

Quotable Facts About America's Libraries – January 2019

DID YOU KNOW?

The Library of Congress is the largest library in the world, with more than 167 million items on approximately 838 miles of bookshelves, which would span roughly the distance from The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., to Cape Canaveral, Florida.

Library of Congress Fascinating Facts (<https://www.loc.gov/about/fascinating-facts/>)

Libraries are a smart investment. A recent study shows that for every dollar spent on Ohio public libraries, Ohioans received \$5.48 in economic value.

Return of Investment on Ohio's Public Libraries: http://olc.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/post-id_2060/2016/04/Ohio-Public-Libraries-ROI-Report.pdf

A growing body of evidence suggests that students' academic success is linked to library usage, including improved student retention and an enhanced academic experience.

*Academic Library Impact on Student Learning and Success: Findings from the Assessment in Action Team Projects
http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/issues/value/findings_y3.pdf*

Libraries play a critical role in the happiness of Americans. Communities that spend more on libraries, parks and highways are shown to support the well-being of community members.

Patrick Flavin. State government public goods spending and citizens' quality of life. Social Science Research, 2018; DOI: [10.1016/j.ssresearch.2018.11.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2018.11.004)

Americans go to public libraries more often than they go to the movies.

*From 2016 PLS: 1,353,081,000 public library visits per year
(Public Libraries Survey, FY 2016, Table 8, Supplementary Tables
https://www.ims.gov/sites/default/files/fy2016_pls_tables.pdf)*

1.24 billion movie admissions in 2017 (https://www.mpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/MPAA-THEME-Report-2017_Final.pdf)

Librarians have long championed their community members' right to access information privately, and serve as an essential refuge where everyone can check out materials or browse the internet without their information being shared.

Mary Madden, Lee Rainie. Pew Research Center, May 20, "Americans' Attitudes About Privacy, Security and Surveillance." Available at:

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/05/20/americans-attitudes-about-privacy-security-and-surveillance/>

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

There are more public libraries than Starbucks in the U.S. – a total of 16,568, including branches. Nearly 100% of public libraries provide Wi-Fi and have no-fee access to computers.

There are 16,568 total libraries including branches in the U.S. per 2016 PLS survey (Public Libraries Survey, FY 2016, Table 3 of the Supplemental Tables

https://www.ims.gov/sites/default/files/fy2016_pls_tables.pdf

[2018 Starbucks: 14,606 corporate and licensed locations within the USA. Source: Starbucks Corporate Customer Relations, 12/28/2018]

In 2016, there were 1.4 billion in-person visits to public libraries across the U.S., the equivalent of about 4 million visits each day. That's 2,664 per minute.

From 2016 PLS: 1,353,081,000 public library visits per year

(Public Libraries Survey, FY 2016, Table 8, Supplementary Tables

https://www.ims.gov/sites/default/files/fy2016_pls_tables.pdf

There were 113 million attendees at public library programs in 2016, more than all Major League Baseball, National Football League, and NBA games combined. That's 16.5 million more than in 2013.

From 2016 PLS: Total program attendance: 113,078,000

(Public Libraries Survey, FY 2016, Table 11, Supplementary Tables

https://www.ims.gov/sites/default/files/fy2016_pls_tables.pdf

From 2016 PLS: Total program attendance: 96,541,000

(Public Libraries Survey, FY 2016, Table 11, Supplementary Tables

https://www.ims.gov/sites/default/files/fy2013_pls_tables_8_thru_18a.pdf

Public Libraries in the United States Survey: Fiscal Year 2013. March, 2016.

<https://www.ims.gov/sites/default/files/publications/documents/plsfy2013.pdf>

National Football League attendance 2017: 17,253,425 (Source: ESPN.com, <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/years/2017/attendance.htm>)
Major League Baseball attendance 2018: 72,678,797 (Source: ESPN.com, <https://www.baseball-reference.com/leagues/MLB/2018-misc.shtml>)
National Basketball League attendance 2017-2018: 22,128,921 (Source: ESPN.com, <http://www.insidehoops.com/attendance.shtml>)

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Everyone in a college benefits from the college library, yet they receive fewer than two cents of every dollar spent on higher education.

