

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
@ your library: Attitudes Toward Public Libraries Survey

KRC Research & Consulting conducted the study, which polled 1,000 adult Americans in a national random-sample telephone survey conducted March 8-11, 2002. The estimated margin of error is 3 percent.

1. Do you have a library card?

Yes	62
No	37
Don't Know/Refused (Volunteered)	1

2. Think about how many times during the past YEAR have you visited the public library or used public library services. How many times have you visited or used the public library? [OPEN-ENDED]

	In Person	By Telephone	By Computer
One to five times	31	12	9
Six to ten times	9	*	4
Eleven to twenty times	11	*	2
Over twenty times	14	*	3
Not at all	35	84	82
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	1	1	2

3. When you have used the public library in person in the past year, which of the following services did you use? [READ. Multiple responses accepted.]

(Asked only of those who visited a public library in person in the past year. N=633)

Take out books (e-books or book on paper or tape)	67
Use reference materials, like the encyclopedia	47
Consult the librarian	47
Read newspapers or magazines	31
Connect to the internet	26
Take out CDs, videos, or computer software	25
Hear a speaker, see a movie, or attend a special program	14
Take a class or workshop	7
None (VOLUNTEERED)	5
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	*

4. When you have used the public library by phone or computer during the past year, which of the following services did you use?

(Asked only of those who visited a public library by telephone or computer in the past year. N=253)

Checked the library's computerized catalog	46
Consulted the librarian by phone or e-mail	35
Used other resources on the library's web page	31
Renewed book loans	26
None (VOLUNTEERED)	15
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	3

5. Again, thinking back over the last year, which one of the following do you most use the public library for? Which one do you use the public library for second most often? *

(Asked only of those who used public library in person, by telephone or by computer in the past year. N=658)

	<u>First</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>Total</u>
Educational purposes (for homework or to take a class)	35	12	46
Entertainment	26	15	41
Travel or vacation information	4	8	12
Information on health issues	4	6	10
U.S. or local news or information	4	6	9
Financial or investment news or information	3	4	7
International news or information	2	5	7
To conduct a job search or write a resume	3	3	6
To look for information on starting or running a business	2	3	5
Other (VOLUNTEERED)	7	3	10
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	10	36	10

6. Do you ever use a computer at the library?

Yes	31
No	68
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	1

* Differences in nets due to rounding.

7. How did you use the computer? [READ. Multiple responses accepted]

(Asked of those who answered yes to question 6. N=311)

To check to see what the library has available	58
To use or surf the Internet	45
To use an online database (e.g. OCLC First Search)	24
To check e-mail	24
To use computer software, such as word-processing or video-games	20
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	5

8. Are you the parent or legal guardian of any children under the age of 18 currently living in your household?

Yes	31
No	69
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	*

9. Do you ever visit the library with your child?

(Asked of those who have a child 18 or younger in household. N=308)

Yes	69
No	31
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	0

10. Thinking back over the last year, did you use public libraries more than you have in the past, less than you have in the past, or about the same amount?

More	17
Less	29
About the same	48
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	6

11. And, did the events of September 11th of last year cause you to use public libraries more than usual, less than usual, or about the same amount?

More	2
Less	5
About the same	87
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	5

12. Thinking of your public library, based on what you know or have heard or read, how satisfied are you with your public library – extremely satisfied, very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, only a little satisfied, or not at all satisfied?

Extremely satisfied	20
Very satisfied	40
Somewhat satisfied	24
Only a little satisfied	4
Not at all satisfied	3
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	9
NET Satisfied (Extremely + Very + Somewhat)	84

13. Now, thinking again about public libraries in your area, please tell me how well you personally believe each of the following words or phrases describe public libraries —very well, somewhat well, not very well, or not well at all. Even if you don't know very much about public libraries in your area, try to answer the questions based on your first reaction.*

	Very Well	Some-what Well	Not Very Well	Not Well at All	DK/ Refused	NET Well	NET Not Well
Modern	47	35	7	4	7	82	11
Friendly	67	21	4	2	7	87	6
Up-to-date on technology	47	35	6	3	10	81	9
Dynamic	30	37	13	6	14	67	19
Comfortable	58	29	4	1	7	88	5
Constantly changing	25	38	15	8	14	63	23
Convenient	66	21	5	3	5	87	8
Offers information from around the world	49	29	5	3	14	78	8
Provides opportunities for everyone	64	23	3	2	8	87	5
Has highly-skilled librarians	48	33	4	2	13	82	6
Offers different activities and entertainment	41	33	8	3	15	74	11

* Differences in nets due to rounding.

