

20. Membership Report as of December 8, 2008

Academic & Special Libraries Section	103
Health Sciences Information Section	35
Public Library Section	138
School Library & Youth Services Section	108
Government Documents Roundtable	38
New Members Roundtable	51
Technical Services Roundtable	59
Associate members	15
Institutional members	12
Student members	2
Trustees	43
New members 2008	60
New members 2009	5
Total	390

From the minutes of our May 30 meeting: "PayPal – Some people have expressed both a request and a need (i.e. military bases must now use a credit card) for credit cards. Bonnie Krenz stated that the finance committee did look into this. It is attached to her report. She went to the PayPal site to see what it would cost. The transaction fee is 2.9% + \$0.30 per transaction for transactions of \$0.00 to \$3000. Theresa Norton said there would be no problem with setting up PayPal as a payment option on the web site. Mike Safratowich stated that there are some differences in setting up a PayPal payment option as a single use versus a shopping cart sort of option. Theresa said that security on our web site would not be an issue. The fee could be absorbed in a variety of ways. President James appointed a committee of four to research the exact costs, etc.: Kathy Thomas, Mike Safratowich, Bonnie Krenz and Theresa Norton. Kathy Thomas will chair the committee; the expectation is to bring this back to the table for discussion in December."

These are replies I received from asking some other state library associations that accept membership dues and other payments by credit card or PayPal about their experience:

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MPLA

I'm really pleased with our experience using PayPal as MPLA's gateway for secure credit card payments. It was exceptionally easy to set up and there have been no problems whatsoever from our end. People don't have to establish PayPal accounts to use the service so it's like using any other credit card gateway. If people have PayPal accounts they can also use them. I can download the record of transactions for any period of time and save the files for future reference. I can also transfer payments online from PayPal to our bank account as often as needed with just a few key strokes. During the height of our membership renewals I do this almost every other day. I've had to contact customer service only once since 2006 and I received an answer within a day. Only occasionally people tell me they've had problems using their credit cards with the system but I think it's often a problem with institutional credit cards or with names matching correctly.

We looked at costs of various gateways, and found that many others had fairly steep annual fees and high set-up fees in addition to the per-transaction cost and percentage of payments. PayPal didn't require those, and our only cost is the percentage of payments plus transaction fee, which is 2.9% plus \$.30/transaction.

Before we used PayPal (and before I began in this position) MPLA took credit cards but the information had to be received either by mail, fax, or e-mail – without any security. At that time we had a different merchant credit card service and I believe its overall cost was less than PayPal's. It required manually keying in all the credit card numbers and submitting by special credit card machine/modem over a phone line, which is time consuming and error-prone. I was not in favor of using a non-secure method and the board agreed.

In the past 2 years we've had a little over a third of our members paying dues by PayPal. We've also offered the service for our Jobline and Leadership Institute payments. I have no basis for comparison, but I think offering a secure credit card option makes it easier for people to pay right away rather than wait to write a check – and for MPLA that means quicker payments and less need for follow-up reminders. When we send out membership renewals or solicitations there is always included a hotlink to the membership form and a mention of the PayPal option so people can go directly from that e-mail to the form.

I arranged the financial aspects of setting up the PayPal service, and Dan Chaney, our super webmaster, took care of making the forms and connections available on our website. If you have questions about what was required to get it online Dan would be the person to ask (dan.chaney@okstate.edu). I've found that the PayPal site (www.paypal.com) has easy-to-find information.

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New Mexico

We are currently using two set-ups to get a better idea which is more cost-effective for us. We have a credit card account with Bank of America (Visa and MasterCard only) in which we put in the information ourselves from the secure website and we also accept PayPal. Our problem is that government entities that only pay with credit cards do not like to use PayPal and individuals like PayPal for the ability to pay "cash" instead of using a credit card.

If you look into going with a credit card company, shop around. There is the basic monthly fee (for us \$25), transaction fees (which is based on which credit card and rewards programs are attached to it) plus tax. We are a non-profit, however, we have to pay tax on services and that is what credit card processing is considered to be.

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Wyoming

I just went to our Bank "Bank of the West" years ago and they had a credit card representative (Merchant Services). They set us up dirt cheap....like \$5 per month.....we have to pay the regular fees per transaction (and I'm not sure what they are right now). We only accept VISA and MC....American Express is too expensive. I bought a machine that hooks up to the phone line (which was about \$400, if I remember correctly).....and I process the payments directly through the phone line....there is a settlement after each deposit. It's really easy. I would say that right now about 25% of our members use their credit cards for either dues or conference. I'm glad we accept CC. Last year we probably paid about \$1,200 in merchant fees...(the fees they charge per charge). Our vendors use credit cards to pay for their vendor space as well....probably 1/3 of them.

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Colorado

We started out with a PayPal account, which we utilized for several years. PayPal allows you to accept credit card payments without setting up a merchant account with a bank, which can be costly (and time consuming). You can find details at: <https://paypal.com>

Eventually, we had enough volume that we found it was time to graduate to a merchant account, because we could save money.

The bank you currently use may be able to provide that, OR I'd be happy to share the information with you about our account -- just let me know and I can phone you to talk about that.

We do not pay any equipment fees, and we are set up for online processing. We pay nearly 50% less in processing/fees than we used to.

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Utah

We use MemberClicks for our membership needs (memberclicks.com). This is where our database of members reside. They offer credit card payments if your organization has a merchant account. You basically define the gateway to use to your merchant acct. and then money gets deposited into your organization's bank account. It's fairly simple if you have those in place. Each cc transaction also gets charged by Memberclicks depending on the amount plus I think .25 per transaction. This setup has saved us from a lot of paperwork. It also automatically adjusts the expiration of the member as they pay and renew.

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South Dakota

SDLA set ours up a couple of years ago. We basically had to work with two different entities, the bank and a programmer to set up the pages. It was a headache and it was expensive \$1000-\$2000 with bank set-up and then programmer fees, but works pretty well now. We are in the process hopefully in the next year to program the form in MemberClicks (our membership database software) because it has the capability of doing cc payments. As far as the costs, it varies depending on how often it is used. The bank charges us monthly for each transaction. This year it has ranged from \$36 to \$77.

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Submitted by Kathy Thomas
Membership Chair