Total Academic Library Expenditures (iPEDS/National Center for Education Statistics, 2018): \$8,293,263,695

Data generated from NCES IPEDS Statistical Tables. Visit link at <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/institutionlist.aspx?stepId=1>

*Total Expenditures for Public Higher Education Institutions, 2015-2016:
\$354,696,909,000*

*(Digest of Education Statistics, Table 334.10
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_334.10.asp?current=yes)*

*Total Expenditures for Private Nonprofit Higher Education Institutions, 2015-2016:
\$188,698,325,000*

*(Digest of Education Statistics, Table 334.70
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_334.70.asp?current=yes)*

*Total Expenditures for Private For-Profit Higher Education Institutions, \$16,009,382,000
(Digest of Education Statistics, Table 334.70
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_334.70.asp?current=yes)*

$8,293,263,695 / (559,404,616,000) = \0.014

Academic libraries have almost 2.5 billion physical and electronic items in their collections available for use.

Data generated from NCES IPEDS Statistical Tables. Visit link at <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/institutionlist.aspx?stepId=1>

Digital media titles in U.S. academic libraries have increased by 50% since 2014.

Data generated from NCES IPEDS Statistical Tables. Visit link at <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/institutionlist.aspx?stepId=1>

Academic librarians provide information services for almost 38 million people each year – reaching more than four million people that attend men's college basketball games.

NCES ALS report 2012 Table 3: Reference transactions (services to individuals) – 28,856,409 per year; individuals served in groups = 10,109,738 -- total served 38,966,147 [http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2014/2014038.pdf]

NCAA Division 1 men's basketball attendance total: 24,525,640

Source: NCAA Annual Attendance Report, 2018

http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/stats/m_basketball_RB/2019/Attendance.pdf

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Students in high-poverty schools are almost twice as likely to graduate when the school library is staffed with a certified school librarian.

The five year graduation rate in high poverty schools was 78.8% “five-year” graduation rate versus 43.2% without a certified teacher-librarian. (Coker, E., 2015)

Coker, E. (2015). Certified Teacher-Librarians, Library Quality and Student Achievement in Washington State Public Schools. [PDF document]. Retrieved from

https://wala.memberclicks.net/assets/WLMA/Advocacy/wslitreport_final%20revised7_14_15.pdf

Cutbacks in school librarians may be yielding unintended consequences. According to a recent study by Stanford University, more than 80% of middle schoolers cannot tell the difference between sponsored content and a real news article.

“Evaluating Information: The Cornerstone of Civic Online Reasoning.” Stanford History Education Group, November 2016. Available at:

<https://sheg.stanford.edu/upload/V3LessonPlans/Executive%20Summary%2011.21.16.pdf>

Research shows the highest achieving students attend schools with well-staffed and well-funded school libraries.

Increased library staff links to higher CSAP scores (2010) 2010

http://www.lrs.org/documents/fastfacts/287_CO3_Staffing_Test_Scores.pdf

Michael Ratlick and Joette Stefl-Mabry. “Finally-Convincing Evidence for the Impact of School Librarians?” Presented at the American Educational Research Association Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, April 18, 2015

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280317668_Radlick_M_Stefl-](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280317668_Radlick_M_Stefl-Mabry_J_2015_April_16-20_Finally_-_Convincing_Evidence_for_the_Impact_of_School_Librarians_Paper_presented_at_the_American_Educational_Research_Association_Chicago_IL)

[Mabry J 2015 April 16-20 Finally -](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280317668_Radlick_M_Stefl-Mabry_J_2015_April_16-20_Finally_-_Convincing_Evidence_for_the_Impact_of_School_Librarians_Paper_presented_at_the_American_Educational_Research_Association_Chicago_IL)

[Convincing Evidence for the Impact of School Librarians Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Chicago IL\)](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280317668_Radlick_M_Stefl-Mabry_J_2015_April_16-20_Finally_-_Convincing_Evidence_for_the_Impact_of_School_Librarians_Paper_presented_at_the_American_Educational_Research_Association_Chicago_IL)

Students make almost 1.3 billion visits to school library media centers during the school year, the same as attendance at movie theaters in 2014, or four times as many visitors to national parks.

