An investigation into the library materials that were the subject of censorship challenges at New Zealand public libraries in the years 2010-2014

by

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Submitted to the School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Information Studies

October 2015
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my research supervisor, Dr Dan Dorner, for his advice, my workplace for their support, and the New Zealand public library systems that responded to the survey for their participation in this research.
Research problem
There is currently a lack of knowledge about which library materials have been the subject of censorship challenges at New Zealand public libraries. This research addresses the problem by identifying and analysing which library materials were the subject of censorship challenges at New Zealand public libraries in the years 2010-2014. It also determined the incidence of censorship challenges within the time period, who made the challenges, what the reasoning was behind the challenges, what censorship actions were requested, and what actions were taken by the libraries in response to the challenges.

Methodology
This research utilised a descriptive research design through the use of an online survey questionnaire to gather data from the research population, which was limited to a collective response for the public library systems administrated by 66 of the 67 territorial authorities in New Zealand.

Results
The survey received 28 viable responses for the 66 public library systems, which represents a response rate of 42.4%. The majority of the responding library systems do not keep records of the censorship challenges they receive so much of the information relied on the collective memory of library staff members. Ten of the 28 public library systems reported receiving a total of 20 censorship challenges. Details were provided for 15 unique titles (eight books, six graphic novels, and one DVD).

Implications
Much of the information about censorship challenges at public libraries in New Zealand currently appears to reply on the collective memory of library staff members. New Zealand territorial authorities should explore their legal obligations to create and maintain records of censorship challenges received by their public libraries. Future research could take the form of in-depth interviews with a cross-section of public library staff members about their experiences dealing with censorship challenges.

Keywords
Censorship, censorship challenges, intellectual freedom, library materials, New Zealand, public libraries
## Contents

List of tables .................................................................................................................. 7
List of figures .................................................................................................................. 8
1 Introduction ................................................................................................................ 10
   1.1 Research problem and rationale ........................................................................ 10
   1.2 Research objectives ............................................................................................ 11
   1.3 Delimitations ....................................................................................................... 11
   1.4 Research questions .............................................................................................. 12
   1.5 Hypothesis ........................................................................................................... 13
   1.6 Research significance ......................................................................................... 13
   1.7 Definition of terms ............................................................................................. 14
2 Review of the literature .............................................................................................. 15
   2.1 Selection of research studies .............................................................................. 15
   2.2 Theoretical positions ........................................................................................... 16
   2.3 Research objectives ............................................................................................ 17
   2.4 Methodologies .................................................................................................... 18
      2.4.1 Survey language ........................................................................................... 19
      2.4.2 Survey time-frames ...................................................................................... 20
   2.5 Findings ............................................................................................................... 20
3 Methodology ............................................................................................................. 22
   3.1 Population ........................................................................................................... 23
   3.2 Data collection ..................................................................................................... 23
   3.3 Survey design ...................................................................................................... 23
   3.4 Pilot test .............................................................................................................. 25
   3.5 Survey distribution .............................................................................................. 25
   3.6 Survey timeframe ............................................................................................... 25
   3.7 Limitations .......................................................................................................... 25
   3.8 Ethical considerations ......................................................................................... 26
   3.9 Data analysis ....................................................................................................... 26
   3.10 Data presentation ............................................................................................... 27
4 Results and analysis .................................................................................................. 27
   4.1 Survey response .................................................................................................. 27
   4.2 Profile of respondents ........................................................................................ 27
   4.3 Policies towards censorship ................................................................................. 30
4.3.1 Treatment of potentially controversial material ........................................... 30
4.3.2 Restriction of access or borrowing privileges ............................................... 30
4.3.3 Established policies to respond to censorship requests .................................. 30
4.3.4 Record keeping for censorship requests ..................................................... 31
4.3.5 Registration of objections ........................................................................... 31
4.4 Challenged titles ............................................................................................... 31
4.4.1 Description of titles ..................................................................................... 34
4.4.2 Format .......................................................................................................... 40
4.4.3 Fiction vs. non-fiction .................................................................................... 40
4.4.4 Audience ....................................................................................................... 41
4.4.5 Classic titles vs. contemporary titles ............................................................. 42
4.4.6 New Zealand material vs. overseas material ................................................. 42
4.5 Number of challenges ...................................................................................... 43
4.6 Profiles of library systems that received challenges ........................................ 44
4.7 Profile of library systems that didn’t receive challenges .................................. 46
4.8 Identity of complainants .................................................................................. 46
4.9 Reasoning behind challenges ......................................................................... 48
4.10 Censorship actions requested ........................................................................ 49
4.11 Reponses to challenges ................................................................................... 50
5 Discussion ........................................................................................................... 51
5.1 Survey response ............................................................................................... 52
5.2 Challenged titles ............................................................................................... 52
5.3 Number of library systems that received challenges ....................................... 55
5.4 Number of challenges ..................................................................................... 55
5.5 Identity of complainants .................................................................................. 56
5.6 Reasoning behind challenges ......................................................................... 56
5.7 Censorship actions requested and response of libraries ............................... 57
6 Conclusion .......................................................................................................... 57
6.1 Recommendations ........................................................................................... 59
7 Future research .................................................................................................. 59
References ............................................................................................................. 60
Bibliography .......................................................................................................... 66
Appendix A: Copy of survey questionnaire on censorship challenges at public libraries in New Zealand, 2010-2014 ................................................................. 68
Appendix B: Copy of email sent to public library managers requesting the participation of their library systems in the survey on censorship challenges at New Zealand public libraries, 2010-2014. 72

Appendix C: Summary of censorship requests received by New Zealand public library systems, 2010-2014 ............................................................................................................................................. 74
List of tables

Table 1: Responding New Zealand public library systems, by geographic area and estimated population served, 2015, page 28

Table 2: Responding New Zealand public library systems, by geographic area and number of borrowers, 2015, page 28

Table 3: Responding New Zealand public library systems, by type (size and geographic area) and estimated population served, 2015, page 29

Table 4: Length of time the responding New Zealand public library systems keep records of censorship challenges, 2015, page 31

Table 5: Unique titles reported by responding New Zealand public library systems as subject of censorship challenges, 2010-2014, page 32

Table 6: Format of titles reported by responding New Zealand public library systems as subject of censorship challenges, 2010-2014, page 40

Table 7: Content of titles reported by responding New Zealand public library systems as subject of censorship challenges, 2010-2014, page 41

Table 8: Audience of items reported by responding New Zealand public library systems as subject of censorship challenges, 2010-2014, page 42

Table 9: New Zealand material vs. overseas material reported by responding New Zealand public library systems as subject of censorship challenges, 2010-2014, page 43

Table 10: Number of censorship challenges reported by responding New Zealand public library systems, 2010-2014, page 43

Table 11: The 10 New Zealand public library systems that reported receiving censorship challenges and the years they were received, 2010-2014, page 45

Table 12: Identity of complainants in censorship challenges reported by responding New Zealand public library systems, 2010-2014, page 47
List of figures


Figure 16: Publication dates of items reported by responding New Zealand public library systems as subject of censorship challenges, 2010-2014, page 42
1 Introduction

1.1 Research problem and rationale

While there has been some research into how many library items have been the subject of censorship challenges at public libraries in New Zealand there has been a lack of research into which items have actually been challenged and why they were challenged.

Previous research by Ball (1998) and Malpass (2009) has shown that censorship challenges to library materials at New Zealand public libraries by members of the community do occur and sometimes result in the challenged item being moved to another part of the library, placed under restricted access, labelled as age inappropriate, or removed from the collection entirely. However, neither identified which library materials were the subject of censorship challenges.

Without knowledge about the library materials that have been the subject of censorship challenges public library users do not know if attempts have been made to restrict their access to the “widest range of information materials possible, which are [...] relevant to [...] users’ requirements, and which represent the spectrum of points of view on the topic held in the community” (Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa, 2002) nor can they make an informed judgement about whether they agree or disagree with the sentiment expressed by a complainant and the action that was taken by the library in response to the censorship challenge.

Unfortunately, there is also a lack of publicly accessible information about the censorship challenges to library materials received by public libraries in New Zealand. While there are occasional reports in the media about a censorship challenge received by a public library (e.g. Wynn (2015) about the campaign to ban How to train up a child at Auckland Libraries), censorship challenges are not routinely made public by the libraries that receive the challenges, nor are they recorded and published by any local or national bodies to inform the public about attempts to censor library materials.

However, this is not the situation in North America where lists of challenged books and/or other library items are compiled to inform the public about attempts to censor library materials. In the United States of America (USA) censorship challenges to library materials have been reported to or recorded by the American Library Association’s (ALA’s) Office of

It is also somewhat ironic that, while New Zealanders do not know which library items have been challenged and potentially banned at public libraries in New Zealand, attention is often drawn to the ALA’s annual Banned Books Week and its lists of banned and challenged books (American Library Association, 2014a) in New Zealand by the media and on blogs and public library websites (e.g. Auckland Libraries, 2014; Christchurch City Libraries, 2009; Radio New Zealand, 2014; Walker, 2014; and Wellington City Libraries, 2014).

The research presented here is the first attempt to help fill this gap in the knowledge about censorship attempts at public libraries in New Zealand.

1.2 Research objectives
The specific objective of this research was to identify and analyse which library materials were the subject of censorship challenges at New Zealand public libraries in the five years January 2010 to December 2014.

It also sought to determine:

- how many censorship challenges to library materials were received by New Zealand public libraries in the years 2010-2014;
- how many New Zealand public libraries received censorship challenges to library materials in the years 2010-2014;
- who made the censorship challenges;
- what the reasoning was behind the censorship challenges;
- what censorship actions were requested; and
- what actions were taken by the libraries in response to the censorship challenges.

1.3 Delimitations
The research did not investigate informal expressions of concern about library materials received by public libraries in New Zealand.
1.4 Research questions
The following questions support the research objectives:

Principal question

• Which library materials were the subject of censorship challenges at New Zealand public libraries in the years 2010-2014 in terms of:
  
  a) title (bibliographic details);
  b) format (book, picture book, comic, graphic novel, newspaper, periodical, reference material, sound recording, DVD, map, poster, music score, etc.);
  c) content (fiction or non-fiction); and
  d) audience (children, young adults, or adults) (Schrader, 1995, p.19)?

Sub-questions

• How many censorship challenges to library materials were received by New Zealand public libraries in the years 2010-2014?

• How many New Zealand public libraries received censorship challenges to library materials in the years 2010-2014?

