with the tools that they use, and rate the ones that they use as being, largely, of good quality. However, the high dependence of material produced by the book trade (Direen's 'product driven' selection) is of concern, as this places the onus of careful selection on the librarian, with few outside, objective opinions available to inform their decisions. Many of the librarians were themselves aware of this dilemma, but were confident of their ability to keep their selection 'market driven'. This research did not explore how well founded this confidence may be (by, for example, evaluating specific collections or observing interactions with sales representatives). One area that could be explored in further research is secondary school librarians' training in selection, whether through

are free and widely available. Many of these sorts of professional tools have not been created for the New Zealand context, and it is important that they are, because the second highest ranked criteria for a selection tool was 'available in New Zealand'. This is clearly a primary marker of quality in the eyes of New Zealand secondary school librarians, and it is provided by the book trade, but not the library world. The commercial market for these tools being small, the onus must be on professional and support organizations, such as SLANZA and the National Library to facilitate the creation of these, if they are to exist.

The other hallmarks of quality for New Zealand secondary school librarians are 'coverage of the range of current publishing' and 'ease of use'. For these alerting tools, anything with the breadth required is likely to be far too expensive for individual schools to afford. A consortium approach (for example, to subscribe to Te Puna Search) might be possible, but again would require support from other organizations.

Word count: 20,786

Appendix A

Questionnaire: Selection tools in secondary school libraries

This questionnaire should be completed by the person in the school who has the main responsibility for selecting library resources.

Question 1.

Who takes part in selecting library resources for your library? *(Please tick all those that apply)*

- ☐ Librarian
- ☐ Other library staff
- ☐ Teaching staff
- ☐ Students
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Question 2.

Does your school library have a written collection policy? Yes/No *(circle that which applies)*

Does your school library have a buying plan? Yes/No

Question 3.

Does your school subscribe to any reviewing journals that are used for selection? (e.g. *Round the Bookshops*, *Magpies*, *New Zealand books*)

Yes/No *(circle that which applies). If yes, please list the journals below:*

Question 4.

Which of the following tools have you used to select resources in the last 6 months? *(Please tick all that apply)*

- ☐ Online booksellers e.g. Amazon
- ☐ Visits to bookshops
- ☐ Publishers' catalogues and publicity material
- ☐ Publishers' websites
- ☐ Review journals e.g. *Magpies*, *School Library Journal*
- ☐ Other serials e.g. *NZ Listener*, *Newspapers*.
- ☐ Recommendations from teachers

- ☐ Recommendations from students
 - ☐ Recommendations from other librarians
 - ☐ Publishers' sales representatives
 - ☐ Approval loans from booksellers
 - ☐ National library loans
 - ☐ Bibliographical lists of suggested/recommended resources for specific curriculum topics.
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
-
-

Question 5.

From the list above, please select the 4 that you use **most often** to find out about possible library purchases, and write them below.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____

Question 6.

For each of the sources identified in Question 5, please describe briefly the main reason you use these particular ones.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____

Question 7.

Again from the list in Question 4, please select the 4 sources you use **least often** to find out about possible library purchases, and write them below.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

Question 8.

For each of the sources identified in Question 7, please describe briefly the main reason why you do not use them, or use them infrequently.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

Question 9.

What is important to you when using selection tools?

Please choose a number from the following scale to indicate how important each aspect below is to you when choosing a selection tool.

Unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 Essential.

- ___ Appears regularly/regularly updated
- ___ Includes NZ resources
- ___ Includes reviews
- ___ Authoritative source
- ___ Includes examples of cover art, layout etc.
- ___ Items identified are available within NZ
- ___ Price information
- ___ Easy to use: e.g. well organized, searchable.
- ___ Ability to preview items
- ___ Good coverage of current publishing

Question 10.

The purpose of this question is to find out how your preferred selection methods perform when considered against the criteria identified as important in Question 9. Using the scale below, please rate your 4 preferred resources as selected in Question 5 against the criteria listed.

