Information Systems at Guide Dogs for the Blind Association

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report
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Executive Summary

Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA) has large amounts of information for both internal and external use. However, the information was not organized well, making it difficult to use efficiently. Most of the staff did not know what information was available both internally and externally, or how to find it if they needed it. The goal of the Information Systems at GDBA project was to evaluate the information system already used and to make recommendations for either improving the existing system or creating an entirely new one.

The information system in use at GDBA at the time of this project had to be evaluated. We interviewed management staff and their assistants located at the GDBA Headquarters in Reading and in two regional centers, Wokingham and Hindhead, in addition to distributing surveys to the management staff, supervisors, and rehabilitation workers in all other GDBA sites across the United Kingdom. The results of our interviews and surveys gave us the basis for our recommendations concerning the improvement of the existing system and the addition of some new elements.

Our first step was to identify the information needs of the GDBA staff. While many of those needs were specific to the functions of the various departments, two were identified that were prevalent throughout the staff questioned. Filters for incoming information from magazines and journals and an easier and less time consuming way to obtain information concerning government policies and laws were needs not addressed by the existing system.

Although we found the existing system to have some useful aspects, one problem with it was that the employees did not know how to use it to its fullest extent. GDBA had

an internal computer network with Internet accessibility available to the employees. In addition, they subscribed to an external information service provided by Action for Blind People (ABP). Based on survey and interview data, we concluded that use of both of these information sources could be increased by requiring that all staff go through training in both areas.

In addition to providing training, we concluded that it would benefit GDBA to create a centralized, physical library located at the Rehabilitation School in Hindhead. This library would contain expensive reference materials and be maintained by an Information Officer reporting to the Chief Executive Officer. This Information Officer would also create and maintain an electronic index of GDBA's holdings and have knowledge of government policy and laws in order to advise employees who need it.

Abstract

This report describes the analysis of the information system used at Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA) at the time of this project and the recommendations made based on the information gathered from surveys and interviews. Taking into consideration what information the staff needed and how they used the existing services, we developed recommendations to expand the use of information at GDBA. Usability, time to implement, and cost of the system were kept in mind during the entire process.

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1.0 Introduction

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA) is a volunteer-based organization with centers located throughout the United Kingdom (see Appendix B). For over sixty years the GDBA has provided guide dogs and other services for the blind and visually impaired. In addition to breeding and training guide dogs, other services include long cane training, help with household tasks, reading and writing instruction, and dog trainer education. GDBA also operates a number of resource centers where the visually impaired can seek professional advice and experiment with new equipment.

Because of the variety of services that GDBA provides, information in various fields is often needed by staff members. Individuals each have their own small libraries in their offices, but it is difficult to organize this sea of information in a manner that allows easy access to the large staff at GDBA. Because of this fact, it is difficult for anyone in the association looking for specific information to find it. In addition, staff members are not familiar with sources of information outside of GDBA that might be helpful to them.

In order to expand the information available to staff members, GDBA is considering establishing a centralized library. In addition, they currently have a networked computer system that could be used to implement an electronic index of the books and documents scattered throughout the organization. Our project is to make the staff at GDBA aware of the holdings that exist within their organization, and to determine the best way for them to make use of the internal and external information that is available. Our starting point will be to conduct a survey to determine what resources GDBA staff members possess, use, and want. We will also research different options GDBA has in setting up an index, searching and retrieving indexed information, and storage of the information. After these steps are complete we will propose a library

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system which best for GDBA. By understanding the needs of GDBA and researching

innovations in information technology, a library system can be found that would enable

the staff at GDBA to fully utilize the information resources around them.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA) is considering the implementation of a centralized library system. Our literature review describes various aspects of information cataloging and retrieval. Areas such as database and indexing procedure, intranets, and human-computer interaction are presented. Survey methods used to obtain information about the needs of GDBA are also discussed.

2.2 Information Management Systems

Information management is an important part of an organization. Therefore, the more efficiently records are created and maintained, the better the organization runs. Although it might be expensive to upgrade or install an information management system, the organization will benefit because a system will save time and space (Spokes, 1993).

Information is stored and managed in manual and electronic systems. Manual information systems are any filing systems that use paper, whereas electronic information systems store records in a computer file or in files that track paper files. The user should understand both systems because, although many paper filing systems are in the process of being switched to electronic systems, many are still used today and their format is similar to those that are electronic (Waner, 1991).

2.2.1 Manual Information Systems

Manual information systems are the basis for electronic information systems. According to Waner (1991), learning how to use a manual filing system helps interested

people to understand how an electronic filing system works. The individual should learn indexing, coding, cross-referencing, requisitioning, charging-out, and transferring procedures. These skills should also be used to perform the same operations on electronic information systems in order to see the similarities and differences between those and manual systems (Waner, 1991).

2.2.2 Benefits of a Record Management System

Whether paper or electronic, a record management system can be justified by its benefits. An electronic information system is much more space efficient than a paper filing system. Filing and retrieval times are significantly reduced as well. Additionally, Spokes (1993), indicates that management of records is easier and quicker, and an electronic information system has disaster recovery in the form of backup files. It is easy and quick to backup an electronic information system, while backing up a paper filing system would be cumbersome (Spokes, 1993).

2.2.3 Information Retrieval

There have been many methods created for electronic libraries and information retrieval, including databases and other systems. Electronic libraries and information retrieval go together when integrating an information system in an office environment. Databases make up the electronic libraries and are used to store the information in the form of text and images and information retrieval is comprised of different techniques of finding the information that is requested and displaying it for the user to view (Entlich, 1997).

2.3 Databases

In order to employ a database, it is important to know how one works. According to Waner (1991), a database is structured by data items, fields, records, and files. A file is made of a set of records, fields that contain data items compose a record, and a data item is the value of the field (Waner, 1991). An example of a database would be the records of the students that attend WPI. Each student has his or her own record, and these records contain fields. Example fields would be name, major, year, and social security number. A data item would be a particular student name, major, year, or social security number. All of these records could be stored in a file called "students."

2.3.1 Learning to Use a Database

In addition to knowing what a database is, it is important to know how to use one. Waner (1991) suggests that, when learning how to use an electronic database, the following tasks should be performed:

1. Plan a database structure.

2. Create a database file.

3. Add or delete records in the database file.

4. Edit existing records in the database file.

5. Combine database files.

6. Produce a report.

7. Backup a database file.

8. Explain the relationship of database files to the overall efficiency of the workplace and the systems approach.

2.3.2 Building a Database

In order to build a database that fits the needs of a company, the following questions should be asked (Waner, 1991):

1. What types of information will be included in the database?

2. Who will use the information?

3. How often will the information be accessed?

4. How will the information be used?

    a. Will it be used to process transactions, such as: sales and inventory? Or

    b. Will it be used as a decision support system?

2.3.3 Database Functions

After these questions are answered and data are inputted into the database, there are several functions that can be utilized. Waner (1991) defines four of these functions that she believes are essential in order to utilize all the benefits of an electronic information system: sorting or indexing, queries or searches, updating a database, and printing a database. Sorting arranges the records by writing a new file in which the records are ordered by a certain criterion, while indexing sorts the records. This requires no movement of the records, therefore a new file does not need to be made. Queries and searches filter out the records the user requested when using the index (Waner, 1991).

2.4 Indexing

Indexing is an integral part of data organization. An index is simply an ordered list of words or phrases, such as bibliographical records and key subject words, that can lead the user to the knowledge that he desires in a timely fashion (Morgan, 1998). After an indexer has attempted to list every term of possible interest to a document's user,

subsequent researchers look at the index rather than the entire text and scan varied

resources for desired data. Indexes can be in either paper or electronic form, but both are

established using similar techniques.

2.4.1 Steps to Creating an Index

According to Purcell (1991), there are six steps to proper indexing. Ground rules

must be established first as to the style of the format and the filing rules. Next, the level

of depth of the index (the number and complexity of entries) must be determined. After

these decisions have been made, the indexer must become familiar with the content of the

materials that he will be indexing so as to choose the proper key words to record. When

this is done, the actual indexing can take place, followed by a verification to exclude any

duplication or errors. Lastly, any final formatting is done (Purcell, 1991).

2.4.2 Index Complexity

Before the actual indexing can take place, many decisions about the form of the

index must be made. According to MacDougal (1996, p.281), "Indexing is an art rather

than a precise science." The implication of this is that there is no objective way to make

the decisions involved in the creation of the index. Many factors must be taken into

account by the indexer in order to create the best index for his application. Often one

benefit, such as rapid search time or accuracy of the search, is traded for another based on

the user's primary needs. First, decisions must be made as to the complexity of the index.

The more complex the index is, the more accurate the searches will be, but the longer the

search will take. If only a small number of sources are to be indexed this is does not

really have to be taken into account, but in larger libraries it can be very important.

GDBA does have a great number of items to be indexed, and because both time and

accuracy of the search would be valued by the organization, an intermediate degree of complexity would be best.

2.4.3 Selection of Access Points

After decisions are made concerning the complexity of the index, access points by which the records are sorted must be selected. This is perhaps the most difficult part of indexing. Items such as the author's name and title of the work are simple to determine, but there also may be access points for reference codes, places, subjects, or in accordance with a classification scheme (Ribiero, 1996). In order to delineate these terms, the indexer employs an "indexing language," defined by Purcell (1991, p.392) as "the directions for using a list of subject headings or a set of descriptors in a thesaurus." This includes preferred terms for the actual listing and synonyms and related terms that get "see" references (Purcell, 1991).

2.4.4 Indexing Languages

There are three types of indexing languages; controlled, free, and natural. Controlled indexing languages are those that have indexing criteria defined beforehand for consistency purposes. This is done through the creation of authority lists that establish select subject headings that may be used as access points. Free indexing languages allow for any word or term that suits the subject to be used as an access point. Natural language indexing is a type of free indexing language that uses the language of the archived document in the selection of access points (Purcell, 1991).

2.4.4.1 The Dewey Decimal Classification

The main type of controlled indexing language used in libraries is the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC). The Dewey Decimal Classification has been in existance

since 1876. Chan (1981) states that over 85 percent of all libraries in the United States and Canada use the DDC. The DDC is made up of 10 main classes, subdivided decimally to make a total of 1000 categories. An alphabetical subject index ranging from 000 to 999 is the heart of the DDC. The ten main classes are numbered 0 through 9 and are displayed as the first number in the three number series. This classification progresses from general to specific where each level of division is indicated by the addition of a new digit. Each of the ten classes are divided into a hierarchical classification structure. Every digit in the identification number represents another subcategory. An example of the application of the DDC is that 516 is the notation for geometry. The five stands for the class of Pure Sciences, the one stands for the subclass of Mathematics, and the six stands for Geometry. Numbers are added until a specific document is fully described. The DDC is a terrific tool for a large library with a wide variety of subject headings (Chan, 1981) and will be considered for possible use at GDBA.

2.4.4.2 The Library of Congress Classification

Another widely used controlled indexing language is the Library of Congress Classification (LCC). The Library of Congress Classification was created in 1897 and was developed by the collective minds of a large group of people managed by J.C.M. Hanson and Charles Martel. As described by Chan (1981), the LCC consists of twenty-one classes. Each class is divided into subclasses which represent major branches of the main class. These subclasses are divided into divisions to accommodate all categories. The divisions are further classified as either form, place, time, or subject. The LLC forms a hierarchical structure ranging from general to specific. The main classes are categorized by letters ranging from A to Z. The subclasses retain their main class letter but follow it by another letter starting with A (for example, QA) and the divisions are

classified by numbers ranging from 0 to 999. The entire system was designed specifically for the Library of Congress collection, but many other organizations have found it useful throughout the years (Chan, 1981). The LCC will be considered for use at GDBA in addition to the DCC.

2.4.4.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Use of Indexing Languages

There are several advantages and disadvantages of both controlled and natural indexing languages. The main problem with a controlled indexing language is that the number of access points is naturally reduced, therefore it can be difficult for the user to find the material that he desires. This can be reduced by exhaustive indexing efforts, but there is always a moderate probability that access points in the authority list will not represent the concepts required by the user's queries. In this respect, a free indexing system can be more effective, but does not guarantee that all information retrieved is relevant. In addition, because there are no limits on the number of words that can be searched for, the user never knows when he should stop an unsuccessful search and rule out the possibility of other access points being capable of retrieving relevant information. Another problem with free indexing languages is that they are more likely than controlled languages to retrieve irrelevant information. The user then has to take the time to read each document to determine which ones are useful or not, whereas a more precise search would have eliminated that extra time expense (Ribiero, 1996).

2.4.5 Paper versus Electronic Indices

After decisions are made concerning the format of the index, it must then be decided how users will have access to the index. Either a paper or electronic form can be used. There are many factors influencing this choice. The main factor to be considered is ease of access. While many users can connect to an online index at the same time, only

one person can use a paper index. There may be several copies of the index, but each can still only be used by one person, and generally only in the location where the index is kept. Online indices can be accessed wherever there is an Internet connection, but along with this fact is the reality that if the network goes down due to a power failure or other difficulties, access is therefore limited (Sylvia & Lesher, 1994).

Another factor to be taken into account in the decision to create a paper or electronic index is the scope of possible information searches. Generally, paper indices can be searched for only one specific term at a time. In addition, because paper indices are generally bound in one to five year increments, the search is further limited. Online indices can search many years at once, and reduce the time necessary to find necessary information. The one main advantage that paper indices have over online ones is that although they are not as precise when the user knows exactly what he is looking for, they can be useful when he is browsing for possible topics. Flipping through a paper volume takes more time than entering a keyword into a computer, but it can lead to the discovery of new information that the user might not have realized that he wanted (Sylvia & Lesher, 1994).

2.4.6 Application of an Indexing System at GDBA

Because the needs of GDBA are such that staff members will generally only require specific kinds of information, and sites are scattered in many locations throughout the United Kingdom, it appears that an electronic index would be the most advantageous type for the organization to employ. In addition, the installation of this type of indexing system shows promise for an increase in the number of GDBA employees that will be willing to access the information available to them. In a recent case study, it was shown that the use of serials at the St. Mary's University Library greatly increased when online

indices were installed, and users actually came to dislike the paper indices from past

years that were still available. Interlibrary loan use increased also because of the ease of

accessing the catalogues of other libraries online (Sylvia & Lesher, 1994). This fact is

especially relevant to GDBA because interlibrary loans would be useful between its

scattered sites.

2.5 Intranets

Along with electronic indices, another tool for easing the strain of many users at

widespread locations would be the creation of an intranet. An intranet is an internal

network that uses the same interface as the Internet to provide an information system.

Because it uses the communication protocols of the Internet, an intranet can provide

almost every type of computer or operating system with the same interface. Ho (1997)

agrees with this by stating that,

"By using the standard interface of the World Wide Web, information can be
presented in the same way to every computer within the organization. Therefore, using
the existing infrastructure of the Internet, an intranet can link up all the computers,
software, and databases of an organization that are spread throughout the world into a
single system that enables employees to find information more readily (Ho, 1997)."

Unlike the Internet, an intranet limits the access of the information to those within the

organization, while allowing employees to access the Internet. It is, in essence, a private

Internet.

2.5.1 Requirements

The are certain requirements that must be met in order to create an intranet. First,

there must be a working internal network with a main computer, called a server, that

provides services for the personal computers connected to the network. Additionally,

Web server software used to store and distribute the information in the appropriate format

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must be in place and the clients must have Web applications or browsers for accessing and reading the information. Basically, all that is required is a network, a server, a client, and server and browser software (Siegal & Warner, 1998).

2.5.2 Expense

Although some software and hardware is required to create an intranet, most companies today already possess some of these items. An intranet is affordable because it works off an existing network (Blackwood, 1997.) If the organization already has a network, then all it needs is the intranet-specific software. This software can range from freeware to costing thousands of dollars. If cost is important, it should be noted that a great amount of money can be saved overall because an intranet can start off small and be upgraded, instead of spending money on a new system when it becomes outdated or too small. An intranet's cost is significantly less that the average cost of GroupWare, an alternative. GroupWare is an application that uses the network for information dispersal, but uses its own communication protocols. In general, an intranet tends to be an affordable option with comparable benefits, as opposed to GroupWare (Blackwood, 1997).

2.5.3 Problems

An intranet does have problems also, the biggest of which, according to Ho (1997), is maintenance. Someone must have the responsibility of maintenance, which entails the design and upgrade of the hardware and software. These responsibilities are not very different from the maintenance and upkeep of the existing network, therefore extra staff might not be hired. This could create more work for an already over-worked staff (Ho, 1997). Another problem with an intranet could be inexperienced or computer-

illiterate users simply not utilizing it or not utilizing it correctly. This problem exists with

any computer software solution, and will have to be addressed by the organization. Since

an intranet uses the same protocol as the Internet, the user will be working in a point-and-

click environment that is easier to use and learn than much of the software available for

purchase today.

2.5.4 Advantages

An intranet has many advantages that outweigh the few problems it has. An

advantage that Rachel (1998) noted is that through Internet technology employees can

remotely connect privately and securely to their organization's intranet. This remote

access enables organizations with multiple sites to share information. In addition, an

intranet would reduce training costs in comparison to other information and indexing

systems, because web browsers have an easily learned interface and can be used by any

computer platform (Rachel, 1998). An intranet is also easily expandable. Indeed, it can

start with one server and client, and make room for future expansion and technological

advances. It will also increase efficiency by reducing the amount of time employees

spend finding information (Ho, 1997). Furthermore, an intranet is flexible and versatile,

in that it will work with any operating system using one common interface (Ho, 1997).

