

Trends in Specialized Libraries

RAILS Board of Directors

Friday, March 18, 2022

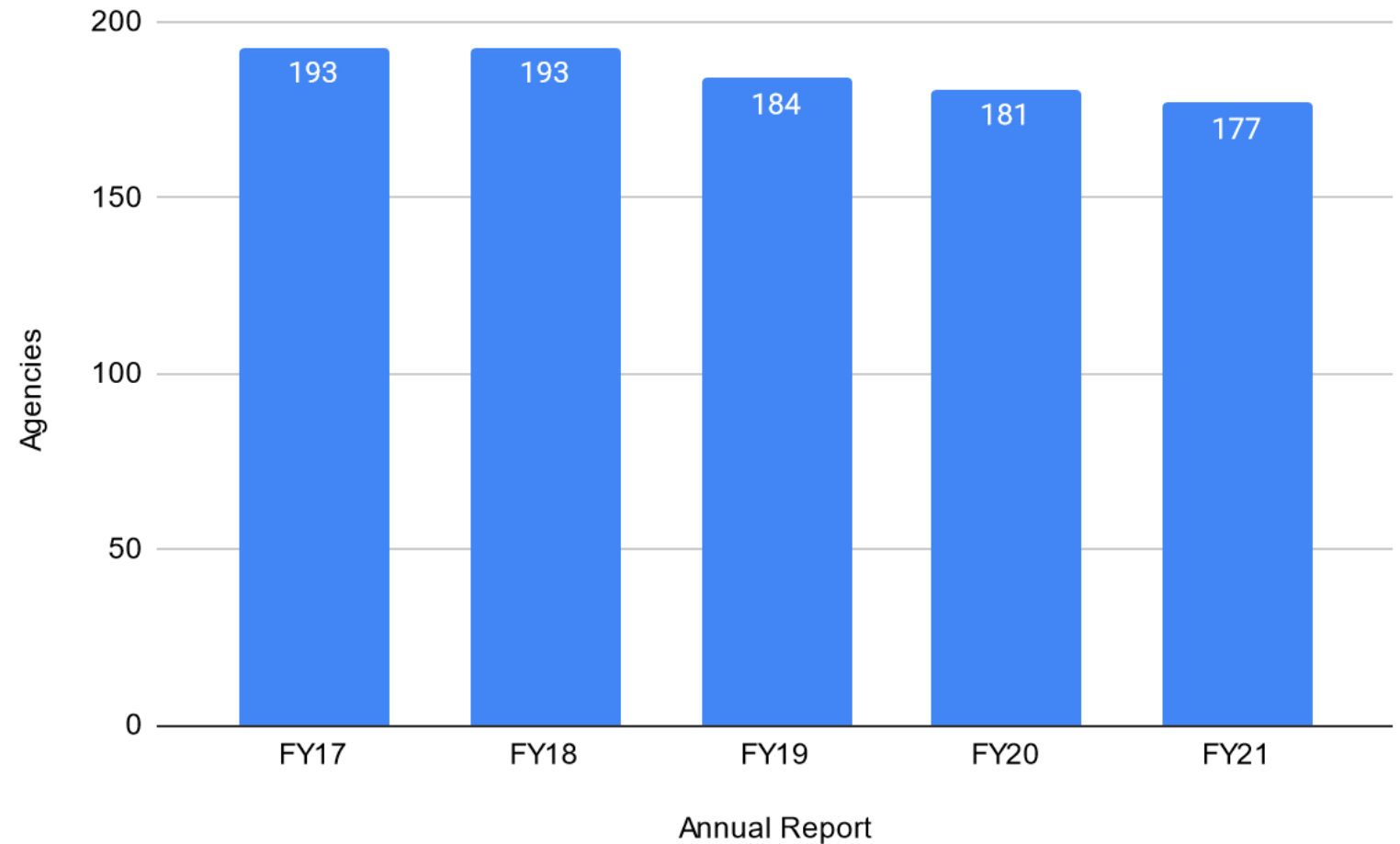
SLA Membership Decline

- Lost 25% of membership, 2017-2021
- Lost 70% of membership, 2010-2021
- Significant loss of revenue, volunteers, support from vendors
- Loss of local chapters, very little local control/participation