• Who made the censorship requests?
  
  a) Individual member of the public – library member (child, parent, or other adult)
  b) Individual member of the public – non-library member (child, parent, or other adult)
  c) Pressure group
  d) Religious organisation
  e) Staff member in unofficial capacity
  f) Staff member in an official capacity
  g) Other

• What was the reasoning behind the censorship challenges?
  
  a) Cultural (racist, sexist, insensitive, or inaccurate)
  b) Sexual (sexually explicit, nudity, homosexuality, or unsuitable for age group)
  c) Values (offensive language, political viewpoint, or religious viewpoint)
d) Social issues (violence, cruelty, drug use, abortion, occult, witchcraft, or suicide) 
   (Taylor & McMenemy, 2013, p.161)

• What censorship actions were requested?
  a) Remove from collection
  b) Restrict access by age
  c) Relocate to another section
  d) Label
  e) Reclassify
  f) Alter content
  g) Other

• What actions did the libraries take in response to the censorship challenges?
  a) Retained without change
  b) Restricted access by age
  c) Relocated to another section
  d) Labelled
  e) Reclassified
  f) Altered content
  g) Removed
  h) Other

1.5 Hypothesis
The hypothesis for the research was that library materials that contain sensitive issues such as sexual content, bad language, violence, witchcraft, religion, homosexuality, or race/racism are more likely to be deemed inappropriate for children and/or all library users by people who make censorship challenges at public libraries in New Zealand.

1.6 Research significance
• The research project provides the first comprehensive survey of the library materials that have been the subject of censorship challenges at public libraries in New Zealand;
• it contributes to the previous research on censorship challenges at public libraries in New Zealand conducted by Ball (1998), which covered the period January 1993 to December 1997, and Malpass (2009), which covered the period January 2004 to January 2009; and

• it provides an opportunity to inform the library community and the general public in New Zealand about attempts to restrict access to “knowledge, information, and opinions” (Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa, 2002).

1.7 Definition of terms

• Censorship:

“A change in the access status of material, based on the content of the work and made by a governing authority or its representatives. Such changes include exclusion, restriction, removal, or age/grade level changes” (American Library Association, 2014c).

• Challenge:

“A complaint lodged by a library user acting as an individual or representing a group, concerning the inclusion of a specific item (or items) in a library collection, usually followed by a demand that the material be removed” (Reitz, 2014).

• Concern:

An expression of concern by a library user about an item in a library collection that does not proceed to a formal written challenge about the item.

• Library materials:

All items (print, non-print, and electronic resources) in a library collection, including books, comics, newspapers, periodicals, reference materials, sound recordings, DVDs, maps, posters, and music scores (i.e. not just “books”).

• New Zealand public library:

A library system administrated by one of the 67 territorial authorities, which includes Auckland Council, 12 city councils and 54 district councils (Department of Internal
Affairs, 2011), or a community-run public library. As of 2012-2013 there was a total of 422 public libraries, including 117 community-run public libraries (Association of Public Library Managers, 2014).

2 Review of the literature

2.1 Selection of research studies

After examining items that provide a general discussion of the topics of censorship and intellectual freedom I decided to focus on research studies and reports on censorship challenges that would help inform the design of the research project. In doing so I considered their theoretical positions, objectives, methodologies, and findings.

The focus was further narrowed to research studies and reports on censorship challenges at public libraries in New Zealand and other countries or territories where similar library materials may be contained in a public library collection and/or where similar sentiments towards intellectual freedom may be held.

Emphasis was also placed on relatively recent research studies and reports (i.e. late 1990s to 2010s) rather than earlier studies and reports, such as Fiske (1959), Busha (1972), and Thompson (1975), because later studies are more likely to provide examples of research approaches that take into account technological advances like email and online surveys and/or they provide contemporary data about censorship challenges to library materials that are relevant to the research objectives.

However, some studies that fall outside this time period were reviewed because of their landmark nature, such as Schrader’s study of censorship challenges in Canada (1985-1987), which represents the first national survey of censorship challenges in the world (Schrader, 1995, p.12); and those by Heuertz (1994, p.7), who conducted the first state-wide censorship survey of public libraries in Washington State (1989-1992); Ball (1998, p.2), who conducted the first survey of censorship challenges at public libraries in New Zealand (1993-1997); and Curry (1997), who interviewed public library directors in Canada and the United Kingdom (1990-1991).

It should be noted that the literature on library censorship is dominated by research from North America, which is reflected in the fact that only library organisations in the USA and
Canada appear to compile publicly accessible lists of challenged books and/or other library materials that have been the subject of censorship challenges at libraries. While it would have been desirable to have examined more studies and papers from New Zealand, Australia, and the United Kingdom, it simply was not possible because of the low volume of research on the subject conducted in those countries.

However, some tantalising hints about surveys or reports on library materials challenged at public libraries outside of North America were found online. One example was a news item in The Telegraph that reported on the results of a survey on the complaints 98 library authorities in the United Kingdom received about “unsuitable, inappropriate or offensive” children’s books in the five years prior to 2012 (Copping, 2012). Unfortunately, I could not locate any of the original research reports so I was unable to include them in the literature review.

**Literature examined**

- **New Zealand** – Ball (1998) and Malpass (2009)
- **Australia** – Moody (2004) (Queensland)
- **Canada** – Curry (1997); Curry (2001) (British Columbia); Schrader (1995); and Schrader and Bowman (2013)
- **United Kingdom** – Curry (1997); and Taylor and McMenemy (2013) (Scotland)

### 2.2 Theoretical positions

It would appear that most of the literature is more concerned with documenting the incidence of censorship than putting forward hypotheses to account for its occurrence. While a number either hoped to generate a ‘grounded theory’ from the data they collected (Ball, 1998, p.22; and Curry, 1997, p.16-17) or developed a conceptual framework (Monks et al., 2014, p.2; Malpass, 2009, p.23; and Schrader, 1995, p.13-17), Schrader’s conceptual framework for investigating and understanding censorship in public libraries is the most comprehensive and well-balanced.
Schrader identified three groupings of factors:

- political and constitutional factors (e.g. library governance),
- social and community factors (e.g. individual initiators of challenges), and
- institutional factors (e.g. library policies and practices and librarian attitudes and behaviours).

The groupings of factors help to predict the three stages of a censorship challenge:

- the likelihood and nature of censorship pressure,
- the outcome of censorship pressure, and
- the effect of censorship pressure.

While it would have been desirable to investigate all of the variables within the three groupings this research was limited by time and resources and only focused on social and institutional factors that help predict the three stages of a censorship challenge.

2.3 Research objectives

The various studies and reports on censorship challenges at public libraries can be situated within Schrader’s conceptual framework through their investigation of one or more of the groupings of political, social, and institutional factors. Most of the studies investigated or reported on variables within the social and institutional groupings in the three stages of a censorship challenge by seeking to establish the incidence of censorship challenges, the most common reasons for censorship challenges, and/or the actions taken by libraries in response to censorship challenges, (e.g. Ball, 1998; Doyle, 2014; Heuertz, 1994; Malpass, 2009; Oregon Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse, 2014; Peterson, 2013; Schrader, 1995; Schrader & Bowman, 2013; and Taylor & McMenemy, 2013).

Malpass (2009) also investigated how legislation and policy influence decisions to censor library materials and the theoretical actions library staff would take when confronted with a controversial item, while Wirth (1996), Curry (1997), Moody (2004), and Monks et al. (2014) investigated the censorship experiences and/or attitudes of library professionals.

Some research was narrower in its approach. Anderson (2014) analysed the classification and subject headings of challenged books; Akers (2012) aimed to determine whether classic books were challenged more than contemporary books; Curry (2001) investigated why
controversial material for older children/young adults was challenged and relocated; and Steffen and Garnar (2004) sought to determine whether more concerns were raised about library materials than formal challenges (Steffen & Garnar, 2004, p.6).

Unfortunately, only the research studies by Peterson (2013), Schrader (1995), and Taylor and McMenemy (2013) and the annual reports by the Oregon Intellectual Clearinghouse (2014), and by Doyle (2014) for the ALA, and Schrader and Bowman (2013) for the CLA sought to document the titles of the library materials that were the subject of censorship challenges.

2.4 Methodologies

The literature provides examples of a range of research methods to investigate censorship challenges at public libraries. While some of the studies did not give clear details about the methods they used, most appear to have employed quantitative research methods through the use of descriptive surveys that utilised both closed and open questions.

Although interviews allow more detailed information to be gathered than survey questionnaires, as demonstrated by Curry (1997; 2001), questionnaires have the benefit of allowing data to be gathered from a large number of people or organisations over a wide geographical area while also being relatively low cost and providing anonymity for the respondents (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014, p.197).

A variety of methods were used to distribute the survey questionnaires in the research reported in the literature:

- Schrader (1995), Ball (1998), Moody (2004), and Malpass (2009) used paper-based questionnaires that were distributed by mail;
- Schrader and Bowman (2013) reported on the results of the CLA’s Annual Challenges Survey, which used the online survey tool Survey Monkey to let libraries self-report incidences;
- Steffen and Garnar (2004) and Monks et al. (2014) used online questionnaires. The Monks et al. questionnaire was accessible via an email link that utilised a chain survey design where participants were encouraged to distribute the survey to other people working at public and school libraries in Idaho; and
Taylor and McMenemy (2013) distributed a questionnaire in the form of freedom of information requests using email or online forms. Peterson (2013) also employed the use of freedom of information requests. However, they took the form of letters requesting copies of written and electronic challenges to library materials rather than a questionnaire.

While all the methods were successful in gaining the information/data they were seeking the response rates varied greatly. The research that utilised freedom of information requests had the best response rates with 91% (29 out of 32) of library authorities in Scotland responding (Taylor & McMenemy, 2013, p.160) and 86% (1,095 out of 1277) of libraries in Massachusetts responding (Peterson, 2013). In comparison the research that utilised paper-based questionnaires resulted in response rates of 17.4% for Moody in Queensland (2004, p.175), 48.5% for Ball in New Zealand (1998, p.26), 53% for Malpass in New Zealand (2009, p.33), and 56% for Schrader in Canada (1995, p.29).

The use of online surveys also had varied responses. Monks et al. (2014) only received 61 responses to their chain survey of library employees in Idaho, while Steffen and Garnar (2004, p.1) received 504 responses to their online survey of Colorado library employees.

Unfortunately, Heuertz (1994, p.7), who had a response rate of 83%, did not state how she distributed her survey to the directors of the 70 municipal and district libraries in Washington State.

The literature would suggest that this research should have followed the example of Taylor and McMenemy (2013) by distributing questionnaires to public libraries in the form of official information requests under the provisions of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987. However, there are a number of downsides to this approach – the responses would not be anonymous, the respondent may be placed on the defensive, and it risks trivialising “the entire underlying ethos of the Act” (Pickard, 2007, p.185, as cited in Taylor & McMenemy, 2013, p.159).

2.4.1 Survey language
A variety of terms for library materials were used in the surveys, including ‘books’ (Doyle, 2014; Monks et al., 2014; and Taylor & McMenemy, 2013), ‘materials’ (Ball, 1998; Curry,
2001; Oregon Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse, 2014; Schrader, 1995; Steffen & Garnar, 2004; and Wirth, 1996), ‘items’ (Malpass, 2009), ‘resources’ (Schrader & Bowman, 2013), and ‘publications’ (Peterson, 2013), which may have had an impact on the results. Monks et al. (2014, p.21) reflected on their use of the term ‘book’ and suggested that the use of the term ‘item’ or ‘material’ would have encouraged respondents to report all censorship challenges not just challenges to books.

