

**LIBRARY JOURNAL**

School Library Journal



**2015**

**in  
U.S.  
School  
(K-12) Libraries**

**SIXTH ANNUAL SURVEY**

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**SIXTH ANNUAL**

**Survey of Ebook Usage in  
U.S. School (K-12) Libraries**

September 2015

*Analysis by Richard Romano*

*Edited by Laura Girmscheid and Barbara Genco*

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## KEY FINDINGS AND TRENDS

Ebook penetration into school libraries took a step backward this survey, with 56% of 916 U.S. school libraries reporting they now have ebooks available for students—that is back to the level it was in 2013. Quantitative and qualitative data suggest that a big part of it is that kids haven't warmed to ebooks. They use them for research and class assignments, but left to their own devices (or lack thereof), they seem to prefer print. As a result, circulation has plateaued or dropped.

Library media specialists—many of whom are enthusiastic about ebooks (even if they do have a tendency to refer to print books as “real” books)—wonder if they promoted ebook collections more or offered more popular titles that kids would use them more. Or, could it be a case of leading a horse to water but not being able to make him drink? Meanwhile, some library media specialists are boosting their collections, while others are cutting back, leery of spending scarce budget dollars on a resource that few students use.

There have been some studies reported in the past year that question whether electronic media are conducive to learning and retention of what is read. One was conducted in Europe:

The study, presented in Italy at a conference last month and set to be published as a paper, gave 50 readers the same short story by Elizabeth George to read. Half read the 28-page story on a Kindle, and half in a paperback, with readers then tested on aspects of the story including objects, characters and settings.

...

the performance was largely similar, except when it came to the timing of events in the story. "The Kindle readers performed significantly worse on the plot reconstruction measure, ie, when they were asked to place 14 events in the correct order."

The researchers suggest that "the haptic and tactile feedback of a Kindle does not provide the same support for mental reconstruction of a story as a print pocket book does".<sup>1</sup>

A year earlier, Scientific American delved into the topic:

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<sup>1</sup> Allison Flood, "Readers absorb less on Kindles than on paper, study finds," *The Guardian*, August 19, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/aug/19/readers-absorb-less-kindles-paper-study-plot-ereader-digitisation>.

(E)vidence from laboratory experiments, polls and consumer reports indicates that modern screens and e-readers fail to adequately recreate certain tactile experiences of reading on paper that many people miss and, more importantly, prevent people from navigating long texts in an intuitive and satisfying way. In turn, such navigational difficulties may subtly inhibit reading comprehension. Compared with paper, screens may also drain more of our mental resources while we are reading and make it a little harder to remember what we read when we are done. A parallel line of research focuses on people's attitudes toward different kinds of media. Whether they realize it or not, many people approach computers and tablets with a state of mind less conducive to learning than the one they bring to paper.<sup>2</sup>

The research is still ongoing and far from conclusive, but one question that should be asked is, while that may apply to people who learned to read on paper and switched to ebooks later in life, what about “ebook” or “mobile device natives” who grew up reading from screens at an early age? After all, no one is born with the ability to read; it has to be learned, and does the medium a person learns to read on affect the way he or she retains information read on that medium? In other words, if someone learned to read on a Kindle, would they have the same reading retention and comprehension skills as someone who learned to read from print? Is it logical to believe that the human brain is “wired” to understand print better than any other medium?

While we're getting a little far afield of our current study, these are important things to consider in the rush to get kids involved in reading ebooks or relying on etextbooks and other digital learning materials.

We found again this year that 24% of school libraries reported having ereading devices on hand for students to borrow. One-to-one programs, whereby a school issues a tablet or laptop to each student at least part of the school day, if not 24/7, and “bring your own device” (BYOD) policies—which are now found in nearly half of schools surveyed, with more intending to implement such plans—will certainly make the library less responsible for providing reading hardware.

Again we found that school ebook collections lean more heavily on the nonfiction side (55% nonfiction). Respondents' comments would make it seem that students prefer using ebooks for school projects and print for recreational reading. And, as it turns out, students are even more frustrated with the ebook access and download process—and having to juggle multiple vendors, accounts, passwords, etc.—than are librarians. So that could be one of the major turnoffs they have with ebooks.

Libraries' perceptions of and relationships with their ebook vendors are improving; there is far less vitriol in the write-in comments than we've seen in the past. Even more so than for their public library brethren, school librarians

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<sup>2</sup> Ferris Jabr, “The Reading Brain in the Digital Age: The Science of Paper versus Screens,” *Scientific American*, April 11, 2013, <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/reading-paper-screens/>.

feel the purchasing terms situation is still unsatisfactory, and the idea that ebooks expire after a year is just anathema to many.

It really is extraordinary how accurately our survey respondents of the past predicted how well ebooks would fare; in our debut survey in 2010, we asked what percentage of their materials budget ebooks would account for in five years' time. It's now five years on, and the number they predicted—7.3%—is almost exactly what this year's figure is (7.2%). So when they say, as they did this year, that ebooks will account for 12% of their materials budgets in 2020, we may be able to take that number to the bank.

## Ebook Trends

What can we identify as the trends to watch?

- Whether ereading will “catch on” among kids and teens. Many currently prefer print, at least for pleasure reading.
- The first “smartphone natives” (born since 2007 when the iPhone was introduced) are now just entering elementary school. In general, they have been exposed to smartphones and looking at screens since infancy. Will they have a greater affinity for ebooks?
- “One-to-one schools,” where each student is given a tablet or laptop computer, are becoming more prevalent. In the next few years, according to our results, more than three-fourths of schools will have some kind of one-to-one program. This will increase exposure to, and comfort with, electronic content.
- Though the general economy is improving, it is still far from robust in many communities, and schools are constantly plagued by severe budget constraints.
- How will lack of Internet access at home or suitable bandwidth in schools impede student interest in and access to ebooks and other electronic content?

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since we launched our annual survey of ebook trends in libraries in 2010, we have seen ebook usage explode among the general public and in public libraries, while ebook adoption by U.S. school libraries has expanded more slowly. Currently 56% of schools nationwide offer ebooks, an decrease of ten percentage points from last year’s survey—which had been a ten percentage point *increase* from 2013. Dips in ebook adoption were recorded for all levels of schools—elementary, middle and high schools. What is going on?

Several factors are impeding the rate of ebook adoption in school libraries. Sure there are the usual issues of money and lack of access to ereading devices, but as we found in this survey—both in the quantitative data and in the comments—many students aren’t that into ebooks. They like print. As we remarked last year, it seems like school library staff, faculty, and administrators are more excited about ebooks than the kids are.

*“Ebooks aren’t for everyone. Convenient, portable, and efficient, yes. Completely replace print? Not any time soon.”*

### Ebook Adoption Slows

In 2015, 56% of the 916 U.S. library media centers (LMCs) responding indicated that they offer ebooks to students and faculty, a ten percentage point drop from 2014 and a return to 2013 levels. “Lack of ereading devices available” is the top cited reason for not making ebooks available, followed by “no money for ebooks,” although both are down from last year. “No interest in ebooks” holds steady at number three.

Of the 44% of school libraries that do not currently offer ebooks, 11% say they have no plans to ever offer them, although 9% say they *definitely* will add them in the next two years. This is the lowest in the history of our survey.

<i>Offer ebooks</i>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
% of school libraries	33%	44%	40%	56%	66%	56%

### Small Ebook Collections in Most Schools

Few schools have any kind of coordinated, school-wide plan for amassing ebook collections, and few schools have any systematic collaboration between teachers and libraries to incorporate ebooks into the curriculum.

Despite this lack of planning and lukewarm interest on the part of students, ebook collections have continued to grow.<sup>3</sup> The median number of ebooks available per school has reached 235 titles (mean 1,857), with high schools

<sup>3</sup> Ebooks comprise only 2% of all books available to students (based on print and ebook data in this report, excluding audio). This is compared to 11% in public libraries.

having significantly more ebooks in their collections than other schools. To put this in perspective, the median number of *print* books in school library collections is 13,000 (mean 14,800), meaning that ebooks comprise only about two percent of all books available to students in the typical school library (not accounting for audiobooks).

<b><i>Ebook collections</i></b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Median # of ebooks	32	35	94	136	189	235

### Low Interest Rates

Are students even interested in reading ebooks? Six percent of school libraries say “interest is high,” 37% say interest is moderate, 50% say “interest is low,” and 7% say students have “no interest in ebooks.” There is some interest, but students are not wildly excited by ebooks.

*“Checking out a book is faster than downloading on their device. Students find it faster to locate information in a book than ebook.”*

When asked what the usage barriers are, “limited access to ereading devices (at home or at school)” is once again the top challenge, selected by 61% of respondents, up from 46% last year. “Users prefer print books” was selected by 58%, up from 45% last year. “Students unaware of ebook availability” came in at 44%, up from 40%.

### Ebook Circulation Stalls

For the 2013–2014 school year, respondents with ebooks during that time period reported a median circulation/usage of 75 ebooks overall (the mean was considerably higher at 903). There are likely some outliers that circulate large numbers of ebooks. Comparing with print, school libraries circulated a median of 14,000 print books (mean 28,520).

<b><i>Ebook circulation</i></b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Median ebook circulation	25	35	25	100	75

Respondents expect a 23% increase in ebook circulation next year, the lowest anticipated rate of growth in the history of our survey. Ebooks have yet to see the surge in demand and circulation in school libraries that public libraries experienced, which was often in the triple digits year over year—although public libraries are also starting to see the ebook ardor cool.

<b><i>Expected ebook circulation increase</i></b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
% change in ebook circulation	+26%	+43%	+48%	+30%	+29%	+23%

The top methods by which school libraries facilitate discovery or promote their ebook collections are “introduce or integrate ebooks into library instruction,” “communicate/collaborate with teachers,” and “flyers and bookmarks.”

## Fiction and Nonfiction Ebook Collections

More than half (55%) of school libraries' ebooks are nonfiction titles, and 44% are fiction. By comparison, school libraries print book collections are split precisely 50/50 between nonfiction and fiction.

The top three fiction and nonfiction categories carried by each school type are:

<i>Elementary school</i>		<i>Middle school</i>		<i>High school</i>	
<i>Fiction</i>	<i>Nonfiction</i>	<i>Fiction</i>	<i>Nonfiction</i>	<i>Fiction</i>	<i>Nonfiction</i>
graphic novels	animals	dystopian fiction	sports	dystopian fiction	history
adventure/thrillers	sports	fantasy	biography	fantasy	biography
picture books	biography tied with science/math/technology	realistic fiction	history	realistic fiction	literary criticism

More than one-half (55%) of students' ebook usage is estimated to be recreational while 45% is lesson-driven.

Just over one-fourth (27%) of school libraries offer non-English ebooks, the primary impediment is lack of demand.

## Ebook Spending Rises

In the 2014–2015 school year, library media centers estimated they spent on average \$1,197 (median \$357) on ebooks. Notably, one-in-five reported spending zero dollars, as their ebooks were made available through the state, school district, or consortium membership. Since last year's survey, spending on ebooks has declined slightly, especially in high schools. A strong reason for this is that, as many of our respondent comments indicate, ebooks are not enthusiastically used by students and a common feeling is that there are better things to spend scarce resources on than something that kids aren't going to use, or use that often.

The projected national school (public and private) ebook spend for the 2014–2015 school year was anywhere from \$41 million (calculated using medians) to \$123 million (calculated using means). In five years' time (2020), libraries expect ebook spending as a percentage of their total materials budget to increase to 12.4%. (In our 2010 survey, respondents guessed that in five years—2015—ebooks would represent 7.3% of their materials budgets. Now that it's actually 2015, we see that they were virtually right on the money five years ago.)

Type of School	Ebook spending as a % of total materials budget (mean %)						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2020
All school libraries	2.7%	2.9%	2.2%	6.1%	5.8%	7.2%	12.4%
Elementary schools	2.1%	2.5%	1.9%	5.8%	5.3%	6.3%	11.2%
Middle schools	2.6%	2.8%	2.7%	5.9%	7.1%	7.6%	14.8%
High schools	3.5%	3.9%	2.8%	6.7%	8.1%	8.7%	13.4%

### Creative Funding Sources

Libraries avail themselves of as many sources of funding as they can, but far and away their materials budget was the biggest source of funding for ebooks. Fifteen percent have received grants, and 12% redeemed vendor credits, but generally reliance on alternate funding sources is down from last year.

The challenge for school libraries is expanding ebook collections while also maintaining print book and media collections, in addition to other services. Ebook purchasing has negatively impacted print book purchasing at one-fourth of school libraries, but 63% reported that building ebook collections had no influence on their print book purchasing. These numbers are virtually unchanged from last year.

Generally, the default format for any given title is print, and an ebook version will be acquired as an alternative. Common criteria for selecting a book in a given format include cost/affordability/budget, demand from teachers or students, whether it's part of the curriculum, and what they think will circulate in which format.

*"My print collection is my primary concern. I purchase ebooks as I see that they are wanted and will be used."*

*"I want to expand our eBook collection of non-fiction titles so they are accessible to everyone simultaneously. For fiction, we will still focus on print materials."*

An all-time high of 21% of school libraries now take part in a consortium licensing program. Consortia had never been an especially popular option for school libraries, in contrast to public libraries, but appear to be gaining favor.

School libraries bought or licensed a mean of 193 (median 36) ebooks in the 2014-2015 school year. One-fourth bought no ebooks outside of those supplied through a consortium or state license program.

### Purchasing/Licensing Terms and Vendors

In 2015, we divided the "purchase with perpetual access" option—long a top purchasing term (it was selected by 61% of libraries in last year's survey)—into "single user" and "multi user." "Purchase with perpetual access—multi user" came in as the most commonly used purchasing term (59%). "Purchase with perpetual access—single user" is not far behind (56%) and "simultaneous use/access" is a distant third (38%).

