

2000

## An analysis of messages posted to the LM\_NET listserv by school library media specialists

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## An analysis of messages posted to the LM\_NET listserv by school library media specialists

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### Abstract

This research examined messages sent to the LM \_NET (School Library Media and Network Communications) listserv by school library media specialists during the month of October, 1999. A content analysis was used to address the first research question: "What areas of concern are school library media specialists who are LM \_ NET subscribers addressing with their questions and postings to the LM \_ NET community?" The second research question, "Are there underlying patterns addressed in LM \_ NET messages posted by school library media specialists?" was approached with a textual analysis. The researcher used a sample of 95 messages that were initial postings by school library media specialists. It was found that the majority of these messages were posted in order to request information, rather than to share information or engage in professional conversation or debate. Message content consisted largely of discussion of resources and products for the school library media center, followed by reference questions for school staff and others. These two categories, combined with discussion of professional issues, accounted for over half of the discussion in the sample. Other topics of discussion included professional communication; Internet resources; policies, practices, and procedures of the media center or school; software use; curricular applications; and other miscellaneous topics. Four of the messages examined contained evidence of their writers feeling professional isolation from other media specialists or teachers.

An Analysis of Messages Posted to the LM\_NET Listserv  
by School Library Media Specialists

A Graduate Research Paper

Submitted to the

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Division of School Library Media Studies

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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by  
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## Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
1. Introduction.....	1
Problem Statement.....	15
Research Questions.....	15
Purpose, Assumptions, and Limitations.....	16
Significance.....	18
Definitions.....	18
2. Literature Review.....	21
Summary.....	38
3. Methodology.....	41
Table 1: Reduction of October, 1999 Message Population.....	46
4. Analysis of Data.....	52
Table 2: Purpose of the Message.....	53
Table 3: Message Content.....	55
Table 4: Elements of Professional Isolation.....	61
Summary.....	70
5. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	73
References.....	83
Appendix A: Analysis Checklist.....	87
Appendix B: Analysis Checklist Results.....	88
Appendix C: Completed Data Analyses.....	89

## Abstract

This research examined messages sent to the LM\_NET (School Library Media and Network Communications) listserv by school library media specialists during the month of October, 1999. A content analysis was used to address the first research question: "What areas of concern are school library media specialists who are LM\_NET subscribers addressing with their questions and postings to the LM\_NET community?" The second research question, "Are there underlying patterns addressed in LM\_NET messages posted by school library media specialists?" was approached with a textual analysis. The researcher used a sample of 95 messages that were initial postings by school library media specialists. It was found that the majority of these messages were posted in order to request information, rather than to share information or engage in professional conversation or debate. Message content consisted largely of discussion of resources and products for the school library media center, followed by reference questions for school staff and others. These two categories, combined with discussion of professional issues, accounted for over half of the discussion in the sample. Other topics of discussion included professional communication; Internet resources; policies, practices, and procedures of the media center or school; software use; curricular applications; and other miscellaneous topics. Four of the messages examined contained evidence of their writers feeling professional isolation from other media specialists or teachers.

The textual analysis found that more than half of the messages had as their intent to elicit concrete answers, while 23% were more open-ended, desiring opinions, views, or experiences of other media specialists. Over 70% of the messages were written with evidence of feeling part of a group, substantiated by the greetings or in-text phrases used in the messages. This finding confirms the listserv's creators intent to create a "virtual community" of media specialists. While half of the messages examined made good use of the listserv according to its moderators' intentions, several messages could have been answered using a more focused resource or showed little sign of the writer seeking the information for him/herself. Additionally, a set of messages emerged that showed that some media specialists consult LM\_NET members to validate their opinions or practices or to defend against the opinions or practices of others.

In summary, media specialists, who often work in isolation from others in their occupation, have a forum to discuss professional issues and to receive support from other professionals. This research indicated initial postings to LM\_NET by practicing media specialists more often seek the former than the latter.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

“LM\_NET is cheaper than a psychologist; safer than an affair; and healthier than 2 boxes of chocolate donuts. In other words, it’s therapy” (Wiltse, [http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv\\_Archives/LM\\_NET-pre1997/1994/Nov\\_1994/msg00283.html](http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv_Archives/LM_NET-pre1997/1994/Nov_1994/msg00283.html)).

### Background

A 1994 subscriber to the school library media specialist-focused listserv LM\_NET (School Library Media & Network Communications) asked fellow subscribers to share their thoughts on the value of their membership. The respondents noted LM\_NET was an "invaluable resource," a "valuable way to discuss problems and find solutions," and a source for "advice, support and help" (Wiltse, [http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv\\_Archives/LM\\_NET-pre1997/1994/Nov\\_1994/msg00283.html](http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv_Archives/LM_NET-pre1997/1994/Nov_1994/msg00283.html)). One member commented, "It's my favorite professional reading" (Wiltse, [http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv\\_Archives/LM\\_NET-pre1997/1994/Nov\\_1994/msg00283.html](http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv_Archives/LM_NET-pre1997/1994/Nov_1994/msg00283.html)). These responses represent but a few of the many subscribers who work in education and depend on listserv technology for part of their professional networking.

### Development of Internet and Listserv Use in Education

The beginning of the Internet as it is known today can be traced back to the first computer network, ARPANET, which was created in the 1970’s by the Department of Defense (Rheingold, 1993, p. 7). The original intent of the creators of this network was to enable users of the connected computer network to log into each others’ computers and

transfer files from computer to computer (Quarterman, 1993, p. 37). Users of the ARPANET network found they wished to send messages to each other about the projects they were working on, so the function of electronic mail was added to the network, and it quickly became the most popular aspect of the network (Quarterman, 1993, pp. 37-38). Developments in technology since the 1970's have spurred the growth of the Internet, of which one use is to facilitate communication.

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) utilizes software applications in the form of electronic mail (e-mail), bulletin board systems (BBS), and computer conferencing packages in order to facilitate contact among computer users (Hettinger, 1997, p. 2). E-mail is primarily used as a one-to-one communication tool in which an individual sends a message to a recipient's electronic mailbox where it is stored until the recipient chooses to read it. A Bulletin Board Service is a communication technique in which users can post a message to a public forum, read messages left by others, and choose to reply to messages they read (Webopedia, [http://webopedia.internet.com/TERM/b/bulletin\\_board\\_system\\_BBS.html](http://webopedia.internet.com/TERM/b/bulletin_board_system_BBS.html)). Internet Relay Chat is a text-based conferencing tool used in Internet technology. To participate in a chat, one must be communicating via computer at the same time as others, since conversation occurs in real time, while e-mail and bulletin board messages can be read at any time the subscriber chooses (Collin, 1997, p. 36).

Computer conferencing, communication among many people, is accomplished through the use of E-mail, Bulletin Board Services, conferencing software, or a combination thereof (Hettinger, 1997, p. 5). The most common way to conduct computer conferencing is through the use of listservs, which are supported by e-mail (Hettinger,



1997, p. 5). A listserv consists of subscribed members who can submit E-mail messages to the listserv and automatically receive all E-mail messages sent to the list (Collin, 1997, p. 106). Upon receiving a message, recipients can delete it, reply personally to the writer who made the posting, or send a public reply to the listserv. Listservs differ from bulletin boards in that a Bulletin Board Service must be accessed to be read; that is, messages are not delivered to one's e-mail account.

There are a great number of listservs to which one can subscribe. Some of these groups are *open groups*, meaning anyone expressing an interest can subscribe; while others are *closed groups*, meaning potential subscribers must apply for membership before they are added to the list (Clyde, 1997, p. 43). Some listservs are moderated, which means a person or group of people read messages sent to the list and determine their relevance and suitability before posting them to all subscribers (Clyde, 1997, p. 43). The earliest electronic mailing list was probably SF-LOVERS (Science Fiction Lovers) and was used among the scientists of ARPANET as early as 1978 (Rheingold, 1993, p. 77; Quarterman, 1993, p. 47). Today's topics range from archaeology to insects; from horror movies to distance running (Clyde, 1997, p. 45). Education-specific listservs include those concerning educational technology, the teaching of math and science, and physical education, just to name a few. School library specific electronic discussion groups include LM\_NET and SLIK-12, the latter a listserv for school library media specialists working in Iowa.

Internet telecommunications, including listservs, are used in education to the benefit of both teachers and students. Many teachers begin networking via telecommunications in order to enhance learning opportunities for their students and find

out they can benefit as well by interacting with other teachers and sharing ideas (Harisim, 1993, p. 21). Educators can use the Internet for professional growth because of the ability to communicate with others online in order to “exchange ideas about teaching, to share successes and disappointments [they] have had in the classroom, to learn from others, and to help colleagues” (Owston, 1998, p. xvi). Educators can use computer-mediated communication to “share ideas, ask questions, and keep up-to-date on trends” according to Summers (1996, p. 22). Sproull and Keisler (1991), researchers of the use of electronic communications in organizations, describe the process in the workplace of someone posing a query beginning with “Does anybody know...?” in which the asker is searching for information either “current or arcane...not easily found in official documents” (p. 133). If the question is not answered by those in the immediate surroundings, the person seeking help is stumped; with electronic communication, the asker is able to broadcast the call for help to a much larger audience (Sproull & Keisler, 1991, p. 133). The Internet provides users with access to people and information worldwide.

Some groups of people involved in computer-mediated communication, including those who use listservs, become known as what some writers refer to as “virtual communities” (Rheingold, 1993; Quarterman, 1993; Owston, 1998). Rheingold (1993) is among the earliest to write of *virtual communities* and discusses how computer-mediated communication allows people worldwide to engage in public discussions. He defines virtual communities as “social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace” (p. 5). He notes, “If you need specific

information or an expert opinion or a pointer to a resource, a virtual community is like having a living encyclopedia” (Rheingold, 1993, p. 57). Owston (1998) describes a virtual community as “a group of people who regularly interact online and share common goals, ideals, or values” (p. 60). Quarterman (1993) writes how people use computer networks and begin to frequent some of the “places” they feel more comfortable or accomplish more work (p. 47). He describes the relationship between communication and community and holds that “there are thousands of online communities today” and “communities differ from mailing lists, even though they may be built from them” (p. 47). Eisenberg and Milbury (1994) refer to LM\_NET as a “virtual community” (p. 31) and members as “virtual colleagues” (Milbury, [http://ericir.syr.edu/plweb-cgi/fas...19796+1+wAAA+milbury%26and%26number](http://ericir.syr.edu/plweb/cgi/fas...19796+1+wAAA+milbury%26and%26number)). They look upon the users of this listserv as a close-knit group with a wealth of information and common goals.

The existence of LM\_NET triggered the establishment of an electronic discussion group focused on a smaller group of school media specialists. SLIK-12 (School Libraries of Iowa, K-12) is an unmoderated discussion group that was formed as a joint project through the University of Northern Iowa's College of Education, between the university's Instructional Resources and Technology Services and the Division of School Library Media Studies (PMDF Mailserv V5.2, personal communication, February 29, 2000). The sponsors of this listserv describe its purpose "to facilitate professional communication among Iowa school library media specialists, provide mentoring, disseminate research findings, discuss intellectual freedom and share applications of the Internet and other online services" (PMDF Mailserv V5.2, personal communication, February 29, 2000).

The development of the Internet technology supporting listservs allows educators, including school librarians, to conduct communication activities with other educators without restrictions on time and place. Doing so provides access to information and colleagues and helps to combat the isolation many media specialists feel in their jobs.

### Isolation of Educators, Including School Library Media Specialists

Benedict and Fimian (1989) indicate that lack of professional support is one category of stress sources that librarians encounter in their careers. Included in this category is “doing work that is not appreciated...working with peers who do not understand what media specialists do, having a principal who does not understand what media specialists do ...and feeling isolated from other professionals at work” (pp. 84-85).

The notion of mentoring is mentioned in the literature regarding coping with occupational stressors of school library media specialists (Caputo, 1991; Sheldon, 1991; Van Deusen & Kraus, 1995). In addition, the idea of networking with professionals for peer support is also cited (Caputo, 1991; Sheldon, 1991; Owston, 1998). Mentoring and networking can be done face-to-face locally on a small scale, but to correspond with a larger and more diverse group of peers, many educators use computer technology.

A 1991 study of a computer network for beginning teachers showed participants felt participation was convenient and reduced feelings of isolation in their new jobs (Merseeth, p. 144). The computer-based group was available 24 hours a day, and participants felt less alone when they read messages left by their novice colleagues, who had similar concerns and problems (Merseeth, 1991, p. 144). Though reducing feelings of isolation was not the original intent of those who set up the computer network, it was a positive side effect.

A 1993 survey published by the Bank Street College of Education in New York City found that teachers are highly motivated to use Internet telecommunications for professional purposes in, “[c]ommunicating with other educators, accessing information, and combating professional isolation” (Honey & Henriquez, p. 16). The report relates that many teaching professionals, including library media specialists, can combat isolation by networking with other professionals to share ideas and receive rapid feedback to their questions and concerns. The group of educators surveyed felt networking with colleagues via the Internet was so worthwhile that the majority of the survey respondents engaged in these activities from their homes (Honey & Henriquez, p. 16).

Clyde (1997) states, “Much of the current trend of school reform relates to attempts to move away from teacher isolation to teacher collaboration, both in the classroom and within the school, and also outside the school” (p. 19). One goal is for both students and teachers to be life-long learners who can locate and evaluate information as well as work “collaboratively with others whose expertise complements that of the learner” (Clyde, 1997, p. 19). School library staff have the duty to provide information to the school community; additionally they have information needs of their own that can be met through resources and services that can be accessed via the Internet (Clyde, 1997, p. 34).

Sproull and Keisler (1991) describe the belief that “we strengthen relationships when we communicate with others. Every relationship is both informational and emotional” (p. 79). They describe the cycle of speaking with someone, learning from them, talking to them more, and from this process, liking them and feeling increasingly

committed toward them (1991, p. 79). Telecommunications interactions can foster such interactions among people and gain its users information they seek. Owston (1998) writes of how regularly joining an online group to exchange ideas about teaching, share successes and disappointments, and learn from and provide help to others begins a process of community building of a “support group of like-minded individuals” (p. 61-62). Though use of computer networking can alleviate some feelings of isolation among its users, Harasim (1993) advises, “Computer networking does not replace other forms of human communication; it increases our range of human connectedness and the number of ways in which we are able to make contacts with others” (p. 16).

School librarians who work in small districts and/or have no other media specialists with whom to speak may not have others in their communities with whom they can relate successes and problems of their occupation. Telecommunications can play a part in reducing some of the isolation that school librarians feel. The founders of LM\_NET realized this, and set out to create other lines of support for those in the school library media field.

### Development of LM\_NET

In spring of 1992, Michael Eisenberg (then professor at the School of Information Studies, Syracuse University, and Director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Information & Technology) raised the idea of creating a discussion group for school library media professionals using the Internet. He approached Ann Weeks, the executive director of the American Association of School Librarians, with this idea, who enthusiastically approved. By June 5, 1992, the idea of LM\_NET was a reality. Eisenberg worked with Syracuse University’s Academic Computing Services to set up the listserv software on its

mainframe computer. The group was begun with 42 members (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1996, p. 31; Eisenberg & Milbury, 1994, p. 32).

The original 42 members consisted of Central New York State school media specialists, Eisenberg's university colleagues from around the country, and some librarians from the New England area referred to Eisenberg by Carolyn Markuson, a media professional from Massachusetts. Markuson also told Eisenberg about Peter Milbury, a school librarian at Pleasant Valley High School in Chico, California, who had created an e-mail group of school librarians in California called the "Leading Edge Librarians." Milbury's group consisted mainly of Californians (his local colleagues and those who had attended his conferences and workshops) as well as other librarians found via the Internet or e-mail (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1996, p. 32; Eisenberg & Milbury, 1994, p. 32).

Communication between the two moderators (Eisenberg and Milbury) began on June 8, 1992. Milbury was added as co-owner of the group on June 15, 1992, and the two groups officially merged on June 16, 1992, with a combined membership total of close to one hundred (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1996, p. 32). The initial membership of the new group for school library professionals grew as word spread throughout the summer via workshops, personal communications, postings to library- and education-related Internet discussion groups, and announcements in journals and newsletters. In July, 1992 LM\_NET members had an opportunity to meet in person for the first time at the ALA (American Library Association) Conference in San Francisco (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1996, p. 32).

By September, 1992 the group consisted of 250 members, with the number reaching 400 members by the end of the year (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1996, p. 32). Of the 400 subscribers, the majority (390) was from the United States; six were from Canada, and Belgium, Germany, Finland, and New Zealand had one member each (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1996, 34). These membership figures are approximate because the membership list included many e-mail addresses that represented more than a single person. Some addresses were representative of Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) or a similar service, which in turn re-sent the postings to their subscribers; others represented informal reposting done by school librarians to their colleagues, even to those in other countries (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1996, p. 34).