2.4.2 Survey time-frames

The length of the time periods examined by the studies varied, ranging from one year for the annual surveys to three to five year periods for the research studies. While a relatively lengthy time period is required to gather enough data for a detailed analysis it may impact on the results due to some libraries not retaining records about censorship challenges. Survey results would then have to rely on the “institutional memories” of libraries, which may not be accurate (Ball, 1998, p.25).

Although the most reliable data is gathered in annual surveys this was clearly not an option for the research. However, the literature demonstrates that its time frame of the past five years (2010-2014) should return a usable, if not entirely reliable, amount of data.

2.5 Findings

Every study found incidences of censorship challenges at public libraries. However, it is difficult to compare the results because of the different time periods, regions, and variables covered in the research studies. Some highlights of the findings that are of relevance to the research and which provided direction for its design and/or the analysis of the data it gathered include:

Items challenged

- The Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling represented more than 13% of the 424 items challenged at libraries in the USA between the years 2000 and 2010, which is clearly reflected in the top 25 subject headings for that period: wizards (#1), Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry (#4), and Harry Potter (#6) (Anderson, 2014, p.12-13).
- Reports of censorship challenges against DVDs outnumbered books in Canada in 2012 with only 56% the 73 challenges being for DVDs and 38% for books (Schrader
& Bowman, 2013, p.1). In contrast, DVDs only accounted for 40% of challenges in 2011.

- Adult fiction and non-fiction titles accounted for two-thirds of items and policies challenged in Canada in 2012, with adult non-fiction titles outnumbering children’s, and children’s fiction outnumbering adult fiction titles (Schrader & Bowman, 2013, p.1).

- Anderson (2014, p.11) found that items classified as ‘young adult fiction’ were challenged the most at libraries in the USA between 2000 and 2010.

- Contemporary books were challenged more than classic books between 2000 and 2010 in the USA (Akers, 2012, p.385).

- None of the authors in the ALA’s list of top 10 authors challenged between 2005 and 2009 were challenged in Scotland during the same time period (Taylor & McMenemy, 2013, p.165).

Censorship rates

- Censorship challenges ranged from an average of three per year in Scotland (Taylor & McMenemy, 2013, p.163), to roughly one per fortnight in New Zealand (Ball, 1998, p.27) and one per day in Canada (Schrader, 1995, p.59).

Concerns vs. challenges

- Concerns were raised more than formal challenges in Colorado (Steffen & Garnar, 2004, p.6) and across the USA (Wirth, 1996, p.47).

Complainants

- The majority of challenges were initiated by members of the public acting on their own initiative (Ball, 1998, p.35; Curry, 1997, p.137; Heuertz, 1994, p.8; Malpass, 2009, p.60; Schrader, 1995, p.62; and Schrader & Bowman, 2013, p.5).

Reasons for challenges

- The most common reason for a censorship challenge against books or library materials was ‘sexual content’ (Ball, 1998, p.28; Curry, 1997, p.134; Curry, 2001, p.32; Doyle, 2014, p.3; Heuertz, 1994, p.8; Malpass, 2009, p.64; Moody, 2004, p.47; Peterson, 2013; Schrader, 1995, p.68; and Taylor & McMenemy, 2013, p.163). Only
Schrader and McMenemy (2013, p.4) reported ‘age inappropriateness’ as the most common reason with ‘sexually explicit’ as the second most common reason. Other reasons included bad language, violence, witchcraft, religion, homosexuality, rebellion, racism, drug use, and suicide.

Actions taken

- The studies found that most items were retained by libraries without change (Ball, 1998, p.37; Wirth, 1996, p.48; Malpass, 2009, p.35; Oregon Intellectual Clearinghouse, 2014; Peterson, 2013; Schrader, 1995, p.83; Schrader & Bowman, 2013, p.6; and Taylor & McMenemy, 2013, p.164).
- In New Zealand Ball (1998, p.54) found that public librarians “were more likely to resist censorship complaints than to accede to them” with Malpass (2009, p.35) declaring labelling as the most common form of censorship undertaken.

3 Methodology

The objectives of this research lend themselves to a positivist quantitative research approach, which is focused and somewhat context-free, has known variables, established guidelines, predetermined methods, and a detached view, and collects numeric data from a representative, large sample using standardised instruments (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014, p.98).

Further, Guthrie (2010, p.43) states that “the essence of positivism is that it:

- studies the world and people in it as objective things;
- views data as being independent of the observer;
- accepts data as scientific evidence only if it is collected by direct observation according to strict rules;
- breaks down data to isolate elements that demonstrate cause-and-effect, and, ultimately, scientific laws; and
- considers that the scientific method is itself objective.”

The research utilised a descriptive research design through the use of a survey questionnaire to gather data from the research population. In doing so it took into account
the successful survey methods used in the censorship studies discussed in the literature review.

3.1 Population
The research population consisted of all public libraries in New Zealand. However, due to the fact that there are, as of 2012-2013, a total of 422 public libraries, including 117 community-run public libraries (Association of Public Library Managers, 2014), the survey was limited to a collective response for the public library systems administrated by New Zealand’s 67 territorial authorities, which includes Auckland council, 12 city councils and 54 district councils (Department of Internal Affairs, 2011), rather than individual library branches.

The population was then reduced to 66 when it was discovered that the Chatham Islands Council, which is the smallest local authority in New Zealand, does not currently administer a public library (Chatham Islands Council, 2014, p.46).

The survey questionnaires were sent to the managers of each library system, where possible, because they are more likely to have access to records about censorship challenges across all library branches within a public library system or they would be able to identify someone else in the organisation that has access to the information that was being sought in the questionnaire.

3.2 Data collection
The survey questionnaire took the form of an online questionnaire constructed and managed through the Qualtrics online survey tool, which Victoria University of Wellington has made available for postgraduate students.

3.3 Survey design
Although the research utilised the positivist quantitative research methodology, which tends to seek numerical data through closed questions, the survey questionnaire also needed to ask some open-ended questions to gather the required information.

The closed and open-ended questions were based on those used in the previous research on censorship in New Zealand public libraries by Ball (1998) and Malpass (2009), Schrader’s (1995) comprehensive survey of Canadian public libraries, and the annual surveys
conducted by the American Library Association (2015) and the Canadian Library Association (2011), which have all been successful in gathering information on censorship challenges. In doing so the survey sought:

- non-identifying information about the responding library systems, which allowed them to be grouped by size and other relevant characteristics,
- information about the policies of the library systems in relation to censorship challenges, and
- details about the censorship challenges the library systems had received in the previous five years (January 2010 to December 2014), including, for each censorship challenge, the bibliographic details of the item, who raised the objection, the reason given for the challenge, and the outcome of the challenge.

Respondents were also asked about how long their library system keep records of the censorship challenges they receive, in the hope that it would help provide an explanation if some library systems indicated that they did not receive any challenges in a certain year – i.e. it was not because they did or did not receive any challenges, they simply did not have the records to provide the requested information.

The survey took note of the suggestion by Monks et al. (2014, p.21) that the use of the term ‘item’ or ‘material’ rather than ‘book’ would encourage respondents to report all the censorship challenges a library system had received, not just those for books.

The wording of the survey also adopted the approach of Schrader (1995, p.22) by directly asking about requests to ‘remove or restrict access’ rather than just ‘challenges’ in an effort to overcome respondents providing unwanted information because they hold different perceptions of what constitutes a ‘challenge’. Some people may view an oral expression of concern as a challenge while others may only define a challenge as a formal written complaint, which was an issue for the research because informal expressions of concern were not being investigated.

In an effort to determine the reasoning given by the person who made the censorship challenge rather than the respondent’s interpretation of the reasoning the respondents
were also asked to directly quote from the written challenge instead of paraphrasing the request to censor an item in the library’s collection.

See Appendix A for a copy of the survey questionnaire.

3.4 Pilot test
The questionnaire was tested on three people who have some experience or knowledge of library processes and an understanding of the bibliographic features of library items.

The main issue raised in the pilot test was that the progress bar at the bottom of each survey page gave the impression that there were a lot more questions left to answer then there actually were. Unfortunately, there did not seem to be a way to remedy the problem beyond numbering the questions, which is not recommended by Qualtrics (2015).

3.5 Survey distribution
An email was sent to the email addresses of the public library managers listed in the latest version of the Directory of New Zealand Libraries (http://natlib.govt.nz/directory-of-new-zealand-libraries).

The body of the email provided background information about the research, highlighted the significance of the study, requested the participation of each library system in the voluntary survey, and included a link to the online questionnaire.

See Appendix B for a copy of the email.

3.6 Survey timeframe
The library systems were initially given three and a half weeks to complete the survey. A follow-up email was sent to all the library managers one week after the initial email and was written in a manner that both thanked those who had already completed the survey and reminded those who had not that there was still time to do so. Further, due to a somewhat disappointing response rate, another email was sent advising that the survey had been extended by one week, which was successful in increasing the number of completed questionnaires.

3.7 Limitations
There were two significant limitations associated with the methodology:
• The majority of people who receive a questionnaire do not return them (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014, p.197).
• The available data relies on libraries keeping records of challenges and/or staff remembering incidences.

3.8 Ethical considerations
The research took into account the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Policy and the requirement for any research involving human participants to be approved by the Human Ethics Committee before being conducted (Victoria University of Wellington, n.d.).

Although the research dealt with human research participants the information that was sought in the survey questionnaire pertained to the organisation as a whole rather than the individual experiences of the person completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire did not seek any personal information about the individual respondent nor did it seek identifying information about the library system or the people or groups that made the censorship complaints.

The library systems also needed to be informed that the results of the research would be accessible to the public, specifically through Victoria University of Wellington’s online ResearchArchive–Te Puna Rangahau (http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/).

3.9 Data analysis
As discussed above, the survey questionnaire asked both closed and open-ended questions to gather the desired information, which required both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. The quantitative data was analysed using the Qualtrics survey tool and entered directly into an electronic spreadsheet (Microsoft Excel), which allowed the data to be manipulated when required (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014, p.286).

However, the responses given for the open-ended questions needed to be manually analysed to yield statistical data. The categories took direction from those used within previous research and reports into censorship challenges at public libraries (i.e. American Library Association, 2014b; Canadian Library Association, 2011; Schrader 1995, p.68; and Taylor & McMenemy, 2013, p.162) along with the classifications and subjects assigned to each item in the New Zealand Libraries’ Catalogue (http://nzlc.natlib.govt.nz/).
3.10 Data presentation
The main data presentation is a list of the library materials that have been the subject of censorship challenges at public libraries in New Zealand over the five years January 2010 to December 2014.

However, the key data presentation is a table containing the details of each censorship challenge (bibliographic information, date of the challenge, the reasons given for the challenge, who raised the objection, the outcome of the challenge, and the reasoning behind the decision).

Further analysis of the data (e.g. characteristics of the responding library systems, fiction vs non-fiction titles, and number of challenges) provides results for a number of tables that help facilitate discussion of the findings.