With all the advantages of an intranet it is one of most cost effective, efficient, flexible,

and user-friendly ways to implement an information system.

2.5.5 Relevance of An Intranet to GDBA

One choice GDBA has for organizing their information is to use an intranet. This

would be one smart choice for GDBA because it provides an easy way to link their 25

sites into one central information system. An intranet is affordable and will work with

GDBA's existing network and computer platform. Because it uses a web protocol it has a user-friendly interface which most people are familiar with. It is also very flexible and can be molded into a system that will meet all of GDBA's indexing and external information needs.

2.6 Human Factors in Information Systems

A major consideration to be taken into account before implementing any degree of computerization into file organization is employee interaction with the new system. This area, termed "Human Factors in Information Systems" (HFIS), has been studied extensively. Disciplines contributing to HFIS include Computer Science (CS), Management Information Systems (MIS), Human Factors Engineering (HFE), and Computer-Human Interaction (CHI). In her 1991 review of the topic, Carey (1991) delineated the impact that each discipline has on HFIS; CS deals with increasing computer efficiency, MIS expands organizational effectiveness through information, HFE optimizes system performance by reducing human error, and CHI examines user interface in order to increase effectiveness. She stated that, collectively "HFIS is about increasing user effectiveness within an organization by enhancing the user interface and other human-computer contact such as training, and end-user involvement in the system development process. (Carey, 1991, p. 11) A thorough understanding of HFIS can be used to increase the efficaciousness of information systems that are already in place, along with eliminating any uncertainty in the creation of new systems.

One area that HFIS does not seem to take into account is the user's attitude toward the computer. A filing system cannot be updated if the staff is reluctant to change. An understanding of the factors contributing to people's attitudes towards computers can help to alleviate any reluctance towards new technology.

2.6.1 Integration of Technology

According to Gilbert (1996), there are three stages of the integration of technology into a university; automation of current tasks, enhancement of current tasks, and the changing of core functions. These stages seem to be applicable to almost any trade. In the first, computers are introduced for applications such as payroll, and do not have much impact on the running of the rest of the business. In the second, important tasks are automated and quality is improved, (An example of this is using software to replace handwriting to make presentation materials). In the third, new applications, such as spreadsheets, are developed in order to fully replace old practices (Gilbert, 1996).

2.6.2 Influences on People's Attitudes Toward Computers

As new technology is introduced, user trepidation is bound to increase. There are many hypotheses as to why this happens. In his 1997 study, Harris suggested five influences on the attitudes of people towards computers. First, organization culture can be divided into two areas; power distance and perceived autonomy. Harris (1991) defined power distance as "the extent to which members of an organization accept that the power in their organization is distributed unequally," (Harris, 1991, p. 96) and perceived autonomy as "the extent to which written rules, procedures and instructions are used to define rules and describe jobs (p. 96)." The connected hypotheses are that people who believe that their organization culture contains a lower power distance, or high autonomy, will have more positive attitudes towards computers than those who perceive otherwise will.

The next influence on user attitudes is task characteristics. Individuals who have less structured tasks (more variety, less pre-defined procedures) will be more apt to have an increased involvement with computers. Likewise, people who are involved with

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computers as products should also have more positive interactions with the machines than those who do not (Harris, 1991).

The personality of the user is also a proposed influence. Harris (1991) suggested that high risk-takers and those tending towards nonconformity are more likely to display low levels of computer anxiety. Lastly, he hypothesized that people with low computer anxiety will have more positive attitudes towards computers (Harris, 1991).

2.6.3 Summary of HFIS

All of these hypotheses were tested in a 1991 survey of Hong Kong educators and conclusions were supported by statistical analysis of the results. Of the twelve originally put forth, five hypothesis received statistical support; task variety and involvement with computers as products are likely to result in positive attitudes towards the machines, while dependent personalities, low autonomy in their work or anxiety towards computers lead people to feel negative towards them (Harris, 1991). Better understanding of the reasons behind user attitudes can facilitate the advancement of information technology by suggesting methods of integrating and teaching computer use in the workplace which are tailored to the needs of employees.

2.7 Survey Methods

In order to understand the needs of GDBA, we will conduct a survey of individuals within the organization. In order to obtain appropriate results and to retain a high response rate, certain practices can be employed when conducting a survey. If the correct methods are not followed, the survey can portray false information. The protocols we applied in the creation of our survey include the Total Design Method, the Social Exchange Theory, and other general social science methods.

2.7.1 Total Design Method

The Total Design Method (TDM), as seen in Dillman (1978), is a technique for constructing a methodology. The TDM maps out every aspect of the method used in a project. By mapping out the entire process, weak links are identified and can be avoided. The process of mapping is done by brainstorming, and incorporates pretesting. Pretesting is where many weak links are found. A pretest is conducted in a limited environment after a draft of the survey is created. The results of the pretest show strengths and weaknesses of the survey method that have to be expanded upon or eliminated. The survey is then revised due to the results of the pretest and can be distributed or pretested again. General social science methods are also incorporated into the TDM (Dillman, 1978).

2.7.2 General Social Science Methods

The structure of creating and conducting the survey will center around a social science method format. The social science method format consists of five parts, Method, Instrument, Collection, Analysis, and Presentation, and it is a design for a generic methodology. An acronym that can be used to describe the social science method is MICAP. The Method is what type of format will be used to gain information. Examples of methods are interviews, a survey, or focus groups. The Instrument is what is used to get the necessary information. In surveys it would be a copy of the survey that individuals had to complete. The instrument should clearly show the goals of the method through the questions. The Collection of information is based on the people or frame chosen and the method being used. Individuals respond to questions in surveys differently and at varying speeds which puts limitations on the collection of data. The mechanics of different methods have an effect on the collection as well. In surveys, the

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timing and presentation must be considered. How the material is presented and the time

frame from distribution to collection cannot inconvenience or offend the person taking

the survey or it will not be completed. The Analysis of the data collected depends on

what data is collected, what data is needed to fulfill the goals, what is the best way to

report the information, and what is available to give the report. How the report is

constructed depends on whether the information is quantitative or qualitative. In

quantitative analysis, Microsoft Excel or SPSS can be used, in qualitative analysis,

Nudist or Ethnography must be incorporated. The Presentation is an interpretation of the

statistics gathered through the collection and then analyzed. Graphs and written reports

highlight and support the information covered but do not distract from the theme of the

presentation. MICAP is an outline for the structure of a methodology. In that structure,

an instrument is determined, but the actual construction of the instrument depends on the

social exchange theory (Berg, 1998).

2.7.3 Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory is a cost-benefit analysis that must be considered

when developing questions in an instrument. The answer to every question asked has a

cost to the person being asked. That cost must be weighed against the benefits that the

respondent perceives he or she will gain by answering the questions. If the cost is more

than the benefits in the eyes of the respondent then the question will not be answered or

will be answered untruthfully. When creating an instrument, one must place oneself in

the role of the respondent and answer the following questions:

- Who wants to know?
- Exactly what are you asking me to do?

- Why should I care?
- Tell me again why I want to do this?

- Why me?
- Is there going to be confidentiality?
- Who is the contact person?
- Will I see the results?

By answering these questions, the costs can be estimated in the eyes of a respondent and weighed against the benefits. If they seem equal or if the benefits are outweighing the costs, then the social exchange will be beneficial and the survey should be a success. In following the TDM, the survey should then be pretested. The pretesting will better show the costs versus the benefits. The questions above are answered when generating the questions in the survey, but the pretest determines what the actual cost is to the people being surveyed and whether or not they feel there are benefits that outweigh that cost. Social exchange must be considered when creating a survey in order to increase its response rate and validity (Dillman, 1978).

2.8 Summary

Based on the knowledge acquired about information management, databases, indexing, and intranets, along with input obtained from the staff at GDBA through surveys, decisions can be made as to what type of library system would maximize staff usage of available information at GDBA. The major factors in these decisions are availability and ease of access of resources. In order to accomplish these aims, options such as the implementation of an indexed database will be considered, along with whether or not this database should be placed on an intranet. Any decision made will have to take into account the various aspects of human-computer interaction.

3.0 Methodology

The goal of the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association-IT project was to determine the best course of action Guide Dogs for the Blind Association could take to improve their current information system. To fully understand the problem GDBA had with the current information system and its overall use, we gathered the information from the people who work there. We interviewed department heads at the GDBA headquarters and conducted a survey of employees in the seven main regions where the other sites are located. The interviews and surveys were based on the social exchange theory and the Total Design Method (TDM). Considering the information gathered in the surveys and interviews, we proposed possible courses of action GDBA could take to improve its current information system.

3.1 Research

The research done to determine the methods of our project was based on conducting a survey and interviews to acquire information. We were introduced to three different aspects of obtaining information that are interrelated. First, the Total Design Method (TDM) gives a general method for designing, creating, and conducting a project. We incorporated a pretesting and revision phase in the creation of our survey and interview questions according to the TDM. Next, general social science methods describe how to distribute, retrieve, and present information. In following these methods we included return envelopes with our surveys and sent several reminders to our recipients. Finally, the social exchange theory is a protocol that must be followed to create a survey that will be answered honestly with a high response rate and in a reasonable time period. We sent a memorandum explaining how the staff at GDBA

would benefit from the results of our project. The actual method of information

gathering was broken down into subcategories then described in detail to give a better

idea of exactly what we planned.

3.1.1 Method and Instrument

In this project, our methods consisted of interviews conducted among the

management staff of the GDBA headquarters and a survey of employees at other sites to

determine the effectiveness of their current method of accessing resources. The

instruments consisted of a paper survey and interviews conducted over the phone and in

person. The questions in the survey and for the interviews were created based on input

we received through early research at the GDBA headquarters and three main themes that

had already been established through discussion with our liaison. These three themes that

addressed in the survey were:

- What information does the staff at GDBA have access to when conducting
  research?

- What information does the staff actually use when conducting research?

- What kind of information is needed when conducting research?

These questions guided us in determining what specific questions to ask on our

survey and during interviews. (Survey questions for the pretest can be found in

Appendix E.) The questions asked in our survey and during interviews provided answers

we compiled to understand where the management stood in relation to the need for

information and information retrieval. Based on the suggestion by our liaison, we

decided the target population for the survey and interviews should be the management

section of GDBA because they are the group that uses or has need for information

resources most often. The initial survey was pretested in the GDBA Reading site before

being distributed to the entire organization. Initial interview questions were pretested with a few staff members in Reading before being asked of other members. The survey and interview questions were used after they were revised so that the answers to the questions asked gave us an understanding of the position of GDBA in relation to the need for and use of information systems currently available.

3.1.2 Distribution and Collection

After the survey was created, pretested, and revised, it was distributed to the Administration Managers (Admin Managers) from each of the seven regions into which GDBA's sites are divided. The Admin Managers acted as our liaisons to the outlying sites of GDBA. Before this, three different types of introductory memoranda were sent out by our liaison to GDBA staff members. One was sent to department heads in Reading who were not interviewed or surveyed for the purpose of informing them about the project and letting them know that we value any input that they might have. The other two memoranda were sent to staff who were interviewed or sent surveys with the purpose of informing them about the project and indicating that we would contact them with further details.

Following this introduction, interviews were arranged. The survey was distributed through the postal service because GDBA's remote sites are scattered throughout the United Kingdom, and the liaisons did not all have personal computers making e-mail difficult. Personal distribution of the survey was unrealistic in the time frame available due to the distance separating the 25 sites of GDBA. The method that was most efficient, with the highest predicted response rate, was distribution through the postal service. We presented the survey to the liaisons with specific instructions on how to fill it out and a completion date.

The collection of the survey was done in the same manor as the distribution. To guarantee we reclaimed all surveys we included a return envelope with the survey in the initial mailing. As the surveys were collected, we began categorizing the data for analysis.

3.1.3 Data Analysis

We did not anticipate that the surveys would be collected all at once. As surveys came in from around the UK, the data were extracted from the survey and entered into a computer for analysis. We used Microsoft Excel to analyze the data both numerically and graphically. Graphs made interpreting the information easier, and the mean, median, and standard deviation of the gathered information was calculated to show where any strengths or weaknesses lay. Quantitative information obtained through interviews was analyzed in a similar manner, while qualitative information was examined for recurring trends of opinion. Knowledge about the amount and kinds of resources that GDBA has collectively was used to ascertain what indexing system would be best for the organization. Whether or not these resources were scattered throughout GDBA's sites influenced the decision on the creation of a centralized library system. Based on this information and other knowledge we gained through the completion of the surveys, and analysis of the information gathered, we made recommendations for the improvement of GDBA's current information system or the installation of a new one.

A recurring problem with using a survey as an instrument in data collection is poor response rate. This was minimized or reduced by a follow up phone call and through the use of the TDM and the social exchange theory.

3.2 Contingency Plan

If the survey failed in its attempt to provide knowledge of the information problems within Guide Dogs then we would revert to case studies of organizations with similar problems and focus groups consisting of GDBA employees. By conducting qualitative interviews both inside and outside of GDBA and analyzing specific situations that relate to information problems, we would attempt to produce an analysis of GDBA's position. Through these methods we would try to answer the questions we base our survey on and provide recommendations on how to best refine or replace GDBA's information system.

4.0 Data Collection

To form our conclusions and recommendations we needed to collect data that would enable us to see what types of information the staff at Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA) used, had access to, or needed. The instruments used to collect the data were interviews and surveys. These interviews and surveys were conducted over a broad range of staff members at different locations scattered throughout the United Kingdom.

4.1 Interview Questions

Interviews were conducted with select members of staff in an effort to gather knowledge on the current state of information at GDBA. We conducted sixteen interviews at the head office in Reading, four interviews at the regional center in Wokingham, six interviews at the Rehabilitation School in Hindhead, and two at the Action for Blind People (ABP) headquarters in London. The target audience of the interviews consisted of department heads, personal assistants to the department heads, and specific people identified as information users (as seen in Appendix G). The interviews typically lasted between half an hour and forty-five minutes, in which time we used the questions outlined in Appendix H as a basis for the questions asked. As each interview progressed, the actual questions asked often varied from the questions seen on the outline. These changes were due to the flow of the interview and they were anticipated. At least two of us were present at each interview; one asking questions and one keeping notes, in order to document all questions and answers. In the interviews conducted at Hindhead and ABP, we each had to conduct separate interviews due to time constraints. The questions asked to each individual can be seen in the summaries

(Appendix H.) It must be kept in mind that these are not verbatim transcripts, but rather, organized versions of notes taken during the interview by one group member while another asked questions.

4.2 Telephone Inquiries

At the same time that in-person interviews were being conducted in Reading, telephone interviews were conducted with staff members from other GDBA sites in the UK. Certain people were identified to us by our liaison, Guy Palmer, as the people we should contact in the remote sites. The purpose of the interviews was to introduce our project and ourselves, and to ask if we could use the person being interviewed as our liaison to his or her site.

By talking to each liaison over the telephone we were able to insure that he or she was willing to assist us. Another important aspect of the telephone interview was that we were able to decide which staff members would be the most appropriate to send our survey to.

4.3 Survey Questions

Packets of surveys were sent to our liaisons at both the small centers and regional centers so that they could distribute them to the staff decided upon during the telephone conversation. There were primarily managers, supervisors and rehabilitation workers selected as respondents. The exact number of surveys sent to each site varied (Appendix I), but the total sent out was 198 and 142 were returned for evaluation. The purpose of the survey was to tell us how much of a need there was for information at the remote sites and what type of information it was. A copy of the survey can be seen in Appendix J.

5.0 Analysis of Data

We were able to gain a great deal of information regarding various aspects of information used at GDBA by interviewing some of the management staff and sending out surveys to the remote sites. As the interviews and surveys were conducted, we were able to learn about different types of information used as well as barriers and needs of employees throughout GDBA. A limited amount of the information in various departments overlapped, but for the most part each department had its own information sources. Every department held a number of frequently used books, magazines, journals, manuals, and reports. While some of these holdings were used on a daily basis by the staff of the department that they were shelved in, many of them were expensive reference books that were not used frequently.

5.1 Information Needs

One of the major themes covered in our interviews was the need for information. Interviewees were asked what kind of information they required for their jobs or that they felt that they were lacking. Many of the people interviewed were not aware that they needed anything at all, which may be a problem in itself. Needs that were identified fell into two main categories; information filters, and policy and law information.

5.1.1 Information Already Used

The employees at GDBA use a large variety of information sources. In our surveys of managers, supervisors, and rehabilitation workers, we asked what types of information were used. We separated the results into small and regional centers as can be seen in Table 5.1. Questions and tabulated responses are in Appendix I.

