



Association of Writers  
& Writing Programs

# 2012 Bookfair Survey Report

Following the conclusion of the annual Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) Conference & Bookfair, AWP invites attendees to respond to an online survey. In 2011, AWP developed a survey for exhibitors. Responses to the bookfair survey are used to improve the planning and execution of the bookfair by giving exhibitors the opportunity to share their concerns and questions about their experiences and the option to request a direct response from AWP's conference department.

AWP is committed to the satisfaction of our bookfair exhibitors and understands that attending the bookfair is a significant investment. As such, AWP welcomes comments and suggestions from exhibitors at any time and remains dedicated to ensuring that exhibitors have a positive experience. If you exhibited at the 2012 AWP Bookfair in Chicago and have a question or concern that is not addressed herein, please contact the Bookfair Services Office at 703-993-4189 or [bookfair@awpwriter.org](mailto:bookfair@awpwriter.org).

## OVERVIEW

This report contains the results of the 2012 Bookfair survey. The survey garnered 93 responses in total. In general, results were positive, with 15% rating the bookfair as "excellent" and 41.5% rating the bookfair as "very good." AWP's customer service at the bookfair received very positive responses. The biggest areas of concern were the lack of Internet access, the size and layout of the bookfair exhibit halls, dissatisfaction with bookfair placement, and concerns about size and crowding. Many exhibitors offered constructive criticism and suggestions about improving the bookfair.



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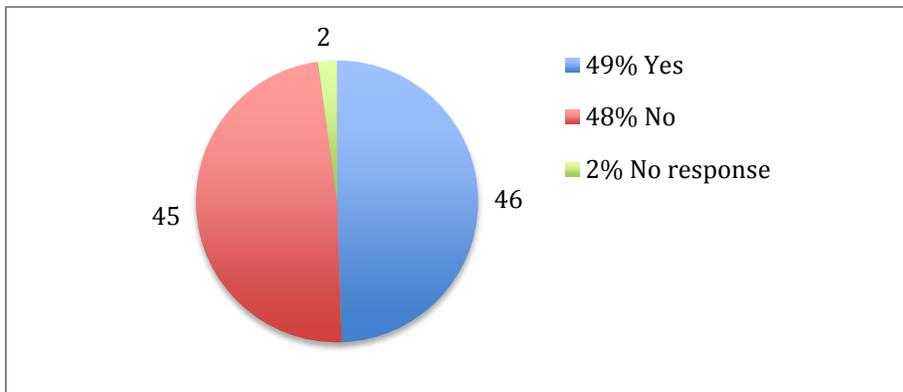


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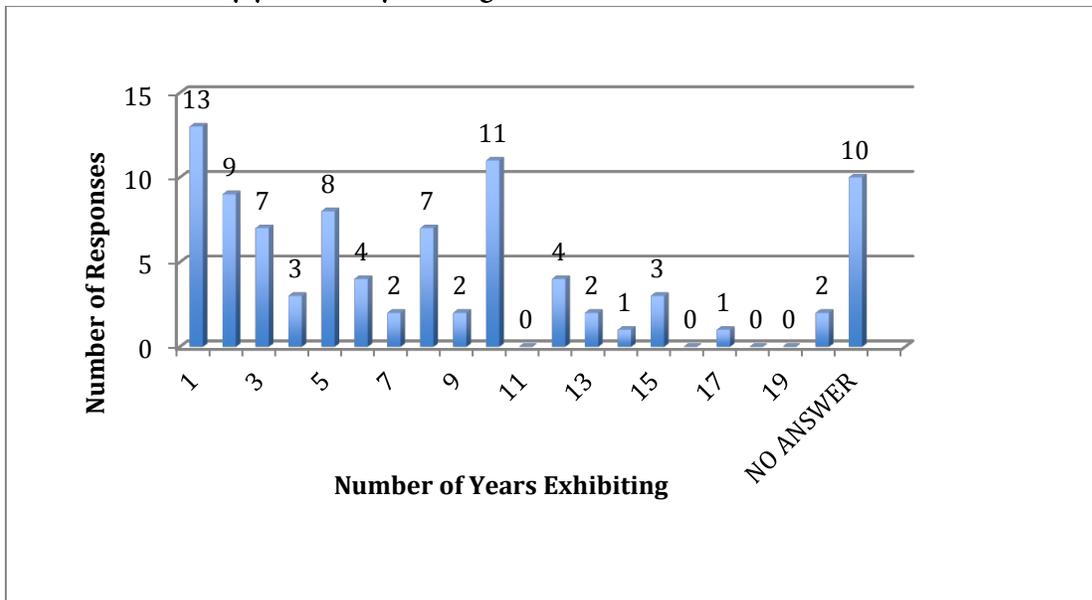


