

**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

## 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



14. Overall, how would you rank the benefits of the public library compared to the benefits

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

- 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

- 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