Small Centers:

	Books	%	Journals	%	Magazines	%	Internet	%	Newspapers	%	Periodicals	%
Southhampton(3)	3	100.00	1	33.33	2	66.67	1	33.33	0	0.00	1	33.33
Maidstone(9)	6	66.67	2	22.22	5	55.56	4	44.44	1	11.11	3	33.33
Cardiff(4)	2	50.00	2	50.00	0	0.00	1	25.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Sheffield(7)	7	100.00	4	57.14	6	85.71	4	57.14	4	57.14	4	57.14
Nottingham(4)	3	75.00	0	0.00	2	50.00	3	75.00	2	50.00	1	25.00
Larkhall(6)	5	83.33	1	16.67	3	50.00	3	50.00	1	16.67	2	33.33
Belfast(3)	3	100.00	2	66.67	1	33.33	1	33.33	2	66.67	0	0.00
Hotels(7)	5	71.43	4	57.14	5	71.43	5	71.43	6	85.71	5	71.43
Total (43):	34	79.07	16	37.21	24	55.81	22	51.16	16	37.21	16	37.21

Regional Centers:

	Books	%	Journals	%	Magazines	%	Internet	%	Newspapers	%	Periodicals	%
Hindhead(19)	13	68.42	15	78.95	10	52.63	15	78.95	6	31.58	8	42.11
Redbridge(17)	13	76.47	11	64.71	9	52.94	5	29.41	7	41.18	11	64.71
Bolton(5)	4	80.00	2	40.00	3	60.00	3	60.00	2	40.00	2	40.00
Exeter(9)	7	77.78	7	77.78	4	44.44	4	44.44	2	22.22	5	55.56
Leamington(10)	9	90.00	7	70.00	9	90.00	2	20.00	5	50.00	6	60.00
Forfar(17)	12	70.59	8	47.06	11	64.71	8	47.06	3	17.65	8	47.06
Wokingham(12)	8	66.67	9	75.00	11	91.67	7	58.33	8	66.67	7	58.33
Middlesborough(10)	7	70.00	6	60.00	5	50.00	2	20.00	6	60.00	4	40.00
Total (99):	73	73.74	65	65.66	62	62.63	46	46.46	39	39.39	51	51.52

Table 5.1: Number of responses to survey question 2. Numbers in parenthesis are number of forms returned.

Table 5.1 shows the percentage of the people surveyed at each site that used a certain external information source. Books, magazines, and journals were the most frequently used information sources at regional centers, while books were by far most frequently used in small centers with magazines and the internet next. These statistics made sense because the regional centers had resource libraries to hold books, magazines, and journals. However, the small centers kept their own books, but did not collect as many magazines and journals because of the fewer number of people in the center and less space available.

We also addressed the issue of internal information sources on our surveys. The

feedback on the types of internal information sources that were used at remote GDBA

sites can be seen in Table 5.2.

Small Centers:

	Library	%	Elec. Library	%	Reports	%	Manuals	%	Other	%
Southhampton(3)	1	33.33	1	33.33	3	100.00	3	100.00	1	33.33
Maidstone(9)	4	44.44	6	66.67	4	44.44	5	55.56	2	22.22
Cardiff(4)	2	50.00	1	25.00	1	25.00	1	25.00	0	0.00
Sheffield(7)	4	57.14	0	0.00	6	85.71	5	71.43	2	28.57
Nottingham(4)	0	0.00	1	25.00	3	75.00	3	75.00	0	0.00
Larkhall(6)	2	33.33	3	50.00	5	83.33	6	100.00	1	16.67
Belfast(3)	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	66.67	2	66.67	1	33.33
Hotels(7)	2	28.57	1	14.29	5	71.43	4	57.14	3	42.86
Total (43):	15	34.88	13	30.23	29	67.44	29	67.44	10	23.26

Regional Centers:

	Library	%	Elec. Library	%	Reports	%	Manuals	%	Other	%
Hindhead(19)	7	36.84	6	31.58	7	36.84	11	57.89	3	15.79
Redbridge(17)	7	41.18	1	5.88	12	70.59	12	70.59	3	17.65
Bolton(5)	4	80.00	0	0.00	5	100.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Exeter(9)	5	55.56	0	0.00	6	66.67	8	88.89	4	44.44
Leamington(10)	8	80.00	2	20.00	9	90.00	6	60.00	1	10.00
Forfar(17)	10	58.82	3	17.65	11	64.71	14	82.35	3	17.65
Wokingham(12)	5	41.67	2	16.67	9	75.00	10	83.33	2	16.67
Middlesborough(10)	7	70.00	1	10.00	7	70.00	7	70.00	0	0.00
Total (99):	53	53.54	15	15.15	66	66.67	73	73.74	16	16.16

Table 5.2: Number of responses to survey question 1. Numbers in parenthesis are number of forms returned.

In Table 5.2, reports and manuals were used much more than a physical library or

the electronic library in both the regional centers and the small centers. A physical

library was preferred and used more frequently over an electronic library in both types of

centers as well. The results of this question indicated that the majority of the staff at

remote GDBA sites received most of their information from hard copies of reports and

manuals rather than from the electronic library or a physical library. Because the

electronic library consisted of a limited number of reports and manuals at the time of the surveys, the results may have indicated that what was in the electronic library was not useful in many of those job functions. The results seen in Table 5.1 and 5.2 indicated that all the types of information mentioned was used, some just more often than others.

The interviews were more specific than the surveys regarding what types of information sources were already in use. Out of twenty-six headquarters and managerial staff at GDBA interviewed, fifteen (58%) specified they used the Internet, thirteen (50%) said they used magazines, twelve (46%) mentioned books, and ten (38%) used journals (Appendix H). In general, the theme of the information used by an individual or a department was expressed through some of the items listed. In the interview with Lynn Fagilde, personal assistant to the Director of Finance, most of the information sources listed were investment or finance related (Appendix H, #1). When speaking with David Holding, PR and Marketing Manager, we learned that the information he used was much different from that used by Ms. Fagilde. He used information on media views, and on other charities (Appendix H, #8).

5.1.2 Information Requested

One of the questions we asked during the interviews was what information the interviewee needed but did not have. There was a wide range of specific responses, but they could be placed in one of three categories, internal, external, or nothing. Of the twenty-six employees interviewed, twelve (46%) articulated the need for external information, nine (35%) for internal information, and five (19%) said they needed nothing more at all (Appendix H). The two most commonly expressed needs were information on policy and law, and help filtering out unwanted information from the sources used.

While some GDBA directors had their personal assistants (PA's) filter most of the information that arrived for them in the form of journals, books, magazines, and other mailings, others were left to sort through it themselves in order to find only the parts that were relevant to their jobs. As David Ellis, Director of Services, pointed out (Appendix H, #18), this task was very tedious and time consuming, due to the fact that the only way to determine what the contents of the items were was to scan through all of the pages. A specific example of this was given by Sue Casey, Staff Training Manager at Headquarters, who mentioned that information in the LOFY publication, in particular, was not easy to sort through (Appendix H, # 3). Although articles were listed under subjects, these subjects were broad and not even in alphabetical order. In order to combat this problem, Steve Billington, Interim Director of Marketing, suggested that what GDBA might need was someone whose job is to systematize all of the incoming information and e-mail each director or employee the parts that were relevant to their jobs (Appendix H, #7). We will go into further detail concerning this aspect of ABP's services later in this chapter.

Although there was an identified need to have a filtering mechanism because there was too much information available in most areas, there was one area that was lacking. The major information need that was mentioned as being insufficient was policy and law information (Appendix H). It was essential for many managers and directors to be aware of the dealings of the government in the charitable sector, but specifically concerning visual impairment and disabilities. Because these are very dynamic areas, it was difficult to stay abreast of the constant changes.

At the time of this study, the only ways that GDBA staff had to gain knowledge in these policy and law areas were to either search through thick, often outdated reference volumes, or to look on the World Wide Web (WWW). The difficulty with using the

reference volumes was that it was very time consuming, and there was a high probability that they were not up to date due to the lack of anyone with the responsibility to keep material updated. According to Tom Muldowney, Head of the Rehabilitation School in Glasgow (Appendix H, #27), searching through the WWW was equally frustrating because many sites were poorly organized.

5.2 Feedback on Previous Initiatives

In the past, a number of attempts have been made to initiate information use at GDBA. When the PC network was installed, many new avenues of information were introduced. Both the Internet and the electronic library were made available wherever there was a networked PC. In addition to these computerized information sources, resource libraries were established at certain sites, and outside of GDBA, Action for Blind People's (ABP's) information services were made available. For the staff to fully utilize information, they had to know that it was accessible.

5.2.1 Internet

One of the attempts to promote information use was making the Internet available on all networked PC's at GDBA. Although the Internet was made available it was not widely used, as an information source. Fifteen out of the twenty-six GDBA staff interviewed (58%) said that they used the Internet (Appendix H), while in the surveys only 40 to 48% said they used it (Appendix J, questions 2 and 7). The Internet is a terrific source of information, as stated by Joanne Reilly (Appendix H), but it was not being used enough. One reason given in a number of interviews (Appendix H) as to why the Internet was not being used enough was accessibility. With only two PC's at most sites other than Headquarters, there was not enough time in the day for everyone to use

them. After discussing the Internet with interviewees, (Appendix H) we determined that another possible reason was that the employees were not familiar enough with the amount and type of information available there; this is an example where training would provide a better understanding of the Internet.

5.2.2 Electronic Library

In addition to the Internet being available to employees, there was an electronic library that was developed by the IT department, which contained internal GDBA information. Created using a web-based system, the electronic library was constructed on the GDBA PC network for easier access to Health and Safety Policies, Human Resource Policies, Management Board Instructions, and IT User Guidelines and Procedure Manuals. The IT Department identified these areas as items people used that the PC would make more accessible. It was the hope of Guy Palmer, Director of Information Technology at GDBA, that staff members would see this library, use it, and request that additional information be added to it. This did not happen, as evidenced in Table 5.2. While 30% of the staff surveyed at the small centers said that they used the electronic library, only 15% at the regional centers and two of the interviewees did. It is possible that this low usage was due to the fact that the type of information contained in the electronic library did not need to be used frequently by the majority of the staff, and did not reflect a trend toward not using information in general. This was corroborated by data in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 that showed that information was used in many other forms such as books and periodicals. Perhaps no one requested additional information to be added to the library since its creation, as the IT department had expected, because the staff did realize it had the capability of being expanded.

5.2.3 Resource Libraries

Number of Items Checked Out From Resource Library in Headquarters
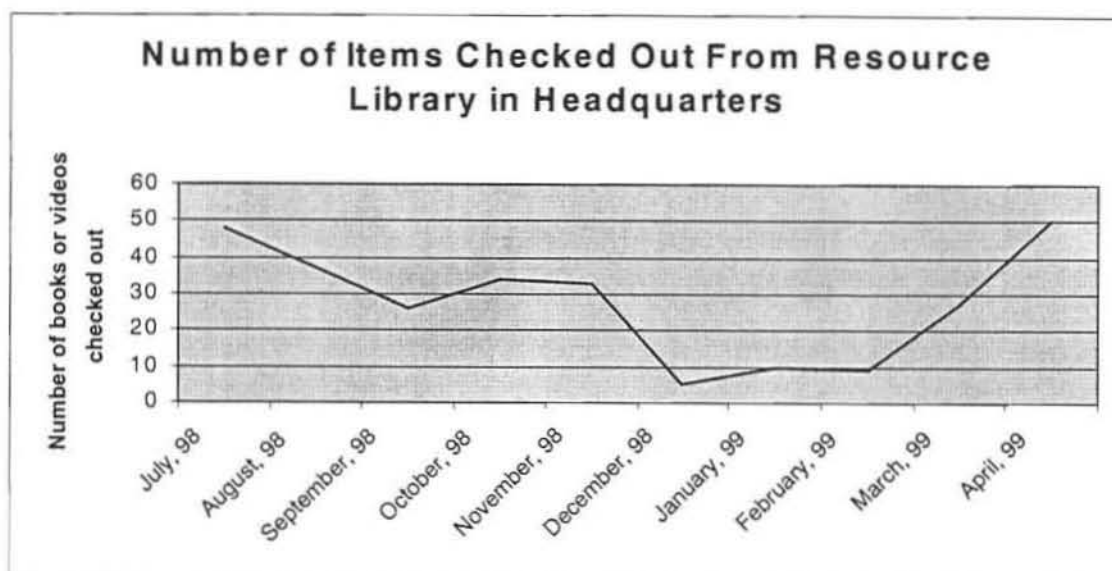
Figure 1: The number of entries per month in the resource library's check out book

The Staff Training Department set up small resource libraries at the headquarters in Reading and in all of the regional centers (Appendix H). In Reading, the resource library was kept in the Staff Training Department and maintained by two staff members within the department. This library contained books, journals, and videos with a paper index and check out system. Figure 1 shows how often the research library at headquarters is used. It can be seen that, especially during the months from December to March, the library saw little use. The holdings of these resource libraries mostly concerned people skills and help with presentations. Because of this, we conjecture that there must have been an increased number of presentations or training sessions in the months that showed a higher number of books and videos.

The surveys showed that 48% of employees throughout GDBA used the resource libraries at the regional sites in their area (Appendix J). Table 5.2 breaks down how staff at each site used the library. It could be seen that while 54% of the staff at the regional centers said that they use the resource libraries, only 35% at the small centers did. This

could be explained by the fact that the resource libraries were located in the regional centers, and the staff at the small centers had to travel to get to them. Because almost half of the employees surveyed said they used the resource libraries it would be advantageous in terms of information use to expand a library system. What GDBA currently has in their resource libraries may be an excellent starting point for a centralized information service.

5.2.4 Action for Blind People

An external information resource, Action for Blind People (ABP), was made available five years ago to all GDBA employees for any questions they had that could not be answered by the resources at GDBA. ABP is a London-based organization specializing in providing information to people concerned with visual impairment. ABP provided GDBA with a monthly publication entitled "Looking Out For You" (LOFY) that contained abstracts of journal articles that staff could request complete copies of, and a monthly press cutting service. GDBA paid £33,000 per year to fund an ABP staff member to provide these services. In addition, GDBA employees could call with any questions that they might have regarding visual impairment and the ABP staff member that GDBA funds would look for the answer.

As seen in Table 5.3, 80% of the employees at the Headquarters of GDBA did not use the information service provided by ABP. However, survey results showed that 49% of the staff at other GDBA sites used the service (Appendix J, question 10), but this could be misleading because the frequency of use was not reported. That is, the interviewee could have used the service once within the five years it has been provided. Statistics compiled by ABP (Figure 2) showed that from January to March of this 1999 there were only 54 inquiries from GDBA's 1000 employees; much less than from other sources.

Requests over the last five quarters were consistently 45 to 70 per quarter. In addition, it can be seen in Figure 3 that approximately half of these inquiries were requests for journal articles seen in LOFY, while the next most desired area was general information.

Headquarters Staff Responses to Questions about ABP

1. Have you heard of Action for Blind People?

   Yes—19   No—1

2. Do you use the services provided by ABP?

   Yes—4   No—16

Table 5.3: Responses to Interview Questions Concerning ABP (Appendix H)
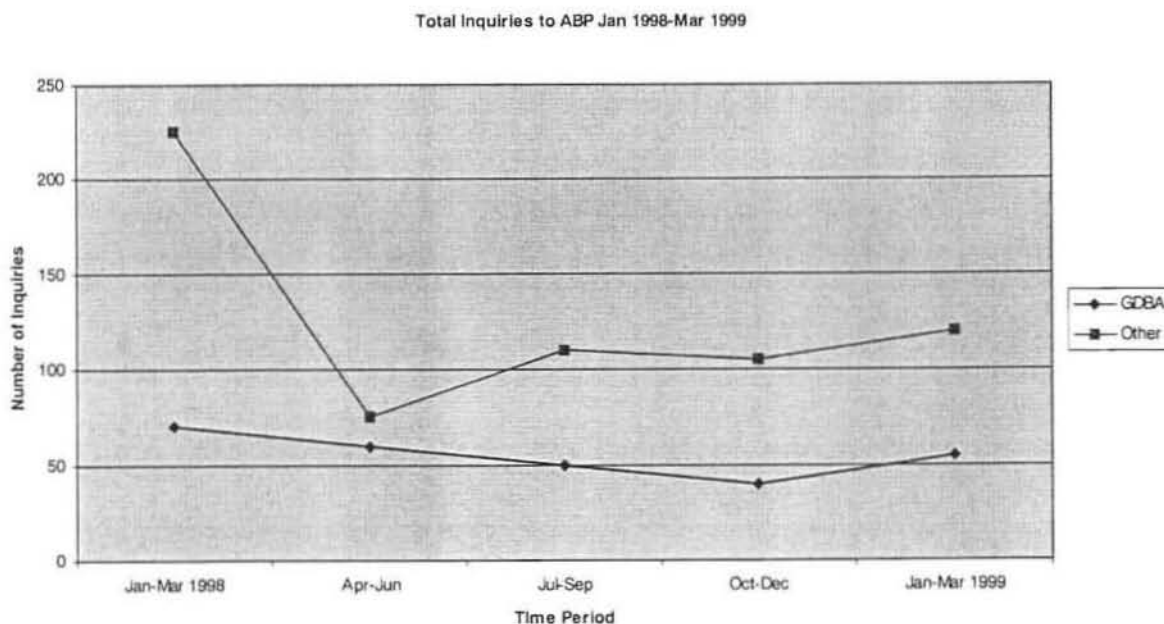
Total Inquiries to ABP Jan 1998-Mar 1999

Figure 2: Statistics provided by ABP concerning the number of inquiries to their service