Not surprisingly, when asked to name their ebook purchasing/licensing model preference, respondents' top choice is "purchase with perpetual

access-multi-user,” selected by 68%. A distant second, selected by 38%, is “simultaneous use/access.”

School librarians’ top complaints about ebooks included “too many ebook platforms” (selected by 30%) and “ebook pricing is too high” (20%).

In terms of vendors used, FollettShelf continues to dominate the ebook space for school libraries—70% of school libraries use FollettShelf, although 59% license ebooks through more than one vendor. Forty-four percent indicated a vendor preference for FollettShelf while 12% percent have no preferred vendor.

### **Ebooks and Ereaders**

The “school or library desktop computer” remains the top method by which students access the library’s ebook collection, selected by 56%, although—as with desktop computers in general—are on the decline. “School or library laptop” and “student tablet” are tied at 47%, the former up from 50%, the latter down from 52%.

Forty-five percent of schools have a “bring your own device” policy by which students are allowed to bring their own reader, tablet, or other mobile device to use for class assignments. BYOD policies are most common in high schools.

Twenty-four percent of school libraries make ereaders available for students in the library (only 12% allow take-home use). The iPad or iPad Mini remains the top device circulated, especially for younger readers, with the NOOK not too far behind, this year becoming more popular than the Kindle. The school libraries that lend ereaders have a median of ten devices on hand (down from twelve last year).

### **Etextbooks and One-to-One Schools**

Over the last two years, etextbooks have not become a major force in schools, although there is some growth. Six out of ten (61%) still have no plans to transition to digital textbooks, down from 69% last year. Still, 26% acquire *some* textbooks digitally, up from 15%. Only 1% report that all new textbooks are purchased digitally, unchanged from last year.

Twenty percent of school library respondents say their schools currently have a one-to-one device program in place, and 24% are planning to offer one—this is up a modest amount from last year. Of schools that have one-to-one programs, one-half assign personal devices to each student for the year, 19% give devices to students in select classes for the year, and 18% give devices to students to keep until graduation. iPads are the top device distributed by schools that have implemented a one-to-one device program (53%), although Chromebook/notebook allocations have doubled to 30% since last year.

## Conclusions

Ebook penetration into school libraries took a step backward this survey, with 56% of U.S. school libraries reporting they now have ebooks available for students—that is back to the level it was in 2013. Data and open-ended responses indicate that a big part of it is that kids haven't warmed to ebooks. They use them for research and class assignments, but left to their own devices (or lack thereof), they seem to prefer print. As a result, circulation has plateaued or dropped, and library media specialists—many of whom are enthusiastic about ebooks (even if they do have a tendency to refer to print books as “real” books)—wonder if they promoted ebook collections more or offered more popular titles that kids would use them more, or if it is just a case of leading a horse to water but not being able to make him drink. So some library media specialists are boosting their collections, while others are cutting back, leery of spending scarce budget dollars on a resource that few students use.

## INTRODUCTION

### About the 2015 School Library Journal Ebook Survey

Welcome to the sixth annual *School Library Journal* survey of electronic book usage in U.S. school libraries based on 916 respondents. The present report is one of two that look at the current state of ebooks and their place in school and public libraries. Our most recent survey reprises many questions from previous years' surveys, allowing us to track long-term trends more effectively, as we now have four or five, even six, data points to consider. We tweaked some other questions based on responses to past surveys or to better reflect changes in the market, so some data points may not be entirely consistent with past responses. There are also some brand new questions this year.

Once again, we invited survey respondents to answer open-ended questions that asked about school libraries' experience with ebooks in general and, in this survey, about a number of different aspects of ebook usage. Despite a lot of the crankiness we find in the general open-ended questions, libraries do have their favorite vendors, and there is a fairly high comfort level with, and even enthusiasm for, some vendors. As we always say, the verbatim responses are a useful lens through which to view the quantitative results of our survey. A selection of these responses can be found throughout each chapter.

### How This Report Is Organized

If you have used past versions of our ebook usage surveys, much of what follows in the present report will seem familiar, although we have added some new "features" this year to aid readers in making the best use of the data. (If you are familiar with past reports, one change you may notice is that the demographic profile of respondents has been moved to Appendix A.

### Data Presentation

The bulk of each chapter provides top-level survey results in chart form—in essence, the "all responses" results, or what all libraries surveyed said about a specific question. This gives an overall idea of the prevailing attitude.

In those cases where we have calculated averages, such as "average number of ebooks available," "average number of ereaders available," or "average amount spent on ebooks," we provide both a mean and a median. A *mean* is a simple average, or "the sum of a collection of numbers divided by the number of numbers in the collection."<sup>4</sup> A *median* is "the numerical value separating the higher half of a data sample, a population, or a probability distribution, from

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<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arithmetic\\_mean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arithmetic_mean).

the lower half.”<sup>5</sup> Medians are more useful than means when looking at datasets with outliers—that is, figures that are anomalously high or anomalously low. For some of the questions in this survey, there were very large outliers that skewed mean figures, so looking at median values gives us a better idea of what the reality is.

Each chart is followed by a corresponding table that breaks down the survey responses by type of school library (elementary, middle, or high school), whether it is public or private, and geographic region. Different grade levels and types of schools have varying attitudes and behaviors and it’s a mistake to assume that all libraries think and act alike. An elementary school library will have a different set of needs and attitudes and be subject to different forces than a high school library. We have called out in commentary those figures in these cross-tabulations that we think merit attention, but users who are looking for specific things may find much of value in these detailed tables.

For geographical region, we grouped our survey sample into four general regions: Northeast, Midwest, West, and South (see Chapter 1 for which specific states are included in these regions). Geographical data can be helpful for vendors, publishers, or other companies seeking to identify where to focus sales, marketing, or even customer support efforts.

In this report we also sought to add a greater historical perspective, so for questions that have appeared in at least three of the past five surveys, we have provided a “time series” chart which is an easy way to track trends over time. We have done our best to keep the presentation of data as clear as possible.

What’s interesting about some of the time series stretching back to our original surveys is that they could almost be seen as longitudinal studies, as some of the same students who began in our surveyed elementary schools in 2010 could very well now be in our surveyed high schools. They offer a unique perspective on the extent to which students are taking their reading preferences with them as they get older.

## Chapter Structure

Chapter 1 looks at ebook “supply and demand.” How many libraries offer ebooks? What is preventing libraries from amassing ebook collections? How has ebook demand circulation changed?

Chapter 2 looks at ebook collections. What ebook categories and genres are most in demand from users?

Chapter 3 looks at budgets and purchasing terms. How much do school libraries spend on ebooks? Are ebooks taking a greater percentage of the budget pie? Are libraries cutting elsewhere to pay for them? What purchasing

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<sup>5</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Median>.

terms do libraries buy? Which vendors do libraries use and which do they prefer?

Chapter 4 looks at ereading devices. What are the most popular hardware devices on which users read ebooks? Do libraries circulate hardware devices to students? Which ones? Are schools switching to etextbooks and/or becoming one-to-one schools?

Appendix A provides a demographic profile of the respondents to our survey.

Appendix B provides the questionnaire and methodology for this year's survey.

At the end of each chapter, we have also added selected responses to our write-in comments questions.

### **For More Information**

For questions or comments regarding this study, please contact our research manager, Laura Girmscheid by phone (646) 380-0719 or by email at [lgirmscheid@mediasourceinc.com](mailto:lgirmscheid@mediasourceinc.com).

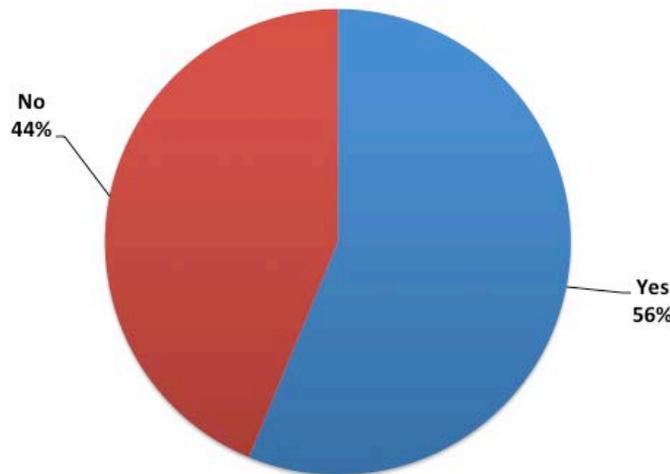
# 1. SUPPLY AND DEMAND

This section examines the percentage of schools offering ebooks, the number of ebooks available, as well ebook circulation, and access methods. How have ebooks fared in school libraries in the past year?

## Offer Ebooks

In the most recent survey, 56% of school libraries reported that they offer ebooks to students. In last year’s survey, 66% of respondents indicated that they offered ebooks to school library users, and in 2013’s survey, 56% of school libraries had offered ebooks. After four years of rapid growth, we’re seeing a bit of a step back. Much of this report will be dedicated to understanding exactly why this might be. What we can glean from many of the comments, as well a direct question later in this chapter, is that students—especially high school students—simply don’t care for them.

**Figure 1. Does your school offer ebooks?**  
*% of school libraries, 2015*



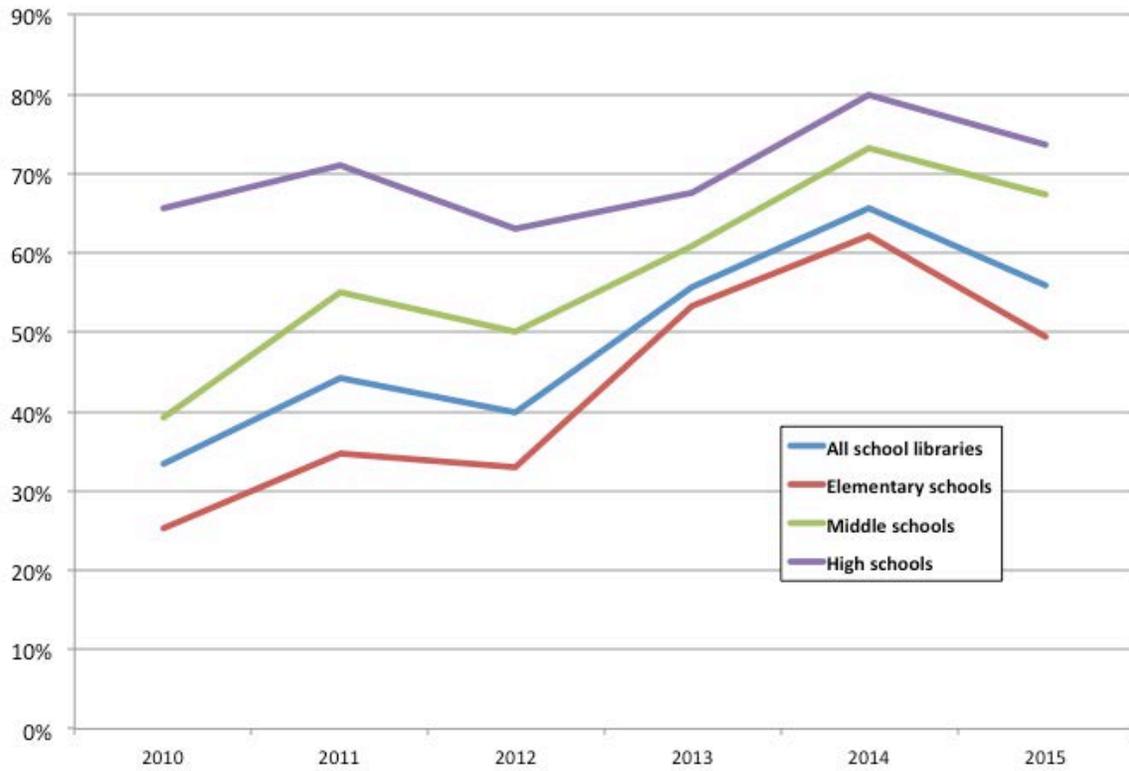
The following table breaks these data down by type of school and geographic region. As we find in every survey, high schools lead the pack in offering ebooks to their students, with 74% offering them. Middle schools are not far behind at 67%. Elementary schools trail with only 50% offering them.

**Table 1. Does your school offer ebooks?**  
*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
We offer ebooks	50%	67%	74%	58%	53%	60%	61%	47%	57%
We do not offer ebooks	50%	33%	26%	42%	47%	40%	39%	53%	43%

Last survey, all types of school libraries offering ebooks were at their highest levels ever, but now they have all universally dipped.