14. Overall, how would you rank the benefits of the public library compared to the benefits of other tax-supported services, such as schools, parks and roads? Would you say: [READ]

At the top of the list	30
In the middle	58
At the bottom	8
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	3

15. Now, how would you rank the value of librarians in public libraries compared to the value of other professionals in your community? Would you say: [READ]

At the top of the list	22
In the middle	63
At the bottom	10
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	5

16. Communities in the U.S. spend anywhere from less than five dollars per person on public libraries to more than one hundred dollars per person. What do you think should be spent in your community: [READ]

Zero or nothing	4
1 to 25 dollars	30
26 to 40 dollars	16
41 to 60 dollars	16
61 to 80 dollars	6
81 to 100 dollars	7
100 dollars or more	6
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	15

17. Let me read you two statements and please tell me, which one comes closest to your own point of view.

Some people think libraries will no longer exist in the future, because of all of the information available on the Internet. **Other people** think libraries will still be needed despite all of the information available on the Internet.

Do you think libraries will no longer exist in the future, or do you think they will still be needed?

Libraries will no longer exist in the future	7
Libraries will still be needed	91
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	2

18. Now, I am going to read you some statements in support of libraries and librarians. Please tell me whether each statement seems very convincing to you, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or not at all convincing.

Here's the first statement. (READ ITEM.) Is that a very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or not at all convincing statement?*

- a. Librarians are techno-savvy, on the forefront of the information age. In a world that's information rich, they are information smart, and help ensure a society where everyone has access to the information they need.

Very convincing	32
Somewhat convincing	48
Not very convincing	10
Not at all convincing	4
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	5
NET Convincing	81
NET Not convincing	14

- b. Libraries are places of opportunity. Libraries are part of the American dream. They are a place for education, for self-help, and offer free access to all.

Very convincing	59
Somewhat convincing	31
Not very convincing	5
Not at all convincing	2
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	3
NET Convincing	90
NET Not convincing	7

* Differences in nets due to rounding.

- c. Libraries are unique. In person or online, where else can you have access to nearly anything on the Web or in print for free as well as personal service and assistance in finding it?

Very convincing	55
Somewhat convincing	33
Not very convincing	5
Not at all convincing	2
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	5
NET Convincing	88
NET Not convincing	7

- d. With yourself as your teacher and your librarian as coach, libraries are a place of lifelong learning.

Very convincing	55
Somewhat convincing	33
Not very convincing	7
Not at all convincing	2
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	3
NET Convincing	88
NET Not convincing	8

- e. Libraries bring you the world. For many libraries, miles are meaningless. Pittsburgh reaches Paris, Boise accesses Beijing. Today's library technology means that information from around the world is just a few clicks away.

Very convincing	46
Somewhat convincing	40
Not very convincing	7
Not at all convincing	3
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	4
NET Convincing	85
NET Not convincing	10

- f. Libraries are changing and dynamic places. In a typical library, children can be listening to a storyteller, first-time computer users can be learning to navigate the Web, retirees can discuss the latest bestseller, and students can search for information for their term papers.

Very convincing	61
Somewhat convincing	30
Not very convincing	4
Not at all convincing	1
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	4
NET Convincing	91
NET Not convincing	5

- g. Librarians are the ultimate search engines. Librarians are trained experts in finding the right information, wherever it is — in books, in archives, on the Web.

Very convincing	39
Somewhat convincing	44
Not very convincing	9
Not at all convincing	2
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	5
NET Convincing	84
NET Not convincing	12

- h. In a world of information overload, librarians are information navigators — clearing a path, pointing you toward the information you need.

Very convincing	44
Somewhat convincing	42
Not very convincing	7
Not at all convincing	3
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	5
NET Convincing	86
NET Not convincing	9

- i. Libraries are your neighborhood's "How To" resource. How to write a better resume, how to cook the perfect recipe, find government information, do your homework — it's all at the library.

Very convincing	54
Somewhat convincing	34
Not very convincing	6
Not at all convincing	2
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	4
NET Convincing	88
NET Not convincing	8

- j. Free people need free libraries. Libraries and librarians play an essential role in our democracy and are needed more now than ever.

Very convincing	45
Somewhat convincing	38
Not very convincing	9
Not at all convincing	4
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	4
NET Convincing	83
NET Not convincing	13

Key Finding:

Two-thirds (66%) of Americans used a public library at least once in the last year in person, by telephone or by computer.

*Library users are:*Age:

14%	18-24
19%	25-34
23%	35-44
17%	45-54
8%	55-64
13%	65+

Gender:

45%	Male
55%	Female

Household income:

16%	Less than \$25,000
25%	Between \$25,000 - \$49,999
14%	Between \$50,000 - \$74,999
14%	Between \$75,000 - \$99,999
8%	\$100,000 or more

Education:

5%	Less than high school
25%	High School graduate
27%	Some College
25%	College graduate
15%	Postgraduate work
3%	Professional/Technical school

Area:

79%	Live in/near metropolitan area
21%	Live in Non-metropolitan area

Children under 18 living in home:

50%	Yes
50%	No

Marital Status:

54%	Married/Living as married
28%	Single, never been married
11%	Divorced
2%	Separated
4%	Widowed