After an announcement in two national journals in January, 1993, membership in LM\_NET grew by 100 new members by February (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1996, p. 34). With additional publicity the membership numbers grew to 1,000 by June, 1993 and to over 1,300 by the end of 1993 (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1996, p. 34). Throughout development of the listserv various professional contacts and gatherings of these members were facilitated. In November, 1993, Milbury announced the first official face-to-face gathering; a breakfast meeting for members of LM\_NET and the California library media teacher's network, to take place at a California state conference for library media educators (Clyde, 1997, p. 82). In February, 1994, an LM\_NET breakfast was held at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Los Angeles, and the success of the event triggered plans for additional meetings at ALA and AASL (American Association of School Librarians) conferences later in the year (Clyde, 1997, p. 83). In a posting immediately following the February meeting, Carol Simpson wrote, "the wonderful thing



about these meetings is we all have instant camaraderie" from previous interactions on the listserv (Clyde, 1997, p. 83). Following the AASL conference in November, 1994, an LM\_NET member reported there were nearly 300 attendants at the breakfast meeting and commented, "It was fun to see faces to associate with names and to share in the energy and spirit of the enthusiasm and cooperation that abounded (Inglis, [http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv\\_Archives/LM\\_NET-pre1997/1994/Nov\\_1.../msg00608.htm](http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv_Archives/LM_NET-pre1997/1994/Nov_1.../msg00608.htm))

In a 1994 writing, Eisenberg and Milbury acknowledged the success of LM\_NET and expounded on their goals for the listserv: "increasing membership is an immediate goal since there are approximately 70,000 library media professionals in the United States. The LM\_NET community also wants to expand its international contacts" (1994, p. 33). They recognized the advent of more members would mean more messages, and discussed the possibility of dividing the group geographically or topically to ease congestion, but held that "One of LM\_NET's current strengths is its ability to bring together the entire library media profession" (1994, p. 33). Other plans proposed by Eisenberg and Milbury in 1994 included expanding access to past discussions with a keyword search feature, electronic help sheets for its users, increased user-friendly interfaces, and the shaping of "the national networking effort, especially in K – 12 education" (p. 33).

The goal of increasing membership continued to be met. By February, 1995, the number of subscribers was over 3,500, and LM\_NET was the largest listserv for a single group of educators in the United States (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1995, p. 140).

Membership continued to grow by leaps and bounds as more educators gained e-mail and

Internet access. A posting to LM\_NET by Milbury in September, 1997, announced membership had reached 8,137 subscribers (<http://ericir.syr.edu/plweb-cgi/fas...19796+1+wAAA+milbury%26and%26number>), and another posting by Milbury a year later in October, 1998 announced a new plateau of “10,000 virtual colleagues” from at least 56 countries (<http://ericir.syr.edu/plweb-cgi/fas...35842+0+wAAA+milbury%26and%26number>). Eisenberg congratulated LM\_NET members on surpassing the 12,000-member mark in a message he posted in January, 2000. He noted that many others may read LM\_NET messages without subscribing, and thus are not counted in the tally (<http://ericsyr.edu/plweb-cgi/fas...55547+1+wAAA+milbury%26and%2612,000>).

Eisenberg and Milbury (1994) tout the LM\_NET listserv as a “virtual community” that “breaks down geographic barriers and supports cooperation, innovation, and new ideas” and is the “focal point for networking activity by library media specialists” (p. 31). The intent of this “virtual community,” according to *LM\_NET on the World Wide Web*, is the following:

Conversation on LM\_NET should focus on the topics of interest to the school library media community, including the latest on school library media services, operations, and activities. It is a group for practitioners helping practitioners, sharing ideas, solving problems, telling each other about new publications and upcoming conferences, asking for assistance or information, and linking schools through their library media centers.

([http://ericir.syr.edu/lm\\_net/](http://ericir.syr.edu/lm_net/))

The owners of LM\_NET contend that the listserv is more like a community than just a question-and-answer or discussion group. Eisenberg and Milbury (1995) say, “This sense of community is reflected in the quality of LM\_NET discussions, the scope of the audience, and the special features that members provide to each other” (p. 147). They contend that there is less chitchat than other listservs and that the discussions among these library media personnel are operated in a “facilitative stance—as if they are working in the same local setting” (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1995, p. 147). The special features referred to above are provided by members of the listserv and include a “mentoring program,” which links new members with more experienced network users, and a “monitoring program,” in which LM\_NET members subscribe to other listservs of educational interest and re-post to LM\_NET, thus reducing the need for the members to subscribe to a large number of listservs. In addition, a compiled member directory and keyword-searchable archives are currently available on the LM\_NET website (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1995, p. 148). Subscribers also have the option of receiving messages in digest form, in which all the messages for the day are compiled into one or more longer messages and sent to their e-mail accounts one or more times per day (LM\_NET on the World Wide Web, [http://ericir.syr.edu/lm\\_net/](http://ericir.syr.edu/lm_net/)). The low amount of “chit-chat” the moderators take pride in is likely due to LM\_NET being a moderated listserv, meaning messages from new subscribers must go through an approval process before they appear to the whole group, in order to be certain they adhere to the etiquette guidelines sent to all members upon subscribing (Milbury, <http://ericir.syr.edu/plweb-cgi/fas...19796+1+wAAA+milbury%26and%26number>).

Tope (1994) wrote about the ease of use of LM\_NET for its members, saying, “Besides its owners, LM\_NET has a group of volunteers who will give advice on how to use various kinds of hardware and software to communicate on the network...LM\_NET even has a Hospitality Committee, who send kind messages to people who screw up their postings to the list, advising them how to do better next time” (p. 5). Clyde (1997) commented “[t]his tolerant attitude, the spirit of cooperation, and the resources created by members are features of LM\_NET that are remarked on frequently by participants and people...who read the postings” (p. 147). She noted the absence of flames (mean-spirited postings directed toward an individual) during the month’s worth of messages she examined (p. 146). These comments suggest a friendly and helpful community with members willing to help each other.

#### Past Analyses of LM\_NET Postings

As stated earlier, the purpose of Eisenberg and Milbury in forming LM\_NET was to provide a focused forum in which to discuss “topics of interest to the school library media community” (LM\_NET on the World Wide Web, [http://ericir.syr.edu/lm\\_net/](http://ericir.syr.edu/lm_net/))

An analysis of messages conducted during October, 1993, showed LM\_NET members used the listserv to discuss professional issues, to locate information for the library or school community, to discuss school library administrative issues, to maintain professional communications, and to discuss Internet use and curricular applications (Clyde, 1997, p. 180). A total of 6% of the messages in this study were classified as miscellaneous, not fitting into any specific category (Clyde, 1997, p. 180). The results of a broad content analysis conducted on LM\_NET postings during November, 1993, indicated that one hundred percent of messages posted by subscribers dealt with topics

relating to issues in school librarianship, including policies and procedures, reference questions, library and Internet resources, software, and other general librarianship issues (Eisenburg & Milbury, 1996, p. 29). The results of these studies imply that during the beginning years of the listserv, member discussion stayed focused on the types of issues the moderators had intended.

### Problem Statement

School librarians frequently work in buildings as the sole media specialist and often do not have other librarians in close proximity with whom to exchange ideas, ask questions, and commiserate. Lack of such communication opportunities can lead to feelings of professional isolation. While tactics such as mentoring and professional networking can help alleviate these feelings, listserv technologies enable school librarians to communicate with other professionals beyond one's local community. The aim of the LM\_NET listserv is to serve as a vehicle for discussion of issues that concern school library media specialists. Does this listserv offer opportunities for discussion of a wide variety of topics and offer support to these professionals?

### Research Questions

- 1) What areas of concern are school library media specialists who are LM\_NET subscribers addressing with their questions and postings to the LM\_NET community?
- 2) Are there underlying patterns addressed in LM\_NET messages posted by school library media specialists?

### Purpose

The purpose of this research was to examine the postings addressed to the LM\_NET listserv in order to gain insight into subject matter, latent content, and possible themes in librarians communication with colleagues. This researcher examined those postings that occurred in a one-month period in the year 1999.

### Assumptions

It was assumed that the topics and underlying themes addressed in the postings to LM\_NET during October, 1999 were representative of those addressed throughout the school year. It was assumed that there were no problems with the function of the listserv software or the method of posting message to the web-based archives during October, 1999.

### Limitations

Due to the nature of activities that take place during the school year, this researcher realizes that there may be some difference in the topics addressed by the postings from month to month. Special library weeks or library events (such as *Banned Book Week* or *Read Across America*) may be addressed more in the postings around the time that they are occurring. Additionally, each posted message may not address just one question, concern, or theme. In looking for the latent content in messages, however, difference in topics is less of an issue.

The researcher analyzed those postings that were addressed to the group as questions or as general information for the group, rather than replies to such initial postings. The intent of this research was to more thoroughly understand electronic communications among LM\_NET members, that is to say, what topics and latent content

were present in the subject matter media specialists wish to initiate discussion with colleagues.

At the time of the study, this investigator had been a subscribed member to LM\_NET for the better part of a year. She had not previously been employed as a school librarian and had not posted questions or comments to the listserv. She had been an avid reader of those messages whose subject lines indicated they would help her in her class work, aid her in her future job as a school librarian, or those whose subject lines simply intrigued her. On rare occasions she had privately e-mailed members of the list with a reply or inquiry related to one of their public postings. Having not directly experienced the communication needs of a school librarian, the researcher remained open to what the data analysis revealed.

This study did not take into consideration the communications of subscribed members who do not post to the listserv, or those who access the archives to locate information. It merely was concerned with messages posted to the listserv. Furthermore, this study was interested only in the messages posted by school library media specialists, and it is to be noted that not all members of LM\_NET are school library media specialists. Some members are involved with school libraries at the district, state, or national level; others are classroom teachers, students in library science programs, professors in library science, representatives of professional associations in the school library field, and people representing commercial services for school libraries (Clyde, 1997, p. 82). Only messages posted by those involved with school librarianship at the PreK-12 level were included in the study.

This paper did not attempt to determine if LM\_NET subscribers were pleased or successful with the results of their interactions with other members of the listserv. It was also not the aim of this researcher to determine if participating media specialists felt elements of professional isolation or if their participation in the listserv provided them assistance in combating such isolation.

### Significance

The majority of school librarians work as the only librarian in their school. While classroom teachers are able to ask each other questions and share similar experiences, the majority of school librarians' needs will not be met by the colleagues in their school. This study is significant to busy school media specialists who wish to communicate with colleagues in their profession and wonder if participation in the LM\_NET listserv will be worth the time they must invest in it.

### Definitions

***BITNET (Because It's Time Network)*** "One of the oldest and largest wide-area networks, used extensively by universities" (Webopedia, <http://webopedia.internet.com/TERM/B/BITNET.html>)

***BBS (Bulletin Board System)*** "An electronic message center. Most bulletin boards serve specific interest groups. They allow you to dial in with a modem, review messages left by others, and leave your own message if you want." (Webopedia, [http://webopedia.internet.com/TERM/b/bulletin\\_board\\_system\\_BBS.html](http://webopedia.internet.com/TERM/b/bulletin_board_system_BBS.html))

***Chat*** Using a software application "to send and receive messages, in real time, with other users on the internet..." (Collin, 1997, p. 36). Also referred to as ***Internet Relay Chat:***



“system that allows many users to participate in a chat session in which each user can send messages and sees the text of any other user” (Collin, 1997, p. 97).

**Computer-mediated communication** The use of “computers and the switched telecommunication networks that also carry our telephone calls” to communicate with other computer users (Rheingold, 1993, p. 5).

**Electronic Mail (e-mail)** “way of sending and receiving messages between users on a network” using special software (Collin, 1997, p. 66).

**Internet** “A vast network of computers offering many types of services, including email and access to the World Wide Web. As a ‘network of networks,’ the Internet links computers around the world” (Harnack & Kleppinger, 1997, p. 7).

**Listserv** “Server on the internet that sends a newsletter or article to a list of registered users...Any user can submit information that might be useful to other users and this information is sent automatically by email to all registered users on the list” (Collin, 1997, p. 106).

**LM\_NET School Library Media & Network Communication** (L-Soft list server at Syracuse University, personal communication, September 29, 1999); an e-mail-based “discussion group open to school library media specialists worldwide, and to people involved with the school library media field” that functions with listserv technology (LM\_NET on the World Wide Web, [http://ericir.syr.edu/lm\\_net/](http://ericir.syr.edu/lm_net/))

**Query** “a question; an inquiry” (Flexner & Hauck, 1993, p. 1584). For the purposes of this paper, a query was a question or inquiry sent to the listserv. When LM\_NET subject key words were used, possible key words indicating queries included TARGET, GREET, TECH, REF, JOBS, ELEM, MIDDLE, and SEC.

**Reply** "an answer or response in words or writing" (Flexner & Hauck, 1993, p. 1634).

For the purposes of this paper, a reply was considered an answer or response to a previously posted listserv message. Most replies sent to a listserv are identified as such by looking at the subject line of an e-mail message for the letters Re:.

**Subject Key Words** The following is a list of suggested subject key words to be used when posting messages to LM\_NET:

TARGET: request for information to be compiled for a HIT:  
 HIT: the compiled information from the TARGET request  
 ADMIN: restricted for official messages from the listowners  
 GREET: for requests for greetings  
 TECH: for PC & MAC software and hardware questions  
 REF: requests for all types of reference questions  
 GEN: anything that doesn't fit the other categories  
 JOBS: postings of job vacancies  
 ELEM: postings for kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade topics  
 MIDDLE: postings for middle school topics  
 SEC: postings for secondary grades (9-12)  
 (L-Soft list server at Syracuse University, personal  
 communication, September 29, 1999)

**Telecommunications** "Computer-based information systems utilizing modems hooked up to computers, which allow communication to take place over telephone lines" (Honey & Henriquez, 1993, p. 2)

**Thread** "In online discussions, a series of messages that have been posted as replies to each other...By reading each message in a thread, one after the other, you can see how the discussion has evolved. You can start a new thread by posting a message that is not a reply to an earlier message" (Webopedia,

<http://webopedia.internet.com/TERM/t/thread.html>)

## Chapter 2

### Review of Related Literature

LM\_NET has been an invaluable resource for everything from nitty gritty technology questions to ideas for book related units for my school. Don't know how I survived without it! We can brainstorm with 2000 other library media specialists. Teachers have other teachers at their grade level to bounce ideas off, but quite often the librarians are isolated.

(Wiltse,[http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv\\_Archives/LM\\_NETpre1997/1994/Nov\\_1994/msg00283.html](http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv_Archives/LM_NETpre1997/1994/Nov_1994/msg00283.html))

LM\_NET was intended to facilitate professional conversations pertaining to school library media specialists. This research sought to explore what topics were addressed, as well as what latent content could be found, in messages posted to the LM\_NET listserv by school librarians. There has been a fair amount written about educators' use of technology, e-mail, and specifically listservs. This chapter will review the literature regarding the use of Internet and telecommunications in United States education, isolation of educators and specifically librarians, the use of Internet and telecommunications among librarians, and research pertaining to LM\_NET.

### Internet and Telecommunications Use in Education

The U. S. Department of Defense established the first large-scale computer network in the 1970's in order to allow communication among colleagues in distant research institutions (Rheingold, 1993, p. 7). Communication via e-mail was just a minor aspect of this network, but very quickly grew to be one of the most popular features

among its users (Quarterman, 1993, pp. 37-38). Currently e-mail is accessible to anyone with Internet access and people find many uses for it, professionally and personally. Many educators consider e-mail and other telecommunications necessary resources to be used within their working day.

Honey and Henriquez (1993) conducted a survey of United States K-12 educators to investigate their use of telecommunications for professional development and student learning. The survey sample included educators who actively used telecommunications technology in their work and who were solicited mainly through announcements on telecommunications networks (p. 3). Five hundred fifty educators from 48 states returned the twenty-seven-page questionnaire (p. 2-3). Of the sample, the greatest percent was elementary teachers (20%), followed by computer specialists (23%), and library media specialists (14%) (p. 7). The remainder of the sample was divided between special area and other categories of educators (p. 7).

The findings indicated that the educators surveyed had been using telecommunications for professional development for an average of one year longer than for student learning activities, that the participants were largely self-motivated in becoming involved in these activities, and that many were self-taught (p.12). The survey results showed that the most widely used telecommunications professional development activities used by this group fell into a category entitled *Collegial Exchanges*, which included sending e-mail to colleagues, using forums or bulletin boards, and participating in discussion forums (p. 16). Other categories involved *Information retrieval using services and databases* and *Administrative tasks* (p. 17). The motivations for educators using telecommunications in their work reflected their use of *Collegial Exchanges*;

including: communicate with other educators; access information for students, colleagues, and self; and combat professional isolation experienced in their jobs (p. 18).

The researchers concluded that the group of educators surveyed felt telecommunications were a valuable resource for professional and student activities and that the users represented a specialized group of experienced and highly educated teachers (p. 34). They noted “[a]mong this group, it is the technologically knowledgeable computer and library media specialists who are taking the lead in telecommunications activities, serving as resource people and facilitators for colleagues in their schools” (p. 34).

