**Pacific Northwest Chapter/Medical Library Association
Technology Committee Annual Report 2002**

The Technology Committee was charged to increase the use of electronic document delivery (EDD) within the region, and has begun by surveying libraries to learn about how current EDD users receive and deliver copies, what the positive and negative aspects of their experiences with EDD have been, how patrons have reacted to EDD, and what issues stand in the way of other libraries' using EDD.

The committee used the CTLSilhouette software provided by Washington State University to create a Web-based survey, which Emily Hull then linked to the PNC/MLA Home Page. The survey was then publicized on September 6, 2002 via the HLIB-NW email discussion list. All libraries within the area covered by PNC/MLA were encouraged to complete it by the end of the day September 30. The committee sent out several reminders via HLIB-NW during the survey period, and had received 60 responses by September 12. In total, 119 libraries responded to the survey and provided more than just straight answers to the survey's multiple-choice questions-they also graciously contributed a wealth of valuable comments.

In summary, two-thirds of respondents were from hospital libraries and the most common ways to receive documents via EDD are by receiving pdfs via email (79 libraries), picking up pdfs on the Web (49 libraries), and receiving tiffs via email (44 libraries). Fewer have used EDD to send documents, with emailing pdfs (37 libraries) and Ariel (20 libraries) the most commonly used routes.

Among the advantages to EDD use are speed, quality, improved service and public relations, and savings in supplies, phone costs, and postage. Disadvantages cited included cost, quality of x-ray and other film images, printing speed, trouble opening documents, slow scanners, problems with notifications that documents are available for pickup via the Web, and the fact that some libraries do not want to receive documents via EDD.

In their survey responses, libraries cited such barriers to EDD use as lack of knowledge or time, cost of equipment and software, insufficient IT support, firewall constraints, and staff resistance.

The survey results revealed the following needs among libraries in the region: information on EDD in general; information on inexpensive ways to begin offering EDD; information on free software for EDD; information on selecting scanners; help with Ariel and firewalls; help with copyright and license questions; monetary support for startup costs; and strategies for staff development.

The committee's immediate plans include further analysis of the survey data and identification of total number of libraries that have identified themselves in DOCUSER as EDD participants. The survey results revealed a few new EDD options to be researched. The committee will develop information on a range of EDD

options, including selection criteria and costs for software and hardware, and make the information available on the Web.

During the upcoming year, the committee will also develop training, beginning with the approaches of supporting receipt of documents, use of existing office software and free viewing software, how to transfer documents directly to patrons instead of printing first, dealing with size limitations in email systems, and preparation for firewall issues with Ariel. Encouraging use of EDD for sending documents will be a goal to be addressed later.

The committee's full reports, including detailed survey results, will be posted on the PNC/MLA Web site.

--report submitted by Susan Barnes, 10/17/02