School libraries dept of ed figures from ALA factsheet: 98,460

<https://www.ala.org/ala/professionalresources/libfactsheets/alalibraryfactsheet01.cfm>

ALA AASL School Libraries Count 2012: 313 visits (mean all responding libraries) times 42 weeks schools are in session = 13,146 visits times 98,460 (# of schools)= 1,294,355,160

Movie theater admissions US profile/media and Motion Picture Association 2014

Theatrical Market Statistics -- 1.27B admissions: <http://www.mpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/MPAA-Theatrical-Market-Statistics-2014.pdf>

2015-307,247,252 visitors to national parks

[https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/National%20Reports/Annual%20Visitation%20Summary%20Report%20\(1979%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year\)](https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/National%20Reports/Annual%20Visitation%20Summary%20Report%20(1979%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year))

School libraries give students a unique opportunity for self-directed inquiry. Four out of five Americans agree that libraries help spark creativity among young people.

Horrigan, John B. "Libraries 2016" Pew Research Center, September 2016

Available at: www.pewinternet.org/2016/09/09/2016/Libraries

Lower-income students are especially at risk of falling behind in math and reading when school is out. Libraries help narrow the achievement gap by offering summer learning opportunities to kids of all backgrounds.

"Evaluating Information: The Cornerstone of Civic Online Reasoning." Stanford History Education Group, November 2016. Available at:

<https://sheg.stanford.edu/upload/V3LessonPlans/Executive%20Summary%2011.21.16.pdf>

LIBRARIES TRANSFORM

Libraries strengthen local economies.

- **84% of libraries offer technology training to patrons in computer software use;**
- **76.8% of libraries provide online health resources and 60% offer programs to help Americans identify health insurance resources and get better informed on health topics;**

- 73.1% of libraries provide programs that assist individuals apply for jobs, create resumes, and prepare for interviews;
- 97% of libraries help people complete online government forms.

Libraries create healthier communities.

- 77% of libraries offer online health resources.
- 59% provide programs on finding health insurance.
- 58% provide programs to help people find and evaluate health information.
- 23% offer fitness classes.

Libraries are the place for lifelong learning.

- 95% provide online homework assistance.
- 95% offer summer reading programs for children.

Library access equals opportunity.

- 100% of public libraries offer access to the Internet.
- 98% of public libraries offer free Wifi.
- 90% help patrons with basic Internet skills.
- 97% help people complete online government forms.
- 9 out of 10 libraries offer access to e-books.

Bertot, J.C., Real, B., Lee, J., McDermott, A.J., & Jaeger, P.T. (201). 2014 Digital Inclusion Survey: Findings and Results. College Park, MD: Information Policy & Access Center, University of Maryland College Park. Available at <http://digitalinclusion.umd.edu/>.

<http://digitalinclusion.umd.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/2014DigitalInclusionSurveyFinalRelease.pdf>

<http://www.ala.org/tools/research/digitalinclusion>

For more information about sources and citations, contact the ALA Library and Research Center at alalibrary@ala.org.

Learn more at www.librariestransform.org.

Sources:

**ALA Office for Library Advocacy
ALA Library and Research & Center
All facts compiled in 2019.**

For more information about America's Libraries visit www.ilovelibraries.org.

Made possible by the ALA Library Champions: www.ala.org/librarychampions

Office for Library Advocacy
American Library Association
50 E. Huron St., Chicago, Illinois, 60611
1.800.545.2433, x 2428
advocacy@ala.org

American Library Association, January 2019