Foley (1996) conducted a study to examine the effect of Internet use on communication among educators working in a K-12 environment. All equipment needed to participate in the study, as well as training sessions and individual technical assistance, was provided to all participants (p. 45). A total of 31 teachers from the Washington D. C. area and surrounding Maryland and Virginia school districts were involved in the study for the 15-week academic semester in Spring 1995 (pp. 45-46, 107). Data gathering instruments in the form of surveys based on previous studies were developed in order to determine participants’ levels of comfort with technology and to see if the educators perceived their use of the Internet as *Insignificant*, *Personal/Management*, or *Valuable* (p. 54). As one of the social outcomes results of this study, it was revealed that use of the Internet reduced some participants’ feelings of isolation (p. 83). Survey respondents offered ideas on how the Internet could be used to reduce teacher isolation: “access to colleagues, exchange of ideas, and access to and support of new teaching ideas...[and] [a]ccess to first-hand expert information” (p. 85). Other *Social Issue* outcomes relevant

to this study included: both positive and negative aspects were experienced by participating educators; participants saw potential benefits of Internet usage for teachers; and participants garnered few new contacts outside of the realm of the study (p. 109).

Foley concluded,

[t]he Internet provides new communications modes and activities which permeate the life of almost every individual in our society and promise broad opportunity with instant access to unlimited resources of people, data, information and images (both live and stored) not even conceived of less than a decade ago.

Even so, she felt teachers need leadership and support to integrate the uses of the Internet into their personal and professional lives (p. 116).

Library media specialists were represented in Honey and Henriquez's 1993 study. They were among the educators using telecommunications for professional development and collegial exchange. As was the case with educators in the Honey and Henriquez, and Foley studies, school librarians reported feelings of isolation in their jobs. A study addressing Internet use by school librarians was carried out shortly after the study by Honey and Henriquez, and is discussed later in the chapter.

#### Telecommunications Studies Focusing on Specific Groups of Teachers

Various studies have been conducted concerning Internet telecommunications by specific groups of educators. Some educational groups use listservs, some use bulletin boards, and some use a variety of computer-mediated communication methods wrapped up into one network or community.

Merseth (1991) investigated the Beginning Teacher network in order to find out whether first-year teachers in diverse geographical settings would receive personal,

emotional, and technical support from the experience (pp. 140-141). Subjects of the study included thirty-nine first-year educators teaching in middle or high schools across the United States who were graduates of three different teacher education programs at Harvard University (p. 142). Participants were able to communicate publicly via bulletin boards and privately through an electronic mail capacity (p. 142). Data for the study was collected by a mail survey and follow-up structured interviews (p. 142). A survey was mailed to all participants in spring, 1988, and 79% returned completed surveys (p. 142). Follow-up interviews were conducted with ten participants representing varying participation levels (p. 142). Results of the survey and interviews suggested contributing members of this network benefited largely from emotional support and reduced feelings of isolation, and received less in the way of technical and assistance with the formal processes of teaching (p. 146). Merseth acknowledged, “keeping in touch with friends received a significantly higher mean rating than the objective of lesson and curricular planning” (p. 144). The researcher surmised the lower scores of support for lesson planning and other formal teaching processes were in part due to the lack of experienced educators involved in the network (p. 146). Merseth concluded that the results of the study suggest electronic transfer of messages can provide emotional support and reduce isolation in beginning teachers in diverse geographic locations (p. 146).

Glazer (1994) analyzed discussions on an Internet-based listserv for educators in the realm of mathematics. The NCTM-L listserv officially began in March of 1994 and had as its intention “to facilitate the discussion of the NCTM [National Council of Teachers of Mathematics] standards” (p. 49-50). Throughout an 81-day interval during the listserv’s beginning, Glazer studied over 1,000 NCTM-L messages from

approximately 535 list subscribers in order to find out the types of people involved, the types of issues discussed, the nature of the discourse among active participants, and the attitudes of subscribers toward the listserv (p. 76). Research was conducted with both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. One finding relevant to this study is that topics discussed included a wide array, with the majority (45%) focusing on *Professional development issues* (p. 103). The vast majority of messages (70%) were providing information, with the remainder looking for information (7%) or a combination of the two (23%) (p. 108). Glazer concluded his study by commenting on the positive and negative aspects of the mathematics-based listserv. Positive aspects included being able to gain world-wide perspectives on issues, having access to a forum of leadership and learning from successful educators, potential for professional development, a forum in which to keep up-to-date about popular topics in education, an opportunity to share ideas and research with other educators, and an opportunity to find answers to questions (p. 171-174). Some of the problems Glazer noted were high volume of messages and concerns about the equity of participation (p. 175-176).

Rojo (1995) conducted research of participation in "public scholarly electronic forums" (abstract, p. ii). This multiple method study had as its qualitative objective to "describe the adoption, use and contribution processes from the users' viewpoint" (abstract, p. ii). Subjects for this portion of the study consisted of 12 participants in 10 different public educational forums (abstract, p. ii). The quantitative portion of Rojo's study was conducted using an e-mail survey and investigated members' patterns of use and tested hypotheses within a framework of public goods' approaches (abstract, p. ii). This portion of the study was conducted using a random sample of 50 users from 12



selected educational forums (abstract, p. iii). The conclusion relevant to this research was that, in terms of use of the forums, Rojo found participants ranged from using them for a wide variety of activities to using them merely as a newsletter from which to extract information (p. 103-104). She classified uses into three modes: "fishing for information mode; enjoying debate mode, and social networking mode" (p. 104). These uses were further delineated as *non-interactive purposes* (getting information, distributing information, feeling part of an intellectual community, and learning about the medium) and *interactive purposes* (social networking and intellectual discussion) (p. 104). This researcher noted that forums varied in their participation levels and modes of use (p. 211). Rojo found that successful electronic forums with a high rate of contribution and a high rate of adoption have: a balanced influx and outflow of members; members who consider themselves as receiving benefits from the online group; a high percentage of regular contributors; and an active listowner who contributes to forum exchanges (p. 261-262). Rojo acknowledges her sample of listserv groups was limited to a select few of the variety available for study, but contends her research leads to further studies focusing on online forums (p. 270).

Research conducted by Spitzer and Wedding (1995) investigated the role electronic networking plays in reducing the isolation felt by science and math teachers (p. 247). They studied LabNet, an electronically-connected group of United States primary and secondary math and science teachers numbering over 1,000 (p. 247). Funded by the National Science Foundation, the purpose of this electronic community is to aid teachers in successfully implementing science and math national standards and "has been carefully engineered to provide an accessible, fertile, and friendly environment for

supporting conversation about teaching, grounded in the needs and realities of teachers” (pp. 247-248). A survey distributed to members of this network showed that 80% felt it helped with their teaching and professional development (p. 251). Most often reported reasons for using the network included: “to gather ideas and teaching materials; to share experiences in an ongoing way; to feel less professionally isolated; to experiment with project-based learning; to learn more about teaching science or math; and to inform others about their work” (pp. 251-252). Spitzer and Wedding concluded that using educational networks can benefit teachers, but is “not a replacement for other forms of contact, training, and professional development” (p. 254). They felt teachers would get involved in electronic communities if they were aware of the value of doing so, if it enhanced their professional affiliations, and if the network was formed with attention to technical and social design (p. 254).

Pennington (1998) explored K-12 physical education teachers’ use of a listserv intended for the educators to discuss ideas about their programs. Many of the subscribers read messages almost daily and Pennington noted “[p]articipation on the listserv appeared to be a valued resource leading subscribers to teaching activities, teaching resources, curricular materials, and reduced feelings of isolation” (1998, abstract).

Results of studies of telecommunications use among various types of educators indicate most feel some type of isolation in their jobs. Though educators work with people all day, one can infer from the literature that they do not have adequate time to discuss professional issues with adults in their buildings, so these types of networks allow the convenience of connecting with people in their profession at their convenience. Additionally, some of these practitioners work in schools where they are the only, or one

a few, educators who teach their specialty. Many library media specialists would fall into both categories.

### Isolation of Educators, Including Library Media Specialists

In a 1989 study Benedict and Fimian sought to create an instrument designed to empirically measure perceived stress levels of library media specialists and to use the instrument to determine the occurrence and manifestations of stress in a sample of North Carolina public school media specialists (p. 82). They first created the Media Specialist Stress Inventory (MSSI) based on the Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI), the literature on media specialist stress, and input from media specialists (pp. 82-3). "The MSSI respondents assess[ed] the intensity of their feelings, attitudes, and reactions as they relate[d] to stressful events in their work environments" (p. 83). The MSSI was administered concurrently with the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to measure validity of the newly created instrument. Analysis of survey results showed positive correlation between the new and established instruments--the total MSSI score was "moderately and positively related to the total burnout score" and "MSSI subscale scores and the total burnout score were similarly and significantly related." (p. 85).

Benedict and Fimian sent 800 surveys to randomly selected North Carolina Schools with library media specialists; 337 usable surveys were returned (p. 82-83). Categories emerging as *Stress Sources*, in the order of their occurrence, were *Time and Work Load Management*, *Instructional Trade-Offs*, and *Lack of Professional Supports* (p. 84). Within the latter category the media specialists reported, among other sources of stress in this category, feeling isolation from other professionals, working with staff

and/or principals who do not understand their job, and feeling isolated from other teachers (p. 84).

The researchers felt the MSSSI could serve as a valuable diagnostic tool for assessing the need and focus of stress-prevention programs for pre-service and in-service librarians as well as for media specialists to self-assess their own stress susceptibility (p. 86). Librarians working in schools would first identify their stressors, including feelings of isolation, and then do something to help themselves deal with, or even alleviate, them.

Dussault, Deaudelin, Royer and Loiselle (1999) conducted research to investigate the relationship between professional isolation of teachers and their occupational stress (p. 943). For the purpose of the study, the researchers used a cognitive definition of professional isolation: “the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person’s network of social relations at work is deficient in some important ways, either quantitatively or qualitatively” (pp. 943-944). The survey instrument used to determine professional isolation was the Echelle de Solitude de l’Université Laval (ESUL), a French version of the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (p. 944). The instrument is comprised of twenty statements which teachers rate on a four-point scale of how accurate each describes them at work (p. 944). The researchers measured the surveyed teachers’ occupational stress with a French Canadian adaptation of the Teacher Stress Inventory used by Boyle et al. in which teachers rated sources of stress on a five-point scale from *No Stress* to *Extreme Stress* (p. 944). The set of questionnaires were sent to 2,924 teachers working in elementary, secondary, and vocational French schools in Quebec, Canada (p. 944). A total of 1,110 teachers (781 women and 329 men) completed all scales, with 530

participants serving in elementary schools, 529 serving in secondary schools, and 51 serving in vocational education (p. 944).

Dussault, Deaudelin, Royer, and Loiselle (1999) reported “[h]igher ratings on professional isolation were associated with higher self-reported stress” (p. 945). Results indicated professional isolation was positively related to each portion of the Teacher Stress Inventory, with the strongest correlation being with the portion labeled *Poor Relations* (p. 945). The researchers felt their results confirmed the opinions of experts about teacher’s professional isolation in the workplace as well as illustrated the need to find ways to reduce this isolation (p. 945). Because of the strong correlation between *Poor Relations* and *Professional Isolation*, they suggested “training programs built around peer collaboration (mentor programs, support groups, and peer coaching, for example) could help teachers face their professional isolation” and that school principals should be aware of the stress and ways to help teachers cope with it (p. 945).

Bentley (personal communication, April 2, 2000) conducted a survey of school librarians to determine if they were subject to feelings of isolation in their jobs. The survey was distributed through the use of a listserv she set up entitled School Librarians’ Network, a listserv based in the United Kingdom with approximately 180 members. Bentley received 60 usable replies to her survey sent by way of the listserv (personal communication, April, 2000). Of the respondents, 68% were certified as librarians but not teachers, 7% were certified only as teachers, 8% were dually certified, and 17% were uncertified. Of all the respondents, approximately 70% said they felt isolated professionally. Of those who were certified as librarians without teacher certification, 80% reported feelings of isolation from colleagues. Bentley noted the results of her

survey indicated “[l]east likely to be isolated were the teachers (25% or 1 out of 4 respondents) and the uncertified (50% or 5 out of 10 respondents)” (personal communication, April 2, 2000). She mentioned there is little research concerning isolation of school media specialists, but “certainly in the UK, if you talk to almost any school librarian, they know exactly what is meant [by professional isolation]” (personal communication, April 2, 2000).

To alleviate the stressful feelings of isolation and being misunderstood by one’s co-workers, some librarians seek to communicate with others in their field. One method librarians use to network with colleagues is through the use of telecommunications, including professional listservs. Though few studies have focused on K-12 school media specialists, one might surmise that special librarians, too, often work in isolation from other librarians.

#### Internet and Telecommunications Use Among Librarians

Ladner and Tillman (1992) conducted a quantitative study of special librarians to find out to which computer conferences they subscribed, the length of time they had been using BITNET or the Internet, the type of training they had, and to what extent they used the capabilities of either network. The five-page survey, consisting of both open-ended and closed questions, was sent electronically to respondents (p. 2). The sample included 54 self-selected special librarians working in technical institutions, universities and colleges in the United States, Canada, Argentina, and The Netherlands (p. 2). Sixty-five percent of those surveyed were academic librarians, with the majority of them working in science or technology, with others representing law, medicine, maps, and business (p.3).

The results of the questions concerning use of networks indicated that the participants primarily used BITNET and the Internet for work-related communication and e-mail as well as to participate in electronic forums, Bulletin Board Systems, and listservs (p. 6). Respondents commented that these activities helped to reduce geographic distance and feelings of isolation by establishing a connection with distant colleagues (p. 6). They noted that this type of communication was “convenient, timely, nondisruptive, and inexpensive” (p. 8). Users of computer discussion groups cited benefits as “a focussed [sic] forum for topics of interest to a specific audience,” “an excellent and swift communications vehicle where questions can be raised and answers provided to all the participants...” and “reduced telecommunications costs because it costs the same to send a message to one person as to send it to a large group” (p. 6).

Ladner and Tillman (1992) concluded that while the special librarians used the Internet to build and access collections, e-mail was the most often used aspect of the Internet (p. 9). Internet e-mail provided a mechanism to communicate with others and combat the isolation they felt in their workplace (p. 11). They suggested it was dangerous to focus efforts on making library resources available on the Internet at the expense of neglecting the most important resources, the librarians themselves (p. 11). They concluded their study with the comment, “[w]e see the need at the same time to create a human interface – a community of knowledge navigators serving to connect people who can interact in their pursuit of truth” (p. 11).

With a multi-faceted study conducted in 1993, Clyde (1997) set out to explore Internet usage by school librarians. After monitoring the LM\_NET listserv for six months, she distributed an electronic questionnaire to all the members of LM\_NET via a

posting to the listserv in October, 1993 (pp. 115-16). A total sample of 105 self-selected persons (9% of the LM\_NET population at that time) returned a completed questionnaire, either by e-mail or the postal service (pp. 116, 119). Of the respondents, 100 were from the United States, three were Australians, and two were Canadians (p. 139). The majority (63%) of respondents worked in an elementary, middle, or secondary school, and most of these were media specialists (pp. 139, 141).

Respondents were asked to indicate all the purposes for which they used the Internet, beyond their use of LM\_NET. Ninety-seven percent signified using e-mail to contact people outside of their schools (p. 177). Other Internet uses specifically involving telecommunications were: use of listservs or bulletin boards (57%) and discussions of professional issues (43%) (p. 177). Additionally, getting all types of information for various members of the school community was a use of the Internet to this group (p. 177). Student projects based on the Internet, student research, and development of enquiry [sic] skills were selected by 29%, 22%, and 15% of the respondents, respectively (p. 177).

As was the case in Honey and Henriquez's 1993 study, Clyde's results indicated the Internet was being used for student research and projects, but overall was primarily used for professional contacts and information retrieval. Clyde hypothesized, "This may be related to the fact that so many school librarians were accessing the Internet mainly through equipment located in their own homes, rather than in their school or school library...they did not always have the facilities within the library to allow users direct access to the Internet, or even watch a search being carried out" (p. 178).



It was around the time of Ladner and Tillman's 1992 study that some listservs were getting their start, including LM\_NET for K-12 media specialists. It is apparent from the LM\_NET membership explosion that Ladner and Tillman were not the only people who felt librarians could be communities of "knowledge navigators" (1992, p. 11).

### Research Studies of LM\_NET

Clyde (1997), referred to earlier in the literature review, also inquired in her survey of LM\_NET members about their reasons for joining as well as reasons for staying members of the listserv. In her description of results she points out that participants responded freely to these questions and were not limited to one response; she listed in her results only those that were cited by four or more respondents (p. 150). Of a total of 105 respondents, 32 said they joined to communicate with colleagues in order to reduce isolation (p. 150). One of those surveyed wrote, "as the only librarian at our middle school, I get lonely..." and another said she joined, "to put an end to 22 years of isolation" (p. 151). Twenty-three respondents said they wanted to keep up with developments in the field, and 11 wished to share information and ideas (p. 150). Other reasons, numbering six or fewer citations, included curiosity about the network, to see what others were doing, because it was set up for school librarians, because they were library school faculty or graduate students wanting to find out what was happening in the trenches of school librarianship, and to learn about library automation (p. 150).

