

## Changes in Medical Librarianship: A Content Analysis of Job Advertisements in the *MLA News*, 1961–1977

BY JOSEPH W. PALMER, *Assistant Professor\**

*School of Information and Library Studies  
State University of New York at Buffalo  
Amherst, New York*

DURING the years that have elapsed since the initiation of job advertisements in the *MLA News* in 1961, the field of medical librarianship has experienced revolutionary changes. Based upon the assumption that changes in the profession would be reflected in these advertisements, as would be the degree and chronology of change, a content analysis of job advertisements in the *MLA News* was performed.

Factors selected for study were: the number of positions advertised, salary, and mention within the advertisement of automation, computer-based reference service, and audiovisual or multimedia services. At times, it was difficult to decide whether a description belonged in the reference or automation category. In such cases a decision was made based upon the overall content of the advertisement. The results of the analysis are summarized in Table 1.

### NUMBER OF POSITIONS ADVERTISED

A rise in the number of listings occurred during the 1960s. The number peaked at 133 in 1967, declined sharply from 102 to 64 in 1971, and reached a nadir of 53 in 1972. A similar decline occurred nationally throughout the library profession, as U.S. educational institutions were forced to begin austerity budgeting [1].

A rapid and continued increase in the number of listings began in 1974, due in part to the *MLA News*' shift from four to eleven issues a year. This makes it a more satisfactory agency for personnel recruitment. Changes in the "fair employment" laws may also be responsible for the increased advertising. It would be interesting to learn both the reasons for increased listings and the proportion of listed positions that are actually filled through the newsletter.

\*Formerly Assistant Librarian, Louis Calder Memorial Library, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida.

### SALARIES

Salaries reflected the inflationary spiral. The mean salary (based on the minimum figure quoted within an advertisement) rose uninterruptedly from \$5,366 in 1961 to \$12,448 in 1977.

### AUTOMATION

Advertisements began to mention automation in 1965. Advertisers were largely university libraries experimenting independently of each other with automation of technical services or serials control or both. A pathfinder in this area was Washington University, St. Louis—one of the earliest and most frequent advertisers. The signing of the Medical Library Assistance Act (MLAA) into law in October 1965 was a great stimulus to automation experiments, providing grants for research and development.

The substantial increase in mentions of automation in 1975 and 1977 can be attributed to the shift from autonomous to cooperative automation programs and, in particular, to the proliferation of OCLC. Indeed, in 1977 twenty-six of the forty-seven positions that mentioned automation referred to OCLC by name. In 1976 ten out of twenty-one mentioned OCLC, as did twelve out of thirty-three in 1975—the first year OCLC was mentioned.

### COMPUTER-BASED REFERENCE

MEDLARS started in 1964 and began decentralizing in 1965, when contracts were awarded to the University of Colorado and UCLA. When the Regional Medical Library Program was initiated in 1967, MEDLARS formulation centers were established at regional medical libraries. By 1968 twelve libraries were formulating MEDLARS searches.

During the five-year period from 1967 to 1971, eighteen different organizations advertised positions that mentioned computer-based reference service. Five of these were pharmaceutical companies developing their private data bases. Most of the rest were MEDLARS formulation stations.

The dramatic intensification of interest in automated reference service beginning in 1972 can be traced to the introduction of MEDLINE in October 1971. By February 1972 fifty-five cities had access to MEDLINE. As computer capacity developed, service was extended to larger hospital libraries and other institutions. With the formation of consortia, smaller medical libraries joined in access to MEDLINE. By 1977 over six hundred

## BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

TABLE 1

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS ADVERTISED IN THE *MLA NEWS*, 1961-1977

No. of issues	Year	No. of positions	Mean salary*	Include or mention:		
				Automation†	Computerized reference	AV
1	1961	16	\$5366	—	—	—
3	1962	48	5452	—	—	—
3	1963	59	5991	—	—	—
4	1964	65	6353	—	—	—
4	1965	81	6603	7 (9%)	—	—
4	1966	106	6769	15 (14%)	—	—
4	1967	133	7403	11 (8%)	7 (5%)	—
4	1968	127	7831	12 (9%)	14 (11%)	—
4	1969	112	8608	8 (7%)	9 (8%)	1 (1%)
4	1970	102	9327	8 (8%)	9 (9%)	—
4	1971	64	9845	5 (8%)	2 (3%)	—
4	1972	53	10069	7 (13%)	9 (17%)	3 (6%)
5	1973	59	11071	5 (8%)	19 (32%)	6 (10%)
11	1974	84	11484	10 (12%)	27 (32%)	12 (14%)
11	1975	134	11888	33 (25%)	29 (22%)	28 (21%)
12	1976	163	12338	21 (13%)	60 (37%)	41 (25%)
11	1977	183	12448	47 (26%)	79 (43%)	44 (24%)

\*Salary figures are based on the minimum salary quoted in each advertisement.