4 Results and analysis

4.1 Survey response
The survey received 34 responses from the 66 library systems surveyed. However, six of the respondents who clicked through to the end of the survey did not enter any answers so only 28 of the responses could be considered in the research, which represents a response rate of 42.4%.

The figure of 28 also includes the emailed responses for two library systems. One supplied a copy of the survey with handwritten answers while the respondent for a self-described ‘small library network’ supplied details covering a number of questions in the survey.

4.2 Profile of respondents
The 28 library systems that supplied responses to the survey present a relatively even representation of rural, regional and urban library systems with 12 (42.9%) describing their library system as rural, six (21.4%) as regional, and 10 (35.7%) as urban.

Further, 10 (35.71%) of the 28 library systems estimate that they serve a ‘small’ population of less than 25,000 people, eight (28.57%) a ‘medium’ population of between 25,000-49,000 people, and 10 (35.7%) a ‘large’ population of more than 50,000 people (Table 1).
In terms of registered borrowers 13 estimate that they have less than 15,000, one between 15,000-24,999, 10 between 25,000-49,999, and three over 50,000. Unfortunately, one small, rural library system did not answer the question so the percentage figures for the number of registered borrowers have not been noted.

In general, most of the rural library systems have less than 15,000 registered borrowers, while the majority of regional and urban library systems have between 25,000-49,999 registered borrowers (Table 2).

Table 2: Responding New Zealand public library systems, by geographic area and number of borrowers, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic area served by library system</th>
<th>Less than 15,000</th>
<th>Between 15,000-24,999</th>
<th>Between 25,000-49,999</th>
<th>Over 50,000</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further, combining the data shows small rural library systems with less than 15,000 registered borrowers form the largest group of respondents (seven) followed by large, urban library systems with 25,000-49,999 borrowers (five) (Table 3).

Table 3: Responding New Zealand public library systems, by type (size and geographic area) and estimated population served, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of library system (population served and geographic area)</th>
<th>Estimated number of borrowers for library system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than 15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small, rural</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium, rural</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large, rural</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small, regional</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium, regional</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large, regional</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small, urban</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium, urban</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large, urban</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Policies towards censorship

4.3.1 Treatment of potentially controversial material
The majority of the responding library systems do not treat potentially controversial materials differently from other materials in terms of selection, classification, shelving, or access, unless required by law, with 18 reporting that they don’t and nine reporting that they do (one didn’t answer).

Some library systems indicated that they treat potentially controversial materials differently by placing warning stickers on backs of books, including ‘restricted’ flags on the library management system, only holding them at larger libraries within their system, reclassifying them, or keeping them in the closed-stack collection (i.e. not on open shelves), with the respondent for one medium regional library system stating that “if there is a run of deaths by suicide in the area then a book with [a] cover image of a boy with [a] gun to [his] head is moved to [the] stack.”

4.3.2 Restriction of access or borrowing privileges
The majority (19) of the library systems do not restrict access to or borrowing privileges for certain individual titles or to certain types of materials beyond the restrictions placed by the Office of Film & Literature Classification.

For the eight library systems that reported that they do restrict access it would appear that the restrictions are solely related to age, with children not being able to borrow items from adult collections. However, the respondent for a medium urban library system did indicate that ‘junior card holders’ can borrow items from the adult collections if permission from a guardian is given at the time of registration. Note: One respondent did not answer the relevant question.

4.3.3 Established policies to respond to censorship requests
The majority of the library systems have an established policy to respond to requests to remove or restrict access to materials in their collections, with 15 reporting that they do and 11 reporting that they don’t (two didn’t answer).
4.3.4 Record keeping for censorship requests
The majority (19) of responding library systems reported that they do not keep records of censorship requests. Of the other seven, three keep records for one year or less and only four keep records for more than five years (two didn’t answer) (Table 4).

Table 4: Length of time the responding New Zealand public library systems keep records of censorship challenges, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long records of censorship challenges are kept</th>
<th>Number of library systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t keep records</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year or less</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years or more</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.5 Registration of objections
A variety of methods for registering an objection or request for reconsideration were described for 24 of the library systems. Two reported that people could just register an objection by speaking to a staff member, 12 reported that people had to register an objection in writing, and 10 reported that people had the option of registering an objection either verbally or in writing. Options for registering an objection in writing included filling in a ‘suggestion’, ‘feedback’ or ‘request for reconsideration of library materials’ form, email, comment via the library’s website, a formal letter to the library manager, or through the “Council complaints systems”.

4.4 Challenged titles
A total of 15 unique titles were reported by the 28 library systems as being the subject of censorship challenges over the five years January 2010 to December 2014.

Table 5 details the library materials in terms of bibliographic details, format, content, and audience, as based on the information supplied by the library systems. However, the New
Zealand Libraries’ Catalogue was also consulted where some of the information was not supplied in full or was inconsistent.

Table 5: Unique titles reported by responding New Zealand public library systems as subject of censorship challenges, 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Bibliographic details</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author/Producer/Director</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Media Type</td>
<td>Audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The modern girl’s guide to safe sex</em></td>
<td>Cooke, K.</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patuone: The peacemaker</strong> (Chronicles of Paki series)</td>
<td>Condon, A. &amp; Taggart, G.</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Graphic novel</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Te pōwhiri: The welcome</strong> (Chronicles of Paki series)</td>
<td>Condon, A. &amp; Taggart, G.</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Graphic novel</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ruataha and the new beginning</strong> (Chronicles of Paki series)</td>
<td>Condon, A. &amp; Taggart, G.</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Graphic novel</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Te Pahi: The adventurer</strong> (Chronicles of Paki series)</td>
<td>Condon, A. &amp; Taggart, G.</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Graphic novel</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Terrifying Tudors</strong> (Horrible histories series)</td>
<td>Deary, T.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where’s Stig?: The world tour</strong></td>
<td>Hunt, R.</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It should be noted that the titles in Table 5 do not correspond with the actual number of requests that were received by the 28 public library systems that responded to the survey. There are a number of reasons for this:

- The five titles in series one of *The chronicles of Paki – NZ’s untold story* by Alison Condon and Gina Taggart (*Elizabeth Colenso: The teacher, Patuone: The peacemaker, Te pōwhiri: The welcome, Ruatara and the new beginning, and Te Pahi: The adventurer*) represent one request to remove the whole series.
- *Into the river* by Ted Dawe was the subject of three requests.
- One large urban library system received a complaint in 2011 about the number of erotic romances in their print and eBook collections.
- Further, some library systems did not or could not supply the title of the library item, including:
  - one small regional library system that received a request in 2013 about a children’s picture book that contained an offensive racial reference to Jewish people;
  - one large urban library system that received a request in 2014 from a local ratepayer who challenged facts in a report by a Māori researcher about his property;
  - one large urban library system that received a request in 2013 from an author to limit access to one of their works; and
  - one medium rural library system that received three requests in 2012, 2013, and 2014.

### 4.4.1 Description of titles

To give an insight into the library materials that were the subject of censorship challenges the following provides a brief description of the 15 titles, along with the main subject headings given on their individual New Zealand Libraries’ Catalogue records.

---

1 Dr Dan Dorner, Senior Lecturer, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington, suggested that the book may be *How do I get to God, asked the small piglet* by Michael Schmidt-Salomon.
| Figure 1: The artist's body | **The artist’s body** edited by Tracey Warr; survey by Amelia Jones.  
Examines the work of key 20th century artists that used their bodies to create their art. Contains nudity.  
- Body art  
- Performance art  
- Artists and models in art  
- Art, Modern -20th century |
| Figure 2: Batman: Vampire | **Batman: Vampire** by Bob Kane, Doug Moench, Kelley Jones, John Beatty, Malcolm Jones, and Eric Lustbader.  
A collection of three stories (*Red rain*, *Bloodstorm*, and *Crimson mist*) about Batman’s battle against Dracula in Gotham City and his life after becoming a vampire.  
- Batman (Fictitious character)  
- Dracula, Count (Fictitious character)  
- Heroes |
| Figure 3: The counterfeit coin | **The counterfeit coin** by Ngapaki Rose.  
A personal account of life inside the Camp David Christian Co-operative Community (aka “The God Squad”) religious cult that existed in North Canterbury from the 1970s to the 1990s.  
- Ngapaki Rose, 1956-  
- Camp David Christian Co-operative Community  
- Communal living -New Zealand -Canterbury  
- Religious communities -New Zealand -Canterbury  
- Adult child sexual abuse victims -New Zealand |
**Elizabeth Colenso: The teacher** by Alison Condon and Gina Taggart.
Tells the story of the New Zealand-born Anglican missionary and teacher.

- Colenso, Elizabeth, 1821-1904
- Missionaries -New Zealand -History
- Māori (New Zealand people) -History -19th century
- Māori (New Zealand people) -Religion
- New Zealand -History -To 1840

**The hunt: A Kiwi mum, her kidnapped babies and a 30 year worldwide search** by Ian Wishart and George London.
Tells the story of a New Zealand woman’s search for her two children who were kidnapped by their father in the United Kingdom. Contains sexually explicit content.

- Moray, Paulette
- Moray, Max, 1925-
- Parental kidnapping -Great Britain
- Custody of children -Great Britain

**Into the river** by Ted Dawe
Coming-of-age novel that follows a small-town boy during his transition to life at an elite boys’ school in Auckland. Contains offensive language, drug use, and sexually explicit content.