Clyde (1997) recognized that the reasons LM\_NET subscribers had for continuing membership in the listserv might differ from the reasons they initially joined, so she included a section of the questionnaire to address this issue. She found the original

purposes for joining held true for remaining a member for many people, but also that librarians learned additional benefits of LM\_NET. Again, survey respondents were not limited to one response (p. 150). Of those respondents working in schools as media specialists, 97% said they continued to use the listserv to maintain contact with professionals outside their school (p. 154). Eighty-four percent of members used it to learn about resources for their library media center, 82% used it to find solutions to problems they encountered in their library media center, and 79% found it useful to discuss professional issues (p. 154). Other reasons for remaining subscribed to LM\_NET included *To have fun* (73%), *To get information for other people* (70%), *To get information about library automation*, and *To find answers to reference questions* (both 52%) (p. 154). When asked to select the most important reason for using LM\_NET, 52% of those working in schools selected *For contact with professionals outside my school* (p. 156). Clyde concluded that, as people remained users of LM\_NET, they discovered additional benefits that they had not necessarily known upon subscribing (p. 153).

Additionally, Clyde (1997) conducted an analysis of all messages posted to LM\_NET in October 1993. The analysis was conducted in the same month as her survey concerning Internet usage by LM\_NET members so that results of each could be compared using a similar population (p. 125). Clyde aspired to “place answers to the questionnaire in perspective, and to provide additional information related to usage, the nature of messages posted, the topics discussed, and the users as a group” (p. 127).

Clyde examined a total of 606 messages posted for the month of October, 1993 (p. 126). Eight categories of messages emerged, corresponding with the questions on the survey concerning school librarians’ use of the Internet. Of the messages, 25% were

related to *Discussion of professional issues* (p. 180). Twenty-four percent fell into the category *Locating information about resources* while *School library administration* issues accounted for 21% (p. 180). *Professional contact and communication*, which survey respondents had rated their highest use of the Internet, accounted for 9% of the messages, with *Reference and information services* being addressed by 8% of the messages (p. 180). Six percent of the messages were described as *Miscellaneous*, not falling into any category, while *Curriculum applications and student projects based on the Internet* was the topic addressed by 4% of the messages, and 3% were posted as *LM\_NET administration* messages (p. 180). Clyde noted that the survey respondents placed great emphasis on using the Internet to maintain professional communication (p. 199). She stated “[t]his was also an important factor in their membership in LM\_NET, and it is reflected in the number of messages posted to LM\_NET that would appear to have their basis in just ‘keeping in touch’” (p. 199).

Eisenberg and Milbury (1996), co-owners of LM\_NET, conducted broad content analysis of postings during November, 1993, during which there was an average of 1,265 members and a total of 569 messages posted (p. 36). The messages were grouped into eight categories, which are ordered according to their frequency: *Library, school, and district policies, practices, and procedures*; *Location and use of Internet resources*; *Reference questions directed to teachers and others*; *Products and resources for the library collection*; *General discussion of librarianship issues*; *Training tips and software use*; *LM\_NET administration and use*; and *Workshop and conference announcements/discussion* (p. 36). Twenty-six percent of November’s postings fell into the category of *Library, school, and district policies, practices, and procedures* (p. 36).

Postings concerning *Location and use of Internet resources* accounted for 17% of the postings (p. 36). Reference questions and those about products and resources for the library each accounted for 15% of the messages (p. 36). The analysis revealed that LM\_NET was used for seeking information about general education in addition to library media issues (p. 36). The moderators of LM\_NET concluded that the wide range of questions, announcements, and discussion items addressed on the listserv addressed the needs of the online community for “not only information, but support, friendship, and comfort as well” (p. 42).

Eisenberg and Milbury (1996) also conducted descriptive analysis research into the posting patterns of the listserv to find the average daily number of postings throughout 1993. During this time period membership grew from an average of 502 during January to 1,269 members in December (p. 35). The average number of messages went from six in January, 1993 to 19 in October and November, then down to 16 in December. (p. 35). The moderators speculated December was likely affected by school vacation and related time constraints (p. 35). Based on their analysis, they described a numerical relationship: “[t]he growth of messages seems to be directly proportional to growth in membership as the number of messages doubled while the membership more than tripled” (p. 35).

### Summary

Many educators, including school librarians, indicate feelings of isolation from other professionals (Benedict & Fimian, 1989; Dussault, Deaudelin, Royer and Loiselle, 1999; Bentley, 2000). Dussault, et al (1999) found that professional isolation was positively related to stress among educators. A 1989 study by Benedict and Fimian

reported that feeling isolated from other professional librarians, feeling isolated from other teachers, and working with staff or administration who do not understand the job of the media specialist can contribute to occupational stress of media specialists.

Studies of educational listservs show members participate in different ways. Some post messages because they are looking for specific information, while others contribute messages in order to share information with other subscribers (Glazer, 1994; Rojo, 1995). Some messages are found to be a combination of both giving and asking for information (Glazer, 1994). Some subscribers use educational listservs in order to engage in social networking, to feel part of an intellectual community, or simply to learn about the communication medium (Rojo, 1995). Whatever form their participation takes, listservs afford subscribers a variety of benefits. Through continued contact with other subscribers to educational listservs, participants can benefit from reduced feelings of isolation (Merseeth, 1991; Ladner & Tilman, 1992; Spitzer & Wedding, 1995; Pennington, 1998).

LM\_NET is one listserv that provides a forum for school library media specialists to share and request information and engage in discussion of issues of librarianship. Since its formation in 1992, LM\_NET has experienced growth in membership and activity. Postings to the listserv in 1993 stayed within the moderators' intent of the listserv's use (Clyde, 1997). Areas of discussion included: *Professional issues* in librarianship, *Library resources*, *Library or school administration and policies*, *Reference questions for members of the school community*, and *LM\_NET administration* (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1996; Clyde, 1997). Other topics were *Professional contact and communication*, *Curricular applications* and *Internet-based student projects* (Clyde,

1997); and, *Location and use of Internet resources, Training tips and software use*, and *Workshop and conference announcements* (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1996). LM\_NET members surveyed indicate their reasons for staying on the listserv are to communicate with other professionals, learn about resources, find solutions to problems in their media center, to discuss professional issues, to have fun, and to get information about various topics (Clyde, 1997). It would appear that their reasons for remaining members correlate to the discussion raised on the listserv.

This literature review illustrates that many educators, including school library media specialists, experience some professional isolation in their occupations. Formal research studies of LM\_NET have investigated topics of discussion, but have not analyzed underlying themes emerging from the communications of its members. Nor have research studies of LM\_NET investigated whether evidence of using the listserv to combat professional isolation is present. This study intends to explore these issues, in addition to looking at categories of subject matter discussed.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the messages posted to an online discussion group for school library media specialists in order to identify subject matter discussed and find out if there were patterns in underlying themes deriving from these messages. Messages sent to LM\_NET were subject to a content analysis as well as textually analyzed in order to gain insight into librarians' use of this mailing list to communicate with like professionals.

This research was conducted using what Creswell (1994) refers to as "the two-phase design approach" (p. 177). A sample of LM\_NET messages was studied in first a quantitative manner, and then cycled through a qualitative approach. The two phases of the study were completed separately, though results of the quantitative study provided the researcher with questions to pursue for the qualitative portion of the research. Qualitative and quantitative methods are often seen as conflicting, but Weber (1985) notes the best studies combine both types of analysis, especially in the case of studying texts (p. 10).

The first phase of this research was conducted with a quantitative approach, using content analysis. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) describe content analysis as a "technique that enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way, through an analysis of their communications" (p. 469). This methodology can be used "in any context in which the researcher desires a means of systemizing and (often) quantifying information that is not previously organized to suit the researcher's purpose" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000, p. 470). Content analysis serves as an unobtrusive way of studying human interactions (Weber, 1985, p. 10). This methodology was appropriate for this study

because the researcher wished to analyze the written communications of school library media specialists and look for comments within their communications that could be placed into preset categories. She then desired to convey the results of the analysis numerically.

In order to develop initial categories to use in the coding of the sample of LM\_NET messages, the researcher consolidated results of prior research concerning the use of telecommunications and listservs by teachers and librarians as well as studies of LM\_NET. This allowed the researcher to “rely on well-developed constructs” (in this case, topics or themes) as well as to add her findings to the existing pool of research in a comparable manner (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 173-174). The data-gathering instrument was created using the studies presented in the literature review and is Appendix A.

As Krippendorff points out, a content analysis may not come to the point where it is cleanly finished. He states,

Although a good content analysis will answer some question[s], it is also expected to pose new ones, leading to revisions of the procedures for future applications, stimulating new research into the bases for drawing inferences, not to mention suggesting new hypotheses about the phenomena of interest (1980, p. 169).

The researcher anticipated new questions would be raised, and hoped to gain more insight with the second phase of the study.

Qualitative research is based in grounded theory, which Glaser and Strauss define as “the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research” (1967, p.2). Qualitative methods seek to generate or modify theory by examining what emerges from the data rather than seeking to prove or disprove a priori assumptions,



which is the case with quantitative research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 3). To say this another way, Pauly writes, "The topic of all qualitative research is the making of meaning" (1991, p. 11). In this study, the researcher intended to investigate the writings of school librarians in order to gain insight, or discover theory, relating to their need to communicate with others.

A qualitative research methodology, in the form of textual analysis, was combined with the quantitative aspects of content analysis methodology because in studying the written communications of people in school librarianship, the researcher wished to view the data a second time without predetermined categories for sorting content. Using predetermined terms, Pauly writes, "deliberately distances the researcher's language of analysis from the subject's language of experience" (1991, p. 6). In this part of the study, it was not the main intent of this researcher to describe submissions to the listserv in categorical and statistical terms, but rather to understand the concerns and feelings behind the messages as the members wrote them. In analyzing the texts with the intention of creating meaning, she took care to "look for contextual units and build those units into an argument for an interpretation of the text" (Potter, 1996, 140).

Before beginning the coding process for the textual analysis, Taylor and Bogdan (1984) suggest the researcher become familiar with the data by reading and re-reading it, while "keep[ing] track of themes, hunches, interpretations, and ideas" relating to them (pp. 130-131). They also advise having read various studies relating to the current research (p. 135). This writer has reviewed literature relating to the use of technology in education as well as those relating to e-mail, online discussion groups, and, specifically, LM\_NET.

The researcher used the five-step coding process presented by Taylor and Bogdan (1984) when sorting the data. These steps include: develop sorting categories, code all data, sort the data in coding categories, see what data are left out, and refine the analysis (p. 137-138). While sorting data into the developed coding categories, the researcher found it necessary to "add, collapse, expand, and redefine the categories" and changes in terminology were recorded on a master list of categories throughout the process (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 137).

Taylor and Bogdan (1984) relate that "most good research builds on what has been done before" and encourage the use of concepts of other studies in describing one's data (p. 135). They also warn "[y]ou should be careful not to force your data into someone else's framework" (p. 135). Throughout the sorting process messages were not forced into categories; rather they were required to both fit and work with the category. Glaser and Straus (1967) define the terms by the following: "By 'fit' we mean that the categories must be readily (not forcibly) applicable to and indicated by the data under study; by 'work' we mean that they must be meaningfully relevant to and be able to explain the behavior under study" (p. 3). In adhering to principles of qualitative research, the investigator took care to avoid having a mindset of what she might find during the coding process.

The researcher continuously noted questions about the data throughout the sorting process and remained open to what the data might reveal. In qualitative methodology, the researcher does not control the study; questions arise and "[t]he emerging theory points to the next steps - the sociologist does not know them until he is guided by emerging gaps in his theory and by research questions suggested by previous answers"

(Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 47). The researcher knew she had completed the textual analysis when no new questions arose from the data—Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to this as "theoretical saturation" (p. 111).

### Population

Data analyzed was an approximately 10% sample of the population of messages posted to the LM\_NET listserv during October, 1999. The specific time period of October 1, 1999 to October 31, 1999, was selected for several reasons. The month of October is a month when the atmosphere in schools has calmed and returned to normal from the activities associated with the beginning of the school year. It is a month with no lengthy vacations or major celebrations that might deter school librarians from accessing and reading their e-mail. Additionally, results of this research could be more readily compared with a study of LM\_NET members and messages conducted in October, 1993 (Clyde, 1997). Selecting a one-month period also delineated a definite starting and stopping point for data collection. The messages were accessed by means of the web-based archives available via LM\_NET on the World Wide Web ([http://ericir.syr.edu/lm\\_net/](http://ericir.syr.edu/lm_net/)). At the time of the analysis, the listserv was in its 7<sup>th</sup> year, with over 10,000 subscribers ([http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv\\_Archives/LM\\_NET/1999/Oct\\_1999/msg00020.html](http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv_Archives/LM_NET/1999/Oct_1999/msg00020.html)).

### Procedure

The set up of the LM\_NET archives allows the messages to be searched by keyword, displayed by thread of conversation, or displayed by date posted. To access the archived messages, the researcher began at the web page LM\_NET on the World Wide Web ([http://ericir.syr.edu/lm\\_net/](http://ericir.syr.edu/lm_net/)). She then located the heading *Archives* and clicked

the hotlink that allowed her to access past messages by date. On the following screen she selected the hotlink for October, 1999. This brought the researcher to a web page with a representation of the messages posted during this month in the chronological order the messages arrived to the LM\_NET listserv and were posted to the website. Each message was represented by its subject line, date sent, and author. According to the first web page of lists of messages posted for October, 1999, there were 1685 messages posted to LM\_NET ([http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv\\_Archives/LM\\_NET/1999/Oct\\_1999/](http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv_Archives/LM_NET/1999/Oct_1999/)).

With approximately one hundred messages to a web page, there were seventeen web pages of message listings displayed for October. These web pages were printed in order to facilitate note-taking and record-keeping.

Table 1: Reduction of October, 1999 Message Population

<b>Beginning Population</b> (total number of messages on October LM_NET Archive web pages)	<b>1685</b>
Messages posted in months other than October	8
Re:, HIT, or ADMIN in subject line	505
Employees of institutions other than K-12 schools	60
Library science graduate students	28
Classroom teachers	9
Non-certified/part-time/non-employed school library media specialists	15
No job title given	80
No school or job title given	31
No message present	3
<b>Remaining messages</b>	<b>946</b>
<b>10% of remaining messages</b>	<b>95</b>

Upon closer inspection, it was noted that the first six messages were posted during the month of September rather than October. Likewise, the last two messages on the web

pages listing October postings were actually sent by their authors during the month of December. This eliminated eight messages from the list under consideration.

In order to investigate only queries, comments, announcements, and other general posts to the listserv (as opposed to replies to messages and HITS, or compiled responses), the subject lines of the remaining messages were examined. Message subject lines containing Re: or the subject key words HIT or ADMIN were eliminated from the list. Messages with other subject keywords, such as GEN, TARGET, ELEM, (or others as noted in the definitions list), as well as those with no subject keywords or blank subject lines were included in the list. There were a total of 505 messages eliminated that were either replies to previous messages or compilations of answers received by queries (HIT's). There were no messages with the subject key word ADMIN in this sample of messages.

Further, since this study was aimed at analyzing LM\_NET postings in order to examine the communications of school library media specialists, the signature lines of the remaining messages were examined. Per LM\_NET etiquette, subscribers to the listserv are to conclude their messages with identification in the form of a signature file that includes name, occupation/job title/worksites, and e-mail address (LM\_NET Etiquette, [http://ericir.syr.edu/lm\\_net/eti.html](http://ericir.syr.edu/lm_net/eti.html)). The signature lines of remaining messages were examined, and those with a job title and/or worksite which indicated the sender worked in an occupation other than that comparable to school library media specialist were removed from consideration. Signature files of 60 messages indicated their authors worked in settings that were not pre-K through grade 12 schools. These included (but were not limited to): ALA offices, H. W. Wilson Publishing company, SUNLINK, Universities

and Colleges, and those who were school superintendents. Twenty-eight messages were signed by graduate students in library science programs. Nine messages indicated their authors worked as classroom teachers. A total of 15 messages carried a signature file that indicated the author worked in a school library as non-certified or non-full-time staff. Some of these job titles included library associate, library aide, library volunteer, and retired librarian. All the above messages were eliminated.

Some LM\_NET contributors for October included in their signature files their name and the name of the school in which they worked. Because of the lack of a job title to ensure these were truly school library media specialists, 80 messages were eliminated. In the case that no identification beyond name was given, messages were eliminated from those under consideration. Thirty-one messages were removed from the sample under consideration for this reason.

Finally, it was noted by the researcher that three of the hotlinked subject lines lead to web pages that held no message. These were eliminated from the list of messages under consideration. The researcher can only assume either people sent blank messages to the listserv by mistake or perhaps the function that automatically posts the messages to the web pages malfunctioned.

Once the Replies, HIT's, ADMIN, and non-school library media specialist messages were noted, all the eliminated messages were crossed off the web pages the researcher had printed for the purpose of note-taking. The remaining message headings were numbered from one through 946. A random number table (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000, p. 646) was then consulted to select the 10% sample of the messages that remained. The 95 messages in this random sample were copied from their web page, minus the

signature file and any evidence of e-mail address. This served to protect the anonymity of the authors of the messages. Upon joining the listserv, subscribers receive a welcome message that, in part, alerts them to the fact that postings can be accessed by anyone with Internet access. Authors are presumably aware of the fact that their postings may be read by many people, but for the purpose of this analysis, author identities were deleted in the interest of protecting their privacy. No individual's e-mail address or contact information were included in the final report, and the senders were not identified more closely than by state. In the case that names of people, specific schools, or cities were included in the message text, they were replaced by the symbol \_\_\_\_.