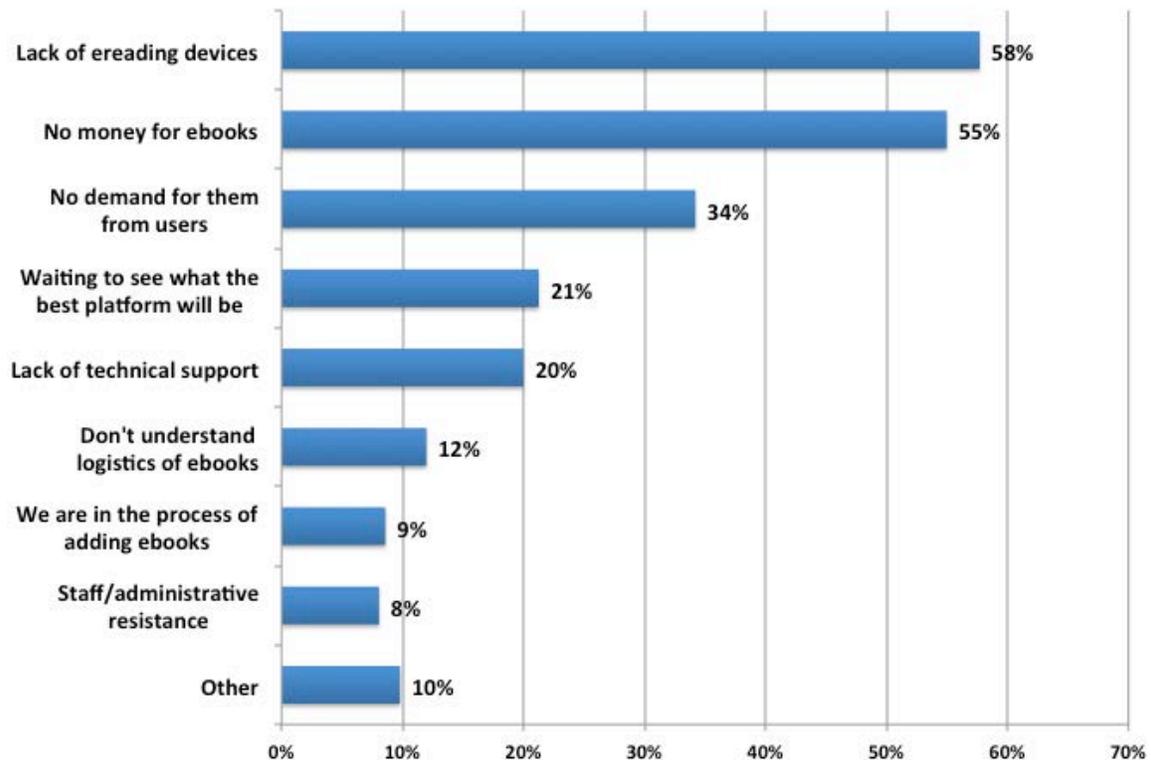
**Figure 2. School libraries that offer ebooks**  
*% of school libraries by type of school, 2010–2015*



### School Libraries Without Ebooks

Of those libraries that do not offer any ebooks (44% of all respondents), the top-cited reason is “lack of ereading devices,” although it’s down to 58% this year from 72% last year. “No money for ebooks” is virtually unchanged at 55%. “No demand from users” was selected by 34% of respondents, again virtually unchanged from last year. Unlike in public libraries, where money is the number one reason for not offering ebooks, in schools it is a combination of money and lack of interest.

Figure 3. Why doesn't your library offer ebooks?  
% of school libraries, 2015



The lack of ereading devices is especially acute in elementary and middle schools, although among elementary schools, this is less of an issue than it was last year.

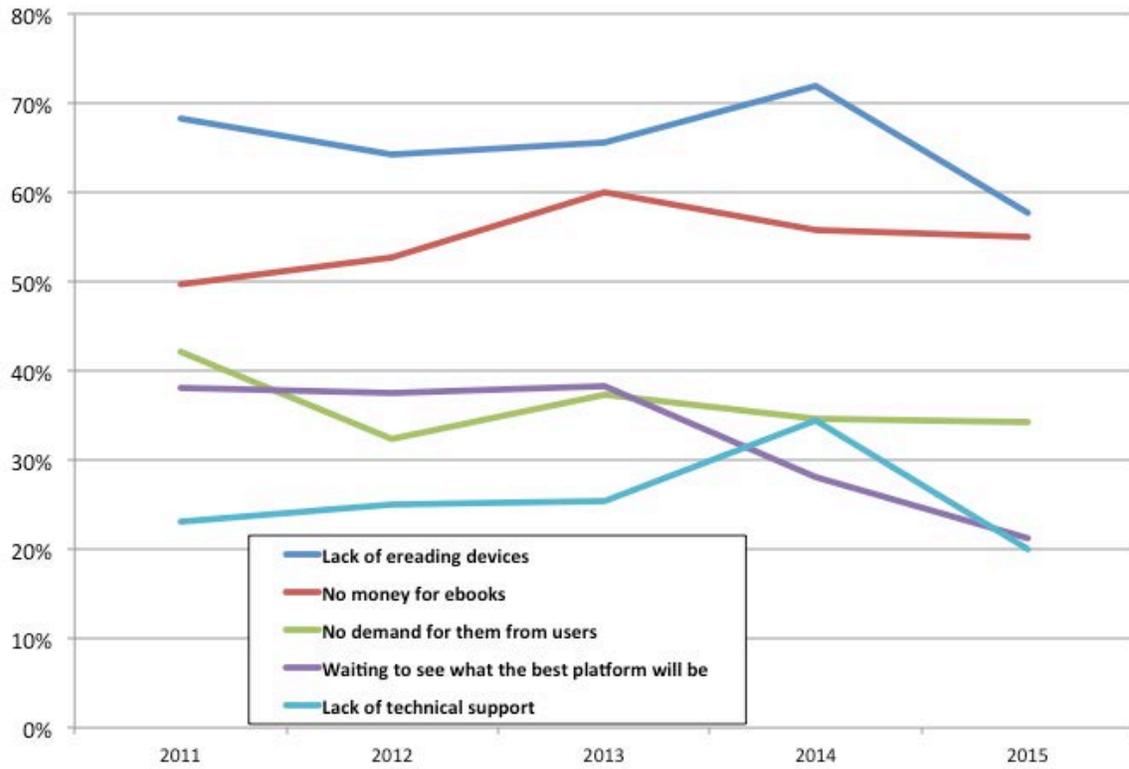
**Table 2. Why doesn't your library offer ebooks?**

*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Lack of ereading devices	61%	64%	46%	59%	51%	56%	61%	65%	50%
No money for ebooks	58%	53%	48%	56%	51%	48%	41%	65%	58%
No demand for them from users	32%	35%	35%	35%	30%	34%	34%	41%	29%
Waiting to see what the best platform will be	20%	22%	35%	19%	27%	32%	39%	6%	18%
Lack of technical support	17%	27%	23%	21%	22%	19%	25%	25%	14%
Don't understand logistics of ebooks	12%	13%	15%	13%	8%	10%	13%	13%	12%
Staff/administrative resistance	7%	7%	10%	8%	8%	11%	7%	9%	6%
Other	9%	20%	10%	10%	8%	10%	4%	7%	15%
We are in the process of adding ebooks	11%	7%	10%	8%	8%	9%	20%	4%	6%

As the time series on the next page indicates, all of these top reasons for not offering ebooks are down, some quite substantially. And yet, the number of school libraries offering ebooks is also down. That seems contradictory, but could be due to several factors. One could be a statistical anomaly in this year's survey sample, or it could be that no single barrier to offering ebooks dominates, and it is for a combination of reasons that the number of school libraries offering ebooks has dropped.

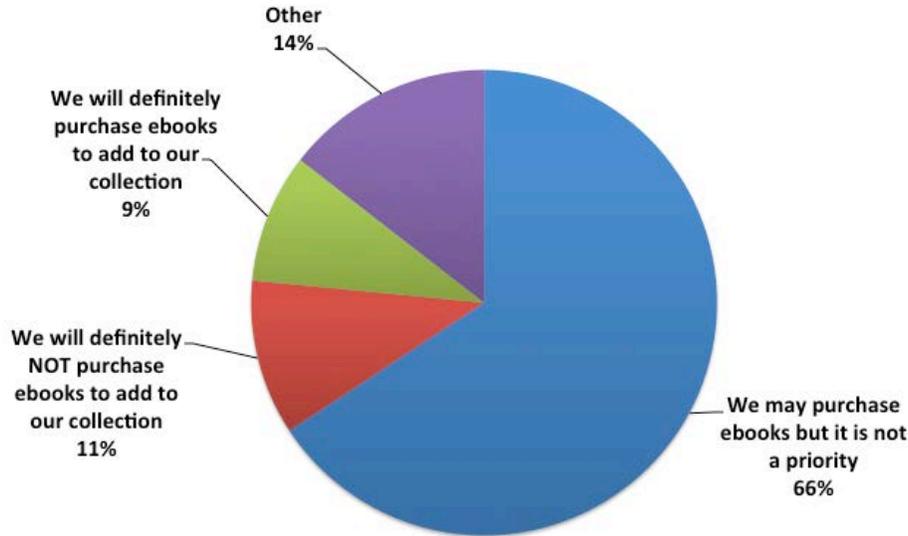
**Figure 4. Why doesn't your library offer ebooks?**  
 % of school libraries, 2011–2015



### Ebook Plans

Of the 44% of school libraries that do not offer ebooks, 11% have categorically ruled out ever offering them, unchanged from last year. On the other hand, 9% said they *definitely* will be adding ebooks to their collections, considerably down from 20%. Two-thirds may offer them in the future, but haven't made it a priority, up from 59% last year.

**Figure 5. What are your library's plans for ebook purchases in the next two years?**  
 % of school libraries, 2015



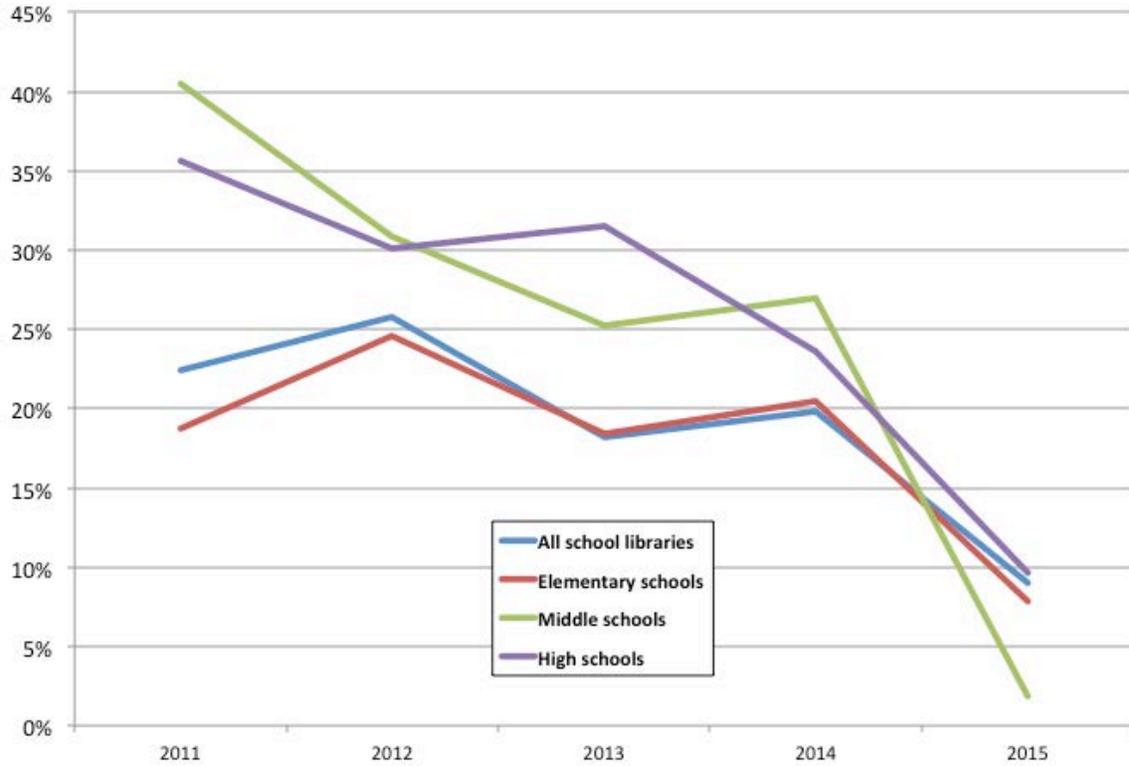
In a complete turnaround from last year, middle schools lead the pack in *not* intending to add ebooks to their collections in the next two years. Last year, they were the ones who were the most committed to adding them. Still, middle and high schools were most fervently adding ebooks, so middle schools without ebooks only represents one-third of all middle school libraries.

**Table 3. What are your library's plans for ebook purchases in the next two years?**  
 % of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
We may purchase ebooks but it is not a priority	70%	67%	71%	67%	65%	71%	69%	70%	58%
We will definitely NOT purchase ebooks to add to our collection	9%	16%	10%	11%	14%	7%	8%	12%	13%
We will definitely purchase ebooks to add to our collection	8%	2%	10%	9%	11%	9%	18%	3%	9%
Other	14%	15%	10%	14%	11%	12%	5%	15%	20%

Over the years, as more and more libraries indicated they will *definitely* be adding ebooks, we knew at some point we are going to hit the wall where no further ebook adoption is likely. Among middle schools and high schools (only one-fourth of which do not offer ebooks at this point), we may be close to reaching that point.

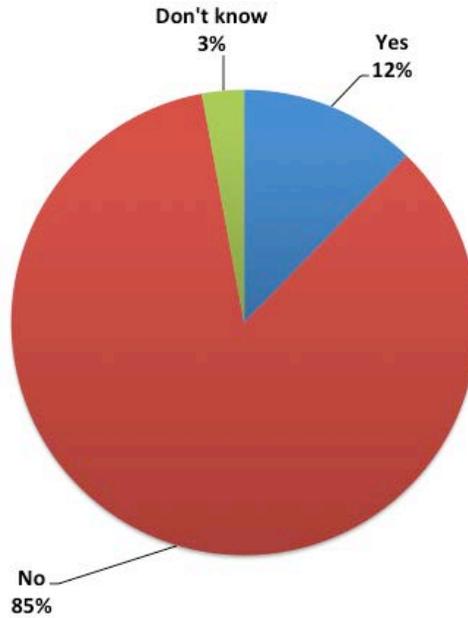
**Figure 6. Will *definitely* purchase ebooks to add to our collection % of school libraries by type of school, 2011–2015**



### Coordinated Ebook Acquisition Plans

A new question we asked this survey concerned whether the institution we surveyed had in place a coordinated, school-wide plan, involving both teachers and librarians, for amassing ebook collections. And, it turns out, they do not: 85% said no, with only 12% saying they had such a plan.