## Bookfair Demographics

1. Are you a member of AWP, or a teacher/student in an AWP member program?

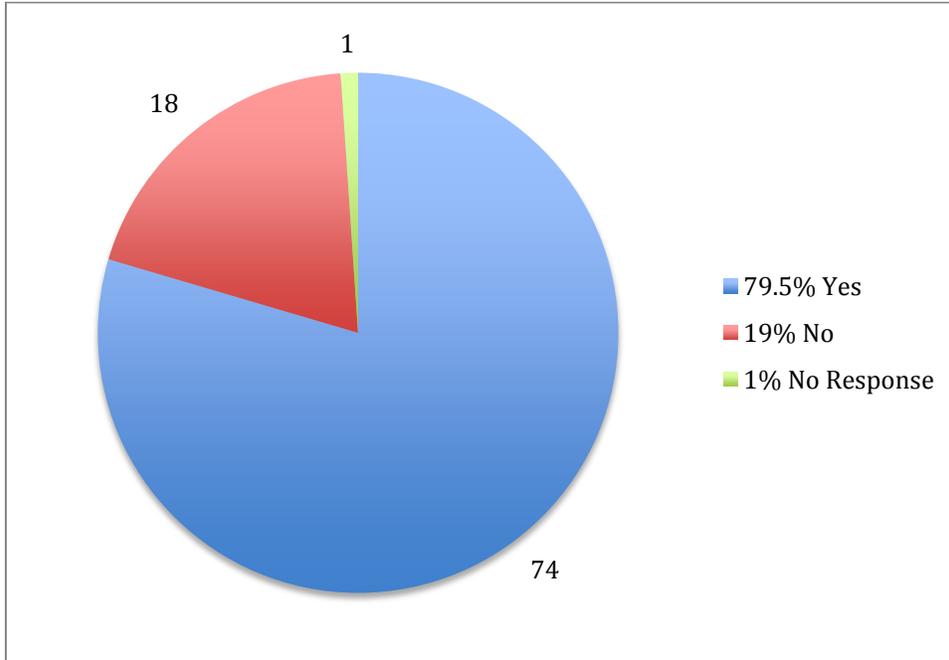


2. How many years has your organization exhibited at the bookfair, in total?

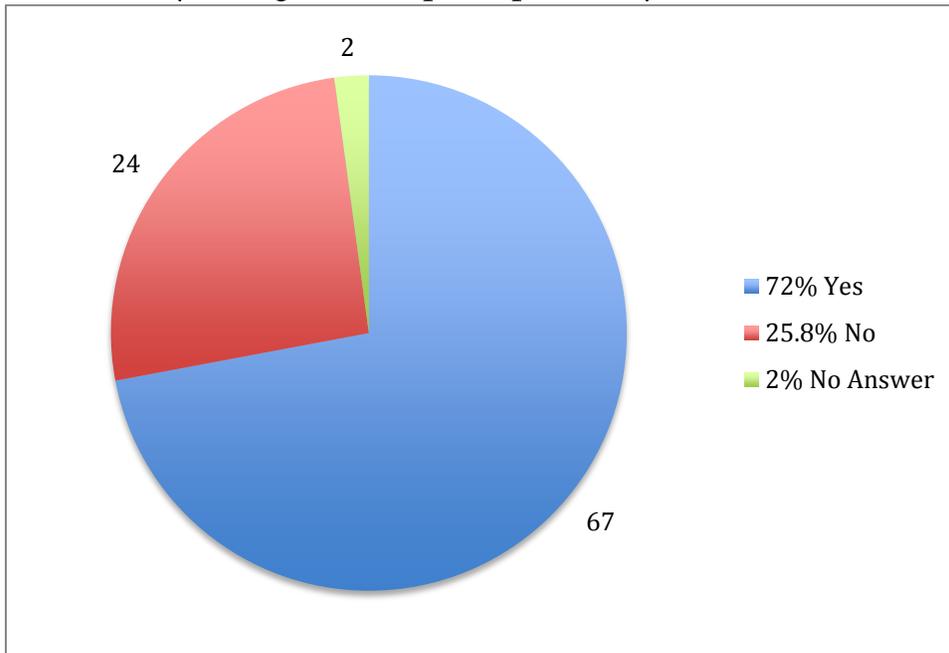




### 3. Does your organization plan to exhibit at the bookfair again?

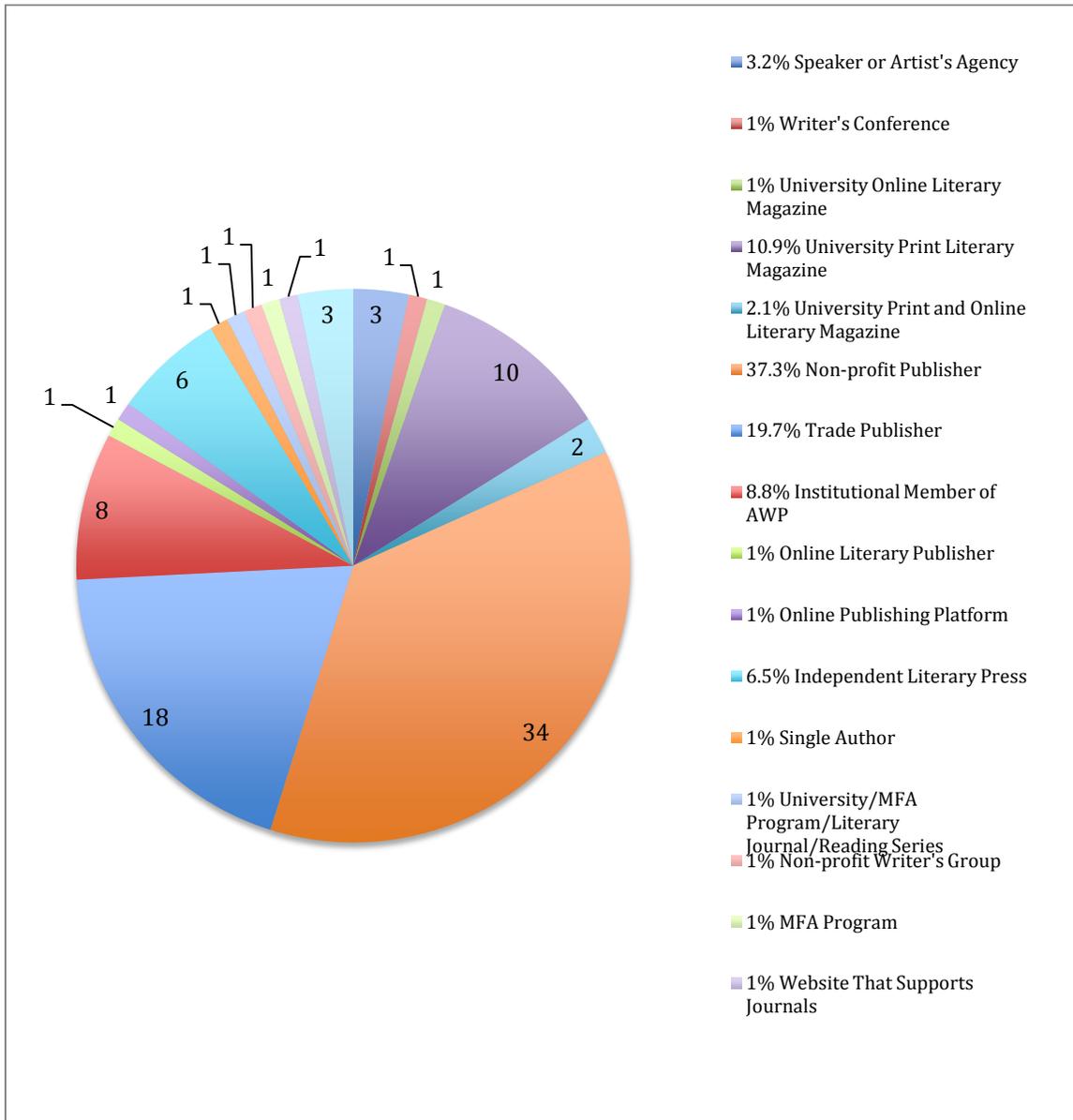


### 4. Does your organization participate in any other book exhibitions?



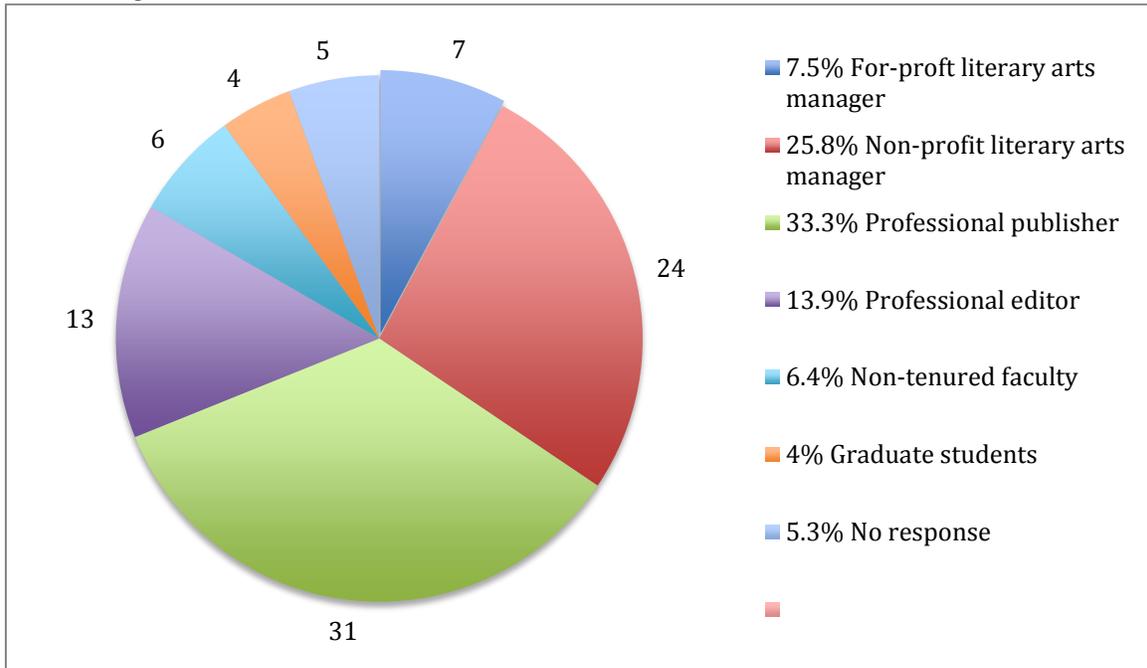