Also deleted were the standard LM\_NET copyright and instructions message attached to the bottom of every message relayed to listserv members. Messages were not altered in any other manner, including spelling, punctuation, or grammar, in order to preserve the intent and tone of the text as written.

After copying, the messages were pasted into a Microsoft Word document (two per page) to conserve paper when printing. Names of cities, schools, and people within the text of the message were replaced with the symbol \_\_\_\_ in order to protect the privacy of the contributors. Some messages were posted to the web page with symbols, (such as =20) interspersed throughout the message. This is due to the author's e-mail program's html editor adding these tags. These marks were left in the message. Two copies of each message were printed to facilitate note-taking during the content and textual analyses. One copy of the messages was left intact.

The randomly selected sample of 95 messages was first subject to a content analysis using the instrument that is Appendix A. Each LM\_NET message was read and

charted on a separate analysis checklist. For each of the three portions of the Data Analysis table, messages were classed in the one that exhibited the essence of the communication and key words recorded as evidence. During this part of the study the researcher also kept a log of any questions that came to her mind while reading the messages. These questions were used to further the sorting process during the qualitative phase of the study.

To conduct the textual analysis, the researcher used one set of messages cut into strips for the sorting process while keeping one set preserved intact. In conducting the first sort, the researcher attempted to build on previous research by looking for the major categories discovered in the 1993 analyses conducted by Clyde and Eisenberg and Milbury and represented on the analysis checklist (Appendix A). These include:

*Discussion of professional issues; Resources or products for the school library media center; Policies, practices and procedures of the school library media center or school; Reference questions for school staff and others; Location/use of Internet resources; Training tips/software use; Workshop and conference announcements; Professional contact and communication; Curricular applications; and LM\_NET administration and use.* It was expected that not all messages would fit neatly into one category. Message texts were sorted into manila envelopes, each envelope was assigned a category title, and the enclosed messages were coded with a number and letter combination written on the back of each. At this point, messages not easily fitting existing categories were reexamined and questioned.

Questions that arose about the data from the first sort as aided by the content analysis were noted and were consulted for subsequent sorting. After cycling repeatedly



through the processes of questioning, re-sorting, and formulating theory, the researcher observed what Glaser and Strauss (1967) term "theoretical saturation" (p. 111). Themes reoccurred and no new questions were formulated by the researcher. It was at this point that the researcher was comfortable with the categories and began to draw conclusions about the data.

## Chapter 4

### Data Analysis

There are many special interest listservs in operation today. LM\_NET is a listserv geared toward the needs of school library media specialists. Media specialists can participate in LM\_NET to communicate with like professionals for a variety of purposes. This research investigated messages sent to this listserv by school library media specialists.

The first research question of the study was “What areas of concern are school library media specialists who are LM\_NET subscribers addressing with their questions and postings to the LM\_NET community?” This question was addressed by the quantitative, or content analysis, portion of the study.

### Content Analysis

The researcher examined a sample of 95 messages from October, 1999. Each message was examined and the results recorded on an analysis checklist. These are presented as Appendix C. The tabulated results of all messages are summarized as Appendix B.

#### Purpose of message.

The first section of the analysis checklist focused on the purpose of the message. Each posting from the sample was categorized as one of the following: *Requesting information*, *Sharing information*, or engaging in *Professional conversation / debate*. The results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Purpose of the Message

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Requesting information	67	71
Sharing information	21	22
Professional conversation / debate	7	7
<b>Total:</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

The vast majority (71%) of the messages examined in this sample had as their purpose to gain some kind of information from the LM\_NET group. Because the topics of conversation were addressed in the second portion of the Data Analysis table, explanations in this area focus on the ways contributors indicated their need for information.

Some LM\_NET members wished to “locate,” or desired respondents to “give” or “direct” them to, resources or information while others hoped to receive what they requested directly (E.g. “would you be willing to send me a copy?”). Some writers simply asked for “information” but many also used the terms “ideas” and “suggestions.” Others asked for a “view,” or an “opinion.” Similarly, one message read “we’d love your recommendations” and another was “greatful [sic] for any feedback.” Other keywords in this category were requests for “input” and even “a flash of insight.”

At least eleven messages posed a question and asked for “help” or “assistance.” The degree to which writers perceived their need for help seemed to be indicated by the way in which they phrased their communication. (E.g. “any help will be appreciated,” “Can anyone help?” and “PLEASE HELP” seem to indicate varying degrees of neediness). Messages included in this category were requests for various kinds of information using a multitude of keywords. All sought some kind of response in one form or another.

While the main intent of most initial postings to LM\_NET was to request information from colleagues, 22% of the messages were written in order to offer information to other school librarians. Some of these messages did so with a spirit of goodwill, using such phrases as “If you want a laugh,” “thought I would share this again,” “Hope these help someone else as well!” and “Enjoy!” Other messages offered information and left the door open for further inquiries, such as the message concluding with “If anyone is interested please let me know.” Others wrote in order to “tell,” “share” or to “offer” information or experiences with readers. One message provided “the info for the people who inquired” and yet another advised library media specialists against a certain purchase.

Some messages did not aim to request or share information. Instead these authors contributed to the listserv merely conversational messages or those intended to engage or respond to debate. Of the 7% of messages in this category, four addressed the group with communication in the form of an anecdote. One of these messages described how a student didn’t think a web site was useful to him because, “he replied, ‘it’s just a lot of WORDS.’” The other anecdotes shared positive experiences media specialists had had during their working day. One message was posted in order to thank other LM\_NET members “for your responses to my request for help.” Two messages in this category offered their opinions to discussions it would appear had already been started on the listserv. One wrote “IMHO [in my humble opinion]...I have liked many of DK books but do not purchase them because of the poor binding.” Another wrote, “I understand that often in a discussion of a company only the dissatisfied people speak up...I think a discussion of their customer service problems are quite appropriate.” One would venture

to say other messages were posted in this thread of conversation before or after these particular messages were sent to LM\_NET.

It should be noted that had this research not been limited to initial postings to the listserv, the categories of messages labeled *Sharing information* and *Professional conversation / debate* likely would have had a greater percentage of messages included in them.

#### Message content.

The second portion of the Data Analysis attempted to classify each message according to the most evident topic. The researcher used key words in order to elicit the most significant topic. The results appear in Table 3.

Table 3: Message Content

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Resources or products for the school library media center	23	24
Reference questions for school staff and others	19	20
Discussion of professional issues	12	13
Professional contact and communication	8	8
Location/use of Internet resources	7	7
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	6	6
Training tips/software use	4	4
Curricular applications	2	2
Workshop and conference announcements	0	0
LM_NET administration and use	0	0
Other	14	15
<b>Total:</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>99</b>

Note: Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

This research illustrated the greatest volume of dialogue in this sample (24%) of the messages concerned discussion of *Resources or products for the school library media center*. Among the types of resources and products discussed were books (both professional and for students), videos, audio recordings, and posters of the Big6<sup>TM</sup> process model. Four messages sought recommendations or opinions about software products to be used in the school library media center, either for student use or the use of the media specialist. Three messages discussed publishing companies; two of these shared their opinions of the companies and one sought to find a good book fair provider. Another type of resource discussed in this sample was computer hardware. One of the messages inquired about “computer to tv converters,” another requested “feedback” about two particular types of CD-ROM drives, and another supplied information about an online source for ordering hardware. One contributor was “wondering what others are doing” regarding purchasing print encyclopedias in addition to the library’s electronic copies. Lastly, two messages offered discarded resources from their libraries to others.

The next category of messages in terms of frequency was *Reference questions for school staff and others* (20% of the sample). Most of the messages within this category (nine) were posted to the LM\_NET group as a question asked by a teacher or group of teachers. These teachers were in need of information about literature, online sources, short stories, poems, and places to publish student work. Two of the reference questions were posed to the listserv members as asked by students. One media specialist, seeking an author address for a student, wrote, “This kid is coming in every day to ask if I have the info, and I really want to help him find this author.” The other stated, “My gifted students as [sic] excited they have finally stumped me.” Additional reference requests

were for school counselors and for “another librarian who is not on LM\_Net [sic].” The final four messages were unclear as for whom the reference questions were posed.

The next largest category was *Other*, in which messages were placed that did not seem to the researcher to fit neatly in any other existing category. Fifteen percent of the message sample was classified as *Other*. Three of these messages concerned librarians wishing to secure an author to visit their schools. Some messages in this category shared miscellaneous information with the group, including a job posting, a quote to share with faculty, a humorous website, a fun Halloween activity, special weeks celebrated during November, and two references to the *Harry Potter* books. One message requested “information and or opinions” about a book and author to be used in his faculty book discussion group, while the remaining messages asked questions for the writer’s personal use. One of these concerned a technology problem, one required information for a paper for a class, and one posed a movie trivia question.

The category *Discussion of professional issues* (12% of the message sample) included five messages focused on the topic of book challenges or attempted censorship. Two of these were in reference to a challenge to the *Eyewitness Book Arms and Armor*. One subscriber reported a challenge to this book by a teacher and the principal in the school district and wondered if anyone else had a similar experience. The other subscriber reported the challenge was due to a “no tolerance for weapons policy.” The subscriber wondered if anyone else had a challenge toward this book and was “interested in comments and suggestions.” Other messages concerning attempted censorship sought Christian reviews for the *Harry Potter* series, told about a challenge to *Something Upstairs*, by Avi, and described an experience with the removal of library materials

“because they are to be used in a reading assessment.” Other professional issues discussed centered on the *Children’s Internet Protection Act*, motivating high school students to read, how to design a new library facility, how to arrange technology professional development in a school, and the denial of an educational discount at a chain bookstore. Another message sought the opinions of other media specialists about the handling of free videos containing television advertising, and also in this category a media specialist shared a method for conducting a research activity making use of materials in a variety of formats. All of these messages had as their intent to inquire about, share information about, or discuss professional issues.

A total of 8% of the postings were classified as *Professional contact and communication*. Postings were categorized in this way if they had as their main goal simply to communicate with other media specialists, usually not seeking any information. Five messages within this category consisted of a media specialist’s sharing an anecdote. One shared how a successful book discussion group provided a “nice change” from other usual parts of the job, while another shared an experience being interviewed for a television news story about the *Harry Potter* books. Three shared humorous or uplifting comments made by students. One of these anecdotes was shared because the author felt the incident “sums up a lot of what we are up against.” The remaining messages encompassing professional contact and communication were seeking, or expressing thanks to, professionals providing professional communication opportunities via private email.

Seven percent of the messages in the sample addressed the *Location/use of Internet resources*. Two of these provided URL’s to be used as a source of professional



reading; one offered a web site on which to read about book characters “like Harry Potter as battlers of evil.” The other shared online lesson plans about Y2K. Two messages asked for web sites to be used with students (“primary ... science experiments” and web sites that “cover writing, grammar, listening, and reading comprehension” for high school students). One writer requested an Internet site for personal use. A final appeal in this category sought “any interesting web sites that would be useful” for “teaching a workshop for the middle school teachers on the Internet.”

A similarly sized category dealt with messages whose content consisted of *Policies, practices, and procedures of the school library media center or school*. Six percent of the sample fit into this category. One such message questioned the group on the criteria for cataloging “books based on actual events.” One message shared the writer’s procedure for dealing with a company that sent unsolicited videos, while another reminded the LM\_NET community of the importance of having backups of one’s automation system. One message requested “a written inter-library loan policy” and other messages in the category sought information for the benefit of the school: fire safety codes and a technology survey to be given to incoming students.

The category entitled *Training tips/software use* accounted for only 4% of the messages in this sample. Software needs were addressed in messages about resources and products for the media center; this category was reserved for messages requesting tips on training staff or students in technology use or questions related to software. There were no messages in this sample categorized by the researcher as training tips. All messages in this category addressed to the LM\_NET population consisted of a question about software applications. These addressed the Winnebago Spectrum automation

system, Claris HomePage (a web authoring program), Microsoft PowerPoint, and Netscape e-mail.

Only 2 messages, or 2% of the sample population, could be classified as curricular applications. Both of these postings inquired about student use of electronic mail. One participant desired someone to “start an email with 9thgraders in Michigan;” the other requested an “armload of documentation” that showed ways “you or your colleagues have successfully used e-mail as a tool for a [student] project.”

Two categories in Table 2 did not have any messages classed in them. These included *Workshop and conference announcements* and *LM\_NET administration and use*. In the 95 postings examined by the researcher, none were considered to address these topics as their main intent.

#### Elements of professional isolation.

The third portion of the Analysis Checklist addressed evidence of elements of professional isolation in the communication on LM\_NET. The researcher did not attempt to speculate if the writer felt isolation at the time of the communication; rather she looked for key words or phrases that indicated the author felt isolated from school library media professionals or other teachers, or whose school administrators did not understand their role. The results of this analysis appear in Table 4.

Table 4: Elements of Professional Isolation

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>		
Professional Isolation	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
From other school library media professionals	3	3
From other teachers	1	1
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	0	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

Note: Percentages do not add to 100 because not all messages are represented in this table.

Of the postings that indicated feeling professional isolation *From other school library media specialists* (3% of the messages), one person posted a message sharing experiences with a technology failure in school. After having a problem with the circulation/cataloging system, the participant wrote to LM\_NET to advise subscribers they should be sure they have a good backup of their data. This lengthy message concluded with, "If you're still reading, thanks. This made a really big impression on me, and I needed to share it with people who'd understand." Though this participant had had contact with people within the school and with the technical support personnel of the software company, the writer felt as if the only people who could really understand the incident were professionals within the same occupation. Similarly, another media professional contributed an uplifting experience that "made [the media specialist's] day" because "Sometimes something happens that you just HAVE to share with someone who will understand!" Another contributed a positive experience in the library, including the following statement: "I too, am all by myself in a library, and this listserv keeps me in touch. Being alone has it's good days BUT...." These messages suggest some

happenings during a school library media specialist's day cannot be appreciated by people who do not have job experiences of a similar vein.

Only one message of the 95 showed evidence of feeling isolated *From other teachers* in one's school building. In this particular case the media specialist received requests from teachers for books that could be used with a certain writing method. The media specialist explained that the workshop presenter "came to our school to give a workshop but I was not included and now all the teachers want titles..." Because this contributor was not included in this reading/writing workshop the media specialist was not as easily able to communicate with the teachers about their needs.

### Textual Analysis

The second research question addressed in this study was "Are there underlying patterns addressed in LM\_NET messages posted by school library media specialists?" Qualitative research methodology, in the form of textual analysis, was used to conduct this portion of the study. The researcher employed the same sample of 95 messages used in the first stage of the study in order to sort the comments based on questions that arose during the content analysis.

After sorting the messages according to the message content categories in the Analysis Checklist used in the content analysis portion of the study, the researcher conducted four subsequent sorts. During each sort key words were noted, the results and additional questions recorded in a log of field notes, and the messages coded for easy reference. What follows is a description of the results of the four sorts.

### Nature/depth of response expected.

In one sort the researcher noted the nature/depth of response desired from media specialists who posted a message. It was found that more than half of the postings (53%) were of a narrow nature and sought concrete responses. One example of such a question was “Can anyone please direct me to a source for Jerry Pinkney’s address.” Another case was the message whose writer sought “help in finding novels on perfectionism or over-achievement.” These types of question have concrete, definitive answers and generally are not expected to launch a discussion of the topic.

Other messages in the October sample (23%) had as their intent a broader range of responses; that is, they did not seek concrete answers that could be looked up in any type of source. These were more open-ended questions and posted in order to elicit the opinions, views, or experiences of other school library media specialists. Some postings that were not questions were also included in this category if it was apparent their writers intended to initiate a discussion of issues.

One media specialist planned to conduct a book discussion group for teachers about Jacques’ book *Redwall* and wrote,

This book and the books in this series have not only appealed to elementary school students, but also to middle school, high school and adult readers as well.

If anyone has any information and or opinions to share on this book or the author, please let me know.

This type of question would likely elicit more than one response in the form of opinions of media specialists and could bring forth discussion either on the listserv or in private email.

Another type of posting in this category of open-ended discussion sought commentary from other librarians who had a similar experience with a product, problem, or incident as the person who wrote the message. One listserv member wrote,

Something Upstairs by Avi has been challenged by a parent who thought it was racially insensitive. The book is on our fifth grade reading list. I am serving on the reconsideration committee. Has anyone else had this book challenged or have any comments?

In this case the writer of the message seeks to hear from other librarians who have had a similar incident in their school; a book challenge to a specific book.

Similarly, some media professionals posted to the listserv in order to find out how other media specialists handle policies, procedures, and operations in their libraries or schools. One such professional was in a “quandry [sic] over whether to purchase a new set of encyclopedias for the shelves or to just stick with the computerized ones.” This message was not likely to receive one definitive answer, but instead, a variety of views. These types of messages were likely to spur replies in the form of threads of discussion on the listserv or in the form of personal email.

Some messages sought no response at all. Most of these were written to share information with LM\_NET members or to share an incident in the library.

#### Feeling part of a group.

In this sort the researcher observed aspects of some messages that indicated their writers might feel part of a cohesive group. This was first detected in the greetings of some messages. Other contributors used words within the texts of their messages that indicated a feeling of communicating with a group of people.