GDBA Subject Inquiries Jan-Mar 1999
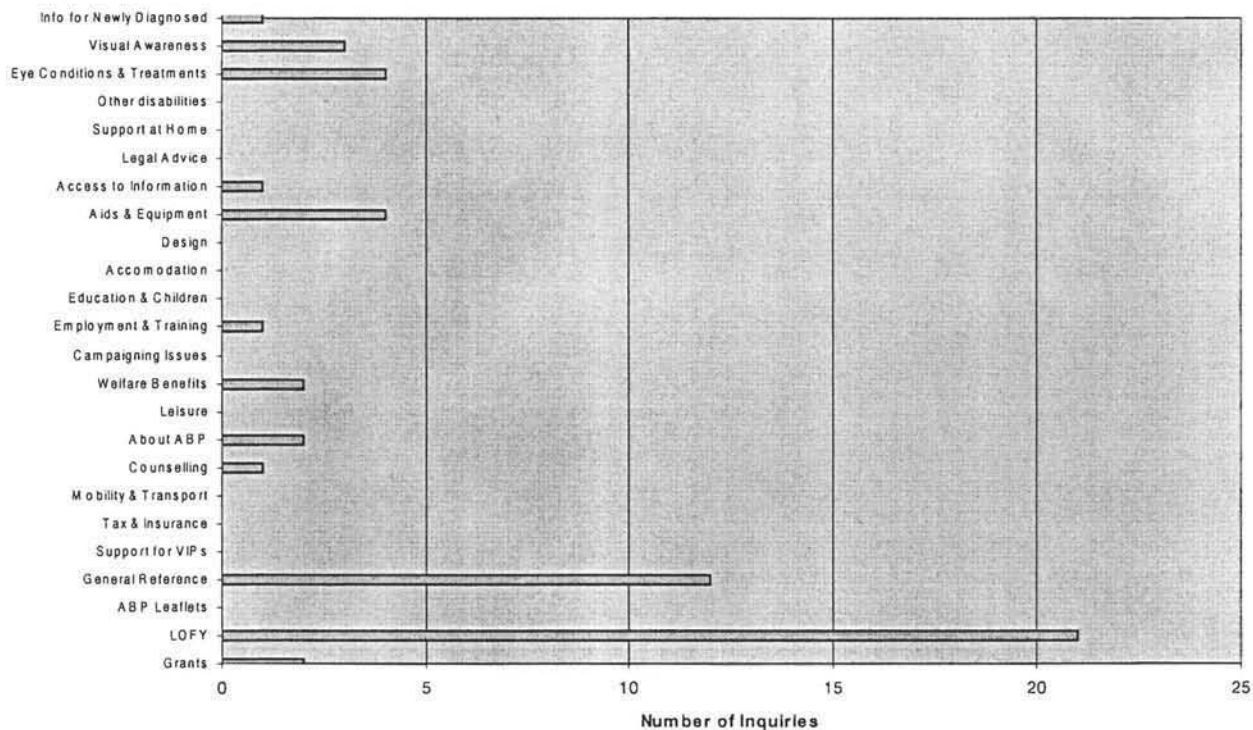
Figure 3: Statistics provided by ABP concerning the subjects of GDBA inquiries

GDBA Staff Users Jan-Mar 1999
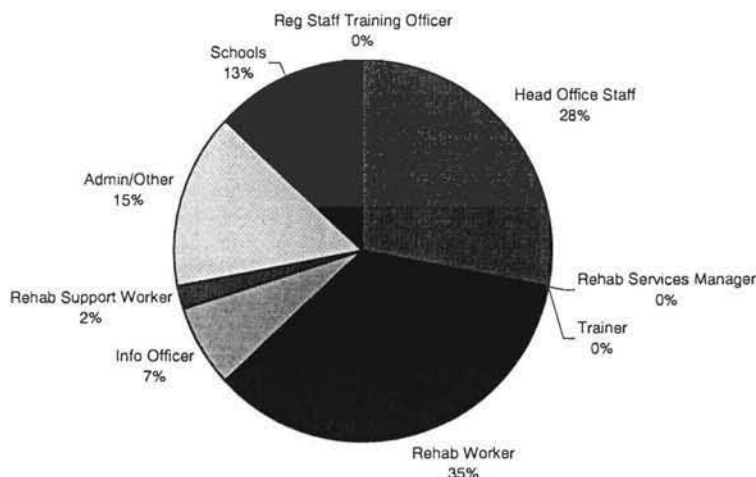
Figure 4: Statistics provided by ABP concerning job titles of GDBA users

It can be seen in Figure 4 that the largest segment of the staff that made any inquiries was the Rehabilitation workers. It is also significant that 28% of all inquiries came from the Head Office Staff, in light of the fact that when asked, only four out of twenty people interviewed there said that they had ever used the service. This suggested that there was a core of frequent users that accounted for the number of inquiries documented by ABP, and not a large number of staff.

ABP's Information and Advice Services department was visited in order to observe how their resource center is arranged. They had a small library of reference books and journal articles, all of which were entered into a searchable database. In addition, there was another searchable database that contained contact information for people in other organizations, and distribution lists for all of ABP's publications. Up to eight employees at a time used these resources to answer any incoming inquiries. There were also two additional employees who staffed the Welfare Rights Service department that answered questions in that area.

There were a few other possible reasons why GDBA employees did not use the information services provided by ABP. Only 49% of the staff surveyed stated that they had ever used ABP's services. The obvious reason would be that the GDBA staff were not aware that the service existed at all, but 19/20 of the people interviewed (Table 5.3) and 92% of the people surveyed (Appendix J) stated that they had heard of it. Copies of LOFY are sent to all sites, but they are not distributed to all employees (as evidenced by the small percentage of people surveyed and interviewed who had not even heard of the service). Pauline Haller, Rehabilitation Services Manager at Wokingham, speculated that ABP simply did not provide the type of information that GDBA needed anymore (see Appendix H). Jane Kippax, Research Manager at Hindhead was of the same opinion and

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believed that the information available within GDBA exceeded what ABP offered.
According to Ida Forster, Information and Advice Services Manager at ABP, when the
service was established five years ago, interviews were conducted by ABP to determine
the needs of GDBA, but there had been no formal inquiries since then (see Appendix H).
Because GDBA is a dynamic organization, it was quite possible that its information
needs had changed in the previous few years.

Instead of it being a fact that ABP does not provide enough information that could
be useful to GDBA staff, this could just be a misconception of the employees, due to
ignorance about the service. Upon interviewing various GDBA staff members, we found
that many of them believed conflicting things about what ABP had to offer. A specific
example of this was that while Ms. Haller believed that ABP's service was useful for
specific facts and figures, Ray Smith, Regional Controller at Wokingham, believed that it
was only useful for general knowledge (see Appendix H). He also believed that ABP did
not have information about specific diseases affecting the eyes, although we observed
such information when we visited the ABP library. This discrepancy could be due to
different levels of information being needed for different job functions. We also felt that
the discrepancy between GDBA staff opinions about ABP holdings and the actual
holdings was due to the level of intricacy of the particular articles. While ABP did have
information about specific diseases, it often was not in-depth enough to fulfil GDBA
needs.

In conjunction with misconceptions about information that ABP had to offer were
misconceptions about the type of organization that ABP was. Tom Muldowney, Head of
the Rehabilitation School in Glasgow, (Appendix H, #27) said that he paid the Royal
National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) for copies of technical articles about eye diseases
before checking ABP to see if he could get the articles as part of their free photocopying

service. His reason for not trying ABP before going elsewhere was that he viewed ABP as a client-based organization catering to the general public, and not an information service for other organizations specializing in visual impairment.

Ms. Forster put forth the idea that another possible reason GDBA staff members did not use ABP could be that they viewed the information that ABP provided as an external source and were reluctant to go outside of their own organization when information was needed (Appendix H, # 22). In actuality, most GDBA staff were probably not aware of the fact that the services made available to GDBA by ABP were provided by an Information Officer based at ABP, whose salary was paid by GDBA. All of these possible reasons behind the underuse of ABP's services will be addressed in the recommendations section of this paper, because we believe that they all contribute to the problem. Because they were under contract with ABP until October 2000, we believed that it would be wise for GDBA to finish the current contract and evaluate their own information services at that time.

5.3 Information Barriers

Throughout our interviews we identified certain barriers that existed within GDBA between people and information. If these barriers are not addressed, there can be no improvement to the prevailing situation whereby information is being underutilized. In an effort to combat the predicament, problem areas acknowledged included employees being reactive rather than proactive, out of date information sources, the lack of personal computers (PC's), and the current electronic mailing system.

5.3.1 Lack of Proactive Employees

According to Geraldine Peacock, Chief Executive Officer of GDBA (Appendix H, #17) the underlying problem behind most of GDBA's difficulties with the use of information was the fact that, in previous years, employees were not encouraged to take a proactive role in areas not directly related to their job description. It is a tradition in British society for some retired military officers to run charitable organizations. GDBA was such an organization until Ms. Peacock began working for them 18 months ago. Previously, GDBA was run in a more authoritarian manner, much like the military, but Ms. Peacock preferred that the employees take a more proactive approach in areas such as information use. Instead of reactively searching for something when they need it, she wanted employees to use information in a broader sense, to keep up to date with current events. In addition, employees should be more vocal about any resources that they feel are lacking.

According to our survey data, Ms. Peacock's views were not unfounded. As can be seen in Figure 5, when employees at the remote sites were asked to rank where they got their information from (one being the most important, and four the least), the majority said that most of the information that they used was in their own offices. In addition, only 26% of the respondents said they used information on a daily basis (Appendix J, question 4). These statistics suggested a reactive, rather than proactive stance to information use, because the typical GDBA employee used the information that was only in his office, and only when necessary, not for daily enrichment.

Location of Information Used
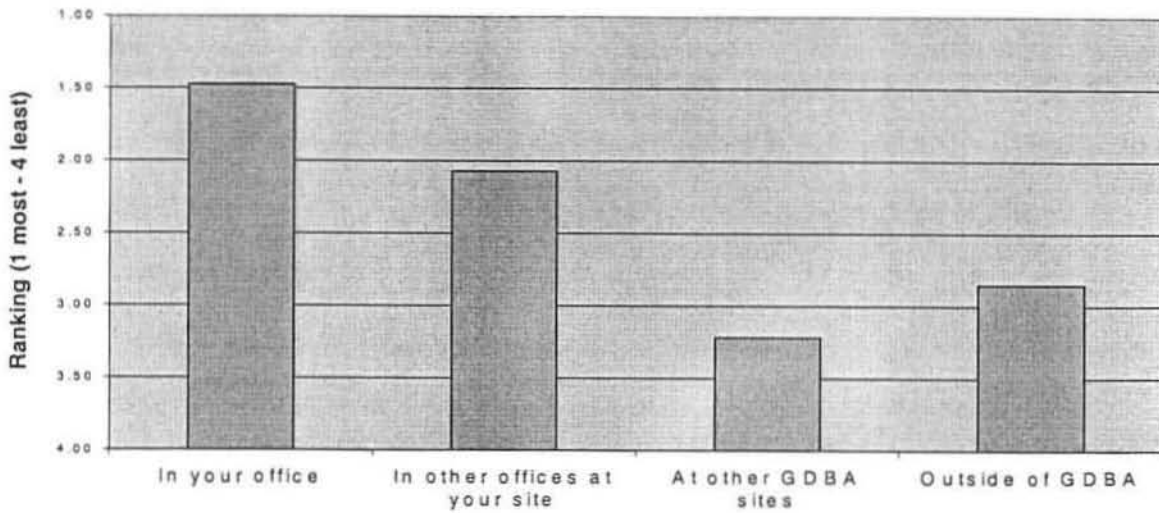
Figure 5: Results to survey question 3

On the other hand, some of the survey data collected indicated that that the

employees were being proactive where they were able to be. Referring back to Table 5.1,

in the survey results, the Internet was used by 48% of all employees in the regional sites,

which shows almost half of all employees were attempting to use non-conventional

resources. In most of those sites there were only two computers, for as many as six to

twenty-five staff. In Table 5.2, when asked about using the resource library available to

them, 54% of the people at the regional centers and 35% of the people at the small

centers said they used it. The resource libraries are located at the regional centers,

making it easier for those working at a regional center to have access. More than half of

the people at each regional center use the library, and 35% of employees from the small

centers travel to the regional centers to use their library. The data presented here showed

employees trying to use as many information resources as possible.

The reactive work ethics addressed previously make individual and organizational

growth difficult. Information sources such as ABP, the electronic library, and the

Internet were provided by GDBA to help their employees find and use information.

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These information sources could be used by employees as a resource for not only supporting their work, but for additional advancement. By using these resources only when absolutely necessary, employees restrict their potential to promote growth, both in themselves and in GDBA.

5.3.2 Outdated Information Sources

In addition to a general lack of proactivity, another barrier that GDBA employees have against adequate use of information is out-of-date reference materials. Upon visiting all of the departments at the headquarters in Reading, and resource libraries at Hindhead and Wokingham, it was observed that many books, such as the "In Touch" handbook of listings of charitable organizations, were several years old. Because the task of ordering new materials to replace outdated ones is not in anyone's job description, the task is overlooked. A specific instance of this was noted at the Glasgow site, according to Tom Muldowney, head of the rehabilitation school there (Appendix H, #17). Because there were two staff members who maintained the library there in addition to their other jobs, items were often not updated due to lack of communication between those responsible.

5.3.3 The PC Dilemma

Aside from not having up-to-date reference materials, another major problem at GDBA was the lack of PC's. The headquarters in Reading was approximately eighty percent integrated with PC's, but they were by far the minority. Most of the regional and small centers scattered throughout the United Kingdom boasted a roster of two networked PC's per site to be shared among all the staff. (We knew of three exceptions, Hindhead, Glasgow, and Redbridge; there may be others). These PC's were used continuously

throughout the day, and according to staff interviewed at the Wokingham site (Appendix H), lines formed after work with employees wanting to use the electronic mail service or the Internet. If an employee needed to get specific information from the GDBA network to complete work in progress, he or she had to wait for the PC to become available, reducing their work proficiency. The surveys show that if more people had access to PC information sources, such as the Internet and the electronic library, they would be used more often. 51% of the employees from the small centers and 46% of the employees from the regional centers, on average, said they made use of the Internet (Table 5.1) while 30% of the employees at the small centers and 15% at the regional centers said they used the electronic library (Table 5.2). These results were surprisingly high due to the number of computers available to them. Although there were only two PC's available per site a sizeable percentage of the employees utilized the electronic information sources. These data indicated that if there were more PC's, more use of the Internet and other electronic information sources would occur. Obsolete dummy terminals were available for using one of the non-PC based electronic mailing systems, which was another problem in itself.

5.3.4 Electronic Mailing Systems

At the time this report was written, GDBA had not one, but three separate e-mail systems. Most of the remote sites had an abundance of dummy terminals but only two PC's. The dummy terminals used the Uniplex and Click systems that were not as user-friendly as the PC system, but there were not enough PC's for all employees to have access to the easier system. Each site had its own e-mail address on the PC network, but individuals at the remote sites did not have their own accounts. If someone from a remote site wanted to e-mail someone at Hillfields, he or she first had to get on one of the

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two PC's at their site, then use the site's e-mail address as his or her own. As an

alternative a person could use one of the other two systems. Unfortunately, both the

Uniplex and Click systems were difficult to use because of their complicated user

interfaces, and did not have the capabilities of sending and receiving e-mail from other e-

mail systems. One purpose the two systems did serve was sending Braille documents

because the PC system at GDBA was not capable of transferring such documents due to

software limitations. By having three different systems, communication at GDBA was a

difficult task. Many employees had to learn all three systems and check e-mail accounts

on all of them daily.

In addition, because of the difficulty of communicating to a large number of

people, a common belief voiced by the survey respondents was that the PC could not be

used until training was provided. There were three different electronic mailing systems

in use and because the communications network was not uniform across GDBA, it was

difficult for the organization to correspond with all employees concerning issues on

policy, information use, and training, among other things. If GDBA is to become a more

dynamic, proactive organization, these issues of communication and technology must be

addressed.

5.4 Proposed Improvements

Before beginning our interviews and distributing our surveys we had some

preliminary ideas from our initial research on how to improve information use. In our

interviews we asked what the interviewee's opinions were on ideas such as a centralized

information service, an electronic index, or an information officer. In the surveys we

asked them to rank which they would be most likely to use, a physical library, an

electronic index of physical resources, information stored electronically, or library

services, as seen in Figure 6. Figure 6 shows the average rank (1 most to 4 least) each

service received.