Figure 7. Do you have a coordinated, school-wide plan in place regarding the collection of ebooks by librarians and teachers?  
% of school libraries, 2015



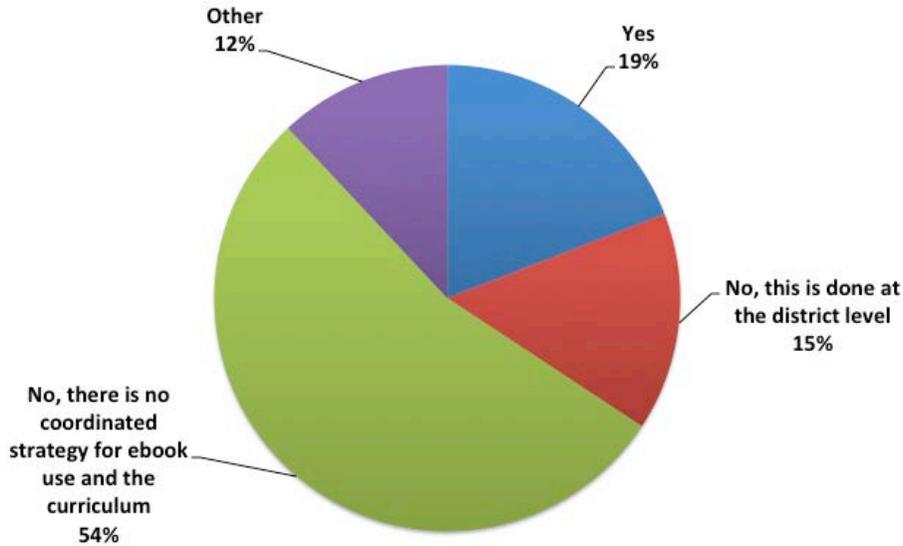
Elementary schools are the most likely to have such a plan in place.

Table 4. Do you have a coordinated, school-wide plan in place regarding the collection of ebooks by librarians and teachers?  
% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Yes	14%	7%	8%	12%	10%	17%	10%	11%	11%
No	83%	91%	88%	84%	88%	80%	88%	88%	84%
Don't know	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%	2%	4%

Digging a little further, to what extent have school librarians met with faculty and department heads to develop some kind of strategy for incorporating ebooks into the curriculum? The answer? Not much; 54% said that “there is no coordinated strategy for ebook use and the curriculum,” while 15% said that this sort of strategizing is done at the district level. Nineteen percent of school libraries do say that such a strategy exists.

**Figure 8. Have you met with faculty and department chairs to develop a strategy for ebook use in the curriculum?**  
*% of school libraries, 2015*



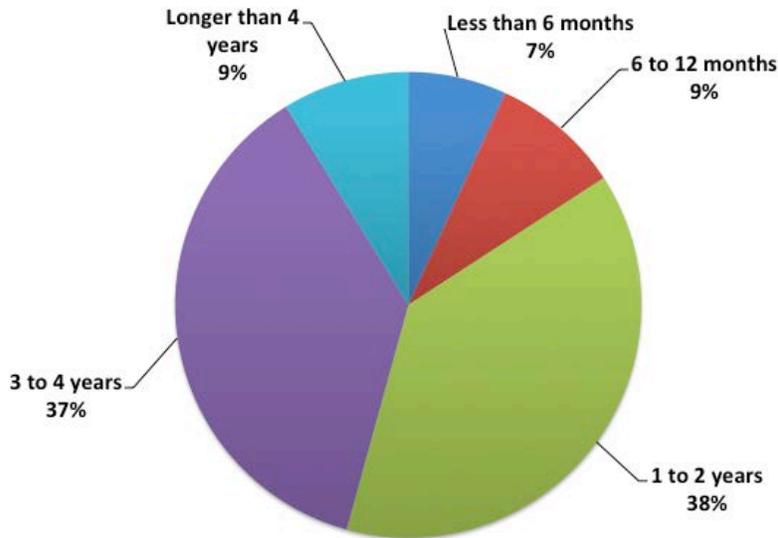
**Table 5. Have you met with faculty and department chairs to develop a strategy for ebook use in the curriculum?**  
*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Yes	18%	19%	18%	19%	20%	24%	19%	12%	21%
No, this is done at the district level	19%	11%	9%	16%	0%	11%	2%	33%	16%
No, there is no coordinated strategy for ebook use and the curriculum	52%	60%	66%	52%	71%	53%	61%	46%	54%
Other	11%	11%	7%	12%	10%	12%	18%	10%	9%

### How Long Libraries Have Offered Ebooks

As of 2015, school libraries have offered ebooks to students, on average, for 28.7 months. Three-fourths of 2015 respondents said that they have carried ebooks for one or more years.

Figure 9. How long has your school offered ebooks?  
 % of school libraries, 2015  
 Mean: 28.7 months  
 Median: 28.1 months



High school libraries were the earliest adopters of ebooks.

Table 6. How long has your school offered ebooks?  
 % of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2012–2015

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
<b>2015</b>									
We do not offer ebooks	50%	33%	26%	42%	47%	40%	39%	53%	43%
Less than 6 months	10%	8%	5%	6%	10%	11%	4%	7%	6%
6 to 12 months	8%	11%	8%	9%	10%	5%	8%	12%	10%
1 to 2 years	43%	32%	27%	38%	32%	39%	44%	41%	33%
3 to 4 years	32%	41%	42%	37%	37%	40%	29%	34%	41%
Longer than 4 years	7%	8%	16%	9%	12%	4%	15%	6%	10%
Mean # months	26.4	29.0	33.5	29.0	29.6	27.3	29.9	26.6	30.0
Median # months	25.7	29.5	35.8	28.4	29.3	27.6	27.7	26.0	31.3
<b>2014</b>									
We do not offer ebooks	38%	27%	20%	35%	29%	34%	36%	50%	25%
Less than 6 months	15%	12%	10%	10%	15%	8%	11%	18%	10%
6 to 12 months	15%	15%	15%	16%	9%	17%	11%	21%	14%
1 to 2 years	43%	45%	37%	44%	24%	49%	48%	40%	40%
3 to 4 years	23%	19%	21%	24%	24%	24%	23%	13%	29%
Longer than 4 years	4%	9%	16%	5%	28%	2%	8%	8%	6%

	<i>Type of School</i>			<i>Public or Private</i>		<i>Geographical Region</i>			
	<i>Elem</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Mid-west</i>	<i>North-east</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>South</i>
Mean # years	1.8	1.9	2.2	1.9	2.6	1.8	2.0	1.6	2.0
<b>2013</b>									
We do not offer ebooks	47%	39%	32%	43%	50%	50%	36%	54%	37%
Less than 6 months	15%	13%	14%	15%	16%	17%	14%	16%	13%
6 to 12 months	11%	12%	11%	12%	4%	8%	16%	10%	13%
1 to 2 years	20%	22%	22%	20%	12%	17%	21%	12%	25%
3 to 4 years	5%	10%	13%	7%	10%	6%	9%	5%	9%
Longer than 4 years	1%	4%	8%	3%	8%	3%	5%	4%	2%
Mean # years	1.3	1.6	1.9	1.4	1.9	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.5
<b>2012</b>									
We do not offer ebooks	67%	50%	37%	60%	51%	71%	54%	67%	51%
Under 6 months	11%	14%	9%	11%	8%	9%	14%	11%	11%
6 to 12 months	10%	12%	14%	11%	7%	7%	10%	9%	15%
1 to 2 years	10%	14%	16%	12%	12%	6%	13%	7%	17%
3 to 4 years	2%	8%	13%	4%	15%	6%	6%	3%	3%
Longer than 4 years	0%	2%	10%	2%	7%	1%	3%	2%	2%
Mean # years	1.0	1.4	2.1	1.3	2.2	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.3

### How Many Ebooks?

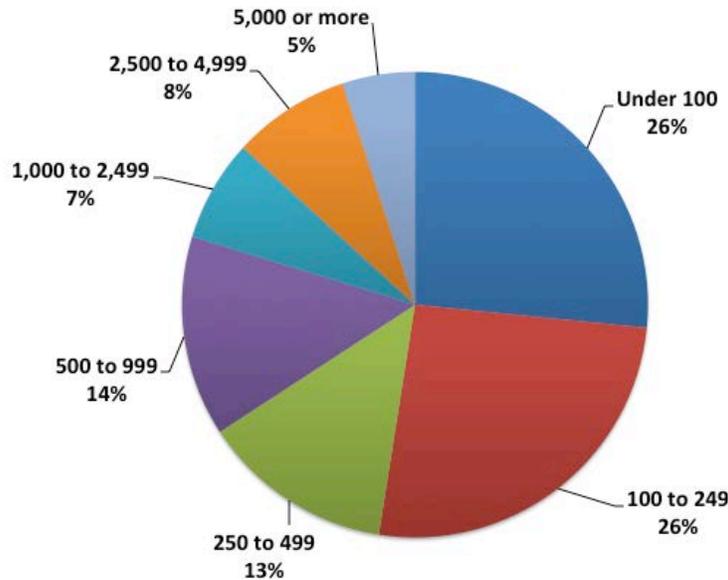
School libraries have access to an average 1,857 ebooks (median 235), up from 1,104 (median 189) last year.

Figure 10. How many ebooks does your library have access to in total, including ebooks licensed through your district, state or consortium?

% of school libraries, 2015

Mean number of ebooks: 1,857

Median number of ebooks: 235



Notably, 13% of high schools boast 5,000 or more electronic titles in their collections, many of these are private high schools.

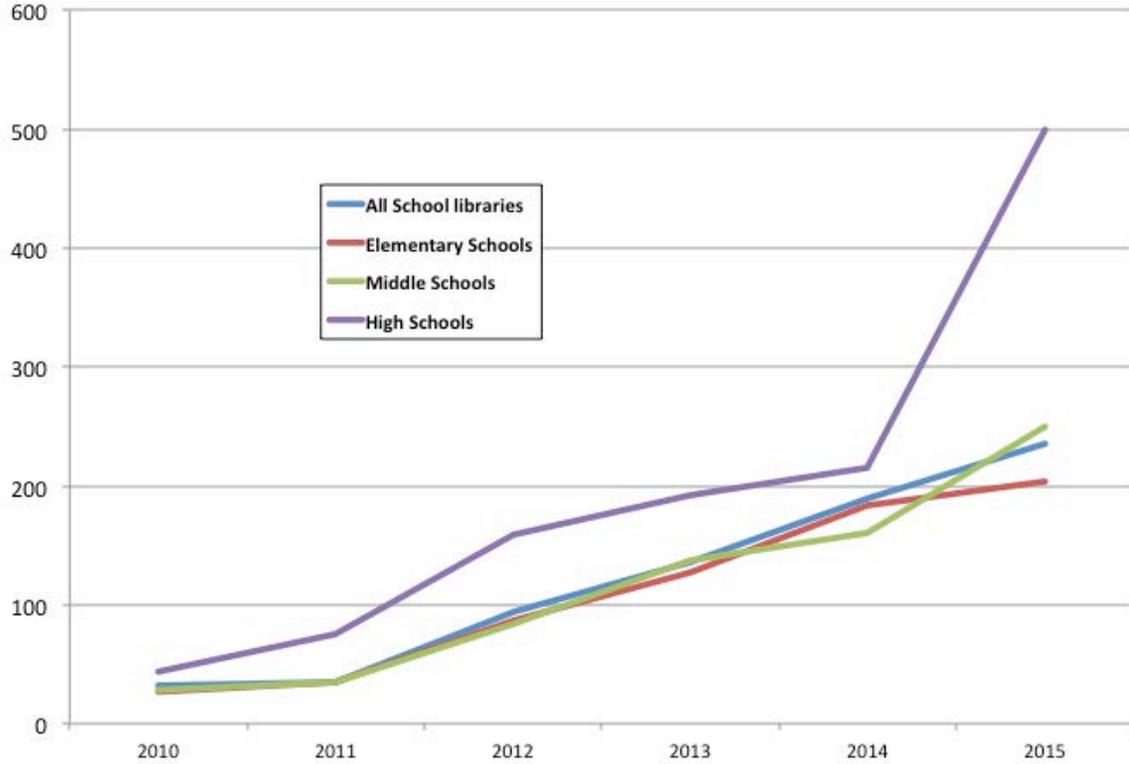
Table 7. How many ebooks does your library have access to in total, including ebooks licensed through your district, state or consortium?

% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Under 100	30%	25%	17%	25%	37%	29%	31%	22%	24%
100 to 249	29%	25%	17%	26%	22%	16%	32%	33%	25%
250 to 499	10%	19%	15%	13%	12%	14%	21%	3%	13%
500 to 999	12%	8%	17%	14%	7%	16%	7%	12%	17%
1,000 to 2,499	6%	9%	12%	8%	2%	5%	2%	12%	10%
2,500 to 4,999	9%	9%	8%	8%	5%	10%	4%	14%	7%
5,000 or more	3%	5%	13%	5%	15%	7%	5%	4%	5%
Mean	997	2,827	5,836	1,909	5,519	1,562	4,024	1,429	932
Median	204	250	500	239	191	311	190	226	277

School libraries' ebook collections have grown substantially over the past six surveys. In 2010, the median number of ebook titles in schools' collections was under 50. Today, that number is 235 for all school grades—and 500 for high schools. The growth curve for most school libraries isn't steep, but it is steady.

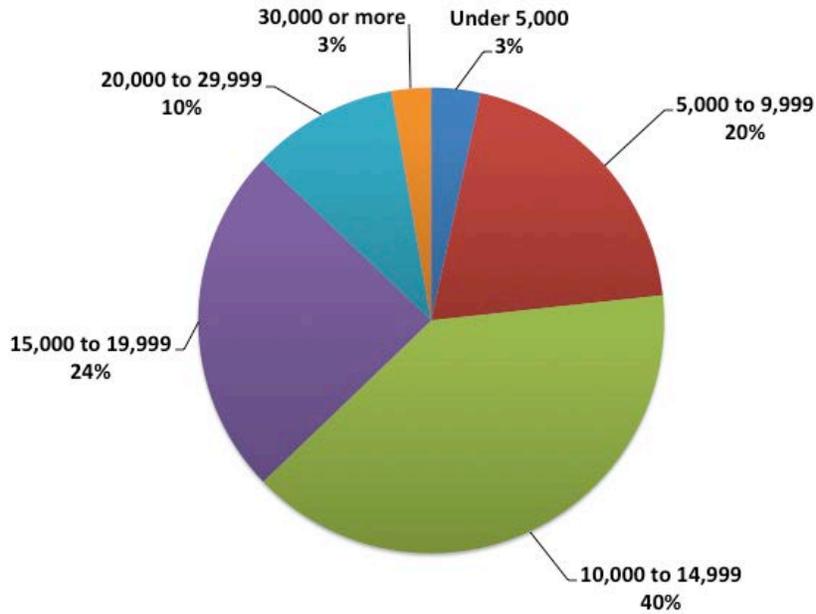
**Figure 11. Median number of ebooks library has access to by type of school, 2010–2015**



### Print Collection

By way of comparison, we added a question this survey about school libraries' print collections and found that schools have on average 14,800 print books (median 13,000). Print predominates: school print book collections dwarf ebook collections 55 to 1.