The researcher noted 17% of the sample LM\_NET messages began with a greeting that signified a feeling of belonging to a group. Some of these began with “Dear All” or “Hello all!” Three of the messages began with a greeting directed toward “LM\_NETTERS” while others wrote to “Colleagues” and even “Friends.” Other messages that included a greeting such as these began “Hello everyone” and “Dear Group.”

Some messages that did not include elements of belonging in the greeting did so in the body of the messages. One of these noted, “I love you all even if you are new, repetitive, too-good at technology, or even flaming me.” Another sent a thank you message for information received and noted, “What a great group of people.” One media specialist wrote of an incident that happened in school saying that it “sum[med]up a lot of what *we* [italics added] are up against.” Yet another wrote, “I am hoping you folks can help.” Text of other messages included comments such as “Thanks for your help” and “Does anyone have ideas...”

Only 28% of the messages were written in an impersonal way, using no greeting or pronouns to indicate people were on the receiving end of their messages.

#### LM\_NET as a resource.

During the previous sorts the researcher noticed a pattern among the questions posed to the LM\_NET community. This sort revealed that perhaps LM\_NET participants could better find the answers to their questions using other sources. Fifty-five percent of the questions were a legitimate use of the listserv, according to the purpose set forth by the listserv owners. But from the message sample emerged a set that perhaps could have been answered using more focused resources (33%). The researcher also noticed some of

the questions were vague or showed no sign of the contributors having tried to find the answers themselves (10%).

Over half of the messages that appeared as queries on the listserv made good use of this service. Especially helpful were messages whose writers indicated in what sources or with what methods they had already tried searching. Some inquiries were written in a very specific way, describing search strategies already tried. One media specialist was looking for a poem by a Nigerian poet and wrote,

He was not in my poetry indexes, nor in my Granger's index to poetry cdrom [sic]. SIRS Renaissance had information about him but not examples. He is in none of my poetry anthologies. Internet searching found lots of pages about him, but none with the poem we need.

It appears by the amount of searching done that this media specialist used LM\_NET as a last resort after exhaustively searching the contents of the media center.

Several messages in the sample appeared to have been answerable using sources other than LM\_NET. One subset of this category included questions that could have been answered by reference books. A message sent during October read, "A teacher is looking for a short story called "The Viper is Coming" by Stephanie Calmenson. Does anyone know where we can locate this story?" This question could have been answered using the *Short Story Index*, published by H. W. Wilson, especially because the asker was aware of both the story title and the author's name. In another question, the writer sought to "replace an 'ancient' (circa 1987) video on parliamentary procedure." The writer further shared a description of the content of the video and informed readers of the attempts made to locate the video's publisher who was "apparently...out of business."



The request was made to those who “have a video like this or have seen one in a catalog” that they send the information to the writer. Gale’s *Video Sourcebook* and Bowker’s *Complete Video Directory*, published by R. R. Bowker could have been consulted for this question.

Another subset in the category of messages that could have been answered using a different method consisted of messages that were state-specific. A media specialist from Washington State wrote, “I need to know whether any federal or Washington State law has been passed tying federal or state money to the mandatory use of internet filters in schools as of today.” Since this is a question that deals with state-specific law, it could perhaps have been better addressed by a legislative representative or a state agency. Other state-specific questions were sent to LM\_NET during October, including one asking “Do you know of any authors visiting \_\_\_\_ New York this spring or next who would be dynamic for Grades 6 – 8? I’d appreciate any names of authors or groups which could be contacted.” After reading messages such as these, the researcher wondered if there is no statewide method of networking for media professionals in some states. Area Education Agencies, a State Library Media Association, and a state-specific library media listserv are a few possibilities that exist in Iowa for communicating with other in-state school library media specialists. This researcher is curious if other states have such opportunities for professional networking.

Another subset of messages perhaps better addressed by another source could have been addressed on another focused listserv. All of the questions within this subset dealt with technology. One participant wrote of the following problem with her *Winnebago Spectrum* automation system:

I am having a problem and wanted to know if anyone else is in the same boat.

We had new wiring done for a server upgrade...SPECTRUM began to have difficulties. I want to know if the Spectrum problems are connected to the wiring or whether they can be solved by Tech Support...

This researcher is aware of a listserv service provided exclusively to the users of Winnebago Spectrum and wonders if this query could have been better addressed there. Another media specialist had problems downloading an update version of Internet Explorer onto a home computer. This question also could have been addressed to a listserv specific to the use of technology. One such listserv is EDTECH, on which discussion focuses on technology use in education. It is a possibility that perhaps each of these messages could have been cross-posted to both listservs. If this is the case, the writers possibly increased the likelihood of receiving a response from someone. There is no way to tell from the messages if that was the case.

Some questions sent to the listserv were vague or left the researcher wondering if the writer had even attempted to answer his/her own question before posting. One message informed LM\_NET subscribers "We are working on a web site for use in our high school ELA [English language arts] lab...Please let us know of interesting web sites that would be useful in this lab." Supplementary information or a description of previous searches would have been helpful in this request.

### Validating/defending.

Questions during the third sort led the researcher to sort according to the apparent motivation for postings. It was found that seven messages in the sample were posted in order to confirm some type of information. This confirmation was desired either to

validate the media specialist's opinion or action, or to confirm information received from another person. Alternatively, eight messages in the sample displayed the media specialist being on the defensive end of some case, writing to gather evidence to help in that defense.

One LM\_NET member wrote:

I would like the opinion of what other hs [high school] librarians are doing with free materials, videos from companies like Fast Times...A teacher received a free video and support material and wants me to put it in the library...It is a short video of cuts from "One Life to Live" (daytime soap) about a character who gets pregnant after a night of drinking...It is also a huge ad for them...My inclination is to pass on this freebie for my library but I am interested in how other media professionals view this and similar free materials that are blatantly ads for the the [sic] product.

This media specialist already had formed an opinion on the subject but requested the views of others in the same occupation.

Another contributor had been told by a business teacher that "buying an HP SureStore CD-ROM Server instead of replacing the old drives one at a time and spending hours configuring and troubleshooting the DiscPort" would be a better move. This contributor sought reviews of the HP product to confirm information received from another person who gave advice.

Alternatively, some media specialists wrote to fellow LM\_NET members in order to get information to be used to defend their views or policies to others. One media specialist sought responses from educators who had "successfully used e-mail as a tool

for a project.” This contributor was “trying to compile an armload of documentation to prove to [the] staff and [the] administrators that [the] students need to learn how to use e-mail well.” The staff and administration apparently did not believe email was as an important skill as did the media specialist.

The following message is another example of defending one’s views or policies:

OK y'all, I have had two parents in two days complaining about Harry Potter books...according to them...the books are dark, teaching our kids the wrong thing, full of witches and wizards (oh no!). ...all the kids are loving them. ...Here's my question...do any of you have any reviews in Christian sources that rate these as good books? Just the fact that the books have won many awards and are best sellers makes no difference to these parents. I need some reviews in Christian sources to give me some leverage.

This librarian had to defend her views about the *Harry Potter* books, and sought information from colleagues to do so. Using LM\_NET as a network of professionals enabled media specialists to request information from others to lend support to validate or defend their views.

### Summary

The content analysis showed the bulk of messages in the sample taken from October, 1999 requested information, rather than shared information or sought professional conversation or debate. One of the topics most commonly addressed included *Resources or products for the school library media center or school*. Another type of posting consisted of reference questions for people other than the media specialist who posted the message. The next largest category of messages was labeled *Other*,

followed by *Discussion of professional issues*. The categories *Professional contact and communication*, *Location/use of Internet resources*, and *Policies, practices, and procedures for the media center or school* each contained a similar amount of messages. *Training tips/software use* accounted for 4% of the messages.

Of the total sample, only 4% of the messages exhibited any form of professional isolation.

Results of the sorts from the textual analysis phase of the study revealed that there were some underlying patterns in the messages posted to LM\_NET during October, 1999 by school library media specialists. It was noted that over half of the initial postings sought a concrete versus an open-ended response. Some of the open-ended questions inquired about other media specialist's opinions, views, or experiences. A small number of messages posted, most of which shared information or anecdotes, did not require any further response.

Approximately 17% of the messages began with a greeting that signified the writer felt part of a group. Some of these addressed "LM\_NETTER's," "Group," "All," "Colleagues," or "Friends." Several more messages included sentences, phrases, or pronouns in the body of the text that showed they were aware they were writing to human recipients. Just over 25% of the messages were written without any type of greeting or message text indicating personal communication.

In terms of usage of the listserv, sets of questions emerged that could have been answered with sources other than LM\_NET. Though nearly all of the messages could be argued to be legitimate uses of the listserv, approximately 30% could have been answered using more focused resources. Some of these resources include reference books, state-

specific resources (such as state agencies), or subject-specific listservs. Around 10% of the questions posted were considered vague or appeared to rely on LM\_NET as their only resource.

A final aspect of these messages that drew the attention of the researcher was that some messages (7%) sought to confirm some information (usually the opinion or action of the media specialist). Nine percent of the messages had as their goal to gather information in order to defend against some other person's opinion or action to be taken.

## Chapter 5

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

“Without LM\_NET, many of us would spend countless hours looking for information in our limited resources. Here, we share and help each other. Think of it as a long running [department] meeting – only one that actually accomplishes something!” (Wiltse, [http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv\\_Archives/LM\\_NET-pre1997/1994/Nov\\_1994/msg00283.html](http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv_Archives/LM_NET-pre1997/1994/Nov_1994/msg00283.html)).

#### Summary

This study had as its goal to investigate the communication on LM\_NET, a listserv developed for school library media specialists. Two research questions were investigated. The first research question dealt with examining areas of concern media specialists addressed in their messages to the LM\_NET community. The researcher conducted a content analysis of the messages using a data-gathering instrument set up from previous research described in the literature review. There were three parts to the data analysis checklist. The first questioned the intent of each message. Of the sample studied, 71% of the messages were written in order to seek information. Twenty-one percent had as their intent to share information with others and 7% of the messages were written to engage in professional conversation and/or debate. In the second part of the data analysis checklist, the researcher identified the most significant topic addressed by each message. In this sample, the two most populous topics discussed were *Resources or products for the school library media center* and *Reference questions for school staff and others*. These topics, combined with messages categorized as *Other*, accounted for over

half the messages posted during October, 1999. *Discussion of professional issues*, with 13% of the messages was the next most popular topic, followed by *Professional contact and communication*, *Location/use of Internet resources*, *Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school*, and *Training tips/software use*, respectively. Completing the list of discussion topic for this sample was *Curricular applications*. There were no messages announcing conferences and workshops, nor any messages posted regarding administration and use of LM\_NET.

The third and final part of the data analysis checklist recorded elements of professional isolation in the sample of messages. Only 4% of the messages displayed comments alluding to their authors feeling professional isolation, either from other professional media specialists or from other teachers.

The researcher conducted a textual analysis to address the second research question, which was "Are there underlying patterns addressed in LM\_NET messages posted by school library media specialists?" This analysis was complete after four sorts.

It was observed that over half of the initial LM\_NET postings that sought information did so in terms of a concrete response. These messages had one or more definitive answers and generally would not act as a catalyst for a multitude of discussion on the list. Twenty-three percent of questions posted to the listserv were open-ended, seeking opinions, judgements, or descriptions of experiences by school library media specialists. The remaining messages, either sharing information or personal stories, needed no response.

Some of the messages included, either in their greeting or text, substantiation that the writer felt part of a cohesive group. Seventeen percent of the messages began with a



greeting to their intended audience; examples included "Hello All!" and "Colleagues." The body of some messages included sentences or phrases that indicated their acknowledgement of a group of like professionals, including one that related an incident that showed what "we are up against." Less than one-third of the messages gave no hint they were addressing a group of human library media specialists.

Another pattern detected was the use of LM\_NET as a substitute for other resources. The majority of messages posted during October, 1999, made undeniably justifiable use of the services the listserv provides. Approximately one-third of the questions posted could have been answered using more focused resources, such as a reference book, a state-specific source, or a technology-specific listserv. One-tenth of the questions could have been improved by the inclusion of written evidence that the writer had made an attempt to locate the desired information him/herself before addressing the LM\_NET audience.

A final pattern that emerged was that 16% of the messages were posted to gather information to help the media specialist confirm, or defend against, some thought or action. In some cases the author had established an opinion or plan of action on some issue and then sought to validate this opinion or plan by viewing comments of others. In other cases the writer of the message desired to gather information to defend against the opinion or plan of action of someone else.

### Conclusions

The limitation of the population sample to include only unsolicited postings likely had effects on both the content and textual analyses conducted. Had this research studied a 10% of all messages posted during October, 1999, the percentage of messages

requesting information, supplying information, and engaging in conversation/debate likely would have been different. Also, the percentage of topics of conversation might have varied from the current results. The researcher suspects that had a two-stage sampling not taken place, the percentages of message content categories might have been different, if only slightly so. It is likely that message content could fluctuate from month to month, depending on the “hot topics” for the period of the sample. For example, censorship of books in the *Harry Potter* series might be a popular discussion topic during a certain period of time, and garner many responses thus raising the percentage of the category *Discussion of professional issues*. Further, additional themes might have emerged in a textual analysis from a population sample of all message postings. It is not feasible for the researcher to speculate what these themes might have been.

This research showed messages from October, 1999, most often discussed *Resources or products for the school library media center*, followed by *Reference questions for school staff and others* and *Discussion of professional issues*. These categories accounted for over one half of the messages. These results are similar to the results of Clyde’s analysis of messages from October, 1993, in which the same three categories accounted for over half of the messages (1997, p. 180). In her analysis, however, *Reference questions* were less common than *Discussion of Professional Issues* (1997, p. 180). In Eisenberg and Milbury’s analysis conducted in November, 1993, the above three message categories were discussed frequently, though two other categories had a higher percentage of messages classed in them (1995, p. 36).

The greatest difference between this 1999 analysis and those completed in 1993 occurred in the category *Policies, practices, and procedures of the school library media*

*center and school* (for which Clyde used the category title *School library administration*).

While both Clyde and Eisenberg and Milbury had over 20% of messages related to this topic (Clyde, 1997, p. 180; Eisenberg & Milbury, 1995, p. 36), this study showed only 6% of messages classed in this category. It is this researcher's estimation that in October, 1993 and November, 1993 there were more questions and discussion revolving around circulation and cataloging software programs than in October, 1999 because by 1999 presumably more school library media specialists had begun the automation process in their libraries, and required less discussion of this topic. This was not the case for all media specialists, however, evidenced by one message written by a media specialist who had recently received a "PC that runs on Windows 3.1" and was looking for software to "create a database of all our holdings and print out catalog cards."

Other differences were noticed between this study and the analysis conducted by Eisenberg and Milbury. While Eisenberg and Milbury listed *Location/use of Internet resources* and *Training tips/software use* accounting for 17% and 9%, respectively (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1995, p. 36), the analysis of 1999 messages showed these categories accounted for only 7% and 4%, respectively. It is this researcher's judgment that media specialists in 1999 either had more experience with both searching for Internet resources and using software or had found other means to find answers relating to their questions.

Studies presented in the literature review concerning use of the Internet and listservs by educators showed that one benefit of using telecommunications is reduction of professional isolation (Merseth, 1991; Honey & Henrequez, 1993; Ladner & Tilman, 1992; Spitzer & Wedding, 1995; Foley, 1996; Pennington, 1998). This study did not

replicate this finding for the users of LM\_NET in the sample. Only 4% of the message sample could be considered to display evidence of isolation. This, however, is not in itself indicative that members of LM\_NET are immune to professional isolation. The format of this study, in looking at written communications of LM\_NET members rather than directly asking members about their use of the listserv, could be one factor in this finding. Absence of evidence of isolation could also be due to the fact that this research was limited only to initial queries and comments posted to the listserv, rather than responses. Elements of isolation might be more abundant in messages that are posted in order to thank LM\_NET members for their help in response to the writers' queries or in postings responding to another writer's experience. It could also be true that LM\_NET subscribers are not professionally isolated as other educators may be. If this is indeed the case, it could be because of developments in technology--they have this network of professionals to consult for "advice, support and help," as a 1994 subscriber wrote (Wiltse, [http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv\\_Archives/LM\\_NETpre1997/1994/Nov\\_1994/msg00283.html](http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Listserv_Archives/LM_NETpre1997/1994/Nov_1994/msg00283.html)). Perhaps the feeling of belonging some LM\_NET members appear to have developed serves as a defense against isolation, or other factors are present that make the issue of professional isolation of school library media specialists a myth.

The contributing subscribers to LM\_NET appear, for the most part, to use the services of the listserv in accordance to the purpose set forth by the list owners, Eisenberg and Milbury. It is true that some of the traffic on LM\_NET could be reduced if the writers of some questions first checked other resources that address their topics specifically. Even though it was concluded that some questions could have been

answered using other means, this does not mean that the writers of these types of messages should be dismissed as "lazy." The question remains whether their budgets do not allow purchase of such materials, if they do not have access to such materials, or if these media specialists are unaware of such resources. In the case of some state-specific questions, perhaps an efficient resource does not, in fact, exist.