Centralized Library Service
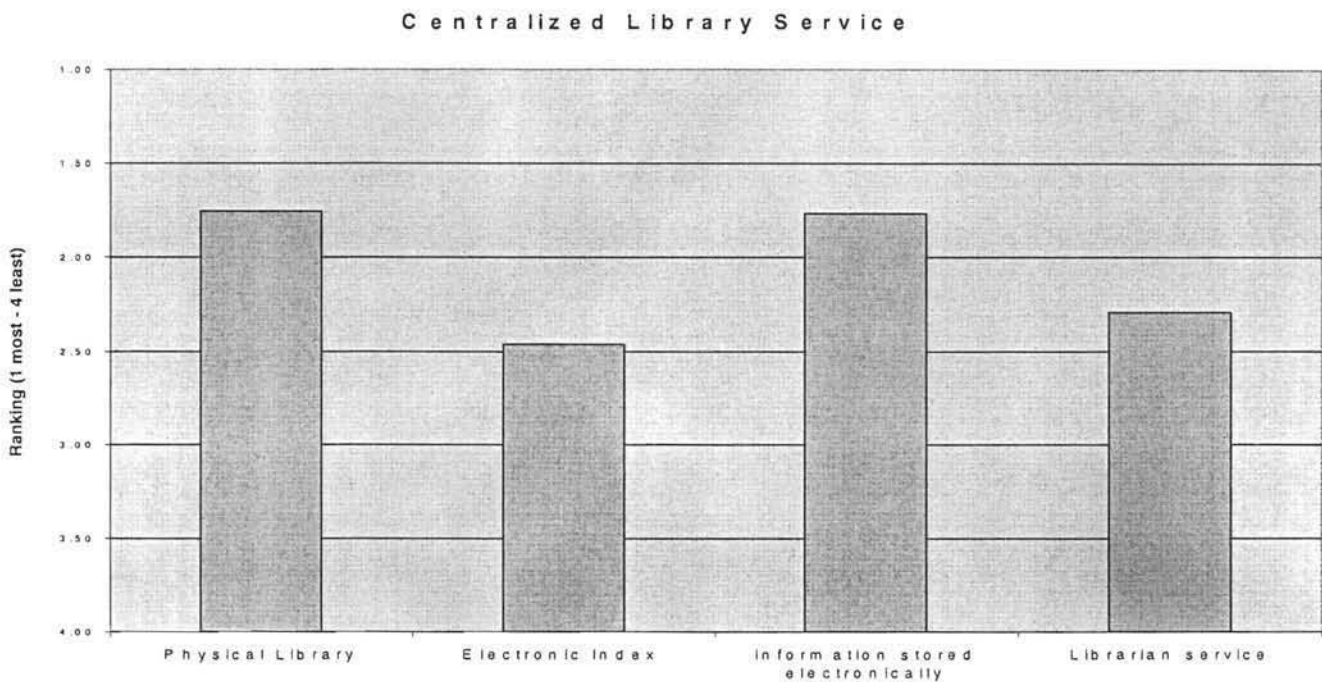
Figure 6: Ranking of preference for a new information system from survey responses

5.4.1 Centralized Information Service

In both the interviews and surveys, when asked about a centralized information

service, the majority of the answers were positive. At headquarters 90% of the

employees interviewed supported a centralized information service, and the surveys

showed that most people were in favor of a centralized physical library (Figure 6). As

seen in Table 5.4, the majority of the staff interviewed (18/20) had positive opinions on

whether or not GDBA would benefit from the establishment of its own, centralized

information service. It was the general opinion of the interviewees that any such service

should include only the less frequently used reference books because staff members did

not want the inconvenience of having to walk across the building or accessing another site to find the resources that they needed daily (Appendix H).

One advantage to such an information service that Mr. Ellis (Appendix H, #18) pointed out was that if there was a designated room for books to be in, it would be easier to keep track of them. The current situation with books being in various departments lends itself to a high rate of misplacement, due to staff members borrowing items and then not returning them.

Int. #	Cent. Info. Service		Elec. Index		Full time Librarian		Training	
	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Yes	No
1	X		X			X	X	
2	X		X		X		X	
3	X		X			X	X	
4	X		X		X		X	
5		X	X			X	X	
6	X		X		X		X	
7	X			X		X	X	
8	X		X			X	X	
9		X	X			X		X
10	X		X		X		X	
11	X		X		X		X	
12	X		X		X		X	
13	X		X		X		X	
14	X		X				X	
15	X		X		X		X	
16	X		X			X	X	
17	X		X		X		X	
18	X		X		X		X	
19	X		X		X		X	
20	X		X		X		X	
Total:	18	2	19	1	12	7	19	1
%	90	10	95	5	60	35	95	5

Table 5.4: Summary of Quantitative Analysis of Interview Data

5.4.2 Electronic Index

Expanding on the centralized information system, employees were asked in both the interviews and surveys were whether or not they would use an electronic index. 95%

of those asked in the interviews had positive opinions about whether or not an electronic

index would be useful to them (Table 5.4). In the surveys, the electronic index was

supported the least. A reason for not preferring an electronic index can be attributed to

the majority of people lacking PC's. One of the main problems that staff members had

with information was that they received too much of it, and did not have any fast way to

locate only the things relevant to their jobs. An electronic index of GDBA's holdings

would provide such a search function.

A matter of disagreement among interviewees regarding an electronic index was

over who would be responsible for updating the records. While some people felt that

individual departments should update the entries pertaining to their holdings, others felt

that it would be better to have only one person designated to complete such a job.

5.4.3 Information Officer

The question of GDBA hiring a full time librarian was brought up in both the

interviews and surveys. The opinions of the staff interviewed, when asked about a

librarian, were split 12 for a librarian and 7 opposing. The librarian option was supported

less than a physical library and having information stored electronically but marginally

more than an electronic index. The survey shows that there was more support for a

librarian than for an electronic index, but not as much as for information stored

electronically. The opinions of interviewees were also mixed (12/20) regarding the

positioning of an employee as a full-time librarian in charge of an information system

established at GDBA (Table 5.4). This difference of opinions can be partially attributed

to the fact that there was not a clear definition of what such a person's responsibilities

would be. Some interviewees had the concern that there would not be enough work for a

full-time librarian to merely keep track of GDBA's holdings and update an electronic

index. Others suggested that this librarian could be more of an "information officer" who

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could perform research and analysis functions as well as being a traditional librarian. One of the services that we envisioned such an "information officer" rendering was to monitor the incoming stack of periodicals each month and relay relevant articles to people in appropriate departments. It was thought that this "information officer" could also be available to answer any research questions that staff members might have.

5.4.4 Training

Another issue explored in the interviews and surveys was training. 94% of the staff surveyed (Appendix H) and 95% of the staff interviewed (Table 5.4) indicated they would be willing to undergo training. However, there were no training workshops in the area of information use required of them up to that point. Occasionally training sessions were offered, but they were not mandatory, and not in all of the areas needed. According to David Ellis, Director of Services, (Appendix H, #18) training is the hidden cost of any new system implemented, because it is essential for the proper use of the system. David Hush, Administration Manager for the Rehabilitation Schools, (Appendix H, #23) agreed when he stated that, because there had not been any formal training, GDBA was not getting the fullest benefit from its new PCs. This training had not been widely offered because there was no one in charge of coordinating it. Although there was a Staff Training Department it did not deal with technical issues such as how to send e-mail. Occasionally, a person from outside GDBA was brought in to offer training in Microsoft Office, but only per request. There had been no formal training required thus far, because the organization was waiting for the staff to take the initiative to request the training, while the staff was waiting for the organization to offer training. This is evidenced by the fact that, while Ms. Peacock stated in her interview that she believed that GDBA

employees do not act proactively, survey data suggests that the employees believe that

they have to wait for training to be offered and it is not their place to request it.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of our project was to gather data concerning the information use at

Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA) and to make recommendations for

possible ways to improve the current system based on the identified needs of the staff,

feedback on previous initiatives, and barriers found that inhibit the employees from fully

utilizing the resources around them. The staff members were questioned in interviews

and surveys about the various ways they use information and, based on the answers that

were given, recommendations could be made for possible solutions to the identified

needs and problems. The solutions were based on not only the information gathered in

the surveys and interviews, but also on what was feasible for GDBA and would help with

future improvements.

6.1 PC Integration

For GDBA to improve their information service with any amount of success, they

must equip their employees with personal computers (PC's). All employees above the

level of a service worker should have a PC on their desk or at their ready disposal.

GDBA must take into consideration when equipping their employees with PC's that some

of their employees are visually impaired and need special technology, such as Braille

keyboards and screen readers. At the time of this project, most of the remote sites had

two PC's for six to twenty-five workers, depending on the site. By having so few PC's,

GDBA was limiting their employee's options for being proactive in information use.

Based on trends in our data collected in the surveys (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2), if the

majority of the employees had their own PC's, the electronically available information

such as the Internet and the electronic library would be used more frequently and by more

members of staff. Another benefit of having one computer network would be that one e-mail system could be incorporated. With one e-mail system as opposed to three, there would be less confusion and effort required when attempting to contact another individual in the association.

6.2 Information Officer

The Information Officer would carry out a number of functions. In response to the identified need for more information concerning government policies and laws, one of this Information Officer's first priorities would be relative to that field. This person would report directly to Geraldine Peacock, but would be available to all staff for assistance with policy and law issues. In order to make this position successful in maintaining and distributing information, who the Information Officer was and their job function must be clear to all employees. The Information Officer must be easy to contact, and must be readily available to all employees.

As the data concerning government policies and laws are collected, it will have to be stored somewhere. The most appropriate place to store this information would be where there was an existing library that could be expanded. We found that the library at Hindhead were expandable, but more importantly, the management there wanted to expand it (Appendix H, #24, 28). Another benefit was that a number of the staff at Hindhead were well equipped to support this library by being both computer and Internet literate. The Information Officer would, therefore, be based in Hindhead, storing all the relevant information collected on government laws and policies there. Furthermore, several of the Information Officer's tasks would be involved with the upkeep of the library, such as maintaining the current holdings, and making sure that all materials are up to date. The Information Officer should be familiar enough with the holdings to be

able to answer questions that GDBA staff members might have about the subjects covered in the library. The Information Officer's responsibilities do not stop at the Hindhead library though.

A responsibility of the Information Officer that may go beyond his or her duties at the library at Hindhead will be filtering information GDBA receives. Eventually, there will be an electronic index of the library holdings. The Information Officer must filter through the material received so he or she can input the relevant material on the electronic index to prevent GDBA employees from having to spend hours searching through useless articles. After the library holdings at Hindhead are established in an index, the Information Officer will have to expand it to include the entire organization.

After the Information Officer grows accustomed to the library at Hindhead, he or she will have the task of organizing GDBA's holdings at other sites. By organizing the holdings, we mean updating material, preventing unnecessary duplication among sites, and the creation of a centralized physical library made up of the more expensive reference material. As the organization of information at GDBA grows through the work of the Information Officer, training must be provided for the staff.

Another of the Information Officer's responsibilities should involve staff training. As of this writing, there was no training on the PC's offered. It would be the responsibility of the Information Officer to coordinate the training program for using the PC, specifically word processing applications, information retrieval, and searching on the Internet. As the library grows, another training program might be organized to instruct the staff on how to use the library.

6.3 Centralized, Physical Library

In order to organize the information resources at GDBA in the most efficacious manner, a centralized library should be created. This library should contain all of the more expensive or large reference materials that are not used on a daily basis by GDBA employees. Optimally, the library would also include journals and magazines.

Because the Rehabilitation School at Hindhead already has a substantial library and a considerable number of PCs, we recommend that the centralized library be located there. Another reason for recommending Hindhead was that the management staff and employees were enthusiastic about improving information use. It is important to place the library in a location where it will receive the most use and support in order to promote the use by other, more reluctant members of staff.

As stated above, an Information Officer should be hired to manage this library, rather than having it under the auspices of another department that already exists. We feel that, if control of the library were added to a current employee's existing job description, it would be neglected because the employee would have too many other responsibilities. The establishment of a new post reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer would make the area of information services the sole responsibility of that person. Therefore, he or she would maintain it on a full time basis in a coherent, organized manner.

This centralized physical library would begin as the existing library in Hindhead, but would grow as more of GDBA's information was moved into it. Currently, many of the reference books used by GDBA employees on an infrequent basis are outdated. We believe those books should be updated and placed in the centralized library in Hindhead by the Information Officer. By doing this, each site would not need to buy a new copy,

since there would be one at the library that could be referenced through the Information Officer whenever it was needed. The reference books would be the start to expanding the centralized library. As the physical library grows, some way to search through it from remote sites without physically being there, or calling the Information Officer, has to be implemented.

6.4 Electronic Index

As the library grows, the Information Officer should be responsible for the establishment and upkeep of an electronic index of GDBA's holdings. This index should be kept on GDBA's internal PC network, so that it would be accessible to all employees. It should begin with a searchable index of the library's holdings, but eventually evolve into a searchable database of all of the journals, magazines, books, and other reference materials contained within GDBA, including titles, authors, and subject headings for keyword searches. The availability of this index would help employees take a more proactive role in information gathering by making it easier and less time consuming to find desired information. This would also help to alleviate the concerns that some staff members had about the tediousness of information gathering by providing the desired filtering mechanism.

It was an option that individual departments to be responsible for the upkeep of the parts of the index that pertain to the specific materials contained within that department, rather than a full-time Information Officer. However, we believe that, in addition to it being neglected because of the added responsibility, the clarity and uniformity of the index would suffer if there would be too many people altering it. It is important to keep such a searchable database homogenous and to make sure that items do not receive duplicate entries leading employees to believe that certain holdings

erroneously exist. Therefore, we recommend that only the Information Officer should be responsible for the upkeep of the electronic index.

6.5 Training

GDBA would like their employees to grow by improving their skills and knowledge as they work. In our interview with the Chief Executive Officer, Geraldine Peacock (Appendix H, #17), she identified information as the best tool for employees to use to improve and grow. The staff spoke to or surveyed agreed with the organization that they would like to use information as a tool to improve themselves in their respective fields, but we did not observe a sustained effort by either group to meet this goal.

We believe that, if training were required, information use would become more commonplace, especially through the use of computers. If people are apprehensive about not fully understanding new technology, they are likely to not even try to use it. We believe that many staff members at GDBA are under the impression that they do not know how to use the new technology around them because of the overwhelming request for training, even from the busy management personnel. Those who do make an effort to teach themselves would benefit from the advice of a trained professional. For these reasons, we recommend that formal training sessions in Microsoft Office, including e-mail, should be offered to all GDBA staff and required of them. In general, training on computer hardware and software relevant to information is important for the growth of any large organization.

In addition, we believed that staff members were not making full use of the resources on the Internet, because they did not realize the full extent of what was available there. Training should be provided and required, not only in how to use the Internet, but also in what it has to offer. This training should include a guided course

through web pages that would be useful to staff members, such as where the Financial Department could find stock quotes, in addition to an introduction to web pages by other organizations in the charitable sector, especially for visually impaired. Lastly, staff should be taught about search engines and how to use them. Tom Muldowney, Head of the Rehabilitation School in Glasgow, (Appendix H, #27) believed that using a search engine would be good training in logic. We agreed that knowing how to go through the steps of finding the information that a person desires online stimulates better search habits in other areas such as using a library.

In an attempt to popularize these training courses, incentives should be offered. Even though there was an overwhelmingly positive response in the survey and interviews concerning the desire to go through training, when the courses are actually offered people might reconsider. In addition, training courses can often seem tedious and boring. In order to promote attendance at all of the courses provided, it may be in the best interest of the organization to offer a free meal or other small token to attendees.

6.6 Increasing Use of Action for Blind People's Services

Another area where training would be beneficial would be in Action for Blind People's (ABP's) services. In view of the fact that only eighteen months remain in the contract with ABP, it may seem inconsistent to recommend that GDBA staff receive training in order to make use of ABP's services, when they may not renew their contract because they will have their own information services. However, we believe that using the established service of ABP is an ideal way to promote the use of information. If, when the contract runs out, the GDBA system is not sufficiently operational, an extension of the use of ABP's services should be considered.

As discussed in the previous chapter, reasons why the service was underused included not knowing that it existed at all, misconceptions about the types of information that they had to offer, wrong information, and misconceptions about the type of organization that ABP is. All of these problems could be solved with mandatory training in the use of ABP, including an introduction to the types of services and types of information offered. This training should be provided by ABP, because they were under contract with GDBA, and it would be in their best interest to ensure that their service was being used.

In addition to providing training to GDBA employees, ABP should conduct an investigation as to what the GDBA staff's needs are in order to improve the service. An information needs survey was conducted five years ago when the service was initiated. Because this had not been done in five years, changes in the direction of the organization to a more holistic approach to supplying services for the visually impaired had not been taken into account. Once the investigation has been conducted, ABP should tailor the information that they offer to GDBA to fit the organization's needs.

The last reason identified as contributing to the underuse of ABP's services was that GDBA employees viewed the service as coming from an external source. Ida Forster, Information and Advice Services Manager at ABP offered a few suggestions to alleviate this problem, and we believe that they should be implemented. The first thing that should be done would be to include the name and phone number of Anne Marsh, the information officer at ABP that works for GDBA, on the GDBA internal telephone list. In conjunction, Ms. Marsh's e-mail address should be added to the GDBA list of users, and employees should be encouraged to e-mail their inquiries to her. Furthermore, Ms. Marsh could send her answers to inquiries on GDBA letterhead, rather than that of ABP. These alterations would indicate that she is, in fact, a GDBA employee.

One additional avenue for increased use of ABP that was explored was a partnership between the two organizations. A possibility worth considering was to enable GDBA staff members to use the databases maintained at ABP directly instead of having to go through Ms. Marsh. From the information gathered, we believed that if this were allowed, there would be an increase in use of ABP, because it would eliminate the need to go through Ms. Marsh and GDBA staff could find what they needed directly. Because of this, we recommend that this partnership be explored.