- Boarding schools
- Schools
- Bullying
- Friendship
- Teenage boys
- Identity
- Māori (New Zealand people)
- Coming of age
| Figure 7: Les Norton and the case of the talking pie crust | **Les Norton and the case of the talking pie crust** by Robert G. Barrett.  
A humorous account of larrikin Les Norton’s search for a missing film script in Australia. Contains violence, sexual content, and offensive language.  
- Norton, Les (Fictitious character) |
| --- | --- |
| Figure 8: The matador | **The matador** [Motion picture: 2005].  
A dark comedy about the relationship between a down-on-his luck American businessman and a hitman in Mexico. Contains violence, sexual content, and offensive language.  
- Male friendship  
- Americans -Mexico |
| Figure 9: The modern girl's guide to safe sex | **The modern girl's guide to safe sex** by Kaz Cooke.  
A humorous guide to safe sex and contraception for women.  
- Sexual health  
- Sexually transmitted diseases -Prevention  
- Safe sex in AIDS prevention |
| Figure 10: Patuone: The peacemaker | Patuone: The peacemaker by Alison Condon and Gina Taggart.  
Tells the story of the Ngā Puhi chief and his protection of Anglican missionaries in Northland.  
- Patuone, Eruera Maihi, 1764?-1872  
- Ngā Puhi (New Zealand people) -History -19th century  
- Missionaries - New Zealand -History -19th century  
- Māori (New Zealand people) -Religion  
- New Zealand -History -To 1840 |
| --- | --- |
| Figure 11: Te Pōwhiri: The welcome | Te pōwhiri: The welcome by Alison Condon and Gina Taggart  
Looks back on the relationship between Europeans and Māori in New Zealand from the time of Captain Cook’s visit in 1769 to the arrival of Anglican missionaries in 1814.  
- Missionaries -New Zealand -History -19th century  
- Māori (New Zealand people) -History -19th century  
- Māori (New Zealand people) -Religion  
- New Zealand -History -To 1840 |
| Figure 12: Ruatara and the new beginning | Ruatara and the new beginning by Alison Condon and Gina Taggart  
Tells the story of Ngā Puhi chief Ruatara, including his experiences as a whaling ship crewmember, his introduction of wheat to New Zealand, and his dealings with the Reverend Samuel Marsden.  
- Ruatara  
- Māori (New Zealand people) -History -19th century  
- Missionaries -New Zealand -History -19th century  
- Māori (New Zealand people) -Religion  
- New Zealand -History -To 1840 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Relevant Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Te Pahi: The adventurer</em></td>
<td>Alison Condon and Gina Taggart</td>
<td>Tells the story of Ngā Puhi chief Te Pahi and his friendship with the Reverend Samuel Marsden.</td>
<td>- Te Pahi&lt;br&gt;- Missionaries -New Zealand -History&lt;br&gt;- Ngā Puhi (New Zealand people) -History -19th century&lt;br&gt;- Māori (New Zealand people) -Religion&lt;br&gt;- New Zealand -History -To 1840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Terrifying Tudors</em></td>
<td>Terry Deary</td>
<td>Looks at unpleasant and gory aspects of life in Great Britain under the Tudor monarchs (1485-1603). Part of the <em>Horrible histories</em> series.</td>
<td>- Great Britain -History -Tudors, 1485-1603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Where's Stig?: The world tour</em></td>
<td>Roderick Hunt</td>
<td>Illustrated book where Stig, the racing driver from the BBC television series <em>Top gear</em>, is hidden somewhere in the various pictures detailing his travels around the world.</td>
<td>- Top gear (Television program : Great Britain : 2002- )&lt;br&gt;- Automobile racing drivers -Great Britain&lt;br&gt;- Television personalities -Great Britain&lt;br&gt;- Automobile racing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It would appear that most of the titles contain potentially sensitive issues, such as sexual content, bad language, violence, religion, homosexuality, or race/racism, to varying degrees. The only title that does not seem to contain any obviously sensitive issues is *Where is Stig?*.  

39
4.4.2 Format
A breakdown of the individual titles (including the requests about the unnamed children’s picture book and the property report) show that the majority of library items subject to censorship requests at public libraries in New Zealand in the years 2010-2014 were books, with a total of eight, followed by six graphic novels, one DVD, one picture book, and one report.

However, the data changes slightly if the information is viewed as requests rather than individual titles. The five titles in series one of The chronicles of Paki are then drawn together to become one request, which reduces the number of graphic novels to two instead of six (Table 6).

Table 6: Format of titles reported by responding New Zealand public library systems as subject of censorship challenges, 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Individual titles</th>
<th>Requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic novel</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture book</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.3 Fiction vs. non-fiction
Non-fiction titles were the subject of more censorship requests than fiction titles with a total of 11 non-fiction titles compared to five fiction titles, noting that the children’s picture book was not included because it could not be determined if it was fiction or non-fiction.

Once again, when the information is viewed as requests rather than individual titles, the split between the two is more even with seven non-fiction titles and five fiction titles.

Of the 11 individual non-fiction titles, six were for a children’s audience (one book and five graphic novels) and five for an adult audience (one property report and four books). None of the non-fiction titles were aimed at young adults.
Of the five individual fiction titles, one was for a children’s audience (a book), two were aimed at young adults (one graphic novel and one book), and two for an adult audience (one book and one R13 DVD), noting that the subject matter of the DVD was aimed at adults rather than young adults (Table 7).

Table 7: Content of titles reported by New Zealand public library systems as subject of censorship challenges, 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Individual titles</th>
<th>Requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s fiction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young adults fiction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults fiction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-fiction</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s non-fiction</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young adults non-fiction</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults non-fiction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.4 Audience
In total, eight of the library items were aimed at children (one picture book, one non-fiction book, one fiction book, and five non-fiction graphic novels), two for young adults (one fiction graphic novel and one fiction book), and seven for adults (one fiction book, one property report, one R13 DVD, and four non-fiction books), noting that this does not include the complaint one large urban library system received about the number of erotic romances in their print and eBook collections (Table 8).
Table 8: Audience of items reported by responding New Zealand public library systems as subject of censorship challenges, 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Individual titles</th>
<th>Requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young adults</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.5 Classic titles vs. contemporary titles
No classic titles were the subject of censorship complaints, bearing in mind that the publication date for the unnamed children’s picture book is unknown. The oldest title was first published in 1988 (*The modern girl’s guide to safe sex*) with the next oldest published in 2000 (*The artist’s body*). The majority of the titles were published between 2007 and 2014 (Chart 1).

Figure 16: Publication dates of items reported by responding New Zealand public library systems as subject of censorship challenges, 2010-2014

4.4.6 New Zealand material vs. overseas material
The majority of the items were about New Zealand and/or New Zealanders. However, if the five titles in series one of *The chronicles of Paki* are treated as one request the split is relatively more even with five requests for titles about New Zealand and/or New Zealanders

- 1988
- 1989
- 1990
- 1991
- 1992
- 1993
- 1994
- 1995
- 1996
- 1997
- 1998
- 1999
- 2000
- 2001
- 2002
- 2003
- 2004
- 2005
- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
- 2011
- 2012
- 2013
- 2014

42
and seven requests for titles published overseas or about overseas subjects. The subject of the children’s picture book was unknown (Table 9).

Table 9: New Zealand material vs. overseas material reported by New Zealand public library systems as subject of censorship challenges, 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National content of item</th>
<th>Individual titles</th>
<th>Requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following sections deal with the sub-questions of the research. It should be noted that they were hampered somewhat by a number of the respondents not being able to provide detailed information about the censorship requests they received.

4.5 Number of challenges

A total of 20 censorship challenges to library materials over the five years January 2010 to December 2014 were reported by the 28 public library systems that responded to the survey. Four requests were received in both 2010 and 2011, three in both 2012 and 2013, and six in 2014 (Table 10).

Table 10: Number of censorship challenges reported by responding New Zealand public library systems, 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For four challenges (2010, 2012, 2013, 2014) it was not clear which item corresponded with the dates given by the library systems.
4.6 Profiles of library systems that received challenges
Ten of the 28 library systems (35.7%) reported receiving censorship requests, which represents 15.15% of the total library systems surveyed. There was a roughly even divide between the various categories of library systems with:

- three estimating they serve populations of less than 15,000 (small), three between 25,000-49,000 (medium), and four over 50,000 (large);
- four describing themselves as rural library systems, three as regional, and three as urban; and
- four having less than 15,000 registered borrowers, four between 25,000-49,999, and two with more than 50,000.

Further:

- four library systems (one small rural with less than 15,000 registered borrowers; one medium rural with 25,000-49,999 borrowers; one medium regional with 25,000-49,999 borrowers; and one large urban with 25,000-49,999 borrowers) reported receiving only one request between 2010 and 2014;
- two library systems (one small rural with less than 15,000 borrowers, and one large regional with over 50,000 borrowers) reported receiving two requests; and
- four library systems (one medium rural with less than 15,000 borrowers; one small regional with less than 15,000 borrowers; one large urban with 25,000-49,999 borrowers; and one large urban with over 50,000 borrowers) reported receiving three requests (Table 11).
Table 11: The 10 New Zealand public library systems that reported receiving censorship challenges and the years they were received, 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual library systems</th>
<th>Year censorship request received</th>
<th>Total number of requests received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Small rural -15,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Small rural -15,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Medium rural -15,000</td>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>No answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Medium rural 25,000-49,999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Small regional -15,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Medium regional 25,000-49,999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Large regional 50,000+</td>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>No answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Large urban 25,000-49,999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Large urban 25,000-49,999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Large urban 50,000+</td>
<td>Not recalled</td>
<td>Not recalled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7 Profile of library systems that didn’t receive challenges

Of the 15 library systems that reported no censorship challenges, including one that was not ‘aware of any’ and one because of a lack of records:

- seven estimate they serve populations of less than 15,000 (small), four between 25,000-49,000 (medium), and four over 50,000 (large);
- eight describe themselves as rural, one as regional, and six as urban; and
- nine have less than 15,000 registered borrowers, one 15,000-24,999, two between 25,000-49,999, and two with more than 50,000, noting one had an unknown number of borrowers. The remaining three library systems did not answer the relevant questions.

A number of respondents also shared some interesting comments about the censorship experiences of their library systems:

- “We have never had an “official” request to restrict or remove items from our collection” (small rural).
- “It has been a long time (1997) since we have had anyone object to a book in the library” (small urban).
- “Have had numerous requests up to 2006, but very few since” (medium regional).
- “We receive requests infrequently” (medium rural).

4.8 Identity of complainants

Eleven of the 20 censorship requests were made by individual members of the public with parents forming the largest proportion. However, this has to be tempered with the fact that the identity of the complainants in seven of the other 10 requests was not stated.

Parents made seven requests, three as library members (Batman: Vampire; The matador; and the children’ picture book) and four with library member status undetermined (The counterfeit coin; Into the river; Terrifying Tudors; and Where’s Stig?). Other adults made three requests, one as a library members (The artist’s body) and two with library member status undetermined (Les Norton and the case of the talking pie crust, and the property report).
Of the remaining three requests, one was made by a library staff member in an official capacity (all books in series one of The chronicles of Paki), one by an author (title not stated), and one reportedly by a publisher (The hunt), although it was stated in a newspaper article that a person heavily featured in the book requested bookshops and libraries to remove the book from their shelves (Cook, 2013) (Table 12).

Table 12: Identity of complainants in censorship challenges reported by responding New Zealand public library systems, 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity of complainant</th>
<th>Number of incidences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual member of the public – library member</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other adult</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual member of the public – non-library member</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other adult</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual member of the public – library member status not stated</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other adult</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure group</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious organisation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member in unofficial capacity</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member in an official capacity</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.9 Reasoning behind challenges

The specific reasons given by the complainants were stated for 13 of the 20 challenges. Of the 13 challenges that have identified reasons, five can be classified as ‘sexual’, two as ‘cultural’, one as ‘values’, one as ‘social issues’, and one both ‘cultural’ and ‘social issues’, as based on the ALA’s categories (Taylor & McMenemy, 2013, p.161). The remaining two were left unclassified because of the potential for misinterpreting the reasoning.