**Figure 12. For comparison, what is the approximate size of your print book collection? % of school libraries, 2015**  
 Mean number of print books: 14,800  
 Median number of print books: 13,000



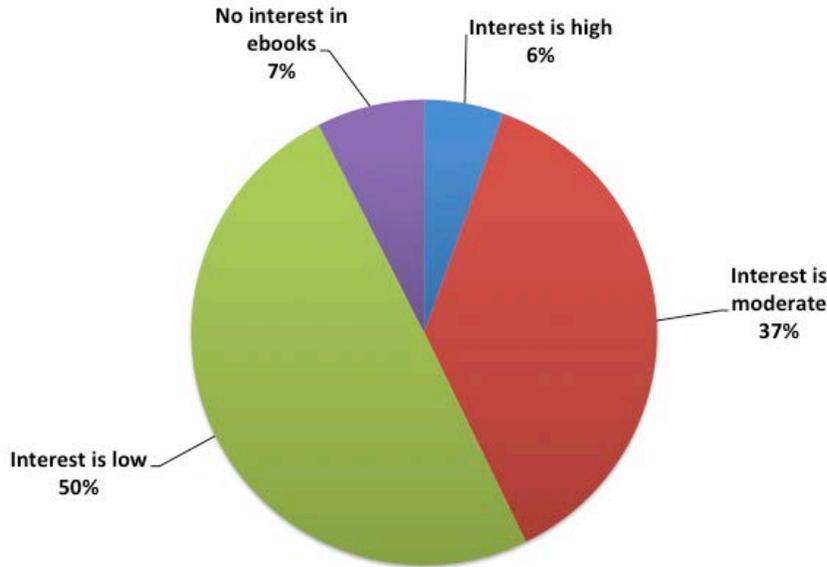
**Table 8. For comparison, what is the approximate size of your print book collection? % of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015**

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Under 5,000	2%	5%	6%	3%	15%	7%	2%	3%	2%
5,000 to 9,999	15%	23%	21%	18%	32%	24%	18%	20%	18%
10,000 to 14,999	42%	33%	37%	41%	17%	34%	37%	39%	44%
15,000 to 19,999	26%	20%	19%	25%	15%	27%	24%	29%	20%
20,000 to 29,999	11%	13%	14%	10%	15%	7%	17%	7%	10%
30,000 or more	3%	5%	3%	3%	7%	1%	1%	3%	5%
Mean (000)	16.7	15.6	14.6	15.1	13.1	11.9	14.3	17.9	15.5
Median (000)	14.0	12.0	12.9	13.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	13.0

### Interest in Ebooks

We added a question to the 2015 survey that cut right to the chase: are students interested in ebooks? The answer is...well...not really. One-half of respondents said that interest is low, while 37% said interest is moderate. “Interest is high” and “no interest in ebooks” are roughly equal at 6% and 7%, respectively.

**Figure 13. How would you describe your students' overall interest in ebooks? % of school libraries, 2015**



Despite the proliferation of ebooks in high schools, student interest in them is actually the lowest of the three school types.

**Table 9. How would you describe your students' overall interest in ebooks? % of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015**

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Interest is high	6%	4%	3%	6%	0%	4%	7%	6%	5%
Interest is moderate	38%	37%	33%	36%	53%	42%	35%	39%	35%
Interest is low	49%	53%	56%	50%	40%	42%	51%	45%	56%
No interest in ebooks	7%	6%	8%	8%	8%	11%	7%	10%	4%

To gain a better perspective on this, we added a follow-up open-ended question about students' interest (or lack of interest) in ebooks. Here is a sampling of responses:

- *“It’s a relatively new option and most kids still prefer tangible books.”*
- *“Large majority of students could [not] care less about reading.”*
- *“Ninth graders are the only grade level that has personal devices. Also, students tend to want to do research with ebooks, but not read for pleasure.”*

- *“A lot of our students come from low income homes and don't have a way to read these titles.”*
- *“Based upon a student ebook survey, the students prefer print for recreational reading. Many did not have devices for reading ebooks or simply want a 'real' book to read from. Most of the ebooks which we have are multi-simultaneous use books which support curriculum standards. They are used by teachers and students for research, but not as much as we would like.”*
- *“Checking out a book is faster than downloading on their device. Students find it faster to locate information in a book than ebook.”*
- *“Convenience. When they check out a print book, it is instant reading. With a print book there are no issues with app downloads, batteries charged, URLs, and learning ereader navigation.”*
- *“Even after we show students how to use ebooks, they are still rarely checked out. Librarian has cut down on buying ebooks, and focuses mainly on real copies.”*
- *“Few students have ebook readers. Those with phones do not want to use their power to read on it. We also only had 8 ebooks last year. This year 200 more were purchased, so I expect interest might increase.”*
- *“High school students would rather have a book in their hand, teachers require them to read a print book for their reports.”*
- *“I am not sure why. Our students prefer ebooks for textbooks because of weight, but they have told me that they tend to prefer hard copy books for pleasure reading.”*
- *“I have asked students and they do not like to read on digital readers, they do not like having to keep up with chargers and be constantly charging, and they do not like the fact that ereading devices can break easily/run out of power on field trips, at athletic competitions, etc.”*
- *“I'm not really sure, but oftentimes if they come in looking for a specific book, I'll say, 'We do have it as an ebook.' More times than not, they'll shrug and say that they'll wait for the book to come back. I wonder if they think of their phones/tablets as a place to play games and interact socially (text messaging and social media), and reading is neither of those things.”*
- *“It amazes me that students that are clearly digital natives are not embracing the ebooks to the extent that I anticipated. The readers in my school will wait for the 'book' in most instances. That said, that is for pleasure reading, they do download class reads.”*
- *“Most kids tell me they would rather read a print book. It's just easier, in some ways. Not everyone has an ereader, and they don't necessarily want to read on phones or tablets. I think more students would use them if I had more chance to talk them up and show kids how to get the app—but they're not really allowed to use phones or iPads in school. I continue to purchase them and market them. I believe they will get used more as time goes on.”*
- *“Our students all have iPads, so I assumed ebooks would be used and enjoyed at our school. However, ebook usage continues to decline. I think they are more trouble to access, and most students say they want the 'real' book, instead.”*
- *“Students believe they can get everything they need from Google or Wikipedia.”*

- “Students seem to want to physically touch the books. Also, I think students view their tablets, phones, etc, as their domain, and wish to keep school materials off them.”
- “Students state a preference for print even when handed a Kindle with loaded books. Some don't want the responsibility of the device. Some like the physicality of flipping print pages and feeling how far along they are. When ebook downloads are offered to personal devices, students don't want to deal with passwords or read on phones (most common device).”
- “The students who are interested in them come from families that can afford to buy them (and the required devices) and so they don't often visit the library unless required for class.”
- “They don't read enough as it is.”
- “They say the Internet distracts them to social media and games. They also say they don't like to read a screen. They say a physical book is easier to read and most of them say that they just really like holding a real book in their hands. They like the physical form of the book and they like to turn a page instead of swiping an e-page. My students will even ask if the ebook I have is also in print because they would rather check out the print copy.”

## Ebook Circulation

In the last complete school year, school library respondents reported a mean circulation of 903 ebooks (median 75). The previous year, respondents reported a mean circulation of 652 ebooks (median 100). On a mean basis, circulation is up, but on a median basis, circulation is down.

For context, we also asked about print book circulation; school libraries circulated, on average, 28,520 print books (median 14,000).

Median circulation of ebooks is roughly equivalent for elementary and high schools. Mean print book circulation declines by half, and by half again from elementary to middle to high schools.

**Table 10. Approximately, what was your total ebook and print book usage circulation for the last complete school year (2013–2014)?**

*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
<b>Ebook circulation</b>									
Mean	539	412	2,357	953	186	350	2,421	316	655
Median	100	48	92	77	64	47	100	30	103
<b>Print book circulation</b>									
Mean	40,646	16,164	6,155	29,859	5,895	50,171	20,007	19,883	24,039
Median	20,022	10,000	4,408	14,500	4,615	12,833	15,000	14,000	14,000

The time series chart on the next page shows that ebook circulation tends to ebb and flow. Circulation had been low and flat until 2013, then it spiked up in 2014, and has now come down a bit. High schools peaked early but are the

only ones seeing circulation rise in the past year. Ebook circulation in elementary schools shot up last survey and even though it dropped this year.

What is happening? The first generation of kids who grew up with smartphones in the house (the iPhone was introduced in 2007) are now entering elementary school and are even more “digital native” than their elders were. Next year, we will start to see the first members of the “tablet generation” (the iPad was introduced in 2010) start elementary school. These kids have—in general—not known a world without portable mobile electronic devices and may be more comfortable with them than their older brothers and sisters. How that will translate to ereading remains to be seen.

One librarian raised an interesting point in the comments. Last winter, especially in the Northeast and Midwest, schools were closed for an abnormally long period of time, and some districts were not able to add enough makeup days in June. To what extent did this affect ebook circulation?

So, we looked it up. In 2014, circulation figures were:

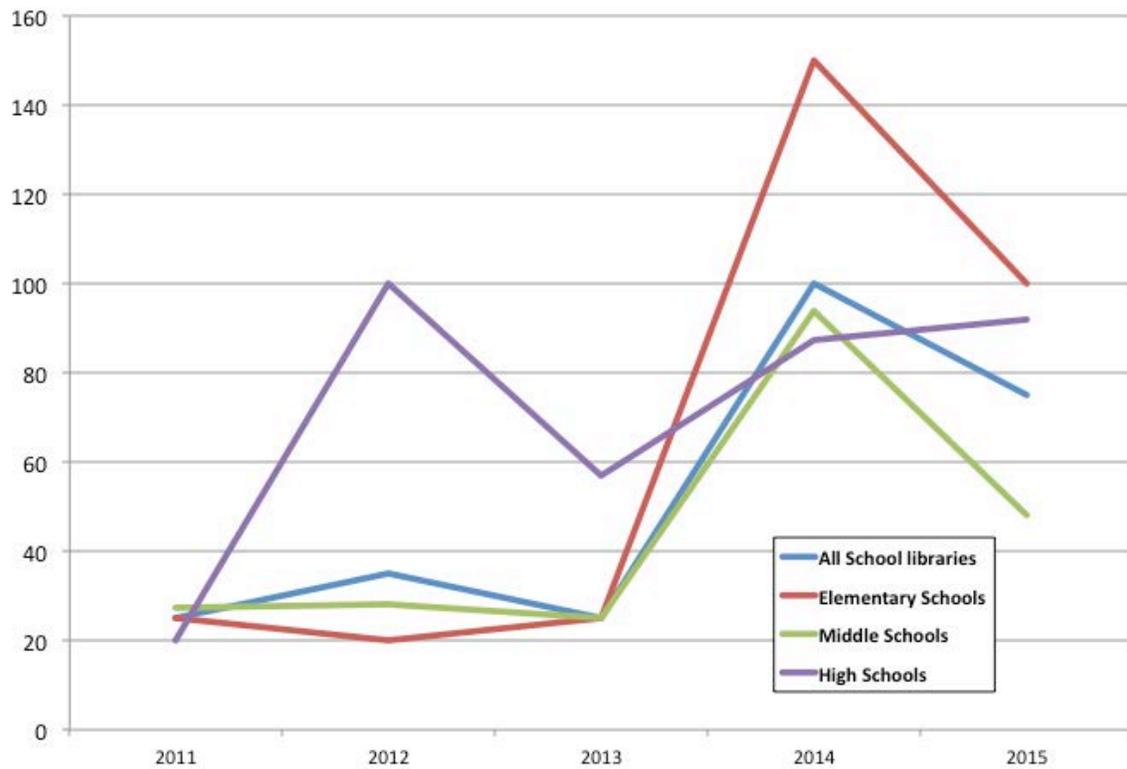
- Northeast: 390 mean/110 median
- Midwest: 1,303 mean/151 median

And in 2015:

- Northeast: 2,421 mean/105 median
- Midwest: 350 mean/47 median

If you are looking at pure circulation figures, it is entirely possible that snow days had *some* impact, but from what we are seeing in other quantitative and qualitative questions, this is not conclusive and there is more going on than just the weather.