6.7 Implementation Plan

Because there is not a very big organizational basis to begin with at GDBA in terms of information services, the plan that we have recommended can not be implemented posthaste. In order to facilitate the creation of the system that we have recommended, we have proposed an implementation plan to be carried out in a number of stages. After each stage has been completed, staff should be required to undergo training in order to become aware of the new system and to learn how to use it.

6.7.1 Stage 1

Along with the establishment of an information service at GDBA, there will have to be an ongoing project to bring the organization up to date with technology. The first and most basic step to do this is equipping each site with enough networked personal computers to consolidate the three e-mail systems into one, with personal e-mail addresses and to have all GDBA information easily accessible by every employee who needs access to information.

The next step of the implementation plan involves hiring an Information Officer to report to the Chief Executive Officer. This Information Officer would be available to

research all policy and law questions, and begin to catalogue GDBA's holdings. He or she should be located at the Rehabilitation School in Hindhead where the library will be. The existing library should be expanded initially by moving only the more expensive, less frequently used volumes into the library, in addition to any policy and law books necessary to advise the GDBA staff on issues involved with that area. Furthermore, the Information Officer should begin to research what materials can be found in electronic, rather than paper forms.

6.7.2 Stage 2

After the initial reference materials have been moved into the library, the next step in the process of implementing a centralized information service for GDBA would be to create a searchable electronic index of all of the holdings. If this cannot be achieved in a reasonable amount of time by the Information Officer, the organization should consider hiring a number of temporary employees to aid in the cataloging and data entry. Initially, the index would only consist of title, author, and subject listings of all of the holdings in the library at Hindhead. It should be stored on GDBA's internal network so that it would be possible for anyone in the organization with a personal computer to access it. It would be ideal for the electronic index to be web-based, so that it would be the most user-friendly to the employees who might not have a great deal of experience with computers.

6.7.3 Stage 3

After the creation of the index of the holdings in the resource library, the listings should be expanded to include information from the journals and magazines that each department has in their offices. A single copy could be stored and indexed in the library

at Hindhead and one copy purchased per site that required one. The copy at the library would be indexed, so employees could use the index to find the journal or magazine, then use they copy at their site to read an entire article. Certain magazines and journals that are available in electronic form can have their paper copies replaced with the new format. Holdings from the other GDBA sites should now be added as well.

6.7.4 Final System

After the completion of the steps listed in the previous sections, GDBA will have an Information Officer located in Hindhead who maintains a reference library of books, journals, magazines, and any other information that should be available to all GDBA employees. In addition, there will be an electronic index with a comprehensive listing of the holdings at all of the GDBA sites, including those in electronic form.

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Appendix A: Agency Information

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
Burghfield Common
Reading RG7 3YG
United Kingdom

Phone: 118 983 5555

WWW Homepage: www.gdba.org

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA) is a volunteer-based organization with centers located throughout the United Kingdom. For over sixty years the GDBA has provided guide dogs and other services for the blind and visually impaired. In addition to breeding and training guide dogs, other services include long cane training, help with household tasks, reading and writing instruction, and dog trainer education. GDBA also operates a number of resource centers where the visually impaired can seek professional advice and try out new equipment.

Appendix B: Site Locations

(http://www.gdba.org.uk/contacts/map/index.shtml)

Appendix C: Task Chart

Task	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7

Initial Presentation Phase
Give Presentation
Revise Task Chart
Design and Pretest Phase
Construct Interview Question Outline
Conduct Preliminary Interviews
Revise Interview Outline
Design Templates for Survey
Construct Survey
Interview Phase
Schedual Department Head Interviews
Conduct Interviews
Analyze Interview Results
Survey Phase
Distribute Survey
Acquire Completed Surveys
Analyze Acquired Data
Systems Proposal Phase
Present Analysis of Acquired Data
Find Solutions Based on Data Acquired
Present Proposed Solutions
Analyze Feedback of Solutions
IQP Production and Final Presentation
Final Revisions to Methodology
Final Revisions to Introduction, Background
Write Data and Analysis Section
Finalize Results and Conclusions
Prepare for Final Presentation
Final Presentation

Appendix D: Flow Chart

Give Presentation → Negotiate Project Scope, Revise Task Chart

Distribute Survey → Analyze Feedback → Create Final Survey

Conduct Interviews for Internal Survey Methods → Design Templates for Survey → Construct Templates

Present Analysis of Acquired data → Present Proposed Solutions → Analyze Feedback of Solutions

Find Solutions Based on Data Acquired

Distribute Survey → Acquire Completed Surveys → Analyze Acquired Data

Final Revision to Introduction, Background → Write Data and Analysis Section → Prepare for Final Presentation → Final Presentation

Appendix E: Survey Questions for Pretest

Note: The term "Information" refers to items such as books, journals, and periodicals.

Section 1: What information does the staff at GDBA have access to?

1. Approximately how many books does your department possess?

2. Approximately how many journals does your department subscribe to?

3. Approximately how many periodicals does your department subscribe to?

4. Where is the information in your department currently located? (Choose one)

    In individual offices   In one location in the department   Other

Section 2: What information does the staff actually use?

1. Approximately what percentage of the information in your department is used on a

    weekly basis? (Choose one)

    0   25   50   75   100

2. Where is the information that your staff uses located? (Rank from 1(most) to 4

    (least))

    ___ Within your department

    ___ Within other departments at your site

    ___ At other GDBA sites

    ___ Outside of GDBA

Section 3: What kind of information is needed?

1. How important is it for your department to access information at other GDBA sites?

    (Rank from 1(very) to 5(not at all))

    1   2   3   4   5

2. How important is it for your department to access information from outside of GDBA? (Rank from 1(very) to 5(not at all))

1   2   3   4   5

Appendix F: Summarization of Liaison Contact

Email received from liaison on 10 Feb 99:

From: Guy Palmer <Guy.Palmer@gdba.org.uk>
To: "Nathan" <nsw@WPI.EDU>
Subject: RE: fax
Date: Wed, 10 Feb 1999 12:17:16 -0000

A couple of thoughts:

1. This job is mainly focussed on how we should organise ourselves rather than any

underlying use of technology. Should we have a) a physical library b) a librarian c) a

research function and d) an index of information sources?

2. The scope is not just the information that we currently have but all the potential

information "out there" that we may need to get our hands on from time to time.

3. The starting point should probably be some sort of audit of a) what information do

people from around GDBA currently use b) what information around GDBA do we

currently have and c) what are the major issues / unmet needs.

I am staying at GDBA both this evening and tomorrow evening if u want to try

and catch me on the phone.

Summarization of Contact the Week of 8 Feb 99:

We contacted our liaison, Guy Palmer, by phone at 1:45pm EST on 11 Feb 99.

Mr. Palmer recently sent us an email with details concerning the project. The purpose of

the phone call was to ask Mr. Palmer questions concerning the email he sent us. In the

email he told us that our job is to determine the best way for Guide Dogs for the Blind

Association (GDBA) to organize themselves in terms of information. We are to answer

whether or not GDBA needs a library, a librarian or information gatherer, a research

function, or an index of information sources. Mr. Palmer suggested, and we agreed, that

the best way to determine what GDBA needs is to conduct a survey. According to the

email, three main areas Mr. Palmer thought we should survey in are what information the staff at GDBA currently use, what information is currently at the disposal of the staff, and what information staff members generally need. This email contradicted information we received earlier dealing with the scope of our project. We wanted to talk to Mr. Palmer to clarify exactly what he expected us to accomplish. The questions we prepared to ask during the phone conversation were:

1. We are conducting a survey but we need background information to determine what questions to ask

   - What is the status of the current physical library?

   - What is the status of the current electronic library?

   - What external information is available to staff at GDBA?

2. Are there any other areas you want to cover in the survey?

3. What is our frame? What employees should we survey?

4. Can we get a list of the names of the people we are to survey?

5. With the information gathered by the survey, are we just determining the need for an information system or should we make suggestions as to which type of system would work best in GDBA?

From the answers given by Mr. Palmer we found that there is no physical library at or near GDBA and the electric library is merely an online employee handbook including information like grievances and expense policies. As for external information, GDBA has access to the Internet but most of the people in the company do not know how to use it properly.

During the conversation, Mr. Palmer could think of no other areas he wanted us to cover in the survey but said he would email us if he thinks of anything.

Mr. Palmer wants all sites surveyed. He does not think that we have to survey everyone in each site though. One method he thought might work would be to nominate one individual per site to fill out the survey. One person fills out the survey but that individual should get input from others in the site before answering the questions.

It is the opinion of Mr. Palmer that it is obvious that some kind of electronic library or index is needed at GDBA, but not so obvious as to whether they need a physical paper library or not. We are to gather the necessary information to determine the best system for GDBA.

Appendix G: Interview Schedule

Person	Number	Title/Dept.	Who	Date	Time
Lynn Fagilde	1	PA to Dir. Of Finance	Greg & Nate	30-Mar-99	9am
Phillipa Ireland	2	Applications Marketing Manager	Nate & Sam	30-Mar-99	11am
Sue Casey	3	Staff Training Manager	Sam & Greg	30-Mar-99	3:30pm
Sue Smith	4	PA to Int. Dir. Of Marketing	Greg & Nate	31-Mar-99	10am
Peter Wilby	5	Services Manager	Nate & Sam	31-Mar-99	11:30am
Janet Snell	6	PA to Dir. Of Services	Sam & Greg	6-Apr-99	10am
Steve Billington	7	Interim Dir. Of Marketing	Greg & Nate	6-Apr-99	2pm
David Holding	8	PR Manager	Nate & Sam	6-Apr-99	3:30pm
Jon Scourse	9	Nat'l Fundraising Dev. Mgr.	Sam & Greg	6-Apr-99	5pm
Christina Krzyzanowska	10	Staff Training Admin.	All	7-Apr-99	10am
Pat Farr	10	Training Resources Officer	All	7-Apr-99	10am
Katie Roberts	11	Publications Officer	Greg & Nate	7-Apr-99	2pm
Claire Evans	12	Research and Grants Manager	Nate & Sam	9-Apr-99	10am
Ray Smith	13	Regional Controller/Wokingham	All	13-Apr-99	10am
Pauline Haller	14	Rehab Services Man./Wokingham	All	13-Apr-99	11am
John Sellers	15	Admin Manager/Wokingham	All	13-Apr-99	2pm
Tania Belcher	16	Kennel Manager/Wokingham	All	13-Apr-99	3pm
Geraldine Peacock	17	CEO	All	14-Apr-99	2pm
David Ellis	18	Dir. Of Services	Sam & Greg	15-Apr-99	9:30-10am
Cheryl Laughlin	19	Administration Assistant--PR	Greg & Nate	15-Apr-99	11am
Richard Lane	20	Media Relations Manager	Nate & Sam	15-Apr-99	2pm
Sandra Hanafin	21	Senior Info Officer/ABP	Sam	28-Apr-99	11am
Ida Forster	22	Info and Sdvice Services Man./ABP	Sam	28-Apr-99	12pm
David Hush	23	Admin Mgr/Hindhead	Greg	29-Apr-99	9am
Jane Kippax	24	Research Manager/Hindhead	Sam	29-Apr-99	9am
Simon Eamonson	25	Principal (Education)/Hindhead	Nate	29-Apr-99	9am
Joanne Reilly	26	Research Asst/Hindhead	Greg	29-Apr-99	9:45am
Tom Muldowney	27	Head of School (Scotland)/Hindhead	Sam	29-Apr-99	9:45am
Roy Lawrenson	28	Gen Manager (Schools)/Hindhead	Nate	29-Apr-99	9:45am

Appendix H: Interview Questions and Transcripts

Initial Interview Questions

1. Introduce ourselves and our project.

2. Personal information on individual

   - Personal responsibilities

   - Department size and responsibilities

3. What type of information do you use personally? (book, internet, magazines, external libraries, files)

4. What type of information does the department use? (book, internet, magazines, external libraries, files)

5. Where do you get the information?

   - Internal (GDBA files, mag. subscriptions, network access, indexes, libraries)

   - External (internet, ext. indices, ext. libraries, on-line search engines)

6. What information does your department have available? (but may not use)

   - Is there any information that would be useful to other departments?

7. What type of information do you need but don't have access to? (mainly external)

8. How often do you use the information in your department?

   - Is the information in your department readily available?

   - Is the information easy to access?

9. Do you think that it would benefit GDBA to have centralised library services?

   - Do you think an index would be beneficial?

   - Would you use an electronic index?

   - Would a central physical library be more useful?

   - Would a full time librarian be useful?

10. Would you be willing to go through training in order to learn how to use a new library system?

Interview Transcripts

Interview with Lynn Fagilde, 30/3/99, 9:00am #1
Given By: Greg & Nate

What is your job? Your responsibilities?
- PA to Finance Director Jonathan Molyneux, administrator of investments (monitors brokers)
- Also computer literate
- Uses email and the internet

What type of information do you use personally?
- Uses the Financial Times newspaper every morning for only the index news on the first page then throws the rest away except for once a month when checking the status of the shares GDBA owns
- Uses World Market (WM) to provide monthly and yearly progress reports on the performance of the two financial brokers working for GDBA
- Also uses Bearing Top 3,000 Charities. Bearing is a subscription that gives a description of the top 3000 charities in detail

What type of information does the department have but may not use?
- Uses minutes of meetings like the council meetings and investment team meetings
- Minutes are all kept on hard copy in the basement and not used very often

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?
- Needs to calculate share dividends to check on the two brokers
- Not entirely sure how to access the information quickly on their shares to calculate the share dividends monthly, or quarterly

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?
- Yes, but not for all information. Some of the information used on finance is confidential and can not be put on any network

Would you use an electronic index?
- Yes, but a physical library may be needed as well or you must be able to print for people that don't have some PC's
- One concern expressed is that as more people start using the internet or an index, the network will become much slower. If the network is too slow, people will be discouraged and stop using it

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?
- It would benefit to have someone to oversee all the information but it does not need to be a full-time position
- People may be using the person to access information but it would only be like once a week so the person would not have much to do

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?
- Heard what is it but does not know what it is for. (She showed us a monthly packet from Action that contained a list of journals and a brief description of

each. The journals could be requested using a form a the beginning of the packet)

Would you be willing to go through training in order to learn how to use a new library system?

- Yes

What is your job? Your responsibilities?
- Main job—applications marketing—markets guide dogs to visually impaired
- Recently—after strategic review has become sort of liaison for staff communication between hotline and senior management team
- Department has two people who take shifts at the hotline

What type of information do you use personally?
- Doesn't really use magazines except for the 3rd Sector—mag about charities
- Mostly just places ads in printed media
- Uses Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) mailing lists—keeps info filed in boxes in office
    - Biggest charity along with GDBA
- Campaign research useful for spotting trends in behavior, but not statistically sound
- National Rehab Manager Peter Willby might have also information
- Gets info from other organizations such as hospitals
- Info from Action for the Blind is sent in
- Lists of other organizations in binders and books such as In Touch
- Exchanges information with field offices over the phone or through mail— over PC would be useful
- CACI demographic lists
- Books of postal codes

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?
- Doesn't really know what others in the visually impaired sector are doing— can't refer people
- Need to be able to track clients better—can in theory, not in practice
- Don't know where people are if they exit the system (i.e.—can't further help people who were turned down for dogs)

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?
- Yes, but library isn't necessarily the right word for it. The English see a library as a place with physical books. Information Center might be a better term for a place that would help blend internal and external communication
- Should be accessible for the visually impaired too, but 75% are unemployed, so they probably don't have internet access
- The library shouldn't just be internal; it should give out information to other places too. It needn't be physical as long as things could be printed out

Would you use an electronic index?
- Yes. She doesn't use the computer frequently, but she is comfortable with it and knows how
- She would be willing to go through training to learn how to use an electronic index

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?

- Yes. The librarian figure should be knowledgeable about external information as well, not just things useful to GDBA, but also to the visually impaired and to other organisations.
- Ex: National help line at local eye hospital

Would you be willing to go through training in order to learn how to use a new library system?

- Yes

Interview with Sue Casey, 30/3/99, 3:30pm   #3
Given By: Sam & Greg

What is your job? Your responsibilities?
- She heads a team of staff trainers who teach personal skills and management development (soft skills) through courses and workshops

What type of information do you use? Your department?
- Members of the department go to conferences
- Internet. The entire department uses the web as much as possible. The number of computers they have with web access limits them
- Books
- Magazines
- Consult other charities

Is there any information that would be useful to other departments?
- Yes, they have a lot of useful information in their own library but barriers exist in the organization that make it difficult for people in other departments to access it
- Barriers are that many people do not having the knowledge that the information exists and that they have access to it
- If the library was on an intranet of some kind, more people would know about it and possibly take advantage of it

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have a centralized library?
- She thought it would benefit GDBA, but more so for the staff training in terms of management development

Would you use an electronic index?
- Yes, but the only problem is access. She only has two PC's for her department so access is a problem
- An index would be good because people get handed too much information that they don't need and being able to search an index to only find needed information would make more people willing to use the resources around them

Do you think a librarian would be helpful?
- It may be but she thought that a librarian would be limited to what they had used already
- She also thought that the librarians also had to be able to input and update the system themselves or they would not be able to do their job efficiently
- A full time librarian probably wouldn't be necessary because it would be easy for one of the staff to just update records. A staff member's name could be next to each entry so that someone with questions about the entry could just call them up

Do you use Action for the Blind?
- No, she hasn't used it but she has seen it. It was one of the things that made it to the bottom of her to do pile then fell into the trash when it didn't get done

Would you be willing to go through training in order to learn how to use a new library system?