The following places the titles within the ALA categories and details the reasoning behind the challenges (as reported by the responding library systems):

- Sexual (sexually explicit, nudity, homosexuality, or unsuitable for age group)
  1. *The artist’s body*: “Offensive to common decency”. Objector believed the “theme of work was ‘porn’, ‘s&m masquerading as art’.”
  2. *The matador*: Concerned father worried about his 12-year-old daughter viewing a sex scene “(most of which occurs off-screen and for ‘comedic effect’”).
  3. *Where’s Stig?*: “Objected to Stig running without any trousers on.”
  4. *The hunt*: Pending legal action against the author in relation to sex-related claims in the book (Cook, 2013). However, it is debatable if this is actually a challenge because the author was successfully sued for defamation (Radio New Zealand, 2013).
  5. Fiction collection: Complaint about the number of erotic romances in the print and eBook collections.

- Cultural (racist, sexist, insensitive, or inaccurate)
  1. All books in series one of *The chronicles of Paki*: “Culturally inaccurate and insensitive.”

- Values (offensive language, political viewpoint, or religious viewpoint)
  1. *Les Norton and the case of the talking pie crust*: “Unsavoury language.”
• Social issues (violence, cruelty, drug use, abortion, occult, witchcraft, or suicide)

  1. *Batman: Vampire*: “Content was unsuitable for children, violent.”


• Undetermined

  1. *The counterfeit coin*: Complaint from anonymous caller sighting concerns about the content of the book. Threatened that the library would be responsible for the suicide of the caller’s child if the book was purchased.

  2. Title not stated: Challenged facts in a report by a Māori researcher about his property.

### 4.10 Censorship actions requested
The specific censorship actions requested by the complainants were stated for eight of the 20 challenges. Of the eight challenges:

• Four wanted an item removed from the collection
  
  - All books in series one of *The chronicles of Paki*
  
  - *Les Norton and the case of the talking pie crust*
  
  - *The hunt*
  
  - Children’s picture book (title not stated)

• One wanted an item removed from public display
  
  - *The artist’s body*

• One wanted an item relocated to another section
  
  - *Batman: Vampire* (remove from children’s section)

• One asked the library system not to purchase an item
  
  - *The counterfeit coin*

• One wanted access to an item limited
  
  - Title not stated
As an aside, the respondent for a medium rural library system provided an insight into covert attempts to remove items for their collection:

“[W]e have come across books being defaced to force deselection, theft of controversial items (an example would be that all copies of a particular book on the foreshore and seabed were stolen from all our libraries!) and even attempts at whiting out portions of text that someone obviously objected to. In these cases, we replace the item, and then place it in our stack collection. “

4.11 Responses to challenges
The specific actions taken by the library systems and the reasons given for the decisions were stated for 13 of the 20 censorship challenges. Of the 13 challenges:

- Six were retained without change
  1. *The artist’s body*: No action taken. “[A]lthough it was later decommissioned from stock due to no issues for 2.5 years.”
  2. *The hunt*: Initially removed from the shelves but when the library didn’t hear anything more it was placed in the open collection.
  3. *Les Norton and the case of the talking pie crust*: No action taken. “Personal sensitivity – no other complaints received.”
  5. *Where’s Stig?*: No action taken. “Not considered offensive.”
  6. Title not stated (author requested that the library limit access to their work after it was purchased). “Library did not comply.”

- Two were removed
  1. All books in series one of *The chronicles of Paki*: “Legitimate grounds for concern and not enough other merit to warrant retention.”

- One was relocated to another section and labelled
1. *Batman: Vampire*: “Item was moved to Adult Graphic novel section (it may still be accessed by all) as there were some legitimate grounds for concern, and a note added on the computer saying “Warning content may not be suitable for children.”

- One was labelled
  1. *Into the river* (in response to a complaint by local home schoolers). R14 note added to record after censor changed the book’s rating.

- Other responses
  1. *The counterfeit coin*: Library decided to purchase multiple copies of the book due to community interest. Located on open shelf.
  2. *The matador*: Asked the person to contact the Film & Video Labelling Body. Respondent was not sure if the objector knew it was illegal to show his child the R13 movie. “The library was entirely within the law on this matter as we displayed the rating A3 fact sheet in the collection and at the point of issue.”
  3. Property report (title not stated): Resolved by offering to host a privately-commissioned counter report by another Māori researcher giving different facts. Put labels on both making readers aware of both documents.

The various information described above for each censorship request (i.e. objector, reason for objection, action requested, and outcome of request) is collated in Appendix C.

5 Discussion
The specific objective of this research was to identify and analyse which library materials were the subject of censorship challenges at New Zealand public libraries in the five years January 2010 to December 2014. It also sought to determine the incidence of censorship challenges within the time period, who made the challenges, what the reasoning was behind the challenges, what censorship actions were requested, and what actions were taken by the libraries in response to the challenges.
5.1 Survey response
The survey response rate of 42.4% (28 of 66 library systems) is lower than those for Ball (1998, p.26), who had a response rate of 48.5% (72 of 144 library systems) and Malpass (2009, p.33), who had a response rate of 53% (39 of 74 library networks).

A number of factors may have influenced the response rate, including the possible ‘controversial’ nature of the survey topic (Ball, 1998, p.26). Other factors, as highlighted by Baruch and Holtom (2008, p.1141-1142), include the failure to deliver the survey to the target population, reluctance of people to complete surveys, the survey not being considered relevant, and people suffering from ‘over-surveying’ or being too busy. One respondent also suggested that the amount of information requested in the survey might put people off completing it, which may help to explain why six respondents did not enter any answers after they viewed the survey.

5.2 Challenged titles
Fifteen unique titles were reported by the 28 public library systems that responded to the survey as being the subject of censorship challenges in the years 2010-2014:

- *The artist's body* edited by Tracey Warr; survey by Amelia Jones
- *Batman: Vampire* by Bob Kane, Doug Moench, Kelley Jones, John Beatty, Malcolm Jones, and Eric Lustbader
- *The counterfeit coin* by Ngapaki Rose
- *Elizabeth Colenso: The teacher* by Alison Condon and Gina Taggart
- *The hunt: A Kiwi mum, her kidnapped babies and a 30 year worldwide search* by Ian Wishart and George London
- *Into the river* by Ted Dawe
- *Les Norton and the case of the talking pie crust* by Robert G. Barrett
- *The matador* (Motion picture: 2005)
- *The modern girl's guide to safe sex* by Kaz Cooke
- *Patuone: The peacemaker* by Alison Condon and Gina Taggart
- *Te pōwhiri: The welcome* by Alison Condon and Gina Taggart
- *Ruatara and the new beginning* by Alison Condon and Gina Taggart
- *Te Pahi: The adventurer* by Alison Condon and Gina Taggart
- *Terrifying Tudors* by Terry Deary
- *Where's Stig?: The world tour* by Roderick Hunt

However, the figure of 15 does not correspond with the actual number of titles (19) and requests (20) that were received by the responding library systems for a number of reasons, including five titles being the subject of one challenge (all books in series one of *The chronicles of Paki* by Alison Condon and Gina Taggart), one title being the subject of three challenges (*Into the river*), one library system receiving a complaint about the number of erotic romances in their print and eBook collections, and some library systems not supplying the title or other details about a challenged item, including a children’s picture book that contained an offensive racial reference to Jewish people and a property report by a Māori researcher.

The majority of library items subject to censorship requests at public libraries in New Zealand between 2010 and 2014 (including the requests about the unnamed children’s picture book and the property report) were books, with a total of eight, followed by six graphic novels, one DVD, one picture book, and one property report. However, the figures change slightly if the five titles in series one of *The chronicles of Paki* are viewed as one request, which reduces the number of graphic novels to two.

More non-fiction titles (11) were the subject of censorship requests than fiction titles (five) (excluding the unclassified children’s picture book), with a roughly even divide between non-fiction titles for a children’s audience (six) and an adult audience (five). Of the five individual fiction titles, one was for a children’s audience, two were aimed at young adults, and two for adults. In total, eight of the items were aimed at children, two for young adults, and seven for adults (excluding the complaint about the number of erotic romances in a print and eBook collections). Once again, the figures change slightly if the data is viewed as requests rather than individual titles: the split between non-fiction titles (seven) and fiction titles (five) becomes more even, with a total of four requests aimed at children’s items, two at young adults, and seven at adults.

In contrast, Anderson (2014, p.11) found that items classified as ‘young adult fiction’ were challenged the most at libraries in the USA between 2000 and 2010, while Schrader and Bowman (2013, p.1) reported that adult titles accounted for two-thirds of items and policies.
challenged in Canada in 2012, with adult non-fiction titles outnumbering children’s, and children’s fiction outnumbering adult fiction. However, it should be noted that these figures include censorship requests received by school libraries.

As hypothesised, most of the titles contain potentially sensitive issues, such as sexual content, bad language, violence, religion, homosexuality, or race/racism, to varying degrees. The sensitive issues contained in each title tended to corresponded with the reasons given for the censorship requests, although it could not be easily surmised that the objection for the children’s book *Where is Stig?* would be based on sexual content (nudity).

None of the 15 titles were reported to be the subject of censorship challenges in Canada in the years 2010-2013 (Schrader, Bowman & Samek, 2011; Schrader & Bowman, 2012; Schrader & Bowman, 2013; and Schrader & Bowman, 2014), the USA in the years 2010-2014 (Doyle, 2011; Doyle, 2012; Doyle, 2013; Doyle, 2014; and Doyle, 2015), or Scotland in the years 2005-2009 (Taylor & McMenemy, 2013), although another title in the *Horrible histories* series by Terry Deary, *Rotten rulers*, was the subject of a complaint in England in 2012 for “glorifying and trivialising violence” (Copping, 2012).

A unique factor about the titles that were the subject of challenges at New Zealand public libraries between 2010 and 2014 is that the majority are about New Zealand and/or New Zealanders, which may have played a part in why none of them were the subject of challenges in Canada, England, Scotland or the USA. Only two of the New Zealand-related titles (*The hunt* and *Into the river*) are listed on WorldCat as being held by libraries outside New Zealand (as at 20 September 2015).

It appears that for the majority of the titles people made the censorship requests after stumbling across them as a customer or staff member at a public library. However, for two of the New Zealand titles it seems that people deliberately sought them out to prevent other people accessing them. In the censorship request for *The counterfeit coin* the objector did not want the library to purchase the book, while in one of the requests for *Into the river* the library did not actually hold a copy of the book.

The three censorship requests for *Into the river* may have been influenced by the widespread publicity surrounding complaints to the Office of Film & Literature Classification
about the novel’s offensive language, drug use, and sexual content. *Into the river* was initially assigned an unrestricted classification of ‘M’ in September 2013, which was subsequently changed to ‘R14 Parental Advisory Explicit Content’ in December 2013 after conservative lobby group Family First complained to the Film and Literature Review Board (Office of Film & Literature Classification, n.d.). It subsequently became the subject of an interim ban in September 2015 after a further complaint by Family First (Kinita, 2015).