## 5. What category best describes your organization?



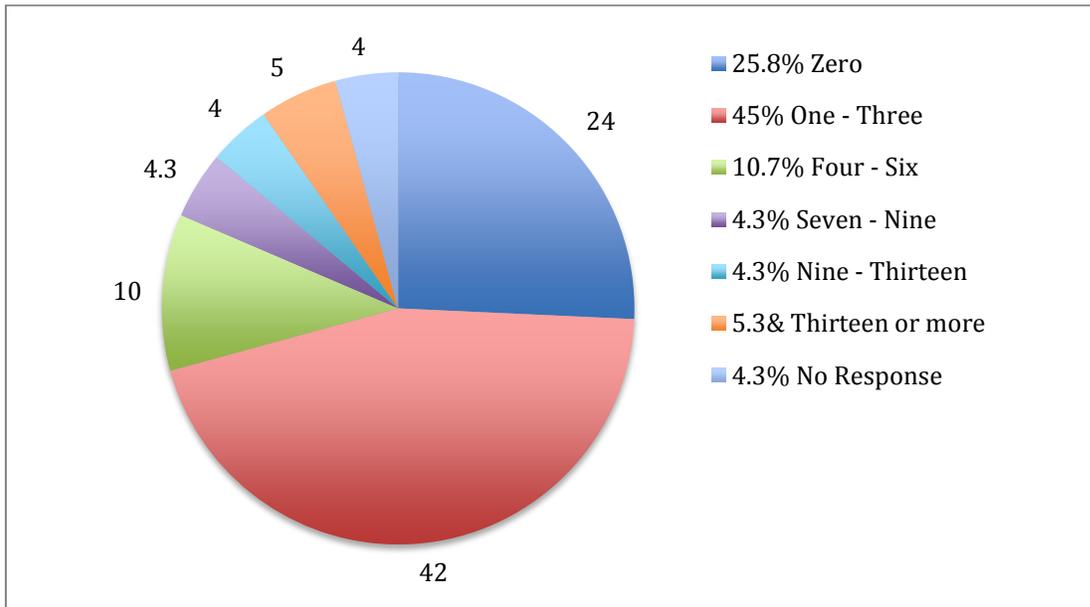


## 6. Who is primarily responsible for the day-to-day operations of your organization?

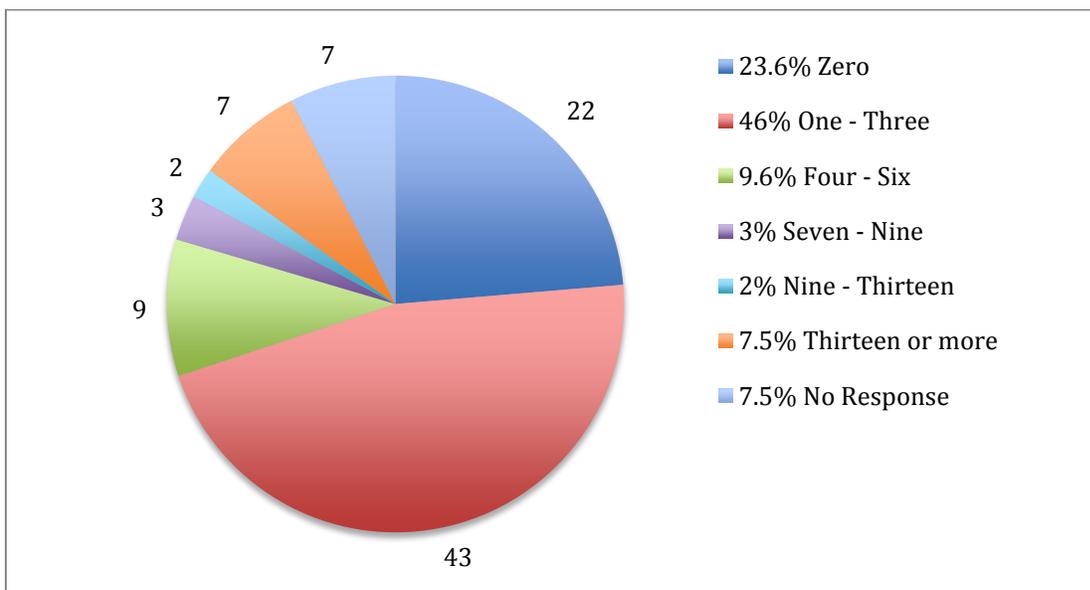




## 7. How many full-time employees does your organization employ?

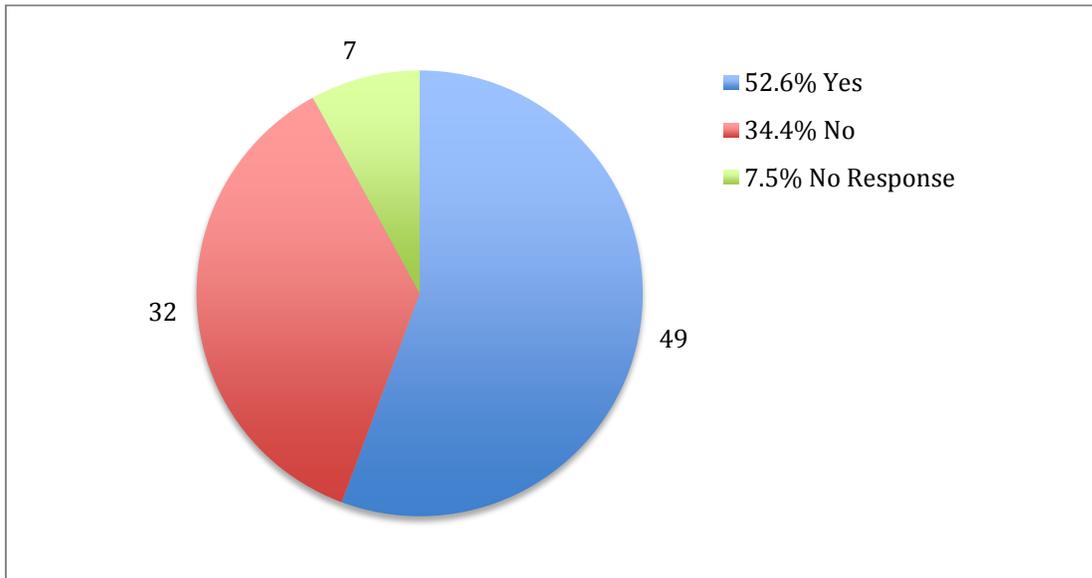


## 8. How many part-time employees does your organization employ?

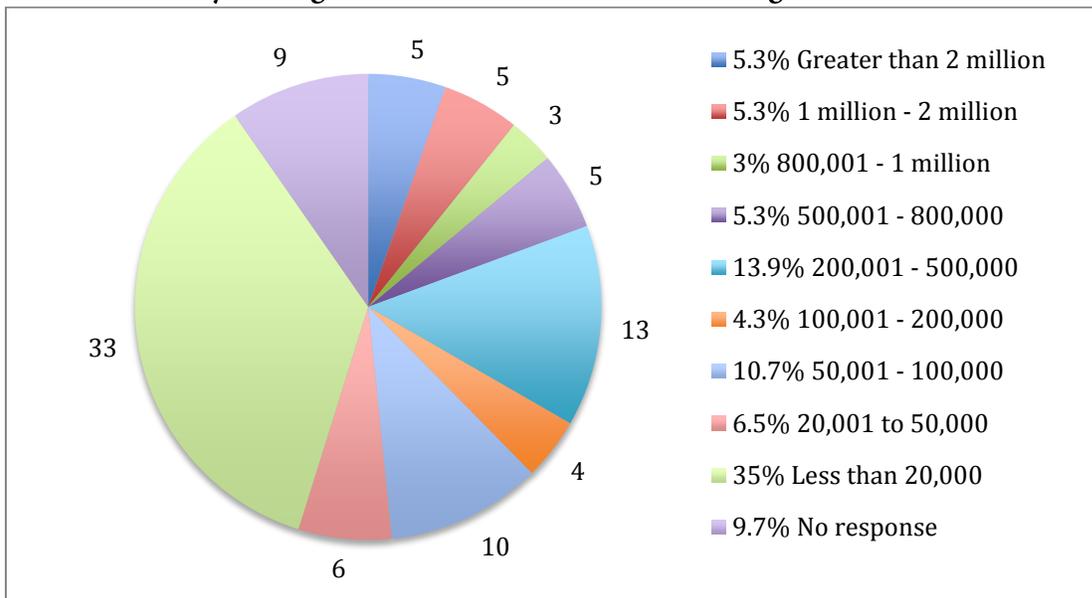




## 9. Are your part-time employees compensated for their work?

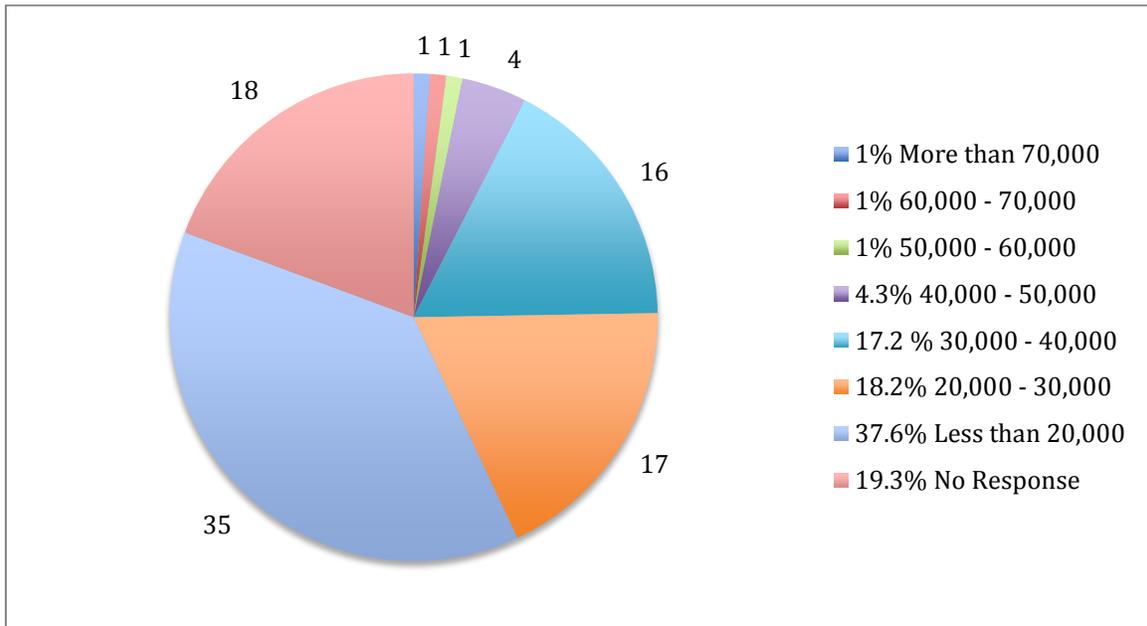