- Yes

Extras: Sue is highly in favor of an intranet. She is concerned about the number of PC's. She feels that the information system is not terrific because there aren't enough PC's for everyone to use. When people start getting their PC's they will begin to learn just because it is there. A lot of the resistance to PC's will disappear when they are installed. Once people start using the computer they will find that it is not so hard and they like it. One way to use the electronic intranet is putting the director's diaries on it so that everyone can see what they are doing and what is going on at the top

What is your job? Your responsibilities?

- PA to Steve Billington
- Assist staff in PR dept, fundraising, application, basically anything to do with income or publicity

What type of information do you use personally?

- Uses Opsys system
- Uses information on the staff

What type of information does the department have but may not use?

- Nothing

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?

- She would like an easier way to find information on the staff. Like what a particular person does and what site he/she is located at
- She suggested an index that could be used to look up a person and give the information on where they are located, what they do and how to reach them

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?

- Yes, she feels it would be beneficial to have a physical and electronic information system

Would you use an electronic index?

- Yes

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?

- Yes

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?

- No

Would you be willing to go though training in order to learn how to use a new library system?

- Yes. She would be willing to go through any training whether it is for a library system or any other computer training
- She would particularly like training on email. She has had to teach herself how to operate and she does not know if she is doing it correctly

Extras: The problem is that are 3 systems (click, uniplex, and outlook) that are not easily compatible. One system would make using much easier

What is your job? Your responsibilities?
- National Rehab Services Manager
- Develops standards for rehab services around the UK

What type of information do you use personally?
- Uses the internet to get government white papers, details of conferences, etc.
- Uses terminal and laptop computers
- Realizes that a lot of paper things can be found on the internet
- Downloads things sometimes
- Uses Action for Blind People (ABP)
- Phones in question and they go through books to get answer
- Gets magazines and journals weekly to be informed
- Filed in office

What type of information does the department have that would be useful to other departments?
- Keeps notes from regional visits on computer
- Reports could be discussed over the internet instead of going through the trouble of trying to get everyone together for a meeting in person

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?
- It is important for rehab workers in the field to be able to easily access medical and financial information that would help them relate to their clients better

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?
- It might be redundant since they already have ABP
- Might not be any demand for it or more people would probably use ABP now

Would you use an electronic index?
- Yes. It would be a lot easier to search an ABP type thing yourself instead of having to call them

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?
- It would be good for internal info, but redundant for external since already have ABP

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?
- Adequate for external info, but not used enough

Would you be willing to go through training in order to learn how to use a new library system?
- Yes

What is your job? Your responsibilities?
- She is the PA to David Ellis, Director of services
- The Services Department handles all services that don't have to do with dog training
- They handle the rehabilitation side for the blind. This includes assessing visually impaired people to see if they need a guide dog, training the blind to do everyday things by themselves, and train people to train the blind

What type of information do you use personally?
- Uses the PC for the internet, e-mail, and Microsoft programs
- She is doing the training programs that are offered but they are not offered continually
- The information used now is gained from books, magazines and journals

What type of information does the department have but may not use?
- Nothing she knows of

How often do you use the information in your department?
- She gets the magazines and journals and looks through them quickly and highlights what she thinks would be useful to David

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?
- Nothing comes to mind

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized information services?
- Yes

Do you think an index would be beneficial?
- She thinks it depends on what would be in the index
- It would benefit when trying to look through a journal to find anything useful

Would you use an electronic index?
- Yes, if she had the training

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?
- She thought the typical librarian would not be useful as a full time position because they would not have enough to do as a full time employee
- If the job was more oriented to being an information gatherer, they would be more useful
- If they maintained the information service as well as being available to help people who are looking for information they could be useful as a full time employee

Would a physical centralized library be more useful then an electronic?
- She thought that a physical library would be useless in this day and age
- An electronic index is the only way to go now

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?

- She knows what it is and has used it once. She phoned a lady there and asked for information. They lady provided a great deal of the information and related topics for here
- Claire Evans is supposed to be the person who sets up the Action for the Blind system

Would you be willing to go through training?

- She goes to the training sessions now, whenever they are offered. She would be willing to go to this training as well
- Sue Smith co-ordinates the training programs now and a lady named Karen from outside GDBA runs the training programs

Given By: Greg & Nate

What is your job? Your responsibilities?
- In charge of GDBA fundraising strategies
- Also in charge of marketing and public relations

What type of information do you use personally?
- He uses multiple magazines. If he has time he spends about an hour a day thumbing though magazines. He pulls out the stuff he or his staff would find interesting. Sometime he will send information to another director if he thinks he/she would find it interesting

What type of information does the department have but may not use?
- They use all their information

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?
- Sometimes he finds it hard to find facts and figures. This may be because he is new and it will take him a little time to figurer out were things are

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?
- Yes

Would you use an electronic index?
- He personally would not use one but might later in the future

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?
- No not at this stage, but maybe someone who sends articles to people
- Their job would be to find information and email to each director or employee who needs the information or request it

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?
- Not really, he has seen but doesn't use it

Would you be willing to go through training in order to learn how to use a new library system?
- Yes

Extras: He thinks it would be useful if this system extended out to the public. Maybe had levels of access. He also thinks, that it would be useful if the public part of the system could be shared with RNIB and ABP. He said the system would have to be expandable for the future

What is your job? Your responsibilities?

- PR Marketing Manager
- Press Officer
- Publications Officer
- New Web page, internal newsletter, external magazines
- New web page debuts 5 May
- New media theme is 'A New Way Forward'
- Annual report
- Advertising, Corporate Identity, Media Relations
- Trading Dept

What type of information do you use personally?

- Need info about what media is saying about GDBA
- Use services like 'Media Disc' and 'Writer's Business Briefing'
- Published charity directories with comparative statistics
- Talk to specific people in GDBA to get internal info

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?

- Nothing really, but it would be easier to access it online than just talking to people like they do now
- Too many email systems make it necessary to ask the same question multiple times

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?

- Yes

Would you use an electronic index?

- Yes, it would be faster than asking people

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?

- No. Individual people should be responsible for updating certain sections, but didn't really want to comment without knowing what the system would be like
- Would like to see an example of good practice first

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?

- Yes. Don't use, but probably should
- Has a press cutting service for specialist media

Would you be willing to go through training in order to learn how to use a new library system?

- Yes

What is your job? Your responsibilities?

- He is the head of fundraising, income generation excluding grants, donations, events and supporter groups

What type of information do you use personally?

- He uses the internet a great deal
- He would read magazines and papers but he doesn't have time
- He uses people around him to filter out some information and only give him what is important

What type of information does the department have?

- They have a small library of journals and books relative to the fundraising department

Where do you get the information?

- Internally, they use their library of journals and books on other charities. They use the information to cross reference GDBA's performance to other charities
- Externally, they use sources for networking

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?

- Some internal information like statistics on major indices in GDBA should be accessible very quickly but it is not

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?

- Fundraising in particular would not benefit with a central physical library because they have a small library of their own already located right in their department

Would you use an electronic index?

- He would use one but he is not sure what would go on it
- He thinks that it would be a waste of time and money to set up something for fundraising where all the information in their library would be on an searchable index or intranet because it would not be used enough to justify the expenditure
- He would like to see one that references general statistics about GDBA so that that information was easier to get in everyday life

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?

- He thought that a librarian wouldn't be very useful but an analyst would
- Not someone who maintained the system but also took the information gathered and created reports, say monthly, to keep GDBA informed
- He would process the information about GDBA's statistics and make easily seen figures about progress, strengths and weaknesses

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?

- Yes he knows what it is, but he does not use it

Would you be willing to go through training in order to learn how to use a new library system

- No

Interview with Christina Krzyzanowska
and Pat Farr, 7/4/99, 10am
Given By: All

What is your job? Your responsibilities?
- Dept. provides information to people who need it, mostly about people skills and help with presentations
- Training Administrator handles daily operations and bulletin
- Training Resources Officer makes sure that needed equipment is avail and develops training courses
- Regional Staff Training Officers (at 7 regional centers) responsible for specific small centers

What type of information do you provide to GDBA employees?
- Library of books and journals with a paper index and check-out system
- Training courses (though moving to a more personalized type of help)
- Videos and cds that are too expensive for people to buy
- Budget matched against need
- Quarterly bulletin in response to identified needs
- Lists courses and interesting web sites
- PC workbench
- Exams for GDMI's and records of apprentices
- Referrals to people in other departments with desired info

What type of information do you use?
- Institute of Personnel and Dev. (IPD) and Institute of Management (IM) resources
- Trade exhibitions and conferences
- Internet
- Hard to get to relevant parts of government pages, etc.
- Used to use ABP, but don't need it now because staff can just call themselves

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?
- Need better computer equipment to run more sophisticated software

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?
- Individual departments have own libraries
- Resource centers at regional centers
- Could link all with an electronic index
- Could scan in things like journal articles and reports and put on an intranet
- Can't get rid of people entirely—the whole referral system

Would you use an electronic index?
- Yes, but it would need to be more than just a listing of titles
- We can now refer people to specific chapters in books, etc. that shouldn't be gotten rid of

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?
- Yes, to manage holdings, but he or she would not be knowledgeable of whom to refer people too or what chapters in books would be useful to them
- Could have a staff of people whose job it is to read all day and learn things of interest to the staff and refer them to it. (Like at Geraldine's previous job)

Would you be willing to go through training in order to learn how to use a new library system
- Yes

Given By: Greg & Nate

What is your job? Your responsibilities?
- Publication officer – editor of six magazines, makes posters, and is in charge of the new web page

What type of information do you use personally?
- The Internet
- Books rarely
- RNIB
- Magazines

What type of information does the department have but may not use?
- None

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?
- Just information in general an index of what GDBA has and knows would be helpful

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?
- Yes

Would you use an electronic index?
- Yes

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?
- Yes, talk to Cheryl

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?
- Yes, she gave us an article on it that she wrote
- She doesn't use it her self because she doesn't have much use for it
- She feels it does not have a broad enough pool of information

Would you be willing to go through training in order to learn how to use a new library system
- Yes

Extra: She showed us a packet of newspaper clippings of every article in the past month the mentions GDBA or any thing that relates to GDBA. It would be more useful if it were on the computer, so one could get only the clippings relevant to him/her and not the whole packet

What is your job? Your responsibilities?

- Research and Grants manager (~20%)—responsible for all external funding
- 4 areas of research grants
- Client grants to individual dog owners
- Resource areas of research funding
- 2 grants to other organizations
- Executive assistant to CEO (~80%)
- Help with correspondence and particular projects
- Strategic review

What type of information do you use personally?

- Primarily grant applications
- Internet (not as much as should)
- Journals
- ABP
- In Touch (not as much now because out of date)
- Doesn't use Resource Center

What type of information does the department have that would be useful to others?

- Fliers, leaflets and pamphlets about grants and research areas
- To see them you have to know that they exist or be on the distribution list
- Should be in a library, not in her office
- Some might be on the web
- Technical reviews should be distributed internally and externally
- Information packs to people who request them
- Road show

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?

- Info on a regular basis about changes in disability laws
- Synopsis like LOFY would be good

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?

- Yes. The sort of referral system used now is biased and too dependant on what people remember
- Too many separate libraries now with no link or control as to whether they are up to date or not
- Why don't people use ABP now?
- Internal information could be disseminated simpler

Would you use an electronic index?

- Yes. Right now limited circulation of documents inhibits information dispersal and no one knows who receives what

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?

- Yes

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?

- Gets a quarterly report of ABP usage
- Uses the service herself frequently
- Trying to find out why other people don't use it
- Thinks that it is a good source of information

Would you be willing to undergo training in order to learn how to use a new information service?

- Yes

What is your job? Your responsibilities?

* Regional Controller, Wokingham

What type of information do you use personally?

* Reports
* Manuals
* Books
* Journals
* Magazines
* The Internet

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?

* Yes, it should be central, physical, and accessible by all, but as much of it as possible should be available online
* Certain books used daily should remain in offices, but less frequently used things should be centralized like:
    * More expensive reference books
    * Heavier trade journals (would get rid of redundancy too)
* A GDBA centralized library would be used more often than RNIB or ABP

Would you use an electronic index?

* An index of books in departments would be good in theory, but it wouldn't get rid of redundant copies
* If a book is at another site, you can't just call them up and ask a question
* Would need a photocopying license to distribute copies of journal articles, etc.

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?

* Yes. Had one in the last place that he worked
* Should be a professional librarian with librarian training that people could call up and ask questions

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?

* Yes, it's good for general knowledge, while RNIB is good for legal information
* It doesn't have information about specific diseases

Do you use ABP?

* No

Would you be willing to undergo training in order to learn how to use a new information service?

* Yes. Training is essential to make people aware of a new service

What is your job? Your responsibilities?
- Rehab Services Manager, Wokingham
- 10 staff members in department
- Loosely responsible for support services
- Mobility training if not ready for a dog
- Resource center with kitchen gadgets and computers

What type of information do you use personally?
- Small library in the department
- Textbooks about visual impairment
- Directories of charities
- ABP
- Leaflets, magazines, journals, videos, newsletters
- Talks to other rehab centers 2 or 3 times a month

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?
- 2 or 3 years ago it would have been redundant with ABP, but now it wouldn't be
- Not redundant now because of internet
- Needs to be a wide resource that has research and info arms and statistical information
- All regions would want things that are used daily in house, but more expensive things could be centralized like textbooks and reference things
- Danger that centralized library wouldn't be used because people can't be bothered to walk to it

Would you use an electronic index?
- Yes
- It is very hard to keep track of where lent books have gotten to in an organization like this

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?
- Yes, it's good for specific facts or figures
- RNIB is good for employment opportunities or lists of available services

Do you use ABP?
- Yes, but not as much as used to, ring 1 or 2 times a month and use LOFY
- Not as useful now as it used to be
- Maybe GDBA's knowledge increased and they have outgrown it

Would you be willing to undergo training in order to learn how to use a new information service?
- Yes

What is your job? Your responsibilities?

* Admin Manager, Wokingham

What type of information do you use personally?

* Policies that are in an electronic library, but he has to go through a binder to get them because don't have PC access
* Catalogues (hardcopy and on cd)

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?

* Physical library would be too far away
* Stuff available electronically would take some getting used to
* Should still have local info too

Would you use an electronic index?

* Search engine would be good
* Electronic not as easy if you don't know what you're searching for
* Legality of using 1 copy?

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?

* Yes

Do you use ABP?

* No
* RNIB has a good catalogue of products that would be easier to access online

Would you be willing to undergo training in order to learn how to use a new information service?

* Yes

What is your job? Your responsibilities?

- Kennel Manager, Wokingham
- Looks after dog's health on site and in region
- Gives advice on the phone
- Interprets what vets say into plain English

What type of information do you use personally?

- Technical magazines to keep up to date
- Internal dog records on computer, but those records aren't complete and are hard to access
- Rely on paper and memory
- Phone vet
- Textbooks
- Reference cds

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?

- Not for day to day things that we get calls about
- Would be good for staff trainees that have endless questions and want more in-depth answers

Would you use an electronic index?

- Would be good if there were more PCs
- Staff would probably rather look up something on the computer than ask a librarian

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?

- Yes

Do you use ABP?

- No

Would you be willing to undergo training in order to learn how to use a new information service?

- Yes

- Used to having an information department in her previous charity
  - Head of info services was responsible for the library (resource bank) and public advice lines, and provided a research function
    - Would go out to other libraries as needed and prepare briefs on background info
    - Provided info for PR and Media Relations
    - Responsible for ordering and circulation of journals
      - Here journal subscriptions are not standardised or cost effective, no clear record of where circulated
- ABP
  - Grant was awarded reactively, not proactively, therefore the needs of GDBA were not looked at first
  - Keen to maintain collaboration with ABP—merging hotels
    - GDBA seen as aloof and affluent in the past
    - Trying to break down those barriers
- GDBA structure
  - Shouldn't be product led, original purpose was to be client led
  - Biggest challenge is changing culture of the org to make people look at the "art of the possible"—unlocking potential
  - Info is power
  - Old directors were military
    - Staff not used to asking questions, used to being told what to do
  - Mindset is often not positive
  - Gap between management and staff
- Computers
  - PCs not he only way, but might be the ideal way
  - People aren't as afraid of computers anymore
  - Computers are only as good as their operators
- Ideas concerning info problem
  - Might have to do in phases
    - Long term it could be electronic, but not overnight
  - People don't think holistically
  - Call it an "Information Service Manager," not a librarian
    - People will use it more under that euphemism
  - Books like In Touch aren't updateable as loose-leaf or online
  - Don't want centralised decision making long term, but it should start that way
- New Department
  - Where should it be aligned? PR? IT?
  - No policy unit now
    - Creating it?
  - Info and policy could go together

What is your job? Your responsibilities?
- Director of Services (new role as organization is expanding)
- Responsible for all services from dogs, to rehab, to QA

What type of information do you use personally?
- Likes to keep up to date with outside world—magazines and journals
- Government proposals and initiatives, legal stuff
- Doesn't need technical information, but needs to know that someone else does
- Most information comes from staff
- Uses PC a lot

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?
- It takes a long time to scan through magazines for relevant articles
- Could use someone to filter info

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?
- Yes, but only if they were used the right way
- It could have the more expensive things in it, while the daily things could stay in departments
- Hard to keep track of things in departments—items can be left in coffee room, etc.
- Would probably be best to compromise
- People might not bother to walk to it
- If books are in a library, they have a definite place to be

Would you use an electronic index?
- Would only be good if everyone had access to it—all or none
- Things would have to be where it says they were, not lost somewhere

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?
- Could read through things and recommend relevant things for people to look at
- Could email these recommendations
- No time for him to be proactive himself
- It would be hard to have a general librarian in the role—would need someone who understood the business

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?
- Vaguely. It might be used by his department

Have you ever used ABP?
- No.
- Also bad feedback from RNIB, not reliable or up to date

Would you be willing to undergo training to learn how to learn a new information system?
- Training is essential to the introduction of any system
- It's a hidden cost—everyone should be required to go through it

What is your job? Your responsibilities?