5.3 Number of library systems that received challenges
Ten of the 28 library systems that responded to the survey (35.71%) reported receiving censorship requests in the years 2010-2014. Previous studies by Ball (1998) and Malpass (2009) reported a much higher percentage of New Zealand public libraries receiving censorship challenges. In the years 1993-1997, 52 of 72 responding library systems (72%) reported receiving censorship challenges (Ball, 1998, p.26), while 27 of 38 responding library networks (71.05%) reported receiving censorship challenges in the years 2004-2009 (Malpass, 2009, p.35). In contrast, in Scotland, which has a similar total population to that of New Zealand, 8 of 29 local authorities (27.58%) received complaints made against books on the grounds of content or inappropriateness in the years 2005–2009 (Taylor & McMenemy, 2013, p.160).

5.4 Number of challenges
A total of 20 censorship challenges to library materials in the years 2010-2014 were reported by the 28 responding library systems, which is on par with the 15 received in Scotland in the years 2005-2009 (Taylor & McMenemy, 2013, p.160) but far less than the totals reported in the two previous surveys of New Zealand public libraries: 129 for the years 1993-1997 (Ball, 1998, p.27) and 126 for the years 2004-2009 (Malpass, 2009, p.72).

One reason for why the figure of 20 may not be a true representation of the actual number of requests received by New Zealand public library systems in the years 2010-2014 is that the majority of library systems that responded to the survey do not keep records of censorship challenges.

The data suggests that the responses to the survey were very reliant on staff members recalling incidences of censorship challenges:
• fourteen requests were reported by library systems that do not keep records (four in 2010, four in 2011, one in 2012, two in 2013, and three in 2014),
• five requests were reported by library systems that keep records for one year of less (one in 2012, one in 2013, and three in 2014), and
• one request was reported by a library system that keeps records for five years or more (in 2012).

This suggestion is further illustrated by statements by some respondents that they were “not aware of any” challenges or they were “not able to recall the title” of an item. Also, the respondent for one large urban library system that does not keep records was personally able to recall five incidences, two of which were unfortunately outside the timeframe of the survey.

The option of verbally registering an objection by speaking to a staff member may also have had an influence on the censorship requests that were recalled. Respondents for library systems that do not keep records of censorship challenges may not have been aware of all the challenges their library system received or when they actually occurred. There is also the possibility that they may have mistakenly recalled an informal expression of concern as a formal challenge or vice versa.

5.5 Identity of complainants
The identities of the complainants were only stated for 13 of the 20 challenges. Of the 13, the majority (10) were made by individual members of the public with parents forming the largest proportion (seven), which is in line with the findings of other studies in New Zealand and overseas (Ball, 1998, p.35; Curry, 1997, p.137; Heuertz, 1994, p.8; Malpass, 2009, p.60; Schrader, 1995, p.62; Schrader & Bowman, 2013, p.5).

5.6 Reasoning behind challenges
Of the 13 challenges that had stated reasons the most common can be classified as ‘sexual’ (five), which was also the most common reason identified in the literature (Ball, 1998, p.28; Curry, 1997, p.134; Curry, 2001, p.32; Doyle, 2014, p.3; Heuertz, 1994, p.8; Malpass, 2009, p.64; Moody, 2004, p.47; Peterson, 2013; Schrader, 1995, p.68; Taylor & McMenemey, 2013, p.163). Other reasons were classified as ‘cultural’ (two), ‘values’ (one), ‘social issues’ (one), and both ‘cultural’ and ‘social issues’ (one), including bad language, violence, racism, and
possibly religion. Also, while the three challenges for *Into the river* lacked stated reasons, it was the subject of public complaints about its suitability for young people in relation to its offensive language, drug use, and sexual content (Office of Film & Literature Classification, n.d.).

As Taylor and McMenemy (2013) found in Scotland, a notable difference from the reasoning behind challenges received in the USA is that there were no complaints on the basis of witchcraft or the occult in New Zealand. A key factor in this may be that the *Harry Potter* series by J. K. Rowling represented more than 13% of the items challenged at libraries in the USA in the years 2000-2010 (Anderson, 2014, p.13).

### 5.7 Censorship actions requested and response of libraries

Of the eight challenges where the requested censorship actions were stated three were successful: all five books in series one of *The chronicles of Paki* and the unnamed children’s picture book that contained a reference to Jewish people were removed, while *Batman: Vampire* was moved to the ‘adult graphic novel section’ with a note added on the catalogue entry saying “Warning content may not be suitable for children.”

Note: Although *The hunt* was initially removed at the time of the request due to pending legal action it was returned to the open shelves when the library didn’t hear any more about it. Further, while a library did add a R14 note to *Into the river* after a complaint by local home schoolers it was actually in response to the censor changing the book’s rating.

Overall, in the 13 challenges were the specific actions taken by library systems were stated six items were retained without change, two were removed, one was relocated to another section and labelled, and one was labelled, while one library system decided to still purchase the ‘offending’ book, one referred the complainant to the Film & Video Labelling Body, and one offered to host a second document with opposing facts.

### 6 Conclusion

This research provides an insight into the censorship challenges received by New Zealand public libraries in the five years January 2010 to December 2014. New Zealand public library users can now be informed that patrons of one library system can’t read series one of the *Chronicles of Paki* because the five books have been deemed “culturally insensitive and
inaccurate”, that *Batman: Vampire* was moved from the children’s section to the adult graphic novel section at one library because the content was thought to be “unsuitable for children”, and that someone challenged *Where’s Stig?* because they objected to Stig running without any trousers on.

The research gives New Zealand public library users knowledge about some of the library materials that have been the subject of attempts to restrict their access to the “widest range of information materials possible, which are [...] relevant to [...] users’ requirements, and which represent the spectrum of points of view on the topic held in the community” (Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa, 2002) and lets them make informed judgements about whether they agree or disagree with the sentiments expressed by the complainants and the actions taken by the libraries in response to the censorship challenges.

However, it should be understood that this research does not provide a list of every single library item that was the subject of a censorship challenge at a New Zealand public library in the years 2010-2014 nor does it represent every single censorship challenge received by New Zealand public libraries within that time period due to the two significant limitations associated with the methodology: the majority of the library systems did not respond to the survey and the available data relied heavily on libraries keeping records of challenges and/or staff remembering incidences.

Although this may suggest that the research should have followed the example of Taylor and McMenemy (2013) by distributing the questionnaires in the form of official information requests it would appear that many New Zealand library systems/territorial authorities could not fulfil the requests to a satisfactory level because they simply do not keep records of censorship challenges.

Further, while the research has gone someway to provide New Zealand public library users with knowledge about recent attempts to censor library materials they will still be unable to easily access information about any future censorship attempts.
6.1 Recommendations
- New Zealand territorial authorities should explore their obligations under the Public Records Act 2005 to create and maintain records of censorship challenges received by their public libraries.
- The Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA) should consider fostering greater public access to information about censorship attempts at libraries in New Zealand by following the examples set by the American Library Association and the Canadian Library Association, which publicly document incidences as voluntarily reported by libraries on an annual basis.

7 Future research
Due to the fact that much of the information about censorship challenges at public libraries in New Zealand currently appears to rely on the collective memory of library staff members future research could take the form of in-depth interviews with a cross-section of public library staff members about their experiences dealing with censorship challenges. Although it would not provide information about every censorship challenge experienced by public libraries in New Zealand within a specific time period it could supply greater detail about the nature and outcomes of the censorship challenges.

Another direction for future research on censorship within New Zealand public libraries is the extent of controversial titles within their collections. A list of potentially controversial titles could be compiled to investigate how many public libraries actually have them in their collections. This could be done using the New Zealand Libraries’ Catalogue.

At the other end of the censorship spectrum could be an investigation into public libraries submitting titles to the Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC) to have restrictions applied by the former Indecent Publications Tribunal reviewed. Although unfortunately outside the scope of the research, one large urban library system reported that they have submitted 20 titles to the OFLC for review. Of those received back six had all their restrictions removed, four had their age lowered from R18 to R16, and seven stayed the same age.
References


Radio New Zealand (2014, September 28). *Banned Books Week, a spotlight on censorship.* Podcast retrieved from
http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/sunday/audio/20151340/banned-books-week,-a-spotlight-on-censorship


http://www.cla.ca/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Resources&Template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=14046

http://www.cla.ca/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Resources&Template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=14046

http://www.cla.ca/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Resources&Template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=14046


Bibliography


Appendix A: Copy of survey questionnaire on censorship challenges at public libraries in New Zealand, 2010-2014

Welcome to this nationwide survey on censorship challenges at public libraries in New Zealand, 2010-2014

The primary objective of the survey is to identify which library materials were the subject of requests to remove or restrict access to them at public libraries in New Zealand over the past five years (1 January 2010 to 31 December 2014).

The survey also seeks to gather information on who made the censorship challenges, what the reasoning was behind the censorship challenges, what censorship actions were requested, and what actions were taken by the libraries in response to the censorship challenges.

The nationwide survey of New Zealand public libraries is being conducted as part of the research I am completing for the Master of Information Studies qualification from Victoria University of Wellington. The research project will lead to a thesis and has received approval from the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee.

The survey seeks one collective response from your library system (all public libraries including branch libraries run by your city or district council) about the requests that the libraries within the system have received to remove or restrict access to library materials over the past five years.

Please be assured that the survey is anonymous and that no person or library system will be identified in the thesis or in any subsequent publications or conference papers. No other person besides me and my supervisor, Dr Dan Dorner, will see the survey responses, which will be stored securely and destroyed two years after the end of the project. The thesis will be submitted for marking to the School of Information Management and will be made accessible to the public through Victoria University of Wellington's online ResearchArchive - Te Puna Rangahau (http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/).

The participation of your library system in the survey is voluntary and submission of the completed survey implies informed consent.

You do not have to complete the survey in one sitting. You can come back anytime between now and Friday 14 August 2015 to complete it.

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey or would like further information about the research project please contact me at millther@myvuw.ac.nz or my supervisor, Dr
Dan Dorner, Senior Lecturer, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington, (04) 463-5781, dan.dorner@vuw.ac.nz.

Thank you for your time.

Theresa Mills

This section asks for background information on your library system.

Q1 Please give an estimation of the size of population served by your library system.

☐ Small (less than 25,000)
☐ Medium (between 25,000 and 49,999)
☐ Large (over 50,000)

Q2 Please give an estimation of the number of registered borrowers your library system has.

☐ Less than 15,000
☐ Between 15,000 and 24,999
☐ Between 25,000 and 49,999
☐ Over 50,000

Q3 How would you describe your library system?

☐ Rural
☐ Regional
☐ Urban

Q4 Please give an estimation of the number of items in your library system's collection.

This section asks questions about your library system's policies

Q5 Does your library system treat potentially controversial materials differently from other materials in terms of selection, classification, shelving, or access?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q6 If YES, please elaborate.

Q7 Does your library system restrict access to or borrowing privileges for certain individual titles or to certain types of materials?

☐ Yes
☐ No
Q8 If YES, please elaborate.

Q9 How can people register objections to or request reconsideration of materials in your library system's collection?

Q10 Does your library system have an established policy to respond to requests to remove or restrict access to materials in its collection?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q11 How long does your library system keep records of requests to remove or restrict access to materials from its collection?