†Automation excludes items that are basically forms of reference service, e.g., MEDLARS, MEDLINE, SDC.

institutions were part of the on-line network and an impressive 43% of all advertised positions mentioned automated reference service.

#### AV MEDIA AND SERVICES

During the eleven-year period from 1961 to 1971, only one advertisement mentioned audiovisual media and services. By 1977 almost a quarter of all advertisements mentioned them. This rapid development can be attributed to several factors.

1. The increased emphasis on mediated instruction that began in the sixties with the preparation of paraprofessionals and subsequently extended to all levels of medical education.
2. Innovative and energetic media programs of the National Medical Audiovisual Center and the Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications.
3. Changes in 1970 of grant provisions of the MLAA. Prior to 1970 most grants were awarded to larger libraries for the expansion of facilities, resources, and services. Under the revisions two types of grants were provided. Improvement grants were made to aid the development of smaller libraries and

to encourage the formation of consortia among them. These consortia frequently used grant funds to establish media collections. Resource project grants were intended to "stimulate established libraries to emphasize new, expanded or improved services" [2]. Thus, larger libraries could obtain funds to subsidize "start-up costs of a new medical library service." Medical libraries, eager to take advantage of federal monies, frequently chose to establish media programs in order to obtain grant awards.

#### CONCLUSION

During the six-year period from 1965 to 1970, job advertisements in the *MLA News* reflected a growing interest in library automation and computer-based reference service. The period was marked by libraries working independently to automate their own technical services activities and, in the case of pharmaceutical companies, to develop their own reference data bases. These years also saw the beginnings of networking in medical libraries, with the establishment of the Regional Medical Library Program and MEDLARS formulation centers. A major stimulus to these developments was the 1965 MLAA.

During these years there was a marked increase in positions listed, followed by a leveling off and a drastic decline in 1971 and 1972.

After 1971 networking and cooperation contributed to a great increase in mentions of automation and on-line reference service. These were related to the institution and expansion of MEDLINE, new grant provisions that encouraged the development of consortia, and the proliferation of OCLC. As a result of changes in medical education, grant provisions, and the activities of media divisions of the National Library of Medicine, mentions of audiovisual media and services began and exhibited a phenomenal increase.

That dramatic changes have been taking place in medical librarianship since 1961 has been and continues to be reflected by job advertisements in the *MLA News*.

## REFERENCES

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2. *Communication in the Service of American Health: A Bicentennial Report from the National Library of Medicine*. Bethesda, Md., National Institutes of Health, 1966. p. 55.

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### The Papers of Senator Lister Hill at the University of Alabama in Birmingham\*

BY JAMES A. THOMPSON, *Circulation Librarian*  
*Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences*

MICHAEL R. KRONENFELD,  
*Public Health Librarian*  
*Department of Public Health*

*The University of Alabama in Birmingham*  
*Birmingham, Alabama*

IN January of 1978 Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences at the University of Alabama in Birmingham (UAB) completed the processing and arrangement of the personal papers of Senator Lister Hill of Alabama. Senator Hill represented Alabama in the United States Congress for forty-

six years (1923-1937, U.S. House; 1938-1968, U.S. Senate) and in his last fifteen years was the most powerful member of the Senate regarding health-related issues. The collection of papers represents the senator's correspondence during the entire forty-six years. It consists primarily of the originals of correspondence to Hill with carbons of his replies attached. Because of his significant contributions, particularly in the area of health, UAB and the National Library of Medicine became interested in the documentation of the senator's contributions. Therefore NLM awarded a four-year contract to UAB for the execution of the project. The first two years of the contract were devoted to the processing and arranging of the Hill papers by the Lister Hill Library, and the final two years focused on the writing of a monograph on Senator Hill's health-related activities by Dr. Virginia Hamilton, chairman of the UAB history department.

The Lister Hill Library was particularly interested in this project for several reasons. First, the support and encouragement of Senator Hill from Washington was of great value in the development of the UAB Medical Center and also its medical library, which bears his name. This project was viewed as an opportunity for the university and the library to further honor his contributions here. Second, Lister Hill Library has had a strong interest in the history of medicine. Its rare book collection, Reynolds Historical Library, is one of the outstanding medical rare book collections in this country. The Alabama Museum of the Health Sciences is part of the Lister Hill Library and gathers not only medical instruments, but papers, notebooks, and other relevant historical material of Alabama physicians. Lister Hill, "Mr. Health" in the U.S. Senate for fourteen years (1955-1968), played a very important role in the development of health care and in the growth of medical research in this period [1]. An example of the high regard with which he was held is the tribute given to the senator in the January 25, 1968, issue of the *Bulletin of the Association of American Medical Colleges*, which states:

Known as the "Statesman for Health," Hill, the son of a doctor whom he proudly remembers as one of the very first to successfully operate on the human heart, has done more to advance the health of our people and to promote the art and science of medicine in the United States and for all mankind than any other individual [2].

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Because of his great contributions in the field of health, both NLM and the Lister Hill Library felt