

## **Forced Advocacy: How the Community Responds to Library Budget Cuts**

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Due to recent economic woes, many library systems are facing cuts. This is not new to any civic organization. In recessions, publicly funded organizations face major cuts. In the current recession, there have been several sweeping proclamations from mayors, city council members, city governments, and/or library boards regarding the need for cutting services or closing branches. While this is often expected, some of these are coming from systems that have not had to face major cuts – Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and New York. Other systems, such as Prescott, Arizona and Oakbrook, Illinois have proposed passing more of the cost onto the community and users.

Depending on the location, communities have had a variety of reactions to these statements of action. Some have rallied behind the library systems while others have accepted the cuts or closings with little to no protest.

The research will look at these public declarations over the past three years, since the recent housing market failure and banking collapse. The public statements will be analyzed for expectations and actions from those who control the budget. The next part of the research will look at how communities have reacted to the statements and the current status of services and branches within the systems.

These actions can be seen as an enforced advocacy of libraries. As those in charge introduce measures to limit or remove services, communities have been forced to either accept the loss or to mount campaigns to change the outcome. As a result, these public organizations are becoming more and more of the community's responsibility beyond taxes and other automatic fiscal contributions.

The study methodology will be content analysis to look at what was the intention of the message and how it was conveyed. Discourse analysis will be used to see the ways the message was worded. There will be a correlation between the two methods to see if there are any similarities. The research will use newspapers, web sites, and blogs as the content to be analyzed for the study.