- She is responsible for the archives in the basement. The archives are made up of old information, photos, information on centres, minutes of meetings
- She helps out where help is needed when GDBA is short-handed because she has been here for so long
- She is acting as a secretary in PR and helps Geraldine's secretary Margaret
- She keeps a list of subscriptions and a circulation list. When an item has circulated, it comes back to her to file
- Indexes the publication of Forward on a database in Uniplex. The index hasn't been updated in ten years because she hasn't worked on it and no one else will

What type of information do you use personally?

- She uses a great deal of internal information when assisting the PR department and Geraldine
- She used information such as the names of journals and magazines and who receives them when she was investigating the duplication of journals

What type of information does the department have but may not use?

- None

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?

- Nothing she can think of

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?

- Yes, very much. We have needed one for a long time
- There is not much duplication of magazines and journals at Reading, but there are many reference type books here and at other sites that could be centralized with one copy

Would you use an electronic index?

- Yes, she believes she would, especially to find information out for PR

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?

- Yes, a full time librarian would find every day easily filled
- As it is now, all the questions a librarian could answer ends up at PR where they are either answered by PR using back issues or the questions are sent to a specific department to be dealt with

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?

- Yes, she knows what Action for the Blind is but says her or her department does not use it
- She gets the bulletin but just puts it into the archives

Would you be willing to undergo training?

- Yes, for any library service or index

What is your job? Your responsibilities?

- Media Relations Manager
- Small Press office function with 3 people with in PR and Marketing
- Deals with GDBA and the media, publicity and press releases

What type of information do you use personally?

- Heavily reliant on PC with screen reader
- Gets newsletters sent over email
- Magazines sent on disk monthly
- Person will read print to him, or it can be scanned in
- Uses about 20% external and the rest internal

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?

- Can't get any electronic communications not on the PC (such as Uniplex)
- His PA doesn't have a PC
- Can't communicate with staff not on the PC system

Would you use an electronic index?

- Yes, of course

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?

- Has thought so since he started working at GDBA
- Current problem of improper archiving

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?

- Yes, uses the press cutting service

Are you willing to undergo training?

- Yes

Job Title: Senior Information Officer at Action for Blind People
How is ABP's library set up?
- Small area with shelves of books and journals
  - Catalogued under the DISS system specific to libraries dealing solely with disability issues
- Searchable database of holdings
  - Uses the InMagic DB/Textworks 3.0 program supplied by Sutron
    - Easily updated and searched for bibliographic records and abstracts
    - RNIB uses too
- Searchable database of contacts
  - Uses the Q & A program
  - Includes contact and distribution lists
  - Easily updatable and searchable for specific person or organization or specific distribution list
- FunderFinder program for location grant money available to groups or individuals
- One computer with Internet access
  - Used mainly for unusual eye conditions and government information

What about copyright issues?
- Don't need a license for internal and GDBA staff to have copies
- Refer the public to RNIB, and they charge

Job title: Information and Advice Services Manager at Action for Blind
People
What services does ABP provide?
- 3 and a quarter million pound budget per year for the department
    - GDBA has access for only a small part of the cost
- Inquiry answering
    - 12,000 per year
    - Up to 8 people fielding questions at a time
- Welfare Rights Service
    - Staffed by 2 people
- Mobile Service
    - Drives around the country making people aware of ABP and giving
      them needed information about visual impairmant
- Point of Diagnosis Project with staff of 1
    - 3 pilot areas
    - Helpline number given to people when they are first told that they
      have an eye condition
- GDBA services such as LOFY and press cuttings

GDBA use
- Service in place for 5 years now
    - Interviews conducted only at start of the project to find out what
      GDBA needs
- Seems to be only a core group of people who use the service
- Lack of use could be due to ABP not having the right information
- Could also be because GDBA staff see it as an outside source
    - Short term improvements:
        - Put Anne Marsh's name and phone number on the GDBA
          phone list
        - Have Anne use letterhead connecting her to GDBA, not ABP
    - Longer term:
        - Enable email inquiries and have Anne's email address on the
          GDBA list
- Possibility of giving GDBA staff access to ABP databases
    - RNIB also, since they use the same database program
- ABP can answer the majority of GDBA's policy and law related questions,
  but it might be beneficial for them to have their own policy officer who
  worked with ABP

What is your job? Your responsibilities?
- Administration Manage for Hindhead and Glasgow, handles all financial, building, services, It, and purchasing
- Two people working with him

What type of information do you use personally?
- He uses the GDBA financial system to look at income, expenditures
- His assistance use the GDBA system to find this information
- He receives journals and booklets from suppliers

What type of information does the department have but may not use?
- The department has access to all the information at the library in Hindhead but they don't use any of that kind of information. They put a lot of the information they receive in journals into the library though

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?
- Mostly needs financial information that is client specific
- More PC's
- Information on European Funding
- Records that maintenance depart keeps in paper could be put onto PC for easier use
- Quality and breadth of training on PC's to be improved

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralised library services?
- Perhaps, but Hindhead has different needs than most of GDBA
- Certain books are held and used specifically at Hindhead

Would you use an electronic index?
- Yes, but they are no good at the moment because not everyone has access or is not properly trained
- It would be the ideal situation but lacking the equipment and training

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?
- It would be essential in any information system, to have someone to maintain it

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?
- Yes, but have never used it
- Mostly uses the financial information specific for GDBA, not information on dogs or visually impaired

Are you willing to undergo training?
- Training is essential for growth
- It literacy varies throughout the organisation
- There has been no formal training so GDBA is not getting the fullest benefit out of its PC's
- More PC's may bring more training requests
- Now, has to organise his own classes

What is your job? Your responsibilities?
- Research Manager, Hindhead
- Marketing and finance
- Scans journals when they come in before they go to the library

What type of information do you use personally?
- Essential for marketing to stay in touch with what's going on in the government, etc., to see what training will be like in the long term—macroenvironment
- Trade journals, Internet
- Setting up a database for mailing purposes and internal stats on students on Access 97
- Applies to European Commission for funding
- Eurofi sends a directory and it is accessible over the Internet
- Can apply on disk
- RNIB reports, OPCS reports, some in library, market data is research assistant's office
- Brochures, calls
- Never heard of Electronic library

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?
- Accessing info isn't the problem, knows where to look, sometimes it just doesn't exist
- Needs info on other charities and stats about VI people
- Not as well organised as the private sector
- Partnership with other orgs would be good so that there isn't duplicate research
- Info about international efforts, their structures and systems

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralised library services?
- Critical to have a real library if GDBA is going to be excellent in its field
- Looking at making library at school available to former students

Would you use an electronic index?
- Yes, it would be useful

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?
- Yes, but it doesn't have anything useful to her
- Called a few times but stopped because she knows more than they do
- Press cutting service is good

What is your job? Your responsibilities?

- Principal of Education and in charge of quality assurance of education.
- Maintains a staff of 10 to 15.
- Manages 60 to 120 students
- Member of a number of committees

What type of information do you use personally?

- Journals, the Internet, list servers, and reference books

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?

- Not enough PCs for the number of students
- Students need PCs to access the Internet and write reports
- Internal information in terms of activity, like what type of research is going on, so not to duplicate

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?

- Hindhead has the biggest library dealing with rehabilitation, teaching, learning, working with, and eye conditions, of the visually impaired
- Want to be used by the organization for information and be recognized as having experience and information
- Yes, an in house library will expand GDBA

Would you use an electronic index?

- Yes, he believes the library should have an electronic index available to the entire organization

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?

- A full time employee who is a librarian and knows the subject area is needed
- Hiring a librarian can solve the accessibility problem the library has

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?

- Yes, ABP gives a general answer while their library provides a more specific and in-depth answer
- More research needs to be done by internal staff instead of external hiring someone
- Hiring a full time information officer it would develop GDBA instead of another organisation
- Put money into GDBA instead of another company

Are you willing to undergo training?

- Yes

What is your job? Your responsibilities?
- Research assistant
- Makes evaluations of what the Guide Dog school does
- Checks what other people or charities are doing

What type of information do you use personally?
- Uses research methods as information
- A great deal of desk research
- Believes the internet is a great place to find information
- Uses other libraries, but rarely the one at Hindhead

What type of information does the department have but may not use?
- They receive many journals and periodicals that are just skimmed through then put into the library where they sit

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?
- A comprehensive library that is staffed and searchable

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralised library services?
- Yes, as long as it was accessible from a distance

Would you use an electronic index?
- Yes

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?
- It would be necessary

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?
- Yes, has used it a couple of times
- Was not aware that they could do any kind of database work search
- Would like access to their databases from her PC. It would make research easier and less time consuming

Are you willing to undergo training?
- Yes, but none has been offered

What is your job? Your responsibilities?
- Head of Rehab School in Glasgow
- Manages courses and operational aspects
- Focus is on teaching and distance learning
- No residents

What type of information do you use personally?
- Needs to be up to date on academics
- Funding, government info
- Stats on students
- Purchasing
- Social work, volunteer orgs
- Electronic library very useful
- Internet

What type of information do you need but don't have access to?
- Government info
- Deal with European Social Fund, hard to figure out where web sites are—not located in logical manner

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralised library services?
- Glasgow has a library with books, periodicals, CCTV and cd-roms
- Smaller than the one at Hindhead, but in a large, multipurpose room
- Has been moved around the building a couple of times per student input
- People are encouraged to use the Internet

Would you use an electronic index?
- Yes, doing a search is good training in logic
- Would be good for stock control

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?
- Glasgow and Hindhead libraries were set up by a staff member who was a qualified librarian
- She assessed the reference materials at the two sites and exchanged things between them to even it out
- No librarian anymore
- Wanted one, but didn't get the funding
- Staff member on contract 4 days/wk responsible for periodicals
- His secretary updates the other stuff
- Some things get done and some don't because of the lack of communication between the two

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?
- The site gets two copies of LOFY
- Uses RNIB for technical articles on eyes, but has to pay for articles

- Sees Abp as a client based service, not as an information service
- Doesn't know if ABP has things that he would find useful
- Might be too non-technical and not at the right level for students

Are you willing to undergo training?
- All staff are PC literate, and use email a lot
- All have PCs at home
- Met with staff and they requested training on MS Office, so Karen Moon was brought in last week

What is your job? Your responsibilities?
- In charge of all the schools and the profit and cost center

What type of information do you use personally?
- Business information, books and the Internet

Do you think it would benefit GDBA to have centralized library services?
- Organization is needed to properly use the library and someone with expertise in the field
- The outside world could then use it and some income would be gained

Would a full time librarian figure be useful?
- Yes, one with knowledge of the subject of rehab and visual impairment

Do you know what Action for the Blind is?
- Yes, It is a duplicate of what is done here, not value for the money
- Can tailor an information internally better than using some thing like ABP
- Should be able to phone an internal information center and have the answer email back

Are you willing to undergo training?
- Yes, it does not matter if people are willing to under go training it is accentual

Appendix I:Survey Schedual

Liaison	Title/Region	Number Sent	Date Sent	Number Returned
Ian Ashworth	Deputy Breeding Manager/Tollgate	6	20-Apr	0
Noel Graham	IT Liaison/Redbridge	20	9-Apr	17
Roz Gratton	Admin Manager/Bolton	10	9-Apr	5
David Griffith	Admin Manager/Exeter	11	9-Apr	9
Linda Harwood	Admin Manager/Leamington	13	9-Apr	10
Graham Topping	RSM/Forfar	17	9-Apr	17
John Sellers	Admin Manager/Wokingham	20	13-Apr	12
Jenny Lindsey	Facilities Manager/Middlesbrough	15	9-Apr	10
Andrew Carson	Sm. Center Manager/Southhampton	4	9-Apr	3
Pete Smith	Sm. Center Manager/Maidstone	11	9-Apr	9
Chris Floyd	Sm. Center Manager/Cardiff	5	9-Apr	4
Val Woolrich	Sm. Center Manager/Sheffiled	7	9-Apr	7
Pete Roe	Sm. Center Manager/Nottingham	5	9-Apr	4
Kenny Hamilton	Sm. Center Manager/Larkhall	6	9-Apr	6
Alan Moneypenny	Sm. Center Manager/Belfast	5	14-Apr	3
Paul Houghton	Sm. Center Manager/Liverpool	6	9-Apr	0
Nigel Potts	Gen Manager, Hotels/Exeter	12	9-Apr	7
David Hush	Gen Manager Rehab Schools/Hindhead	25	14-Apr	19
		198		142

% Returned: 71.7

Appendix J: Survey Questions and Tabulated Results

Survey of Information Use at GDBA

The intention of this survey is to gain knowledge on the current state of the information use at GDBA. This knowledge will be used to make recommendations for changes to the current processes within GDBA. Improvements to the information resources will benefit all at GDBA by making it quicker and easier to access needed information. We would appreciate it if you could return this as soon as possible to Tricia Trotman at Hillfields, in the envelope provided. If there are any questions, feel free to contact Samantha Garramone, Greg Mickle, or Nathan Wilfert at Hillfields, extension 338. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please fill in the following information:

Job Title: _____

Site Location: _____

Name/Contact Information (optional): _____

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge.

Note: The term "Information" refers to internal and external items such as books, journals, internet, reports, manuals, magazines, newspapers, periodicals, etc.

1. Which of the following GDBA information services do you currently use? (Circle all that apply)

Resource Library   Electronic Library   Reports   Manuals

Other _____

2. What kinds of external information do you use for your job? (Circle all that apply)

Books Journals   Magazines Internet   Newspapers Periodicals

Other: _____

Frequently Used Titles:

Feel free to attach a list of the additional titles of information sources and their uses

3. Where is this information that you use located? (Rank from 1(most) to 4 (least))

___ In your office

___ In other offices at your site

___ At other GDBA sites

___ Outside of GDBA

4. Approximately how often do you use the information? (Choose one)

Daily   Weekly   Monthly   Not accessible

5. How important is it for you to access information from other GDBA sites?
(Rank from 1(very) to 5(not at all))

1   2   3   4   5

6. How important is it for you to access information from outside of GDBA? (Rank
   from 1(very) to 5(not at all))

1   2   3   4   5

7. How do you access information outside your department? (Circle all that apply)

Internet   Email   Telephone Request   Postal Service

Other (explain)_____

8. What types of library services would you be most likely to use? (Rank from 1

(most) to 4 (least)).

___Physical library

___Electronic index of physical resources

___Information stored electronically (accessible through a PC)

___Librarian services (person able to locate information)

9. Have you heard of Action for Blind People?

Yes   No

10. Have you used the information services provided by Action for Blind People?

Yes   No

11. Would you be willing to undergo training to learn how to operate any new
   information services?

Yes   No

12. Approximately how often do you use a personal computer (PC)? (Choose one)

Daily Weekly   Monthly   Not accessible

13. What functions does the PC perform for you? (circle all that apply)

   E-mail   Web browsing   Word processing   Not applicable

   Other (explain)_____

Tabulated Results

#1	#	%	#2	#	%	#3	Avg.		#4	#	%
Resource Library	68	47.89	Books	107	75.35	In your office	1.48		Daily	37	26.06
Elec. Library	28	19.72	Journals	81	57.04	In other offices at your site	2.07		Weekly	66	46.48
Reports	95	66.90	Magazines	86	60.56	At other GDBA sites	3.22		Monthly	36	25.35
Manuals	102	71.83	Internet	68	47.89	Outside of GDBA	2.85		Not Accessible	2	1.41
Other	26	18.31	Newspapers	55	38.73						
			Periodicals	67	47.18						
			Other	27	19.01						

#5	Avg.		#6	Avg.		#7	#	%	#8	Avg.
Avg.	3.09		Avg.	2.46		Internet	58	40.85	Physical Lib.	1.76
						Email	63	44.37	Elec. Index	2.46
						Telephone Request	127	89.44	Info stored elec.	1.77
						Postal Service	96	67.61	Librarian serv.	2.29
						Other	17	11.97		

#9	#	%	#10	#	%	#11	#	%
Yes	131	92.25	Yes	69	48.59	Yes	134	94.37
No	8	5.63	No	73	51.41	No	5	3.52

#12	#	%	#13	#	%
Daily	70	61.95	Email	68	60.18
Weekly	21	18.58	Web Browsing	70	61.95
Monthly	22	19.47	Word processing	93	82.30
Not Accessible	29	25.66	Not applicable	17	15.04
			other	33	29.20