## 10. What is your organization's annual estimated budget?

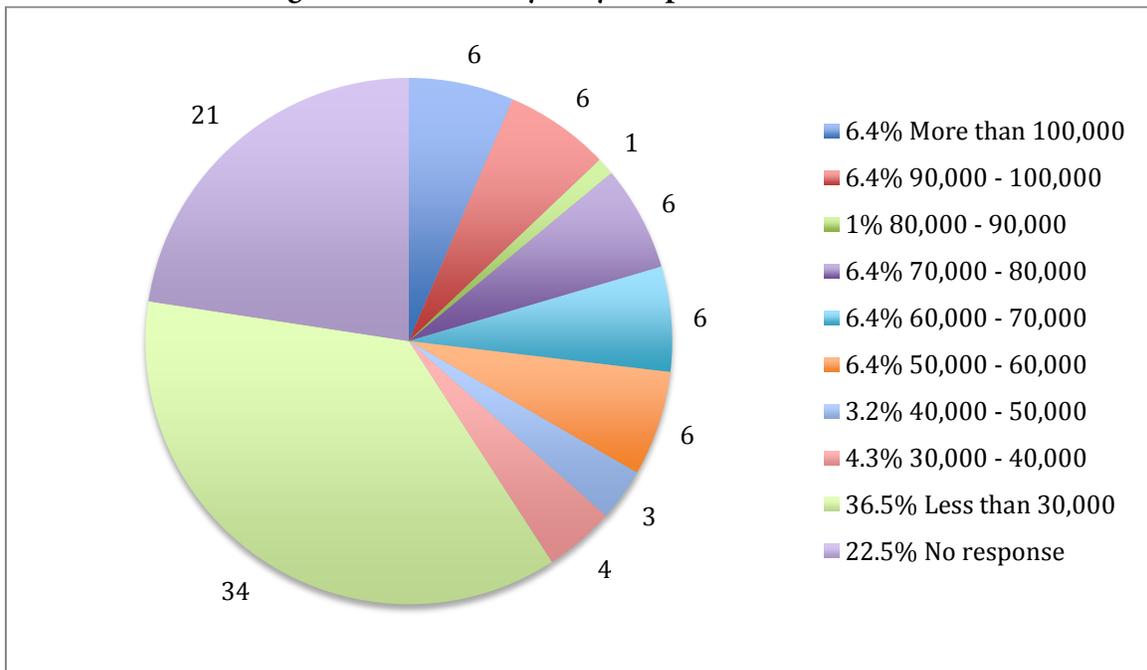




## 11. What is the lowest annual salary of your paid full-time staff?



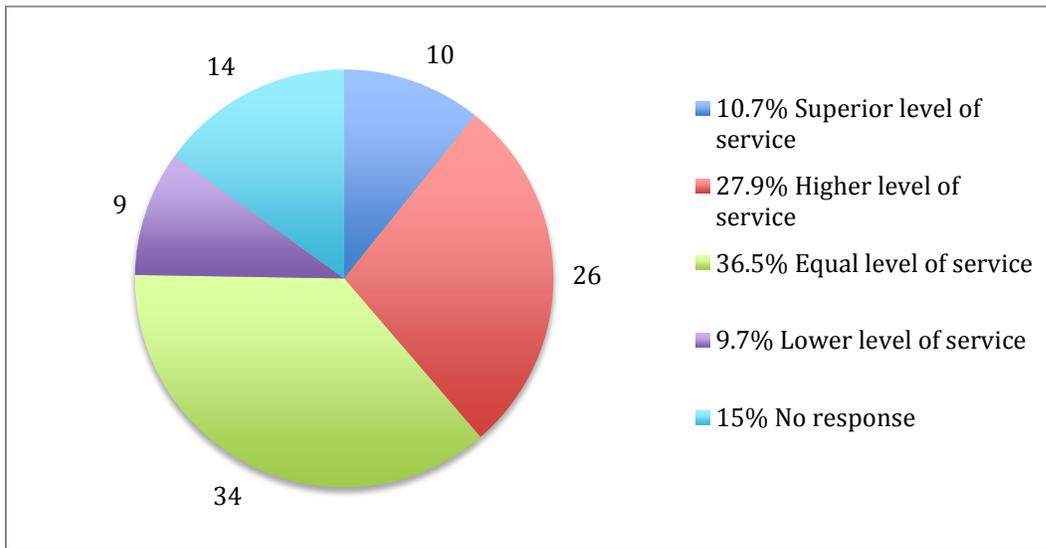
## 12. What is the highest annual salary for your paid full-time staff?



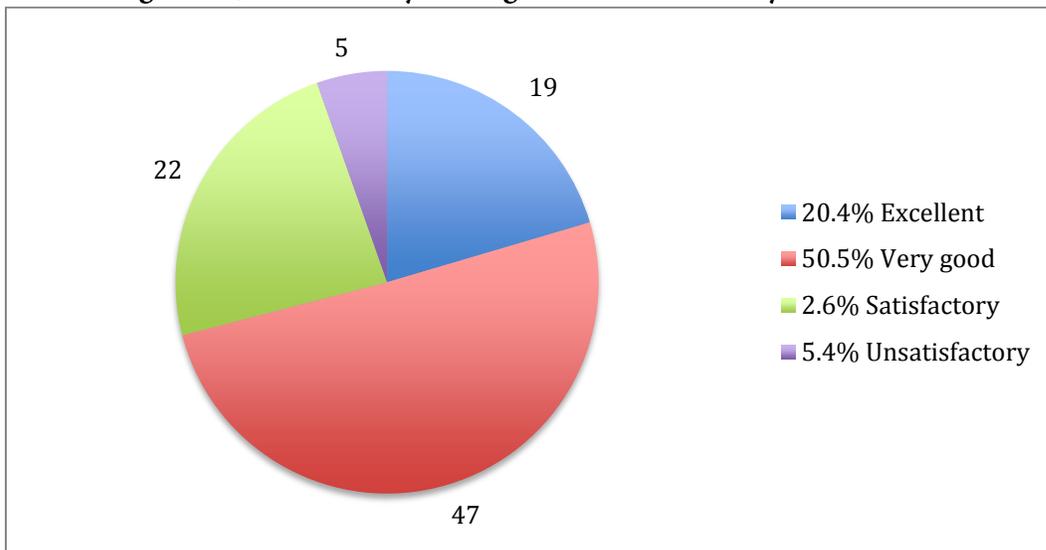


## 2012 Bookfair Survey Responses

1. If you have attended any other book exhibitions in the past five years, how would your organization rate AWP's bookfair in comparison?

