The Survey:  
The Mountain Plains Library Association Continuing Education/Training Survey, comprised of 25 questions, was posted on the University of Virginia free survey site in November 2001. The survey was answered by 283 individuals.

Characteristics of the respondents:
- 42% were public librarians, 24% academic, 15% school, and 7% special.
- All but 12 respondents were from the MPLA region with the states of Kansas, Colorado, North Dakota, and South Dakota accounting for 55%.
- 45% were MPLA members.
- 80% were experienced librarians (more than 5 yrs. experience) with 44% falling in the experience range of 5-20 years.
- 78% have a masters degree in library science.

Continuing education experience during the previous 12 months:
- 95% attended at least one continuing education activity with 62% attending from one to five.
- The subject matter of the continuing education activities was varied with the majority of responses falling into one of three general categories: Specific subject areas (archives, cat., ref, etc.) – 23%; Mgt./Admn. – 16%; Technology issues – 19%.
- About 20% of the respondents attended continuing education activities as part of a conference or consortium activity.
- Most activities were delivered in traditional formats—58% lecture and 30% hands-on. Online, teleconference, and videoconferences accounted for only 12%.
- 88% of the activities were either whole or partly funded by employers or grants.

Internet and teleconference Access:
- 99.6% have access to the Internet either at home or work.
- 39% have access to satellite connections for delivery of teleconferences at work and 55% have access within their community.

Why attend continuing education activities:
- Respondents pursue continuing education opportunities chiefly for personal growth or job satisfaction and to keep up with changes in the profession.

Factors important in attendance at continued education programs:
- topic, location and cost were the most important factors.
- Hands-on training was the preferred method of delivery; however, 192 individuals said that the method of delivery was dependant upon the topic.
• 47% said the ideal length of a workshop is dependant upon the topic.

**How well are training and skills development needs being met by various entities:**
• A majority of respondents judged that their training and skills needs were being met very well by their employers, state libraries, state library associations, regional systems, and MPLA.

**What role should MPLA have in fulfilling continuing education needs:**
• The most important role for MPLA is to serve as a clearinghouse for Continuing Education opportunities in the MPLA region.

**What topics are of most interest to the respondents:**
• On a weighted basis, the single most popular broad subject of interest (out of 25 choices) for CE offerings is “collection development/management.”

**Other:**
• 37 comments/suggestions were offered to the committee.
• 58 individuals volunteered to provide continuing education opportunities.

**OBSERVATIONS :**
• Some of the survey questions did not translate well to the online environment and that made analysis of the results for those questions a challenge.
• Continuing Education activities are not utilizing the internet as much as they could. This is shown by only 5.47% of Continuing Education activities being delivered online while 99.65% of librarians have regular access to the internet either at work or at home.
• Teleconferences presently do not account for a large number of continuing education offerings; however, there is potential for an increase in this method of delivery as 39% of the respondents have access to satellite connections at their place of work and 55% have access in their community.
• MPLA clearly has a role to play in Continuing Education. According to respondents, MPLA should primarily act as a clearinghouse for Continuing Education opportunities in the MPLA region and secondarily share information (such as from this survey) and offer conference and pre-conference sessions.
• Surprisingly, the single most popular broad subject of interest (out of 25 choices) for Continuing Education offerings is “collection development/management.” There were more specific topics suggested in this area than in any other broad category.