**Figure 14. Median ebook usage/circulation for the last school year by type of school, 2011–2015**



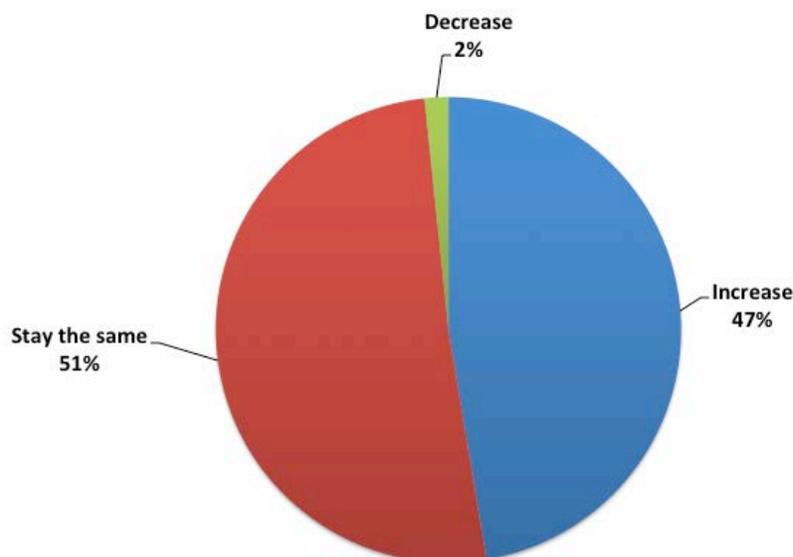
### Changes in Circulation/Usage

How do school library media specialists expect ebook circulation/usage to change over the next year compared to the previous year? Circulation, as we just saw, has been an up and down affair. What do school libraries expect?

Just under one-half (47%) expect ebook circulation to increase, down from 55% last year. Fifty-one percent expect it to stay the same, up from 42% last year. Hardly anyone expects it to decrease.

Overall, our school library respondents expect a net 23.1% increase in circulation next year.

**Figure 15. Compared to last year, do you expect this year's usage of ebooks will increase, stay the same or decrease?**  
*% of school libraries, 2015*



Middle schools expect to see the greatest increase in ebook usage in the coming year (a net 34.6% increase).

**Table 11. Compared to last year, do you expect this year's usage of ebooks will increase, stay the same or decrease?**

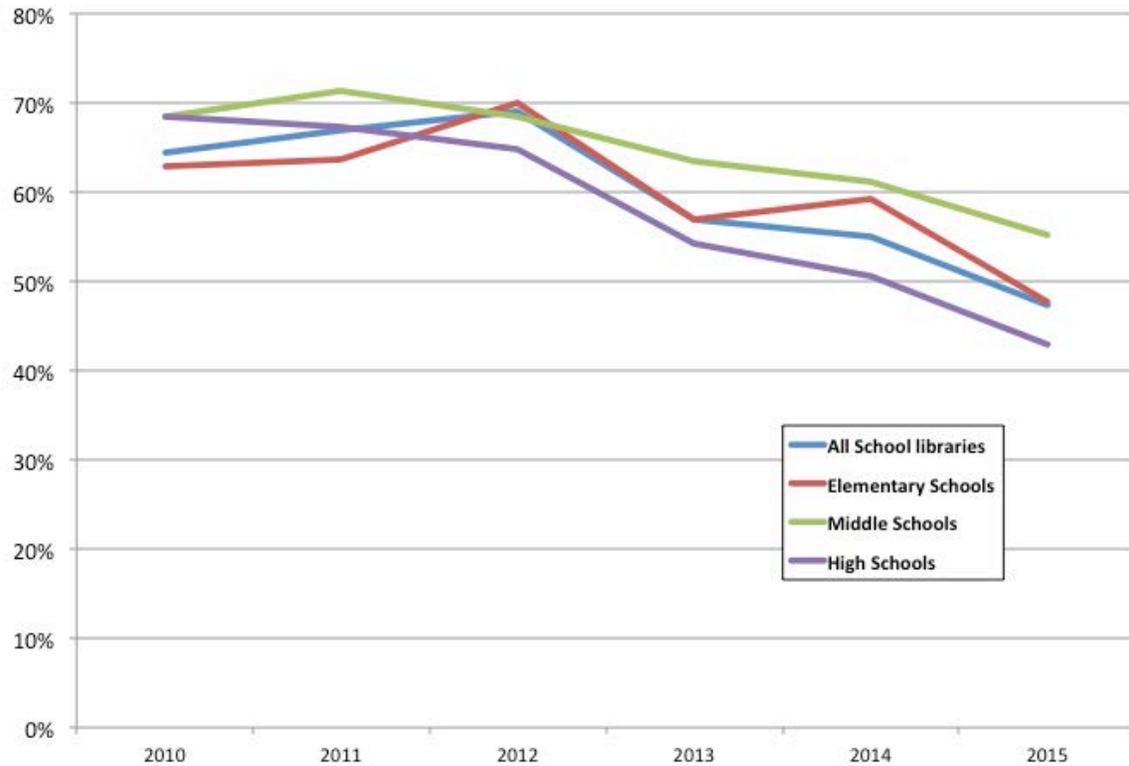
*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Increase	48%	55%	43%	47%	51%	43%	42%	53%	51%
Stay the same	52%	44%	51%	52%	41%	53%	58%	46%	48%
Decrease	0%	1%	6%	1%	8%	4%	1%	1%	1%
Overall % change	20.2%	34.6%	18.7%	23.7%	12.4%	15.9%	28.4%	25.1%	22.7%

For this question, we created two time series figures to gauge the extent to which ebook circulation is expected to change. In the first, we look at respondents who expected ebook circulation/usage to increase. There is a sense that ebook usage has peaked among school library users.

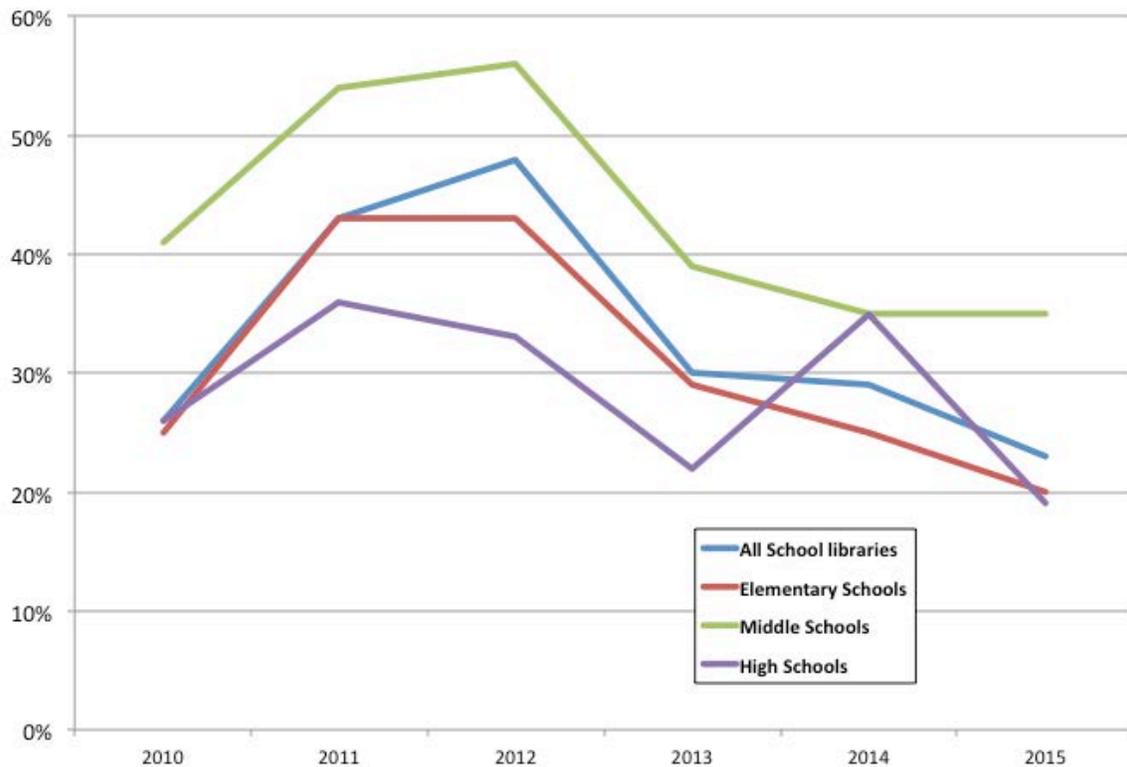
**Figure 16. School libraries that expect ebook circulation/usage to increase in the next year compared to the previous year**

*% of school libraries by type of school, 2010–2015*



In the second time series, we look at the magnitude of that increase, or the overall percent change in ebook circulation/usage. Librarians in middle schools are far more bullish with respect to ebook circulation increases than other school libraries.

Figure 17. Overall percentage change in ebook circulation/usage by type of school, 2010–2015



We added a follow-up, open-ended question to see if school librarians can explain the declines in ebook usage among their students. Here is a sampling of their responses:

- *“Even though I have held two teacher workshops to encourage ebook use, teachers are assigning them less.”*
- *“Bad weather, not being in session for most of January and February. Teachers not requiring the same projects as last year.”*
- *“Classes aren't coming to the library this year because they are busy doing test prep for standardized tests. I don't have the opportunity to publicize the library's online presence or the ebooks. I was circulating Nooks with hundreds of titles on them, but I had an incident in which a student hacked the password and downloaded offensive content, so I have hesitated to continue to circulate them.”*
- *“I have not added new books to the collection nor have I marketed it as much this year due to the disappointing results last year.”*
- *“More students have tried it and still prefer to have the book in their hands.”*
- *“Students are not using their district-issued devices as much as last year, fewer students have district-issued devices because many would not pay the insurance fees now required, our school-wide read was started in the spring instead of fall during a time with less energy and enthusiasm by teachers.”*
- *“The few students that used the ebooks have graduated.”*

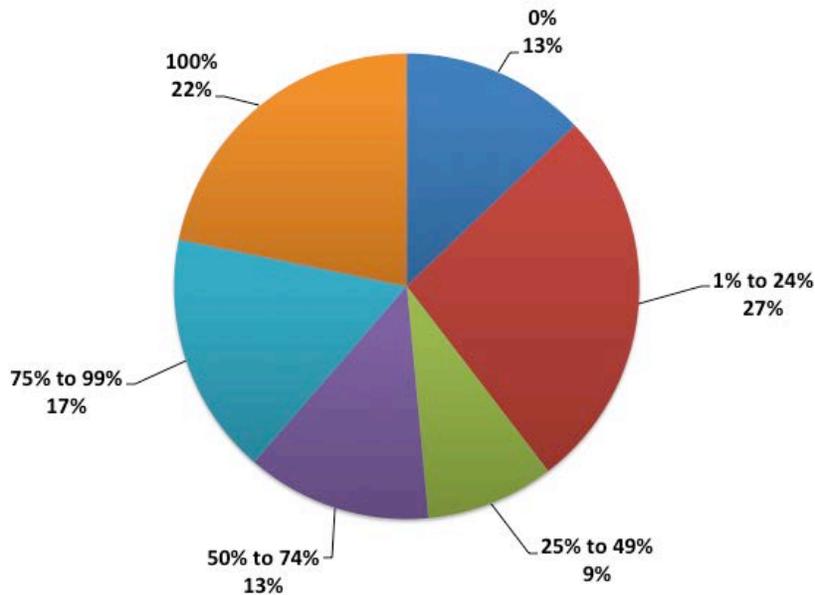
- “Unless required for class work and projects, students no longer see reading as a recreational activity. Social media connectivity outranks time for reading.”
- “We just went 1:1 and students would rather play games on their iPads.”

### Ebook Access

In previous surveys, we found that, in half of libraries, students had unlimited simultaneous access to ebook titles, while the other half were limited to one user at a time. (Different platforms allow different forms of access.)

We changed the question this year to focus on the percentage of the library’s ebook collection that allows for simultaneous access. About half of libraries’ collections are available as simultaneous access.

**Figure 18. What percentage of your library's ebook collection allows for simultaneous access?**  
*all school libraries, 2015*  
**Mean: 48.6%**  
**Median: 50.0%**



Ebooks allowing for simultaneous access represent over half of collections at elementary schools. In middle and high schools, one user at a time is the predominant model.

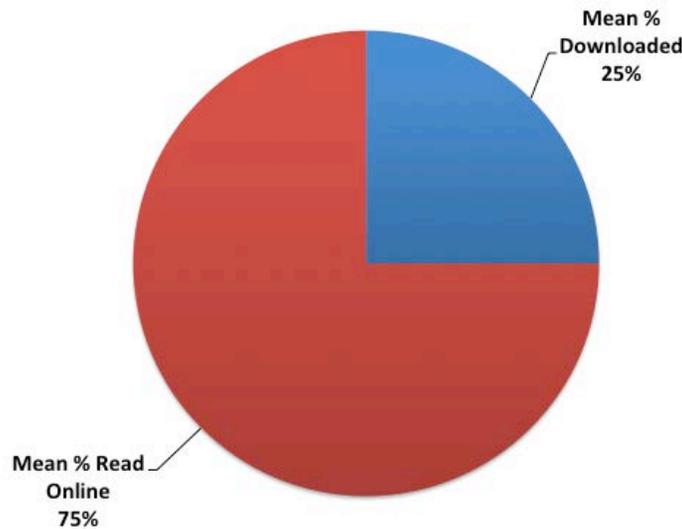
**Table 12. What percentage of your library's ebook collection allows for simultaneous access?  
% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2014–2015**

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
0%	11%	19%	19%	12%	25%	19%	8%	12%	14%
1% to 24%	22%	37%	32%	27%	18%	19%	23%	32%	30%
25% to 49%	7%	7%	10%	9%	5%	11%	8%	9%	8%
50% to 74%	15%	9%	6%	13%	13%	10%	15%	12%	13%
75% to 99%	19%	15%	16%	18%	13%	18%	22%	16%	14%
100%	26%	13%	18%	21%	28%	23%	24%	19%	20%
Mean %	54.2	37.2	40.1	48.7	48.4	49.5	55.9	47.1	44.5
Median %	50.0	20.0	20.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	70.0	40.0	35.0

**Read Online or Downloaded**

A new question added to the 2015 survey asked what percent of circulated ebooks are read online and what percentage are downloaded. One-fourth of school libraries' ebooks are downloaded, while three-fourths are read online.

**Figure 19. Of the library's ebooks that were borrowed in the last year, what percent would you estimate were downloaded and what percent were read online?  
all school libraries, 2015**



The extra step of downloading ebooks to a device rather than reading them online increases with school level.