☐ Don’t keep records
☐ 1 year or less
☐ 2 years
☐ 3 years
☐ 4 years
☐ 5 years or more

This section asks for information about the requests your library system has received to remove or restrict access to materials in its collection in each of the past five years (1 January 2010 to 31 December 2014)

Q12 Between 1 January 2010 and 31 December 2010, how many requests did your library system receive to remove or restrict access to a book, magazine, DVD, sound recording or other material in its collection?

Q13 Between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2011, how many requests did your library system receive to remove or restrict access to a book, magazine, DVD, sound recording or other material in its collection?

Q14 Between 1 January 2012 and 31 December 2012, how many requests did your library system receive to remove or restrict access to a book, magazine, DVD, sound recording or other material in its collection?

Q15 Between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2013, how many requests did your library system receive to remove or restrict access to a book, magazine, DVD, sound recording or other material in its collection?

Q16 Between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2014, how many requests did your library system receive to remove or restrict access to a book, magazine, DVD, sound recording or other material in its collection?

Q17 For EACH request your library system received to remove or restrict library materials between 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2014 please provide as much of the following information as possible:

- Bibliographic details (including title, author/creator, date of publication)
- Year of request
• ISSN/ISBN number
• Format (e.g. book, eBook, DVD, CD, magazine etc.)
• Location/collection
• Who the objector was (please use one of the following categories: child, parent, library staff member in official capacity, library member in an unofficial capacity, pressure group, or other)
• Whether the objector was a registered borrower
• Specific reason given for the objection (please quote if possible)
• Action requested by the complainant
• Final result of the objection (e.g. no action taken, removed from collection, relocated, restricted access by age, added warning or content label, altered content etc.)
• Reason for the decision

Example:

   • 2011
   • ISBN: 0434098000
   • Book
   • Adult Fiction
   • Parent
   • Registered borrower
   • Violence, drug use, crime - "Portrayal of senseless acts of violence and cruelty that should not be read by young people ..."
   • Remove from collection
   • Relocated (now kept at desk)
   • Legitimate grounds for concern but not for complete removal from collection.

Q18 Do you have any other comments or information you would like to share?
Appendix B: Copy of email sent to public library managers requesting the participation of their library systems in the survey on censorship challenges at New Zealand public libraries, 2010-2014

Dear _____________________

I would be very grateful for the cooperation of your library system in completing a survey about library materials that have been the subject of requests to remove or restrict access to them at public libraries in New Zealand over the past five years (1 January 2010 to 31 December 2014).

The nationwide survey of New Zealand public libraries is being conducted as part of the research course I am completing for the Master of Information Studies qualification from Victoria University of Wellington. The research project will lead to a thesis and has received approval from the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee.

The research project will provide a comprehensive survey of the library materials that have been the subject of censorship challenges at public libraries in New Zealand. The survey also seeks to gather information on who made the censorship challenges, what the reasoning was behind the censorship challenges, what censorship actions were requested, and what actions were taken by the libraries in response to the censorship challenges.

The survey seeks **one collective response** from your library system (all public libraries including branch libraries run by your city or district council) about the requests the libraries within the system received to remove or restrict access to library materials over the past five years.

The survey is being conducted online using the Qualtrics survey tool, which Victoria University of Wellington has made available for its students and staff. Please be assured that the survey is anonymous and that no person or library system will be identified in the thesis or in any subsequent publications or conference papers. No other person besides me and my supervisor, Dr Dan Dorner, will see the survey responses, which will be stored securely and destroyed two years after the end of the project. The thesis will be submitted for marking to the School of Information Management and will be made accessible to the public through Victoria University of Wellington’s online ResearchArchive -Te Puna Rangahau (http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/).
The participation of your library system in the survey is voluntary and submission of the completed survey implies informed consent.

Please complete the survey by **Friday 14 August 2015**. Note: *the survey can be completed in more than one session.*

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey or would like further information about the research project, please contact me at millsther@myvuw.ac.nz or my supervisor, Dr Dan Dorner, Senior Lecturer, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington at dan.dorner@vuw.ac.nz or (04) 463 5781.

**Click on the following link to be taken to the survey:**

http://vuw.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_089Q0qHYNVJHimx

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely

Theresa Mills
### Appendix C: Summary of censorship requests received by New Zealand public library systems, 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title/collection</th>
<th>Bibliographic details</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Audience &amp; content</th>
<th>Subject headings</th>
<th>Type of library system</th>
<th>Objector/borrower status</th>
<th>Reason for objection</th>
<th>Action requested</th>
<th>Outcome of challenge</th>
<th>Year of challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
• Performance art  
• Artists and models in art  
• Art, Modern - 20th century | Medium regional | Adult – registered borrower | “Offensive to common decency”. Objector believed the theme of the work was “porn”, “s&m masquerading as art”. | Remove from public display. | No action taken, although it was later decommissioned from stock due to no issues for 2.5 years. | 2012 |
• Dracula, Count (Fictitious character)  
• Heroes | Small rural | Parent – registered borrower | Content was unsuitable for children, violent. | Remove from children’s section. | Item was moved to Adult Graphic novel section (It may still be accessed by all) as there were some legitimate grounds for concern. Note added on the computer [catalogue?] saying “Warning content may not be suitable for children”. | 2014 |
• Camp David Christian Cooperative Community Communal Living - New Zealand - | Small rural | Parent - borrower status not stated | Anonymous caller sighted concerns about the content of the book. Threatened that the library would be responsible for the suicide of the caller’s child if the library not to purchase book. | Library purchased multiple copies of the book due to general community interest. Located on open shelf. | 2012 |

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2 Based on subject headings given on the New Zealand Libraries’ Catalogue records for each item.
|   | 4a | **Elizabeth Colenso: The teacher**  
Missionaries -New Zealand - History - Fiction  
Māori (New Zealand people) - History - 19th century -  
Māori (New Zealand people) - Religion -  
New Zealand - History -To 1840 | Large regional | Member of staff in official capacity | Culturally inaccurate and insensitive. | Removal of all books in *The chronicles of Paki* series from collection. | Item removed.  
Legitimate grounds for concern and not enough other merit to warrant retention. | 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
Moray, Max, 1925 -  
Parental kidnapping - Great Britain  
Custody of children - Great Britain | Medium rural | Publisher | General request to keep book off shelves because of pending legal action against the author. There were no objections from patrons. | Publisher requested library to keep book off shelves. | The book was removed from the shelves at the time. When the library didn’t hear anything more it was placed in the open collection. There have been no issues since. | 2011 |
|   | 6,7,8 | **Into the river** | Dave, T. (2012). *Into the river*. Auckland, New Zealand: M.U.P. | Book | Young adult fiction | Boarding schools  
Schools  
Bullying  
Friendship  
Teenage boys  
Identity | 1. Large urban  
2. Small rural  
3. Large urban | 1. Not stated  
2. Not stated  
3. Not stated  
1. Not stated  
2. Not stated  
1. Not stated  
2. Not stated  
1. Not stated  
2. Not stated | 1. The library didn’t have a copy of the book.  
2. R14 note added to record after censor changed the rating for the | 1. The library didn’t have a copy of the book.  
2. R14 note added to record after censor changed the rating for the | 1. 2. 2012  
3. 2014 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author/Producer/Director</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Genre 1</th>
<th>Genre 2</th>
<th>Genre 3</th>
<th>Genre 4</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><em>The matador</em> (Motion picture: 2005)</td>
<td>Version not stated - probably Brosnan, P. (Producer) &amp; Shepard, R. (Director). (2007). <em>The matador</em> [Motion picture].</td>
<td>DVD</td>
<td>R13 - fiction</td>
<td>Male friendship</td>
<td>Americans - Mexico</td>
<td>Large urban</td>
<td>Parent – registered</td>
<td>Not stated. Asked the person to contact the Film &amp; Video Labelling Body (FVLB) who are responsible for labelling all visual content released in New Zealand. It was not clear if the person knew it was illegal to show his child the R13 movie. Let the FVLB point this out to him. “The library was entirely within the law on this matter as we displayed the rating A3 fact sheet in the collection and at the point of issue.”</td>
<td>2010*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4b | *Patuone: The peacemaker*  
(Book four of *The chronicles of Paki* series one) | Condon, A. & Taggart, G.  
(2014). *Patuone: The peacemaker*.  
Tauranga, New Zealand: Big Book Publishing. | Graphic novel | Children’s non-fiction | Patuone, Eruera Maihi,  
1764-1872  
Ngā Puhi (New Zealand people) -  
History -19th century  
Missionaries - New Zealand -  
History - 19th century  
Māori (New Zealand people) -  
Religion  
New Zealand - History - To 1840 | Large regional | Member of staff in official capacity | Culturally inaccurate and insensitive.  
Removal of all books in *The chronicles of Paki* series from collection. | Item removed.  
Legitimate grounds for concern and not enough other merit to warrant retention. | 2014 |
| 4c | *Te pōwhiri: the welcome*  
(Book one of *The chronicles of Paki* series one) | Condon, A. & Taggart, G.  
(2014). *Te pōwhiri: the welcome*.  
Tauranga, New Zealand: Big Book Publishing. | Graphic novel | Children’s non-fiction | Missionaries - New Zealand -  
History -19th century  
Māori (New Zealand people) -  
History -19th century  
Māori (New Zealand people) -  
Religion  
New Zealand - History - To 1840 | Large regional | Member of staff in official capacity | Culturally inaccurate and insensitive.  
Removal of all books in *The chronicles of Paki* series from collection. | Item removed.  
Legitimate grounds for concern and not enough other merit to warrant retention. | 2014 |
| 4d | *Ruatara and the new beginning*  
(Book three of *The chronicles of Paki*) | Condon, A. & Taggart, G.  
Māori (New Zealand people) -  
History - | Large regional | Member of staff in official capacity | Culturally inaccurate and insensitive.  
Removal of all books in *The chronicles of Paki* series from collection. | Item removed.  
Legitimate grounds for concern and not enough other merit to warrant retention. | 2014 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Publisher/Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Setting/Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4e</td>
<td><em>Te Pahi: The adventurer</em></td>
<td>Condon, A. &amp; Taggart, G.</td>
<td>Tauranga, New Zealand: Big Book Publishing</td>
<td>Graphic novel</td>
<td>19th century • Missionaries - New Zealand - History - 19th century • Māori (New Zealand people) - Religion • New Zealand - History - To 1840</td>
<td>Large regional Member of staff in official capacity Culturally inaccurate and insensitive. Removal of all books in <em>The chronicles of Paki</em> series from collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Item Type</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Details</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Fiction collection</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Books &amp; eBooks</td>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Large urban</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Picture book</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Small regional</td>
<td>Parent-registered borrower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014*</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Report/document</td>
<td>Non-fiction</td>
<td>Large urban</td>
<td>Adult (local ratepayer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Medium rural</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Medium rural</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Medium rural</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For four challenges (2010, 2012, 2013, 2014) it was not clear which item corresponded with the dates given by the library systems.