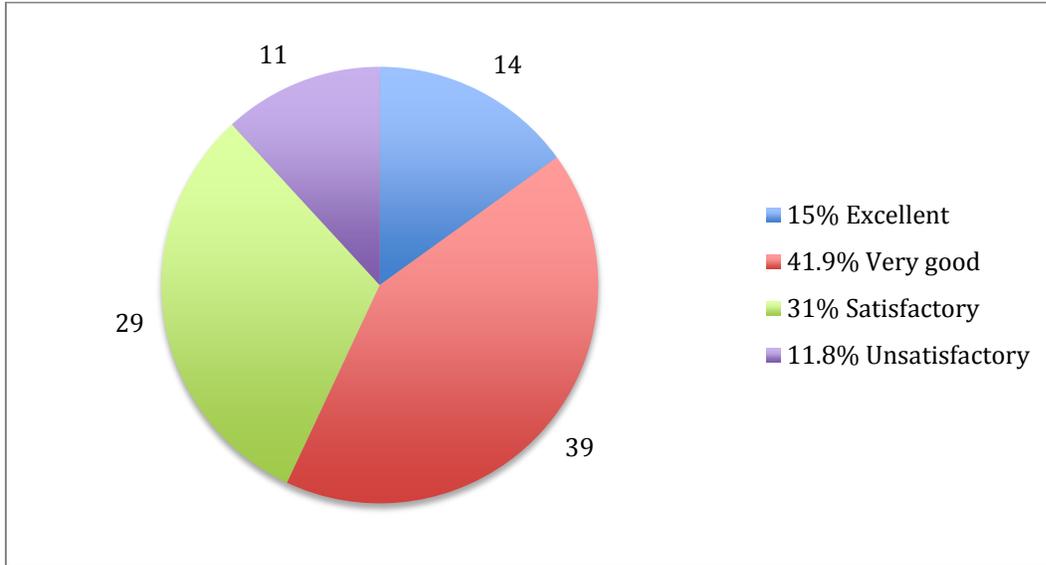


2. In general, how would your organization rate this year's conference?

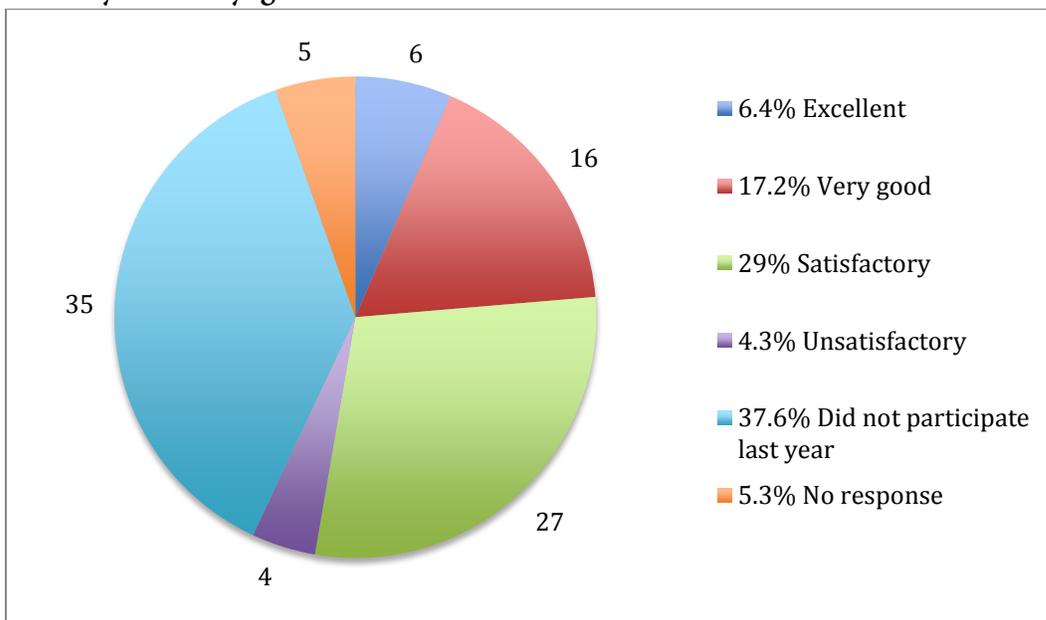




### 3. In general, how would your organization rate this year's bookfair?

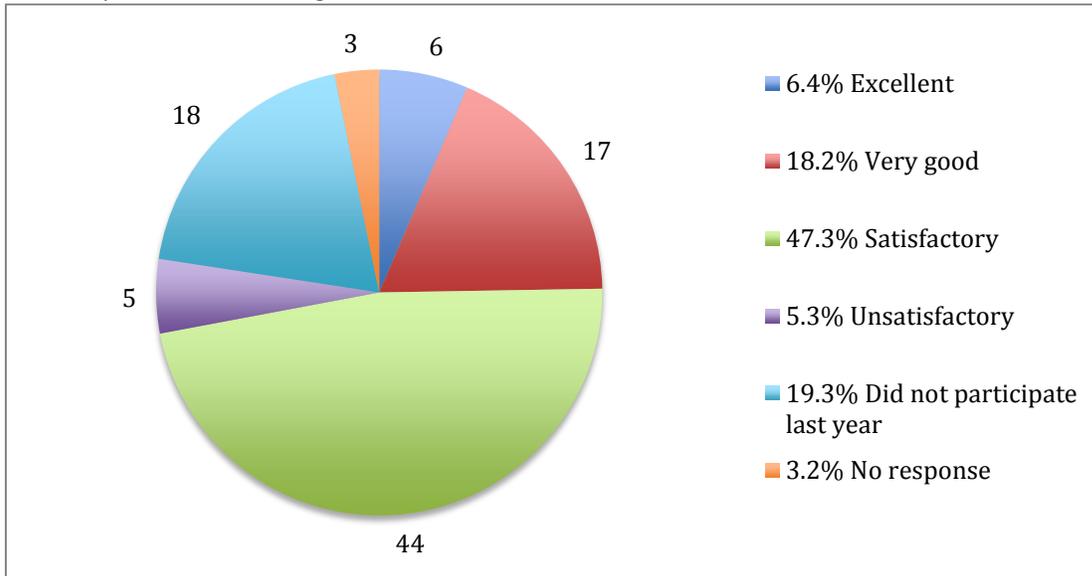


### 4. How would your organization rate this year's drayage services compared to last year's drayage services?

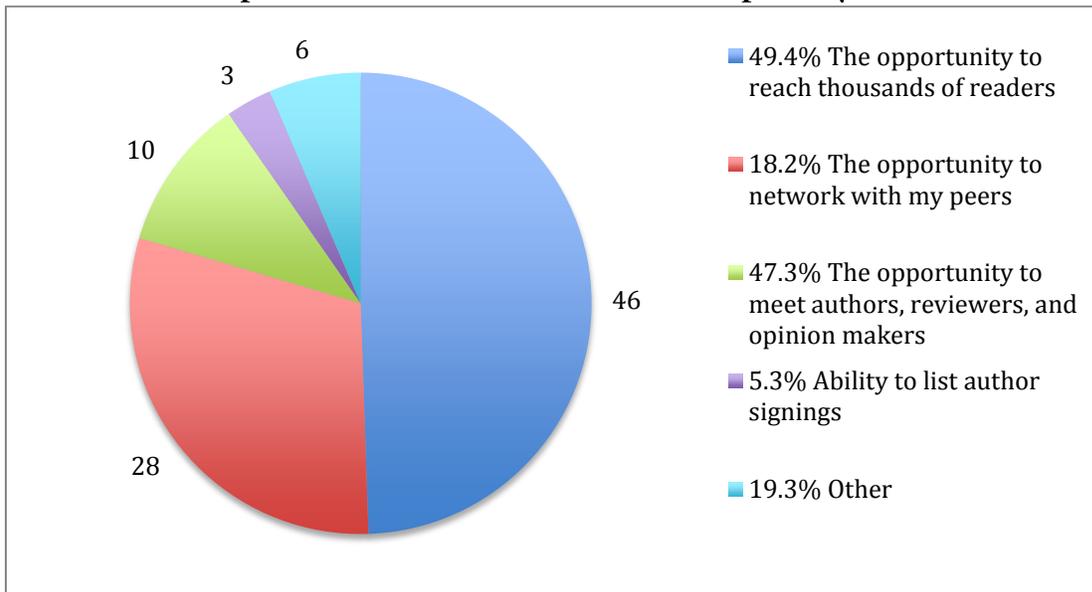




## 5. In general, how would you rate this year's decorating services compared to last year's decorating services?

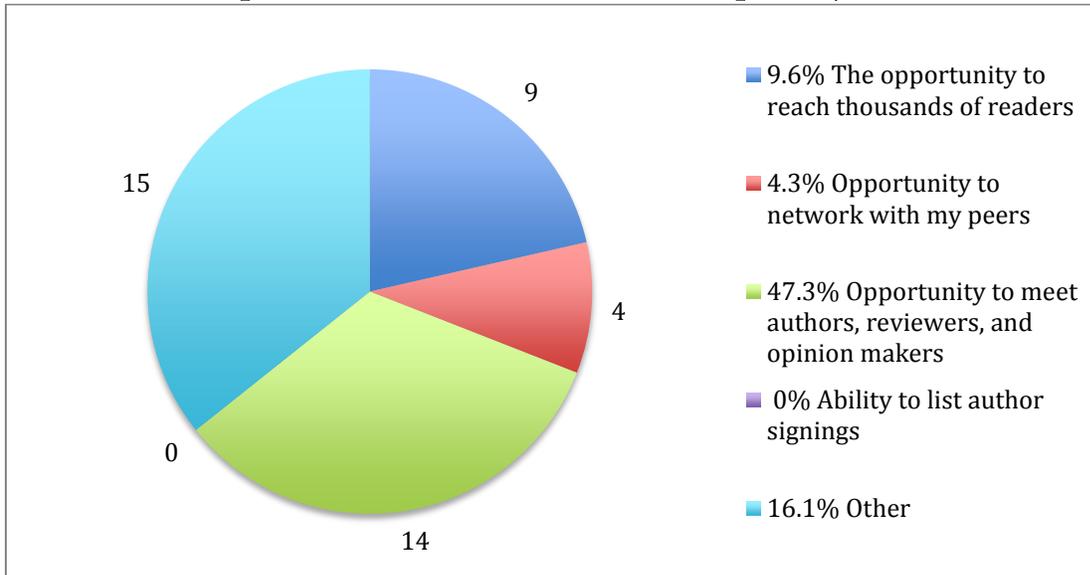