Please try to give a rating for each criterion, even for methods that you may not normally consider traditional selection tools (for example, recommendations from students and others), but leave blank if you feel the criterion does not apply.

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent	Source 1	Source 2	Source 3	Source 4
Appears regularly/regularly updated				
Includes NZ resources				
Includes reviews				
Authoritative source				
Includes examples of cover art, layout etc.				
Items identified are available within NZ				
Price information				
Easy to use: e.g. well organized, searchable.				
Ability to preview items				
Good coverage of current publishing				

Question 11.

In general, do you believe the range of selection tools available to you is adequate? Yes / No (*circle that which applies*)

Why or why not?

Question 12.

Would you like to receive information about the results of this survey?

Yes/No

If yes, please supply the following:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Thank you very much for your time and co-operation.

Please return this questionnaire using the enclosed envelope to:

Katherine Chisholm

PO Box 876

Palmerston North

Appendix B

Focus groups: interview schedule/discussion guide

1. How is selection of resources organized in your schools? How much are teachers and students involved? (e.g. notifying gaps, suggesting titles, budget control?)
2. Do you use a buying plan/collection development plan? Does it help?
3. Do you find selection of resources easy? Enjoyable? Hard? What do you like/dislike about it?
4. What selection tools do you use? What do you think of them?
5. What selection tools would you like to use? Why don't you use them?
6. What would your ideal selection tool be?
7. Are there any particular annoyances in selecting resources? What are they?
8. Any other comments?

Note: these questions are designed to stimulate discussion, rather than to be followed rigidly.

Appendix C

Cover letters/information sheets

1. QUESTIONNAIRE

Katherine Chisholm
PO Box 876
Palmerston North
Ph. 06 353 0150
e-mail: Katherine@slsys.co.nz

July 2004

Dear Librarian,

As a Masters in Library and Information Studies (MLIS) student with Victoria University, I am currently undertaking research into how New Zealand secondary school librarians select library resources.

The aim of the study is to find out which sources secondary school librarians use to identify and evaluate resources for their libraries, why these particular ones are used, how satisfactory they are, and what criteria they judge this by. Little research in this area has been done in New Zealand, and it is envisioned that the findings may be useful to organizations that support school libraries in providing better services and/or advice, as well as being of use and interest to school librarians themselves.

Part of this research involves a postal survey of secondary (Y9-13) school librarians, enquiring into their use of selection tools, and opinions about selection and selection tools. **This letter is to request your participation in this survey.** Participation is voluntary and your consent for me to use the information provided is presumed by the return of the completed questionnaire. You have been chosen as part of a random sample of secondary school librarians. I estimate that the survey should take 10 to 20 minutes to complete.

Returned survey forms will be seen only by myself or my supervisor, will be stored in a locked file, and will be destroyed within 2 years of completion of the project. A summary of results of the survey will be available by December 2004, and will be sent to respondents who request it.

The survey findings will be reported in an aggregated form, and no data will be attributed to an identifiable individual in the finished report. The results will be written up as a research report and submitted to the School of Information Management. A copy of the report will also be deposited with the Victoria University Library and will be available to be read within the Library building. It is also possible that the research may be published in library journals or presented at professional conferences.

Victoria University requires that all research undertaken by its staff or students be approved by their Human Ethics Committee, and approval has been obtained for this study.

If you have any queries or concerns about this research, please feel free to contact me, using the details above, or my supervisor, Professor Gary Gorman, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 600, Wellington, ph. 04 463 5782.

I thank you for your time in reading this letter, and very much hope that you will further assist me by completing this questionnaire.

Yours truly,

Katherine Chisholm

2. FOCUS GROUPS INFORMATION SHEET

Consent Form for Participation in Research

Selection tools in secondary school libraries

As a Masters in Library and Information Studies (MLIS) student with Victoria University, I am currently undertaking research into how New Zealand secondary school librarians select library resources.

