

## Did You Know?

- 58% of adults in the U.S. have public library cards.
- Americans go to school, public and academic libraries more than three times more often than they go to the movies.
- Reference librarians in the nation's public and academic libraries answer nearly 6.6 million questions weekly. Standing single file, the line of questioners would span from Ocean City, MD to Juneau, AK.
- A 2012 poll conducted for the American Library Association found that 94% of respondents agreed that public libraries play an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed because they provide free access to materials and resources.

## Technology Trends

- Academic libraries held approximately 158.7 million e-books and public libraries held more than 18.5 million in 2010.
- A 2011 Pew study found that about 24% of library card holders had read e-books in the past year. Of them, 57% preferred borrowing e-books and about 33% preferred purchasing them.
- The 2011-2012 ALA Libraries Connect Communities study reported that 76.3% of libraries reported offering e-books, an increase of 9% from 2010-2011.

## Public

- There are more public libraries than McDonald's in the U.S.—a total of 16,766 including branches.
- Americans spend nearly three times as much on candy as they do on public libraries.
- Americans check out more than eight books a year, on the average. They spend \$35.81 a year for the public library—about the average cost of one hardcover book.
- Almost 89% of public library outlets now offer wireless Internet access.
- More than 92% of public libraries provide services for job seekers.

## Academic

- Academic librarians provide information that serves more than 44 million students yearly—reaching almost 12 million more than attend college basketball games.
- College libraries receive just less than three cents of every dollar spent on higher education.
- If the cost of *People* magazine had risen as fast as the cost of academic library periodicals since 1990, it would cost about \$182 for a one-year subscription.
- There are 584 students enrolled for every librarian in 2- and 4-year colleges and universities in 2010 in the U.S. as compared with 14 students for each teaching faculty member.

## School

- Research shows the highest achieving students attend schools with well-staffed and well-funded libraries.
- The average copyright year for health and medicine titles in school libraries is 1996. A student using these resources would not learn about the cloning of Dolly the sheep (1997) or that the United Kingdom handed sovereignty of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China (1997).
- Students make 1.3 billion visits to school libraries during the school year, the same as attendance in movie theaters in 2011, or three times as many visits to national parks.

## School

- Americans spend over 18 times as much money on home video games (\$18.6 billion) as they do on school library materials for their children (\$1 billion).
- School libraries spend an average of \$12.06 per student on library media—about two-thirds the cost of a single fiction title (\$17.63) or about one-third the cost of a single non-fiction title (\$27.04).

Sources: ALA Office for Research & Statistics; ALA Public Information Office.  
All facts compiled in 2012.

## For more information please contact:

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# Quotable Facts About America's Libraries

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