## 6. What components of the bookfair were most helpful to you?

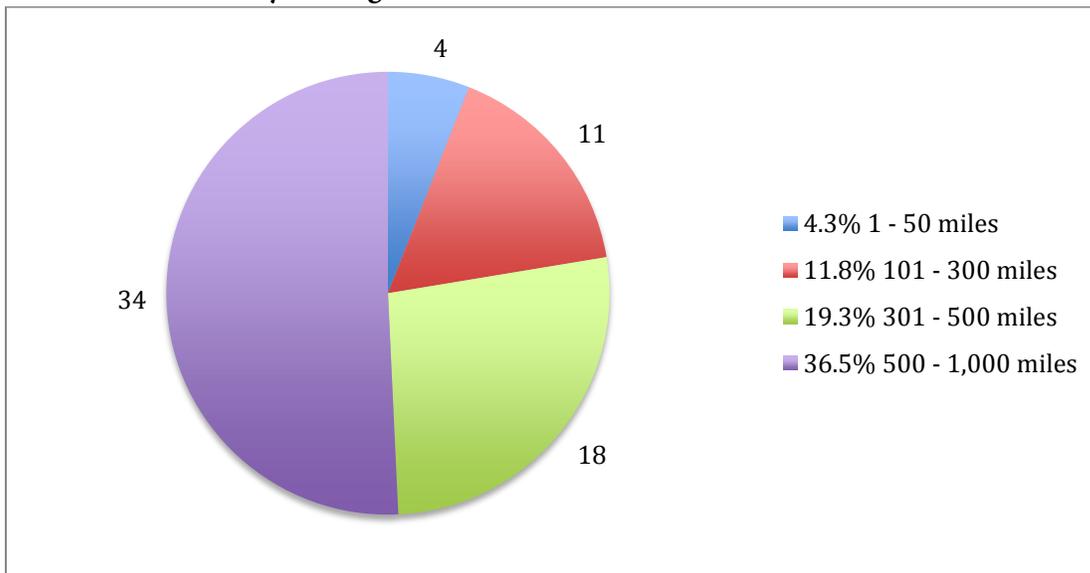




## 7. What components of the bookfair were least helpful to you?

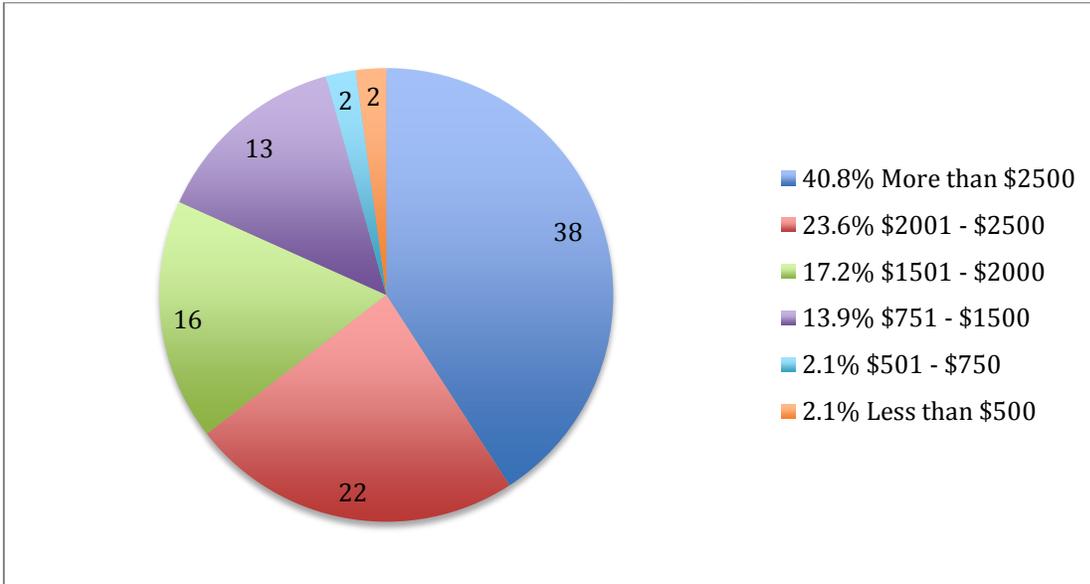


## 8. How far did your organization travel to attend the bookfair?

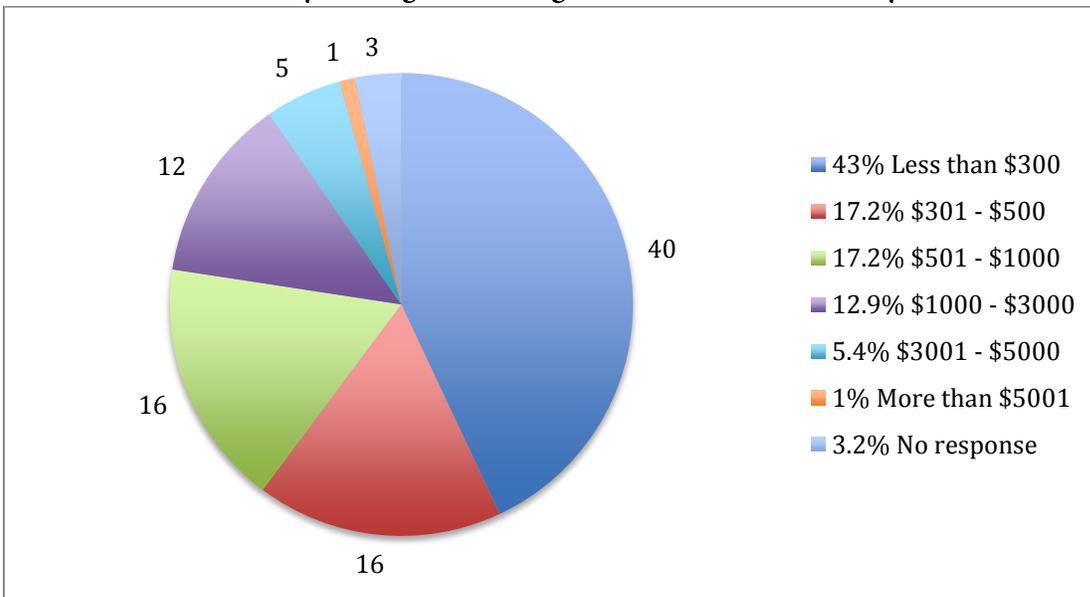




**9. Including the purchase of your exhibit space, travel and lodging for exhibit staff, shipping and any additional costs related to your participation in the bookfair, what is the total estimated expense for your organization to attend?**