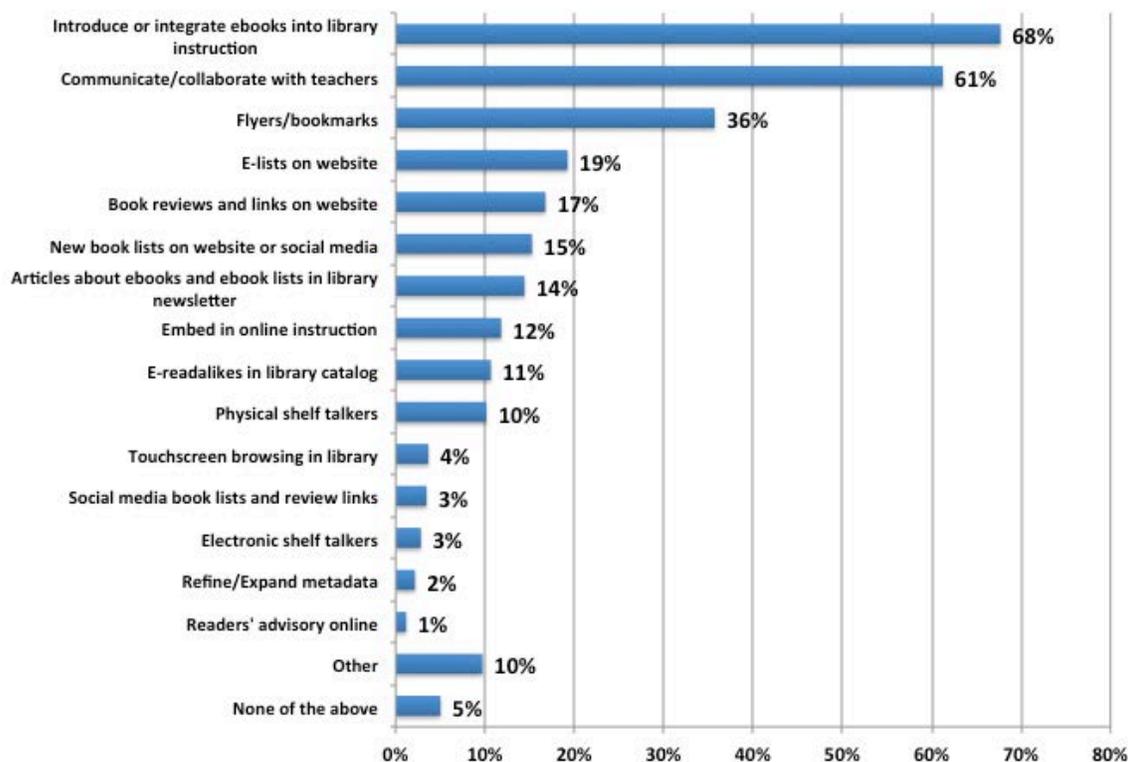
**Table 13. Of the library's ebooks that were borrowed in the last year, what percent would you estimate were downloaded and what percent were read online?  
% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2014**

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Mean % Downloaded	20%	38%	41%	24%	52%	26%	20%	27%	28%
Mean % Read Online	81%	62%	59%	76%	49%	76%	80%	73%	73%

## Facilitating Discovery

How do school libraries facilitate discovery or promote their ebook collections? The top method, selected by 68% of respondents, is “introduce or integrate ebooks into library instruction.” Sixty-one percent “communicates/collaborates with teachers,” and 36% use old-fashioned flyers and bookmarks.

**Figure 20. How are you facilitating ebook discovery in your library?**  
% of school libraries, 2015



**Table 14. How are you facilitating ebook discovery in your library?**  
% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Introduce or integrate ebooks into library instruction	71%	68%	59%	69%	46%	65%	77%	69%	62%
Communicate/collaborate with teachers	58%	62%	65%	62%	51%	51%	67%	57%	66%
Flyers/bookmarks	29%	39%	44%	37%	22%	29%	34%	41%	38%
E-lists on website	16%	19%	26%	20%	22%	20%	19%	16%	21%
Book reviews and links on website	14%	15%	21%	17%	10%	23%	20%	6%	17%
New book lists on website or social media	11%	21%	26%	15%	22%	22%	8%	11%	18%

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Articles about ebooks and ebook lists in library newsletter	17%	14%	12%	15%	10%	14%	9%	12%	20%
Embed in online instruction	11%	12%	18%	12%	22%	6%	13%	20%	10%
E-readalikes in library catalog	12%	9%	8%	11%	10%	11%	8%	9%	13%
Physical shelf talkers	9%	16%	12%	10%	17%	10%	4%	14%	12%
Touchscreen browsing in library	3%	5%	3%	4%	5%	0%	1%	8%	5%
Social media book lists and review links	3%	4%	6%	4%	2%	2%	3%	2%	6%
Electronic shelf talkers	2%	4%	4%	3%	7%	4%	2%	0%	5%
Refine/Expand metadata	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	0%	3%
Readers' advisory online	0%	3%	5%	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Other	10%	13%	11%	9%	15%	14%	4%	12%	9%
None of the above	6%	4%	4%	5%	10%	10%	4%	5%	2%

### OPAC Discoverability

Do ebooks appear in search results on the library’s general online public access catalog (OPAC)? The majority of respondents (91%) said that, yes, ebooks could be discovered via the library’s OPAC.

Figure 21. Are ebooks discoverable through your library's general OPAC? % of school libraries, 2013–2015

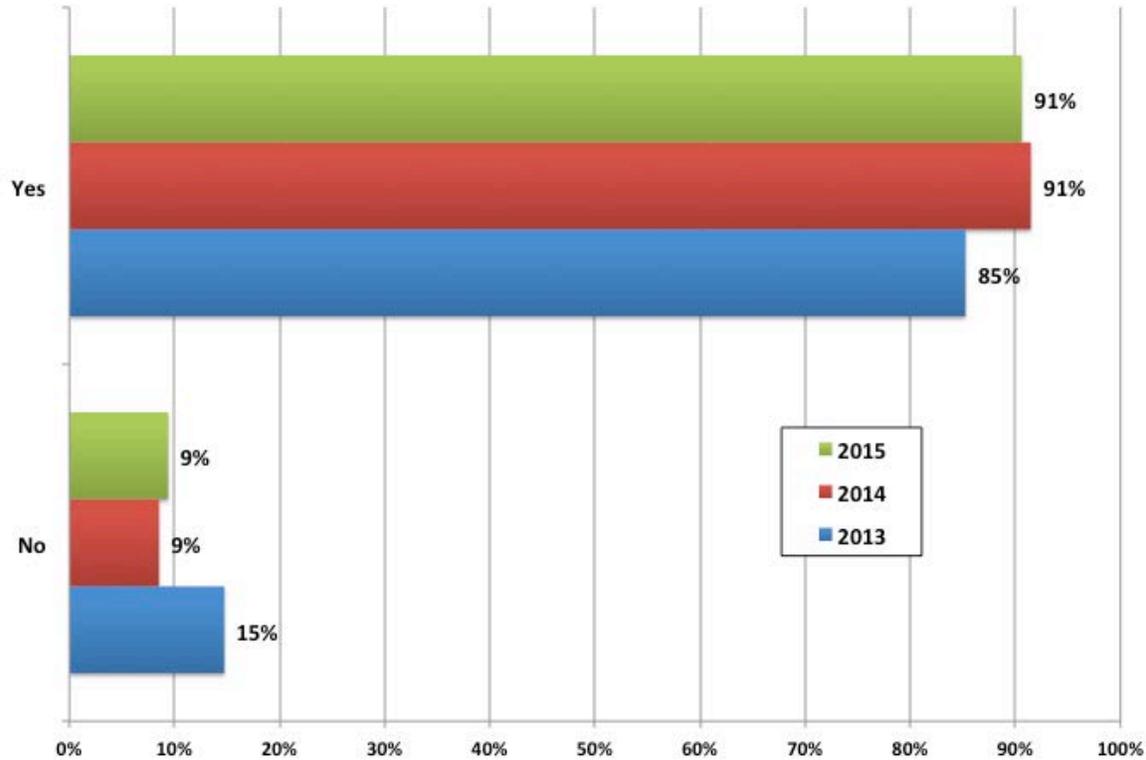


Table 15. Are ebooks discoverable through your library’s general OPAC? % of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2013–2015

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region				
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South	
<b>2015</b>										
Yes	90%	93%	88%	91%	78%	93%	92%	94%	87%	
No	10%	7%	12%	9%	22%	7%	8%	6%	13%	
<b>2014</b>										
Yes	91%	84%	87%	93%	72%	90%	90%	87%	94%	
No	9%	16%	13%	7%	28%	10%	10%	13%	6%	
<b>2013</b>										
Yes	83%	79%	81%	86%	68%	84%	79%	88%	88%	
No	17%	21%	19%	14%	32%	16%	21%	12%	12%	

## In Summary

The number of school libraries offering ebooks has dropped down to 56%, which is where it had been in 2013. And less than 10% of school libraries that don't currently offer them say they definitely will be adding ebooks. Why the lost ground? It appears to be a combination of lack of resources (money and ereaders) and lack of interest on the part of students. Less than half of libraries told us that students have a high or moderate interest in reading ebooks, and interest was actually the highest in high schools. This has translated to low rates of ebook circulation, and the lowest levels of anticipated ebook circulation growth in the history of our survey.

Reading the respondent comments—a sampling of which starts below—one finds a peculiar irony: it is the adults who are far more excited by and interested in a new technology than kids. Usually it works the other way around.

One respondent mentioned that his or her middle school students were hooked on WattPad ([www.wattpad.com](http://www.wattpad.com)) which is a “fiction social network.” They prefer to read self-published stories, similar to how kids flock to YouTube, rather than watching shows via the television. This trend might be something to keep our eye on in the future.

## In Their Own Words

Here is a selection of write-in comments from our survey respondents (lightly edited).

- *“Acquiring ebooks and integrating the use of them in school curriculum and extending them to outside of school hours is an exciting adventure. I look forward to improving my ability to use this new technology. Knowing that this is more and more available for students to access and use at home is a wonderful thing...it will certainly inspire many to read more and make resources more available for them when they are doing their school work away from school.”*
- *“Adults think that young students will love the ebooks. I find that not to be true but I cannot figure out why!”*
- *“At the local level, teachers and students do not want ebooks most of the time. Upper administration doesn't see that and thinks EVERYTHING should be ebooks—they want us to replace everything we have in print. Completely unrealistic, cost prohibitive, and I would lose the breadth and depth that I have with print resources. It would also create a larger divide between the haves and have nots, along with denying access for students who desperately need the specific resources to support their needs, i.e. English learners.”*
- *“Content drives my purchasing decisions regardless of format. No student chooses to use a resource just because of its format. I would like to see more curriculum-related titles for middle school students—80 to 120 pages, lots of graphics and pictures, good sized font. It would be interesting for someone to do a study of whether ebooks are an incentive for reluctant readers or not. Are they really better for these students than printed books and if so, why? Students*

*spend so much time on devices now, it seems they like to take a mental break and read a physical book (which can't beep at them) instead."*

- *"Ebooks are not catching on as a popular reading platform in my school. I am surprised by this and I think there are many reasons behind it. The greatest barrier is the platform user interface. It is difficult to log in for my young students. They can't find ebooks easily and are so confused with the tools that appear while they are trying to read. I do not plan to spend any budget monies on ebooks in the next year. I don't find that this is money well spent."*
- *"Children and adults still love the tactile nature of print, and the more soothing experience for the eyes. Electronic material is still too harsh for many."*
- *"Ebooks for recreational reading at the elementary level is very difficult to manage in a high-poverty school without existing technology for one-to-one device access. Without student personal devices, ebooks are an excellent resource for nonfiction and informational texts to supplement the curriculum."*
- *"Even my four-year-olds would rather have a book than an ebook. Interactive ebooks fare a little better, but it depends on the size of the screen. There is very little interest even while I am demonstrating them."*
- *"I am eager to begin collecting ebooks for next year, I am just waiting on approval of a proposal from my school board. A larger collection combined with a solid marketing and training plan will increase ebook usage."*
- *"I am in a 6–8 grade school. My students are hooked on WattPad and would prefer to read that than ebooks for the most part. Also, how does one grow an ebook collection with so many titles being needed to be repurchased each year due to the single-year purchase/license? I feel as if I will never be able to grow my ebooks or have enough funds to grow this part of the collection."*
- *"I am totally committed to the use of ebooks, but my ongoing dilemma is how to increase interest and circulation."*
- *"I feel that ebooks are an important part of my library as they are becoming more and more convenient for readers. I would like to see my school be able to assign tablets to students, at least in the junior high, (I'm in a K–8 district) for etextbooks, as well."*
- *"I had really thought our middle schoolers would love the ebooks but they still prefer the print books. They say they don't find it as interesting. And there is something about turning those pages..."*
- *"I love how quickly they are delivered and ready for circulation. They always return. They are never damaged. I don't have to deal with fines and/or fees. Patrons can access them 24/7, including weekends, holidays, and summer!"*
- *"I need to do more to get them to circulate. I don't read ebooks; I prefer paper. Could that be coloring my attitude??? I've got to do more training of students and teachers. I wish our county would get [Follett] Brytewave working."*
- *"I usually suggest students try to take ebooks from the public library. It is easier and they have availability of popular titles. I have found that the school library ebook availability is too unwieldy. We offer about five vendors, and each would need different apps and access codes. It is a mess. I also think that many of the vendors do not offer the popular authors, or if they do, you need to re-purchase the books each year, which is not always cost affective in the public school"*

system. Lastly, not all of our high school students have access to easy-to-carry, school-owned ereading devices. The whole process is a mess. I would rather teach students how to use their personal devices and check them out from the public library. The public library can afford OverDrive. My other option would be to see if I can pay into the public library system's audio and ebook service (ONE service)."