Concerning queries posted with no evidence of the writer having tried to search by other means, one would expect other members to be more apt to respond if they had some background information to narrow their searching for a request. This is dealt with by some subscribers of LM\_NET, who issue a reminder to the group or to the individual when they feel the need arises. It can be assumed that one would read such a message and ignore it rather than taking the time to email the writer to clarify so one could offer assistance. In the case that some media specialists may try to save time in posting to a group of knowledgeable individuals, they may not get a quick answer if their message is ignored.

As for the listserv's owners claiming it is a "virtual community" (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1994, p. 31), there seems to be some evidence of LM\_NET members feeling part of a cyber-group of colleagues. This evidence is in the form of the way contributors greet their colleagues and the words they use within the texts of their messages. It is this researcher's view that this feeling of community does not instantly come about from merely subscribing and reading the daily messages. She suspects this feeling might be more common among members who post questions and contribute on a regular basis. This community feeling is perhaps stronger for those who have met members of the network face-to-face.

The combination methodology of this study provided a unique look at the discussion on LM\_NET. While two previous studies (Eisenberg & Milbury, 1996; Clyde, 1997) analyzed communication on the listserv in order to categorize messages into topics of discussion, neither had done so with a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. This researcher made use of categories established by the studies conducted by Eisenberg and Milbury and Clyde, yet remained open to themes that would emerge from LM\_NET communications. In doing so, the researcher used preconceived topics as a starting point, but was also free to form new categories, thereby adding new conclusions to the body of literature. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies to answer the research questions in this study provided a new viewpoint for research about listserv discussion. What was discovered in the textual analysis would not likely have been noticed had only a quantitative analysis taken place.

### Recommendations

This study could serve as a basis for further research about school library media specialists, listservs, and isolation. One possibility is to more thoroughly compare the findings from this study with the results of Clyde's and Eisenberg and Milbury's analyses of LM\_NET messages completed during 1993. One might compare the correlation between increase in volume of messages with increases in membership numbers. One could also investigate how the topics of conversations have changed, or remained the same, since the advent of the new *Information Power* and advances in technology. The availability of email and Internet has increased among individuals and schools, conceivably leading media specialists to ask more, or perhaps fewer, questions about technology. For example, is there a rise in questions that deal with technology, since

computer equipment and software are becoming more abundant in schools? Or is there a decrease in questions about technology as media specialists become more comfortable in using such equipment and software?

This research examined only initial postings to the LM\_NET listserv. Another possibility for further study is to examine postings from October, 1999, including the replies and HIT's generated by these initial postings. The data analysis checklist used in this study could be used to record topics of conversation and elements of isolation. Further, a study could examine what topics of discussion during the month spawned the greatest amounts of dialogue.

A researcher might even conduct long-term analysis of LM\_NET communication. One could record what topics have appeared to be "hot topics" on the listserv over the time the archives have been in existence. Most recently the *Harry Potter* books have accounted for quite a bit of discussion. Similarly, one might study messages within one category (e.g. *Discussion of professional issues*), or a subset of a category (e.g. *Censorship*) over a long period of time.

This researcher remains curious whether today's school library media specialists feel elements of isolation from other media specialists in their jobs. The literature review seemed to indicate that they do. After reading how Eisenberg and Milbury (1994) intended LM\_NET to be a "virtual community," (p. 31) an interesting study could investigate if today's members truly feel that they have "webs of personal relationships in cyberspace" (Rheingold, 1993, p. 5). If so, it seems this could be part of the explanation that so few messages showed evidence of professional isolation. Another way to

examine the issue would be to survey members vs. non-members of LM\_NET to see if any differences in feelings of isolation exist.

Finally, Iowa school library media specialists are fortunate to have the SLIK-12 listserv, very similar to LM\_NET, which they can use to communicate with each other. One could adapt any of the studies previously mentioned and conduct them on a smaller scale using this Iowa listserv.



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## Appendix A

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:**

- **Subject:**
- **Date:**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix B

### Analysis Checklist Results

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Requesting information	67	71
Sharing information	21	22
Professional conversation / debate	7	7
<b>Total:</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Discussion of professional issues	12	13
Resources or products for the school library media center	23	24
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	6	6
Reference questions for school staff and others	19	20
Location/use of Internet resources	7	7
Training tips/software use	4	4
Workshop and conference announcements	0	0
Professional contact and communication	8	8
Curricular applications	2	2
LM_NET administration and use	0	0
Other	14	15
<b>Total:</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>99</b>

Note: Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Professional Isolation		
From other school library media professionals	3	3
From other teachers	1	1
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	0	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

Note: Percentages do not add to 100 because not all messages are represented in this table

## Appendix C

### Completed Data Analyses

**Message ID number:** 1

- **Subject: GEN: video needed**
- **Date: Wed, 27 Oct 1999 11:32:54 -0400**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>		
Requesting information	X	“... please send on the information.”
Sharing information		
Professional conversation / debate		

<b>Message content composed of:</b>		
Discussion of professional issues		“looking to replace” a video
Resources or products for the school library media center	X	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others		
Location/use of Internet resources		
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication		
Curricular applications		
LM NET administration and use		
Other		

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:**           **2**

- **Subject: Challenged Book**
- **Date: Mon, 18 Oct 1999 09:04:25 -0700**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>		
Requesting information	X	“has anyone had this book challenged?”
Sharing information		
Professional conversation / debate		

<b>Message content composed of:</b>		
Discussion of professional issues	X	Book “challenged by a teacher and the principal...” “at what age would this book be appropriate?”
Resources or products for the school library media center		
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others		
Location/use of Internet resources		
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication		
Curricular applications		
LM_NET administration and use		
Other		

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	



## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 3

- **Subject:** Internet web sites for middle school
- **Date:** Sun, 3 Oct 1999 09:15:56 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>		
Requesting information	X	“Do you have any interesting...?”
Sharing information		
Professional conversation / debate		

<b>Message content composed of:</b>		
Discussion of professional issues		“Do you have any interesting web sites...”
Resources or products for the school library media center		
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others		
Location/use of Internet resources	X	
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication		
Curricular applications		
LM_NET administration and use		
Other		

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 4

- **Subject: TARGET: TECH: HP SureStore CD-ROM Servers**
- **Date: Fri, 1 Oct 1999 14:40:37 -0700**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“My question: Is anyone out there using...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

CD-drives

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 5

- **Subject:** REF:Poem by Wole Soyinka
- **Date:** Mon, 18 Oct 1999 14:49:41 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Can anyone help?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	X
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Location of poem is needed for a “teacher who assigned a project...”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 6

- **Subject:** GEN: Children's Internet Protection Act
- **Date:** Tue, 12 Oct 1999 10:27:35 -0700

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Can anyone help? I need to know...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	X
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

needs “up-to-the-minute information about the status of ... The Children's Internet Protection Act...” –fed. or st. money tied to use of Internet filters?

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 7

- **Subject:** Harry Potter Reviews
- **Date:** Thu, 14 Oct 1999 13:33:11 -0500

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“...do any of you have any reviews in...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	X
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Need Christian reviews for Harry Potter to defend book to upset parents

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 8

- **Subject:** GEN: REDWALL by Brian Jacques
- **Date:** Wed, 13 Oct 1999 15:58:26 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“If anyone has any information or opinions...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	X

Book discussion group input

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 9

- **Subject:** November is...
- **Date:** Tue, 5 Oct 1999 09:58:37 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“Enjoy!”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	X

Special events/weeks/month of Nov.

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 10

- **Subject: GREET: from \_\_\_\_\_, B.C.**
- **Date: Mon, 4 Oct 1999 20:27:35 -0700**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“...response to this request would be greatly appreciated...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	X
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“...assignment requires me to correspond with another TL...” “find out how technology is used... and to discuss ideas for research and information gathering.”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	



## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 11

- **Subject:** ELEM: Novels on perfectionism
- **Date:** Tue, 19 Oct 1999 10:24:21 -0700

<b>Purpose of message:</b>		
Requesting information	X	“...help in finding novels...”
Sharing information		
Professional conversation / debate		

<b>Message content composed of:</b>		
Discussion of professional issues		“...that she could use with a student...”
Resources or products for the school library media center		
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others	X	
Location/use of Internet resources		
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication		
Curricular applications		
LM_NET administration and use		
Other		

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>		
Professional Isolation		
From other school library media professionals		
From other teachers		
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist		

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 12

- **Subject:** GEN: Harry Potter 4
- **Date:** Sat, 2 Oct 1999 18:43:39 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Has anyone heard...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Release date of “Harry Potter 4”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 13  
 • **Subject:** Devil's Arithmetic video  
 • **Date:** Mon, 11 Oct 1999 20:06:57 -0500

Purpose of message:	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“Several people have asked for...”

Message content composed of:	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Devil’s Arthmetic video and teacher’s guide

Message Shows Elements of:	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 14

- **Subject: Cataloging**
- **Date: Sun, 24 Oct 1999 13:12:19 -0500**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“We’d appreciate your input”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	X
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Books based on actual events--“Why are they catalogued differently? What is the criteria for cataloging books based on actual events?”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

Appendix C

Analysis Checklist

- Message ID number: 15
- Subject: DK Publisher
  - Date: Sun, 24 Oct 1999 08:17:46 -0500

Purpose of message:	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	X

“IMHO” [in my humble opinion]

Message content composed of:	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Dorling Kindersley publisher

Message Shows Elements of:	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 16

- **Subject: TARGET: Places to publish student work**
- Date: Tue, 26 Oct 1999 09:25:17 -0400

Purpose of message:		
Requesting information	X	“Can ya’ll suggest...”
Sharing information		
Professional conversation / debate		

Message content composed of:		
Discussion of professional issues		“I have a middle school language arts teacher interested in ...” “...she is looking for...”
Resources or products for the school library media center		
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others	X	
Location/use of Internet resources		
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication		
Curricular applications		
LM_NET administration and use		
Other		

Message Shows Elements of:		
Professional Isolation		
From other school library media professionals		
From other teachers		
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist		

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 17

- **Subject:** TECH:computer to tv converters
- **Date:** Thu, 28 Oct 1999 11:46:15 -0500

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“...I am asking for opinions.” “I’d like information on that.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Scan converters for computer/TV usage

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 18

- **Subject: Target: Elem: Books for teaching Vicky Spandel 6 traits writing**
- **Date: Mon, 11 Oct 1999 21:10:39 +0000**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“We are looking for...” “...would sure appreciate help...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	X
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“...now all the teachers want...”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	X
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

“She came to our school to give a workshop but I was not included and now all the teachers want...”



# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 19

- **Subject: TARGET: High school book fairs**
- **Date: Thu, 7 Oct 1999 21:36:41 -0500**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>		
Requesting information	X	“Does anyone have ideas...”
Sharing information		
Professional conversation / debate		

<b>Message content composed of:</b>		
Discussion of professional issues		Book fair company
Resources or products for the school library media center	X	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others		
Location/use of Internet resources		
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication		
Curricular applications		
LM_NET administration and use		
Other		

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 20

- **Subject: MID: Westing Game Teaching Unit**
- **Date: Mon, 18 Oct 1999 11:35:11 -0400**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>		
Requesting information	X	“Any ideas?”
Sharing information		
Professional conversation / debate		

<b>Message content composed of:</b>		
Discussion of professional issues		“One of our teachers is looking for...”
Resources or products for the school library media center		
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others	X	
Location/use of Internet resources		
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication		
Curricular applications		
LM_NET administration and use		
Other		

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 21

- **Subject:** looking for brochure program
- **Date:** Thu, 21 Oct 1999 10:55:53 -0500

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“...we’d love your recommendations.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“...we are now looking for a new program that high school students can use to create a brochure.”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 22

- **Subject:** Borders Bookstore/Educator discount
- **Date:** Tue, 19 Oct 1999 09:53:14 -0500

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

"I am very upset by this and wandered [sic] if anyone else has dealt with them..."

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	X
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Book store "discount was only for teachers"

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 23

- **Subject: SEC, GEN: Harry Potter Book Discussion Group**
- **Date: Fri, 22 Oct 1999 18:07:27 -0400**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“I just wanted to share my positive experience...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	X
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“The book group was a nice change for me from helping students with research projects, monitoring computer use, and signing passes.”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

Message ID number: 24

- Subject: author visit Dear LM\_Netters:  
(no date indicated)

Purpose of message:	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Please help me to locate”

Message content composed of:	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	X

Author visit needed

Message Shows Elements of:	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

Message ID number: 25

- Subject: Scholastic
- Date: Mon, 18 Oct 1999 16:24:49 EDT

Purpose of message:	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	X

“I think a discussion of their customer service problems are quite appropriate.”

Message content composed of:	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Discussion of Scholastic publishing company

Message Shows Elements of:	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

- Message ID number:** 26
- **Subject:** Rourke Publishing--Disappointment
  - **Date:** Tue, 12 Oct 1999 13:48:36 -0700

Purpose of message:	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“...do not order the Dinosaur Library from Rourke”

Message content composed of:	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

dinosaur books from Rourke Publishing

Message Shows Elements of:	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	



## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 27

- **Subject: WEB EVALUATION SITES**
- Date: Mon, 11 Oct 1999 15:04:25 -0600

<b>Purpose of message:</b>		
Requesting information		
Sharing information	X	"Sites on evaluating websites on the Internet"
Professional conversation / debate		

<b>Message content composed of:</b>		
Discussion of professional issues		
Resources or products for the school library media center		
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others		
Location/use of Internet resources	X	"WEB EVALUATION SITES"
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication		
Curricular applications		
LM_NET administration and use		
Other		

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>		
Professional Isolation		
From other school library media professionals		
From other teachers		
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist		

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 28

- **Subject:** TECH:Spectrum help
- **Date:** Wed, 6 Oct 1999 05:21:34 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“I am having a problem and want to know if anyone else is in the same boat.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	X
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM NET administration and use	
Other	

“I want to know if the Spectrum problems are connected to the wiring or whether they can be solved by Tech Support.”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

Message ID number: 29

- Subject: Target: Junior grade camera / photography / movie reseearch
- Date: Sun, 24 Oct 1999 17:14:43 -0400

Purpose of message:	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“If you hav [sic] any info on...” “any help will be appreciated.”

Message content composed of:	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	X
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“I have been asked to find urls on the topic of...for a junior enrichment group”

Message Shows Elements of:	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 30

- **Subject:** student technology survey
- **Date:** Thu, 14 Oct 1999 23:01:33 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Any help in this area will be greatly appreciated.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	X
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“...student surey [sic] that will produce data showing the technology used by students and their current skill level with that technology?” for incoming freshman

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 31

- **Subject: Updating Internet Explorer**
- **Date: Tue, 26 Oct 1999 18:27:11 -0500**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Can anyone give me...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	X
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“Can anyone give me a site where I can download this?”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 32

- **Subject: TECH: printer problem**
- **Date: Sun, 10 Oct 1999 16:36:15 -0400**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Does anyone have an idea what could be causing this?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	X

Technology help needed for personal use (printer)

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 33

- **Subject:** Netscape E-mail
- **Date:** Mon, 4 Oct 1999 09:38:59 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“...to ask this question....”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	X
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“We are using Netscape 4.08...How can they e-mail articles and web sites that they find at school to their home computer...?”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 34

- **Subject:** Elem book title needed
- **Date:** Tue, 19 Oct 1999 07:10:41 -0500

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“...is anyone out there having a flash of insight?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	X
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“I had a call from a teacher looking for a book...”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	



## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 35

- **Subject:** humor??
- **Date:** Fri, 15 Oct 1999 18:00:47 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>		
Requesting information		
Sharing information		
Professional conversation / debate	X	anecdote

<b>Message content composed of:</b>		
Discussion of professional issues		
Resources or products for the school library media center		
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others		
Location/use of Internet resources		
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication	X	“...sums up a lot of what we are up against...”
Curricular applications		
LM_NET administration and use		
Other		

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 36

- **Subject:** Request for help with MLIS
- **Date:** Thu, 14 Oct 1999 22:00:58 -0700

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	X

"I now have enough responses...I will discuss further with those people I have contacted, through private emails."

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	X
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

"...I will discuss further with those people I have contacted, through private emails."

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 37

- **Subject: TECH: Scary story with happy ending on backups**
- **Date: Sun, 17 Oct 1999 23:24:47 -0500**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“I’d like to tell you about something ...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	X
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“You know how you always hear warnings that you’d better have a good backup for your catalog/cir. System?...Believe it!”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	X
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

“This made a really big impression on me, and I needed to share it with people who’d understand.”