The aim of the study is to find out which sources secondary school librarians use to identify and evaluate resources for their libraries, why these particular ones are used, how satisfactory they are, and what criteria they judge this by. Research in this area has not been done in New Zealand, and it is envisioned that the findings may be useful to organizations that support school libraries in providing better services and/or advice, as well as being of use and interest to school librarians themselves.

Part of this research involves focus group discussions with secondary (Y9-13) school librarians, surrounding their use of selection tools, and opinions about selection and selection tools. The sessions will involve between 3 to 10 people (excluding the researcher). The sessions will be taped, and notes will also be taken during the session. The sessions will take approximately one hour.

You may withdraw your consent at any stage before the final analysis of the data. You will not be required to give any reason. If you wish to withdraw, please contact me **before September 22nd, 2004.**

A transcript of the session will be prepared and a copy sent via e-mail to each participant so that they can check the accuracy of the transcript. If you have any corrections or alterations to suggest regarding your contribution, please contact me **before September 22nd, 2004.**

Notes, transcripts, and recordings of the sessions will be seen or heard only by myself or my supervisor, will be stored in a locked file, and will be destroyed (or wiped, in the case of the audiotapes) upon completion of the project. A summary of results of the research will be available by December 2004, and will be sent to participants who request it.

The findings will be reported in an aggregated form, and no data will be attributed to an identifiable individual in the finished report. The results will be written up as a research report and submitted to the School of Information Management. A copy of the report will also be deposited with the Victoria University Library and will be available to be read within the Library building. It is also possible that the research may be published in library journals or presented at professional conferences.

Victoria University requires that all research undertaken by its staff or students be approved by their Human Ethics Committee, and approval has been obtained for this study.

If you have any queries or concerns about this research, please feel free to contact me by phone on 06 353 0150 or by e-mail at Katherine@slsys.co.nz. You may also contact my supervisor, Professor Gary Gorman, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 600, Wellington, ph. 04 463 5782.

Katherine Chisholm.

3. FOCUS GROUPS CONSENT FORM (SEPARATE SHEET)

Please read, complete and sign the following:

I have been provided with adequate information relating to the nature and objectives of this research project. I have understood that information and have been given the opportunity to seek further clarification or explanations.

I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time before the final analysis of data without providing reasons. If I withdraw, my contributions will be deleted from the transcripts of the sessions.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential and reported only in an aggregated or a non-attributable form.

I understand that the information I have provided will be used only for this research project and that any further use will require my written consent.

I understand that when this research is completed the notes and transcripts taken will be destroyed and the audiotapes wiped within 2 years.

I consent to:

☐ participate in this research;

☐ allow the information and opinions I provide in this research to be used in conference reports or publications.

☐ I would like to receive a summary of results of this research. Address to be sent to:

Signed:

Name of participant (please print clearly):

Date:

Appendix D

Publication details and contact details: cited selection tools

1. JOURNALS

ALAN review. Athens, Ga.: Assembly on Literature for Adolescents, National Council of Teachers of English. (three times per year).

Around the bookshops: a buying guide for schools. Wellington: Marigold Enterprises. (quarterly).

Booknotes. Wellington: New Zealand Book Council. (five times per year).

Fiction focus: new titles for teenagers. East Perth, W.A.: Services Branch Curriculum directorate, Ministry of Education. (three times per year).

Good book guide. London, England: The Good Book Guide. (monthly).

Good reading. Chicago, Ill.: Committee on College Reading of the National Council of Teachers of English. (irregular).

Landfall. Christchurch, N.Z.: Caxton Press. (semiannual).

Literary Review. London, England: Literary Review and Quarto. (monthly).

The Literature base. Victoria Park, W.A.: Magpies Magazine. (quarterly).

London Review of Books. London, England: LRB Ltd. (biweekly).

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