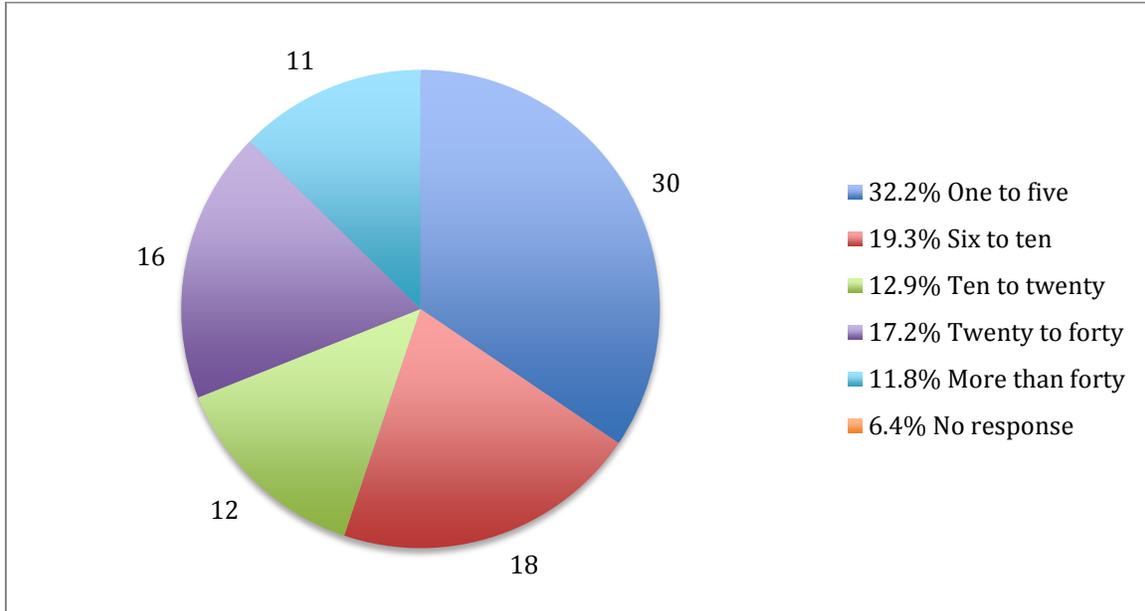


**10. How much did your organization gross at the bookfair this year?**

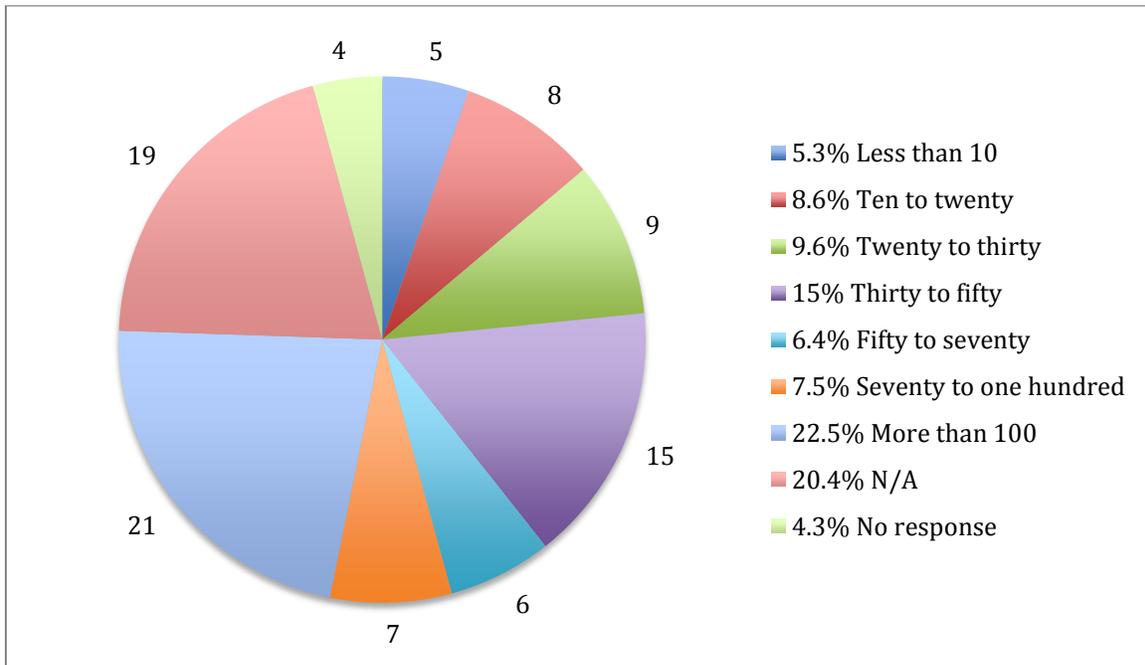




## 11. How many different titles were available for purchase at your exhibit this year?

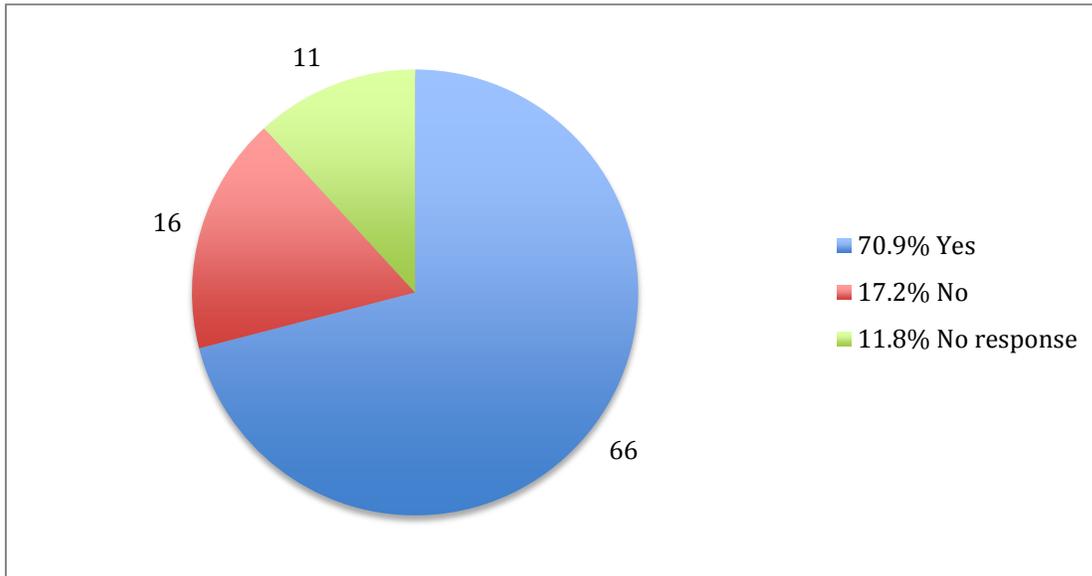


## 12. Can you provide a rough estimate of how many items total your organization sold at the bookfair?

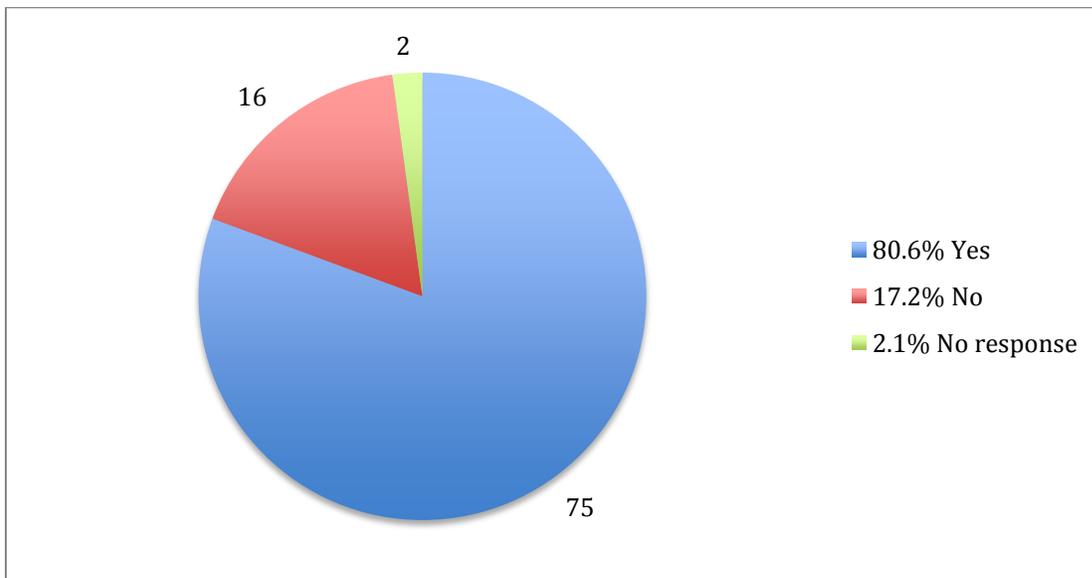




### 13. Did you find the tax information listed on AWP's website helpful and easy to understand?

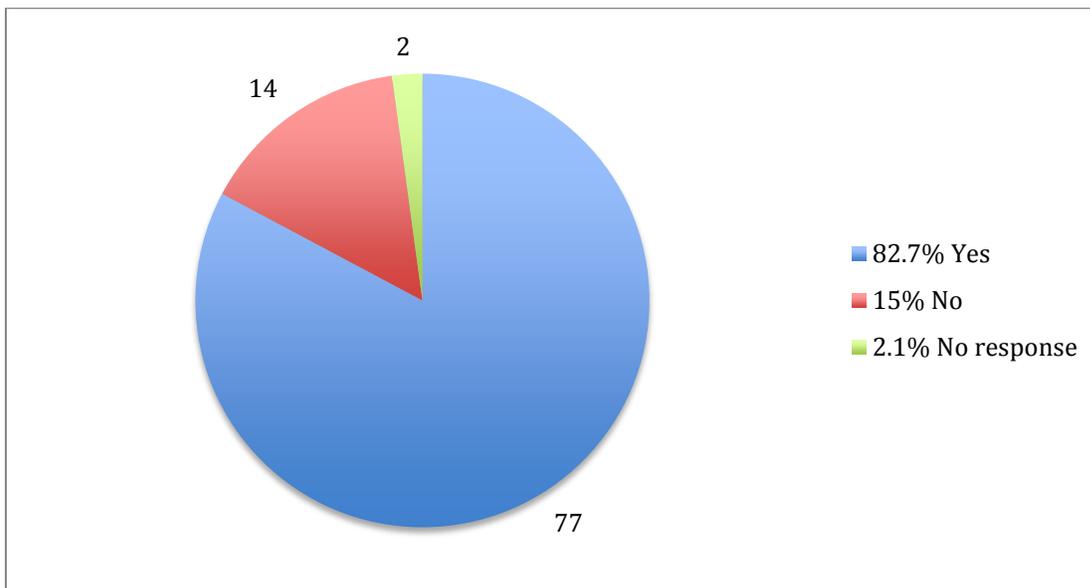


### 14. Did you find the 2012 Exhibitor's Kit helpful, easy to use, and easy to understand?

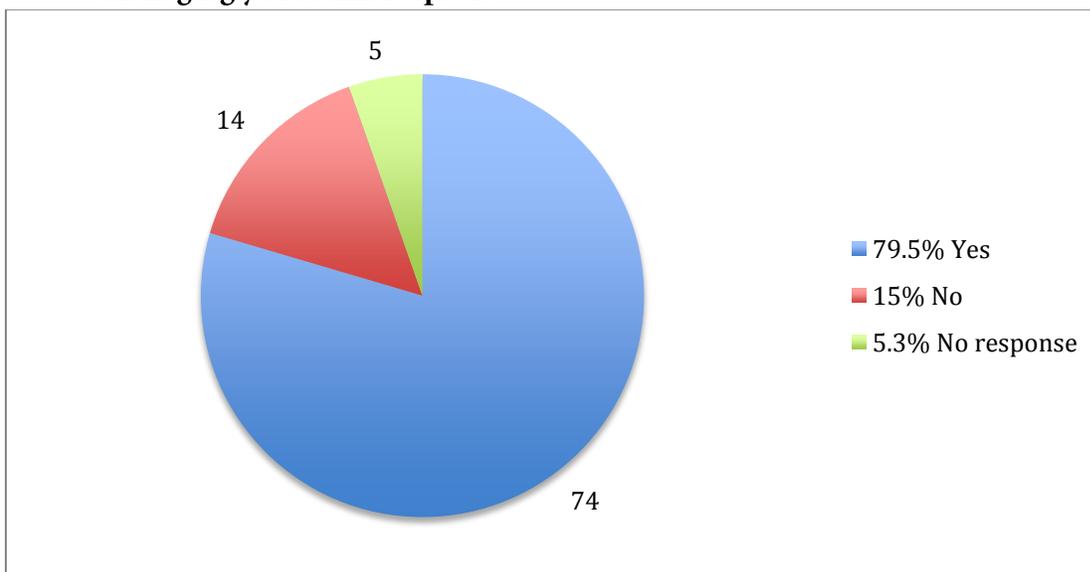




**15. Would your organization be interested in using an online ordering system for exhibition services in the future, instead of the paper forms included in the Exhibitor's Kit?**



**16. Did you find the AWP website to be a helpful resource in procuring and managing your exhibit space?**





## Written Responses to the 2012 Bookfair Survey

Out of the 93 survey responses AWP received, 68 responses included written comments. The main areas of concern included the lack of and cost of Internet connectivity at the Hilton Chicago, the layout of the bookfair, traffic flow within the bookfair halls, and exhibit placement.

### INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

Out of the 68 survey responders who provided written comments, fifteen commented negatively on the lack of wireless Internet access and their dissatisfaction with the \$600/day fee for Internet access by the Hilton Chicago.

As more exhibitors use software programs to process credit cards or display online publications, AWP understands that free or affordable Internet access is a necessity for many exhibitors. AWP will continue to work to choose venues that offer wireless Internet access. The Hynes Convention Center, site of the 2013 Conference & Bookfair, offers free wireless Internet access throughout the facility. AWP will work to secure free or affordable Internet access for exhibitors if possible. However, given the size of the current bookfair and the venues we are obligated to use, AWP is unable to guarantee the availability or cost of Internet access.