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 38

- **Subject:** J. K. Rowling/Today Show
- **Date:** Thu, 14 Oct 1999 08:37:41 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

J.K. Rowling appearance on Today show

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM NET administration and use	
Other	X

Author appearance on Today Show

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 39

- **Subject:** Author address
- **Date:** Wed, 20 Oct 1999 20:28:11 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“If you know anything about this author, please help...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	X
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“I have a fourth grader looking for information...” “...I really want to help him find this author.”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 40

- **Subject: Target: 20th Century Novel for 7th Graders**
- **Date: Sun, 24 Oct 1999 18:57:22 EDT**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Any ideas would be greatly appreciated.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	X
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“I have a group of 7<sup>th</sup> grade teachers who are looking for a novel...”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 41

- **Subject:** Literary term question
- **Date:** Thu, 7 Oct 1999 10:55:29 -0500

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“What is the name of the type of poetry...?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	X
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“My gifted students as [sic] so excited they have finally stumped me.”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 42

- **Subject:** typing program
- **Date:** Fri, 29 Oct 1999 12:00:13 +0100

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“What are some good typing programs?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“What are some good typing programs for the elementary school? What is something I definitely should not buy?”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	



## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 43

- **Subject: ELEM: Book Challenge**
- **Date: Sat, 16 Oct 1999 10:12:51 -0700**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“I am interested in comments and suggestions.” “What are your thoughts?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	X
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

book challenge to DK Eyewitness book

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 44

- **Subject: TARGET: Big Six Displays**
- **Date: Thu, 28 Oct 1999 15:52:00 -0400**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Does anyone know where I could get...?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“...posters or other displays featuring the Big6”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:**       **45**

- **Subject: TECH : Web page problem**
- **Date: Fri, 8 Oct 1999 18:35:37 -0500**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Any suggestions?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	X
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Having problems transferring Claris Home Page files created on a Mac opening on an IBM computer

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 46

- **Subject: Activity Books**
- Date: Thu, 7 Oct 1999 19:25:23 EDT

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
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Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Please let me know how you would rate these books, or if you have any other suggestions.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
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Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“activity books” “57 Games to Play in the Library or Classroom, Newbery On the Net” etc.

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
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Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 47

- **Subject:** Target: E-mail curricular uses
- **Date:** Mon, 11 Oct 1999 17:57:20 -0500

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“I am trying to compile...” “I am looking for ways...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	X
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“...ways that you or perhaps your colleagues have successfully used e-mail as a tool for a project.”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 48

- **Subject:** Y2K Lesson plans
- **Date:** Fri, 22 Oct 1999 12:52:50 -0700

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“Hope these help someone else as well!”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	X
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“...for Y2K lesson plans...”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

Appendix C

Analysis Checklist

Message ID number: 49

- Subject: Tech: Power Point
- Date: Wed, 20 Oct 1999 07:12:19 PDT

Purpose of message:	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“...can you...?” “Thanks for your help.”

Message content composed of:	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	X
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Is there a “hot key...to switch between one presentation and another fluidly?”

Message Shows Elements of:	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 50

- **Subject: Fingerprints**
- Date: Tue, 12 Oct 1999 19:22:02 -0500

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“I am hoping you folks can help.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	X
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM NET administration and use	
Other	

“...I have been asked to locate...”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	



## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 51

- **Subject:** TECH; PC software for school library
- **Date:** Mon, 18 Oct 1999 20:07:32 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“What are your librarians using? Any good suggestions are appreciated.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“I would like to find windows [sic] software that will allow us to create a database of all our holdings and print out catalog cards.”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number: 52**

- **Subject: SEC: International Baccalaureate**
- **Date: Thu, 21 Oct 1999 10:47:14 -0700**

Purpose of message:	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Anyone know where I can direct her to find this information?”

Message content composed of:	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	X
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“The counselors need to know how to give her credit on her transcript here...”

Message Shows Elements of:	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 53

- **Subject: target: Halloween poem**
- **Date: Wed, 27 Oct 1999 09:08:08 -0400**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>		
Requesting information	X	"I am looking for..."
Sharing information		
Professional conversation / debate		

<b>Message content composed of:</b>		
Discussion of professional issues		"This is the second request I have received..."
Resources or products for the school library media center		
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others	X	
Location/use of Internet resources		
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication		
Curricular applications		
LM_NET administration and use		
Other		

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>		
Professional Isolation		
From other school library media professionals		
From other teachers		
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist		

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 54

- **Subject:** Michigan: **Target:** Fire safety codes for schools
- **Date:** Mon, 25 Oct 1999 12:15:12 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“I am trying to get ...” “Thanks for any assistance.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	X
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“...fire safety codes for schools...”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 55

- **Subject:** REF: Poets
- **Date:** Sat, 30 Oct 1999 14:49:26 -0700

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“I have a couple of questions...””Thanks in advance if anyone has this information!”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Audio recording of Maya Angelou, video biography of James Fenimore [sic] Cooper and Washington Irving

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 56

- **Subject: Witches Brew!**
- **Date: Wed, 13 Oct 1999 18:44:29 EDT**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“In case you’ve misplaced it...or never had it...I thought I would share this again.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	X

Fun poem/activity for Halloween

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 57

- **Subject:** Source: Kafka quote.
- **Date:** Sat, 2 Oct 1999 15:08:10 +1000

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“...does anyone know the original source of...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	X

personal use—writing a paper for a class

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 58

- **Subject:** GEN->MS & HS Research
- **Date:** Tue, 5 Oct 1999 13:26:36 -0500

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT...” “I hope you like this.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	X
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

how a whole-class research project was conducted using a variety of formats

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	X
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

“I too, am all by myself in a library, and this listserv keeps me in touch. Being alone has it’s [sic] good days BUT...”



## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 59

- **Subject:** periodicals
- **Date:** Fri, 15 Oct 1999 07:43:27 -0600

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“If anyone is interested please let me know.” “You may request them by emailing me...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“I have included a list of periodicals that I would like to dispose of.”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 60

- **Subject: GEN: Delaware only - book offer**
- **Date: Mon, 4 Oct 1999 17:42:46 EDT**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“I hope you will take advantage of this offer...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“I am discarding a large number of books, some of which may fill gaps in your collection.”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 61

- **Subject:** BOOK: Mr. Was by Hautman
- **Date:** Sat, 2 Oct 1999 17:07:09 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

book review "Even if you don't purchase this one, try to read it."

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

"Wow, what a book!" "...has a great story and the characters are very well developed."

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 62

- **Subject: Math Storybooks 5th and up**
- **Date: Sat, 23 Oct 1999 10:07:58 -0500**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“...would like to find others. Any ideas?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	X
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“I have a new request from a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. She wants to link literature with math and is having trouble finding books that pertain to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade level.”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 63

- **Subject:** GEN:FRONTPAGE
- **Date:** Wed, 20 Oct 1999 06:40:00 EDT

<b>Purpose of message:</b>		
Requesting information	X	“...please give me your opinion...”
Sharing information		
Professional conversation / debate		

<b>Message content composed of:</b>		
Discussion of professional issues		“...would like to develop an webpage to link to our school homepage.” “If any of you have used Frontpage, or any other web software – please give me your opinion before I purchase it...”
Resources or products for the school library media center	X	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others		
Location/use of Internet resources		
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication		
Curricular applications		
LM_NET administration and use		
Other		

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>		
Professional Isolation		
From other school library media professionals		
From other teachers		
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist		

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 64

- **Subject:** Query Anyone in Japan want to email 9th graders?
- **Date:** Tue, 26 Oct 1999 20:08:17 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Would anyone like to...?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	X

hoping to find communication pals for 9<sup>th</sup> graders

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 65

- **Subject: Challenged Book: Something Upstairs**
- **Date: Fri, 15 Oct 1999 13:03:41 -0400**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Has anyone else had this book challenged or have any comments?” “Any input is appreciated.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	X
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“Something Upstairs by Avi has been challenged by a parent...”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 66

- **Subject: TARGET: Chesapeake Bay Fishermen/Colonial America**
- **Date: Thu, 14 Oct 1999 15:10:30 -0400**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“I am looking for any information...”  
 “Any help would be appreciated.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“...any information on the daily life of Chesapeake Bay Fisherman during the Colonial Period.”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	



# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

Message ID number: 67

- Subject: BRAG
- Date: Tue, 5 Oct 1999 19:30:32 -0700

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	X

anecdote

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	X
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

anecdote “Makes it all worthwhile!”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 68

- **Subject:** To Purchase or not to purchase encyclopedias
- **Date:** Tue, 26 Oct 1999 09:15:29 -0500

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

"I am just wondering what others are doing."

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Purchasing print vs. "computerized" encyclopedias

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 69

- **Subject: Update:Removal of Library Materials**
- Date: Thu, 28 Oct 1999 11:13:19 -0500

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“Update:” of a situation for which the author had previously asked for advice on LM\_NET.

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	X
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“...permanent removal of library purchased materials because they are to be used in a reading assessment.”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

Message ID number: 70

- Subject: HS: Reading--NY State only
- Date: Tue, 12 Oct 1999 05:49:16 -0400

Purpose of message:	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“What are other high schools doing?”

Message content composed of:	
Discussion of professional issues	X
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“...societal attitude that says adults don’t have time to read.” Wants advice how to get high school students to read.

Message Shows Elements of:	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 71

- **Subject: GEN: NEW SCHOOL LIBRARY**
- **Date: Mon, 18 Oct 1999 00:05:00 EST**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>		
Requesting information	X	“We are looking for...” “We would like to hear from any library-media specialist...”
Sharing information		
Professional conversation / debate		

<b>Message content composed of:</b>		
Discussion of professional issues	X	“...major renovation with a new library...” would like have advice for utilizing 10,000 sq. ft.
Resources or products for the school library media center		
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others		
Location/use of Internet resources		
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication		
Curricular applications		
LM_NET administration and use		
Other		

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>		
Professional Isolation		
From other school library media professionals		
From other teachers		
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist		

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 72

- **Subject: TARGET: VA, MD and DC only**
- **Date: Thu, 7 Oct 1999 23:22:06 -0200**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Would anyone be interested in trying to book him...?” “If you might be interested, please let me know.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	X

seeks author visit

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 73

- **Subject:** author address
- **Date:** Tue, 26 Oct 1999 11:19:20 EDT

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Can anyone please direct me to a source...?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	X
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“...a request from another librarian who is not on LM\_NET”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 74

- **Subject:** GEN: Harry Potter, et al
- **Date:** Sun, 10 Oct 1999 13:20:32 EDT

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“For an interesting viewpoint on ...read...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	X
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Online articles for professional reading

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	



## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 75

- **Subject: Target: HS Fast Times.com**
- Date: Wed, 20 Oct 1999 14:07:17 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>		“I would like the opinion of what other librarians are doing...”
Requesting information	X	
Sharing information		
Professional conversation / debate		

<b>Message content composed of:</b>		“I am interested in how other media professionals view this and similar free materials that are blatantly ads for the product.”
Discussion of professional issues	X	
Resources or products for the school library media center		
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others		
Location/use of Internet resources		
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication		
Curricular applications		
LM_NET administration and use		
Other		

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 76

- **Subject: TARGET: Professional Development**
- **Date: Tue, 26 Oct 1999 19:07:58 -0400**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Does you [sic] school have...?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	X
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Request for a technology plan—wonders about funding, implementation, evaluation, and role of media specialist

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 77

- **Subject:** GEN: Marco Polo online
- **Date:** Wed, 6 Oct 1999 22:32:39 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Can someone email the details to me?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	X
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“One of my teachers received...” “...she accidentally tossed the postcard out.”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 78

- **Subject:** Target: Websites for Phonecians and Early Israelites
- **Date:** Sat, 2 Oct 1999 18:03:24 EDT

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“I need sites...” “Thank you for any help you might provide.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	X
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“I did not talk to the teacher who needs the information....the request was passed to me second hand...”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 79

- **Subject: HUMOR: Be the first on your block**
- Date: Tue, 12 Oct 1999 21:20:43 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“If you want a laugh...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	X

sharing humorous website

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 80

- **Subject:** GEN: TV pic bks
- **Date:** Fri, 8 Oct 1999 17:08:56 -0500

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Does anyone have other suggestions?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	X
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“Some of the teachers would like to read short stories/picture books...”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

Message ID number: 81

- Subject: Definitive Harry Potter pronunciation guide <g>
- Date: Wed, 20 Oct 1999 12:13:17 -0500

Purpose of message:	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“...offered tongue-in-cheek...”

Message content composed of:	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	X

Harry Potter character pronunciations

Message Shows Elements of:	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 82

- **Subject: REF: Movie title?**
- **Date: Mon, 4 Oct 1999 12:10:06 -0400**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Does anyone remember know [sic] the name of a movie...?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	X

Personal interest “I thought of this while cataloging...” (movie trivia)

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	



## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 83

- **Subject: GEN: Help with Disney song needed**
- Date: Fri, 15 Oct 1999 09:48:22 -0600

<b>Purpose of message:</b>		"PLEASE HELP!"
Requesting information	X	
Sharing information		
Professional conversation / debate		

<b>Message content composed of:</b>		"We are looking for the Disney video that contains the cartoon bears in Yellowstone (?)..."
Discussion of professional issues		
Resources or products for the school library media center	X	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others		
Location/use of Internet resources		
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication		
Curricular applications		
LM NET administration and use		
Other		

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 84

- **Subject:** Unsolicited video
- **Date:** Tue, 26 Oct 1999 22:15:24 -0600

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

Shares experience dealing with a company that sent unordered videos

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	X
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Dealing with companies that send unsolicited videos. "I think the law is on my side."

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 85

- **Subject:** In search of \_\_\_\_, SIRS/FAME Award Winner
- **Date:** Sun, 17 Oct 1999 06:08:38 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Can you help me locate her?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	X
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Wishes to “email her with a few questions for a UCF class of media specialists.”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 86

- **Subject: GEN: timely quote to share with faculty**
- **Date: Sun, 10 Oct 1999 10:11:24 EDT**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

sharing a “quote to share with faculty”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	X

“...quotes about ‘failure’ and its lessons...”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 87

- **Subject:** ELEM: A "warm fuzzy" to share...
- **Date:** Tue, 26 Oct 1999 18:56:48 EDT

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	X

anecdote "Sometimes something happens that you just HAVE to share..."

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	X
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

"...just have to share..." "Made my day!"

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	X
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

"Sometimes something happens that you just HAVE to share with someone who will understand!"

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 88

- **Subject:** JOB POSTING - DIRECTOR OF LIBRARY SERVICES - \_\_\_\_\_
- **Date:** Fri, 15 Oct 1999 02:43:07 EDT

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“...asked me to submit ... for your consideration...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	X

Announcement of job opening

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 89

- **Subject:** English Language Arts writing lab
- **Date:** Fri, 1 Oct 1999 16:54:20 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>		“Please let us know of interesting web sites...”
Requesting information	X	
Sharing information		
Professional conversation / debate		

<b>Message content composed of:</b>		“This should cover writing, grammar, listening, and reading comprehension. Please let us know of interesting web sites that would be useful...”
Discussion of professional issues		
Resources or products for the school library media center		
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others		
Location/use of Internet resources	X	
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication		
Curricular applications		
LM_NET administration and use		
Other		

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 90

- **Subject:** Target: The Viper is Coming source
- **Date:** Fri, 22 Oct 1999 21:05:50 +0000

<b>Purpose of message:</b>		
Requesting information	X	“Does anyone know where we can...?”
Sharing information		
Professional conversation / debate		

<b>Message content composed of:</b>		
Discussion of professional issues		“A teacher is looking for a short story called...”
Resources or products for the school library media center		
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school		
Reference questions for school staff and others	X	
Location/use of Internet resources		
Training tips/software use		
Workshop and conference announcements		
Professional contact and communication		
Curricular applications		
LM_NET administration and use		
Other		

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	



## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 91

- **Subject: Target: Inter-Library Loan Policy**
- **Date: Thu, 21 Oct 1999 07:35:03 -0400**

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Do any of you have...?” “...would you be willing to send me a copy?”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	X
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“...written inter-library loan policy” for a school with “card catalog on the WWW”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

Appendix C

Analysis Checklist

- Message ID number: 92
- Subject: GEN: Harry Potter
  - Date: Thu, 14 Oct 1999 23:00:35 -0000

Purpose of message:	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	X anecdote "...interesting experience..."

Message content composed of:	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	X Sharing experience being interviewed about Harry Potter books for "local reaction story." "It was an interesting experience."
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Message Shows Elements of:	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 93

- **Subject: Target: Primary Science Experiments**
- Date: Sun, 17 Oct 1999 20:43:24 -0400

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Please send to me any urls...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	X
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

“...any urls that provide primary (Gr. 2) science experiments...”

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

## Appendix C

### Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number:** 94

- **Subject:** Authors Visiting \_\_\_\_ NY--2000 or 2001?
- **Date:** Tue, 19 Oct 1999 15:17:00 -0700

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	X
Sharing information	
Professional conversation / debate	

“Do you know of any authors...”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	X

seeks author visit

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	

# Appendix C

## Analysis Checklist

**Message ID number: 95**

- **Subject: Good Companies**
- Date: Mon, 18 Oct 1999 21:54:18 -0500

<b>Purpose of message:</b>	
Requesting information	
Sharing information	X
Professional conversation / debate	

“Just a personal note on a company that has served us well.”

<b>Message content composed of:</b>	
Discussion of professional issues	
Resources or products for the school library media center	X
Policies, practices, and procedures of school library media center or school	
Reference questions for school staff and others	
Location/use of Internet resources	
Training tips/software use	
Workshop and conference announcements	
Professional contact and communication	
Curricular applications	
LM_NET administration and use	
Other	

Ordering hardware from an online company

<b>Message Shows Elements of:</b>	
Professional Isolation	
From other school library media professionals	
From other teachers	
School administrators do not understand the role of the school library media specialist	