RAILS Specialized Library Agency Decline

Agencies vs. Annual Report



Annual Report	Agencies	# Gain/Loss	% Gain/Loss
FY17	193	n/a	n/a
FY18	193	0	0.00%
FY19	184	-9	-4.66%
FY20	181	-3	-1.63%
FY21	177	-4	-2.21%
Average		-4	-2.13%

Trend #1: Return on Investment (ROI)

- Specialized librarians must put a heavy emphasis on providing value to their firm/organization
- Corporate/law librarians must often bill for their time
- Compiling data on “hours saved” or “dollars saved” becomes very important
- Many specialized librarians are constantly seeking ways to quantify their work

Trend #2: Shift to digital platforms

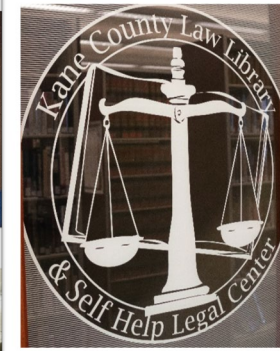
- Many larger organizations perform their work on a national/international scale, so a physical library becomes impractical
- Much of the work of specialized library comes in the form of digital document delivery
- Specialized libraries must purchase expensive platforms that allow users to access the collection wherever they are

Trend #3: Vendor negotiation/content buying

- In the shift from physical to digital materials, specialized libraries now must enter into specific agreements with publishers for licensing
- Libraries are often negotiating with vendors who are *experienced negotiators*
- Prices are high and content providers often hold all of the cards

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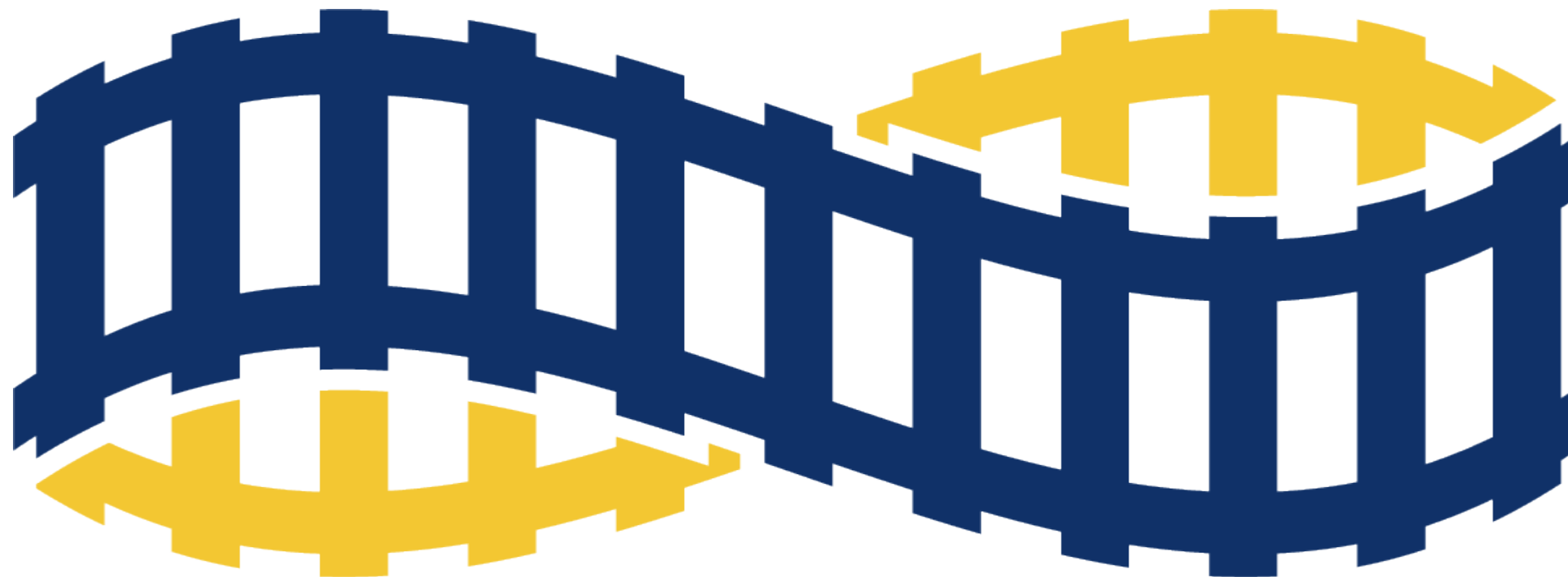


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- Return on Investment
- Shift to digital platforms
- Vendor Negotiation

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