### BOOKFAIR LAYOUT

Six exhibitors called the layout of the exhibit halls confusing or difficult to navigate. Three exhibitors mentioned their dissatisfaction with the discrepancy in foot traffic between the exhibit halls with tables and the exhibit halls with booths. Six exhibitors mentioned issues with foot traffic, citing the layout, lack of space, and crowding. Five exhibitors mentioned their dissatisfaction with the separation of the tables and booths, and four exhibitors were specifically dissatisfied with their exhibit placement.



AWP understands concerns about foot traffic in the exhibit halls and recognizes that exhibitors would like to maximize the foot traffic to their exhibit space. AWP is pleased to announce that, beginning with the 2013 Bookfair in Boston, booths and tables will no longer be separated, which will allow for better traffic flow overall, with a more equitable number of exhibitors per exhibit hall.

## BOOKFAIR PLACEMENT

AWP responded to exhibitors who were displeased with their placement at the 2012 bookfair. Location, disparity in foot traffic between the exhibit halls with tables and the exhibit halls with booths, and the layout of the exhibit halls were the chief issues cited by exhibitors as the source of their dissatisfaction.

AWP also understands that exhibit placement is very important to our exhibitors. Exhibit placement presents many challenges, but AWP is committed to fair and equitable placement for all of our exhibitors, regardless of size.

As such, AWP will continue to use the points placement system to place exhibitors. Points will continue to be awarded based on purchase date and number of consecutive years of participation in the bookfair. As always, AWP welcomes and works to accommodate placement requests and encourages exhibitors to contact the AWP bookfair office with their concerns about placement before the bookfair. AWP will make floor plans and placement information available to exhibitors online.

## SIZE OF THE BOOKFAIR

Five exhibitors mentioned concerns with the growth of the bookfair and its impact on the quality of the event, including crowding. One exhibitor suggested that AWP hold multiple regional bookfairs instead of one annual bookfair.



The growth of the bookfair, while wonderful for our attendees and exhibitors, has brought concomitant challenges. AWP has taken steps, including holding the bookfair in convention centers beginning in 2013, to address these concerns, and encourages exhibitors to contact AWP with suggestions. There are currently many regional and specialized bookfairs held annually throughout the country, and AWP does not plan to hold multiple regional bookfairs. The annual AWP bookfair is the largest literary bookfair in North America and offers an inclusive, diverse attendee base and an opportunity for exhibitors to meet an international audience of readers and writers that is not available at regional bookfairs. While AWP does not plan to cap the number of exhibitors permitted to participate in the bookfair, the number of exhibit spaces will remain constrained by the size of the venue where the event is held.

## COSTS

Aside from the previously mentioned issue with the cost of wireless access, one exhibitor voiced concerns about the cost of registrations, one exhibitor mentioned the cost of using Brede's services, and two mentioned the cost of purchasing exhibition space.

AWP works to keep prices for exhibitors and registration as low as possible. While AWP does not profit from the bookfair, it's important that AWP recoup the booking expenses associated with producing the bookfair. AWP's prices for exhibition space remain among the lowest in comparison to similar bookfairs, including the Miami Book Fair and Brooklyn Book Festival.

Although exhibit prices will increase slightly in 2013 to \$475 for a table and \$855 for a booth, AWP believes that the free wireless access, better infrastructure, and lower price for amenities will offset the increase in cost. AWP remains committed to keeping exhibition and registration prices as low as possible.

## INTERACTION WITH EXPOSITION SERVICES STAFF

Two exhibitors mentioned issues with the exposition services staff. While AWP works with an exposition services provider, many of the staff onsite at the bookfair are third-



party contractors and union members who are hired by the exposition services provider. It is important to AWP that all exhibitors and attendees be treated respectfully and fairly by all onsite staff, whether AWP staff, exposition services staff, or subcontracted staff. AWP encourages exhibitors to come to the AWP Help Desk or locate an AWP staff member and have a conference staff member paged for immediate assistance.

## SUGGESTIONS

Many exhibitors provided suggestions for improving the bookfair. Two exhibitors recommended changing the check-in process for exhibitors. To make check-in easier and faster for exhibitors, AWP will not have a separate line for exhibitor badges at the 2013 Conference & Bookfair. Instead, exhibitor badges can be picked up from the alphabetical pre-paid registration bays.

One exhibitor recommended ending the practice of opening the bookfair to the public on Saturday. AWP plans to continue opening the bookfair to the public on Saturday in 2013. In Massachusetts, exhibitors are required to pay sales tax on all three days of the bookfair, regardless of whether it is open to registered attendees or the general public. AWP believes that opening the bookfair to the public provides for better outreach and exposure for all exhibitors, and we will be working to better publicize that the bookfair is open to the public on Saturday. However, depending on sales tax requirements and other considerations, AWP will continue to examine the feasibility of keeping the bookfair open to the public on Saturday, and will reassess this practice if it is determined that the exhibitors will benefit from having the bookfair open only to registered attendees on all three days.

One exhibitor suggested allowing exhibitors to opt-out of receiving the bag and conference program. AWP does not require that exhibitors receive a bag or conference program, and exhibitors may choose to decline these items.

One exhibitor suggested more content in the conference sessions directed at publishers, including sessions about navigating the changing publishing industry and educating writers about the different types of presses. AWP would also like to feature more programming for publishers and presses. The events produced at the conference are all proposed to us, and as such, more programming for publishers must be proposed in



order for AWP to offer it at the conference. AWP welcomes and encourages exhibitors to submit panel proposals through AWP's online proposal submission portal.

One exhibitor reported difficulty in understanding the exhibitor's kit. To make exposition services more user-friendly, AWP plans to work with the selected exposition services provider to offer online ordering for exhibitors for exhibit furnishings and redesigning the exhibitor's kit to make it more user-friendly and easier to understand, including features such as page numbers, a table of contents, and a drayage fee chart that were not included in the 2012 Exhibitor's Kit.

One exhibitor suggested that AWP offer childcare. However, due to the prohibitive cost and the liability, AWP does not plan to offer childcare. AWP is committed to addressing the concerns of its membership, and will continue to work to improve the experience of attendees with children. In 2012, AWP offered a lactation room at the Hilton Chicago and plans to do so again in 2013. AWP will consider other family-friendly options as space, costs, and staff requirements permit.

## BOOKFAIR HOURS

One exhibitor suggested opening the bookfair later than 8:30 AM. As we feel that the current hours create the greatest exposure for the exhibitors, AWP does not plan to alter the bookfair hours at this time, but will continue to monitor exhibitor scheduling needs and will adjust the bookfair hours if necessary.

## POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Many exhibitors included positive feedback in their comments about AWP's customer service and their experience at the bookfair. Exhibitors commented positively about AWP's customer service, new online content offered by AWP, including an online conference program, the diversity of the bookfair, and the opportunity to interact with many readers and writers.

## BOOKFAIR PLACEMENT

AWP responded to exhibitors who were displeased with their placement at the 2012 bookfair. Location, the perceived disparity in foot traffic between the exhibit halls with tables and the exhibit halls with booths, and the layout of the exhibit halls were the chief



issues cited by exhibitors as the source of their dissatisfaction. AWP provided information about how exhibit space placements are conducted, including directing exhibitors to AWP's website and the point placement system, and provided exhibitors with information about how to increase their points and improve their placement. AWP also acknowledged the challenges in the layout of the Hilton Chicago and the impact of the growth of the bookfair and gave exhibitors information about how AWP plans to address these issues in the future.

## IMPROVING COMMUNICATION WITH EXHIBITORS

Currently, the AWP website and mass e-mails are used to communicate with exhibitors. AWP is in the process of redesigning the website to make it more intuitive and easier to navigate. AWP will also begin using HTML e-mails, which are easier to read and understand, with links back to the AWP website to encourage exhibitors to consult the website for information about the bookfair, and move away from text-heavy information e-mails.

AWP understands that navigating the exposition services process can be difficult. To make this easier, AWP plans to work with the selected exposition services provider to offer online ordering for exhibitors for exhibit furnishings and redesigning the exhibitor's kit to make it more user-friendly and easier to understand, including features such as page numbers, a table of contents, and a drayage fee chart that were not included in the 2012 Exhibitor's Kit.

## **Conclusion**

AWP appreciates the feedback provided by exhibitors and welcomes suggestions about improving the bookfair. Exhibitors' main concerns were access to Internet services, layout and foot traffic, crowding, and exhibit placement. AWP's decision to move to convention centers, beginning with the 2013 Conference & Bookfair at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston, will address many of these concerns. AWP is also committed to a fair and equitable placement system and to keeping exhibition and registration prices low. AWP will continue to focus on excellent customer service and improving exhibitors' experience



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at the bookfair. In 2012, the bookfair services office will work to improve communication between exhibitors and the bookfair services office and make the exposition services ordering and shipping processes easier to navigate and more convenient. The launch of AWP's new website will aid in improving ease and access to information for exhibitors. As always, AWP welcomes feedback from exhibitors and encourages exhibitors to use the bookfair services office as a resource.