- "I want to have more ebooks, although price is prohibitive. I want multi-access for most titles. I want to have the ebook and the print version available to readers to encourage low-level readers (most of our students). I am trying to organize this. In process now."
- "I was all for getting ebooks until I saw circulation stats. Yikes. What a waste to toss out books to make room for online materials no one uses."
- "I was told by my principal two years ago after I received \$4,000 from the Laura Bush grant to purchase ebooks that I should use any future monies to purchase print books since our shelves needed replenishing. The majority of our ebooks are purchased on the district level by our media coordinator and made available to all of the schools in the district. Also, each school contributes \$1,000 of their budget to digital subscription resources that are made available to all of the schools."
- "We are an enormous, largely non-English speaking, inner-city school w/ dramatically low achievement level scores. Literacy rates are v-e-r-y low. It's almost comical to be discussing ebooks when neither the school nor the kids have sufficient e-devices to support developing an ebook collection of any size. Our print collection is dreadfully out-of-date and largely in disrepair. All you folks with idealistic thoughts of the wonders ebooks might work in situations like ours ought to get out of your offices and lovely schools or off your campuses and out here in the trenches to see what life is really like for these kids and teachers. Ebooks...in your dreams!"

## 2. COLLECTIONS AND CATEGORIES

This section examines the specific ebooks held by the school libraries who responded to our survey. What categories and genres are in demand by school library users and students?

### Fiction vs. Nonfiction

We asked school libraries to estimate what percentage of their ebook collections is made up of fiction vs. nonfiction titles. Nonfiction comprises more than one-half (55%) of school libraries' ebook collections, across all school grade levels, while fiction accounts for 45%. These numbers are virtually unchanged from the previous two years.

Figure 22. Approximately what percent of the ebooks you have available are fiction titles versus nonfiction titles?  
all school libraries, 2015

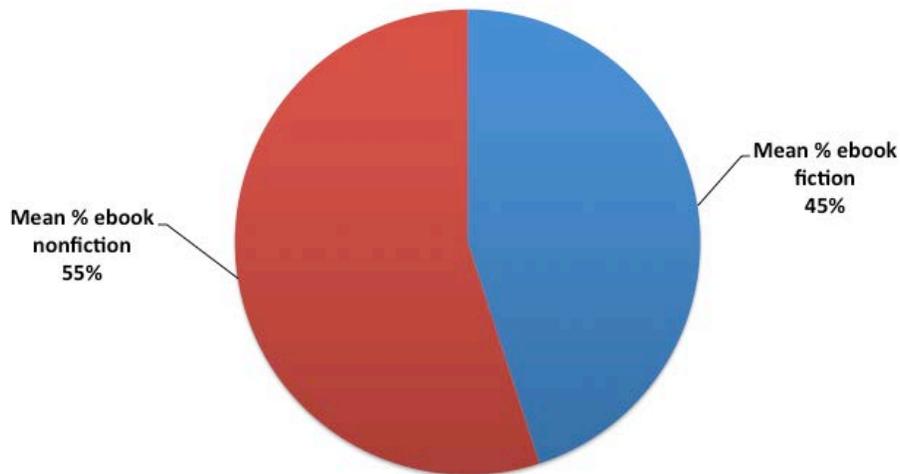


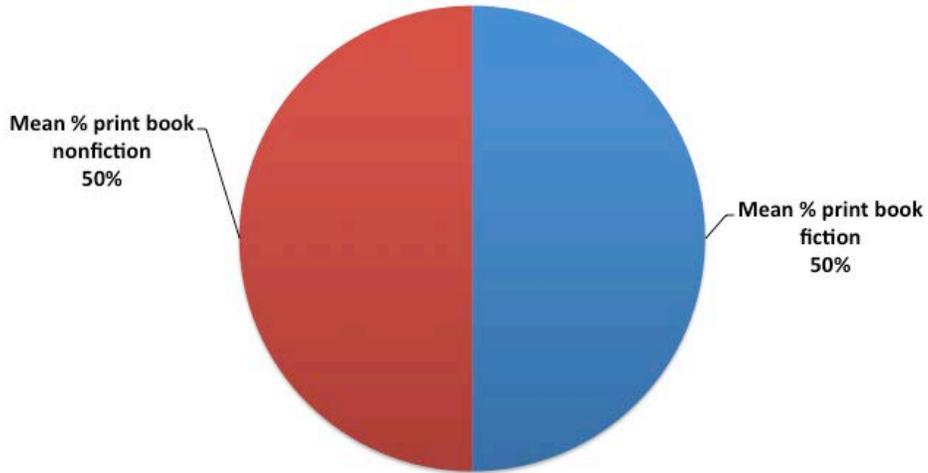
Table 16. Approximately what percent of the ebooks you have available are fiction titles versus nonfiction titles?  
school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2013–2015

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
<b>2015</b>									
Mean % Fiction	41%	53%	49%	45%	48%	38%	44%	50%	48%
Mean % Nonfiction	59%	47%	51%	55%	52%	62%	56%	50%	52%
<b>2014</b>									
Mean % Fiction	43%	52%	39%	44%	32%	55%	37%	42%	41%
Mean % Nonfiction	57%	48%	61%	56%	68%	45%	63%	58%	59%
<b>2013</b>									
Mean % Fiction	44%	48%	41%	43%	39%	52%	36%	43%	42%
Mean % Nonfiction	56%	52%	59%	57%	61%	48%	64%	57%	58%

For the sake of comparison, school libraries' *print* book collections comprise a precise 50/50 split between fiction and nonfiction. This is unchanged from last year.

**Figure 23. Approximately what percent of the print books you have available are fiction titles versus nonfiction titles?**

*all school libraries, 2015*



**Table 17. Approximately what percent of the print books you have available are fiction titles versus nonfiction titles?**

*school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2014–2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
<b>2015</b>									
Mean % Fiction	50%	52%	48%	41%	50%	39%	50%	48%	52%
Mean % Nonfiction	50%	48%	52%	59%	50%	61%	50%	52%	48%
<b>2014</b>									
Mean % Fiction	52%	51%	43%	51%	42%	51%	46%	51%	52%
Mean % Nonfiction	48%	49%	57%	49%	58%	49%	54%	49%	48%

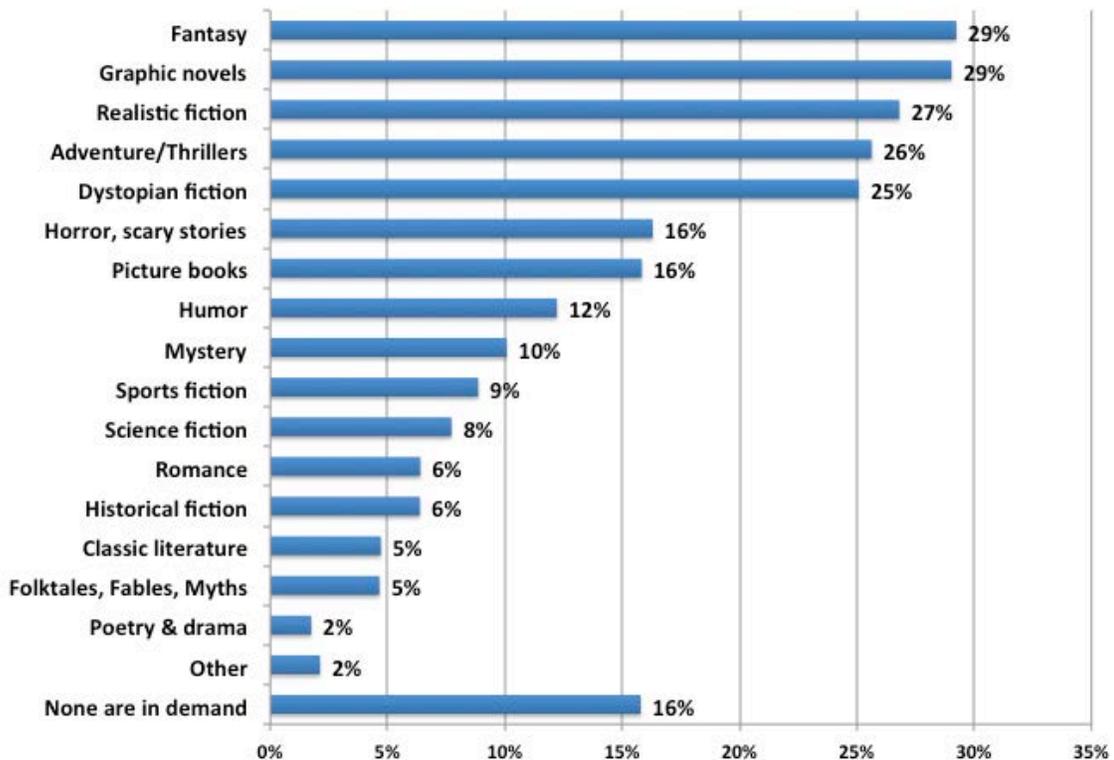
## In-Demand Ebook Genres

In this year's survey, we drilled deeper into the general categories and asked about specific genres. We divided the results by fiction and nonfiction.

### Fiction

Last year, the top fiction genre reported by school library respondents was "realistic fiction." Students have had enough reality, it seems, as "fantasy" and "graphic novels" tied as the top ebook genres this year, according to 29% of school libraries. "Realistic" fiction drops to number two at 27%.

Figure 24. What *fiction* ebook genres or categories are most in demand in your library? % of school libraries, 2015



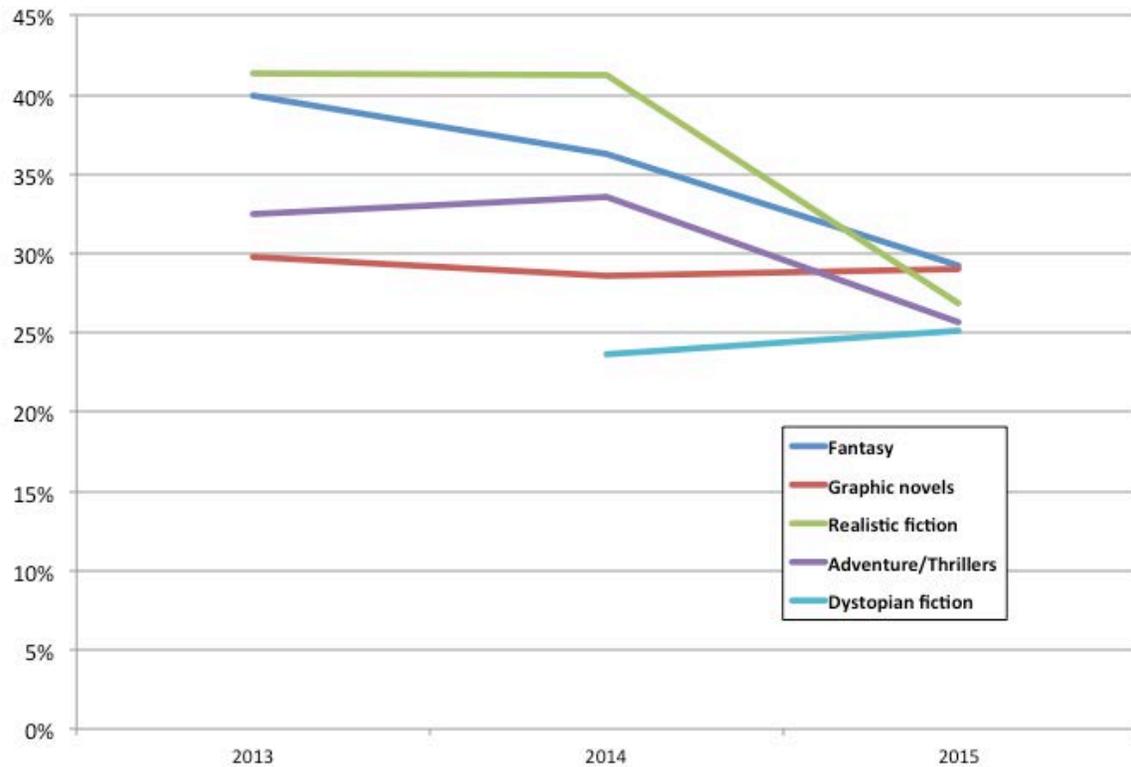
The top fiction genres by school level:

- Elementary schools: Graphic novels, adventure/thrillers, and picture books.
- Middle schools: Dystopian fiction, fantasy, realistic fiction.
- High schools: Dystopian fiction, fantasy, realistic fiction.

**Table 18. What *fiction* ebook genres or categories are most in demand in your library?  
% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015**

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Fantasy	22%	41%	39%	29%	43%	19%	26%	35%	35%
Graphic novels	35%	23%	16%	30%	15%	30%	24%	35%	28%
Realistic fiction	20%	32%	39%	26%	28%	30%	32%	23%	24%
Adventure/Thrillers	27%	23%	16%	26%	15%	29%	17%	23%	30%
Dystopian fiction	12%	50%	52%	25%	40%	17%	24%	30%	29%
Horror, scary stories	20%	19%	8%	17%	5%	26%	11%	14%	14%
Picture books	26%	4%	1%	16%	8%	16%	25%	17%	9%
Humor	16%	7%	1%	13%	5%	19%	13%	8%	9%
Mystery	9%	10%	10%	10%	10%	8%	7%	7%	15%
Sports fiction	8%	14%	7%	9%	8%	4%	8%	14%	10%
Science fiction	5%	11%	10%	7%	13%	11%	6%	3%	9%
Romance	2%	9%	20%	6%	13%	6%	4%	3%	10%
Historical fiction	7%	5%	4%	6%	10%	7%	6%	3%	8%
Classic literature	4%	5%	9%	5%	13%	2%	7%	3%	5%
Folktales, Fables, Myths	7%	0%	1%	4%	3%	1%	6%	4%	7%
Poetry & drama	2%	0%	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%	0%	4%
Other	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%	0%	1%	2%
None are in demand	16%	12%	16%	16%	15%	17%	19%	22%	10%

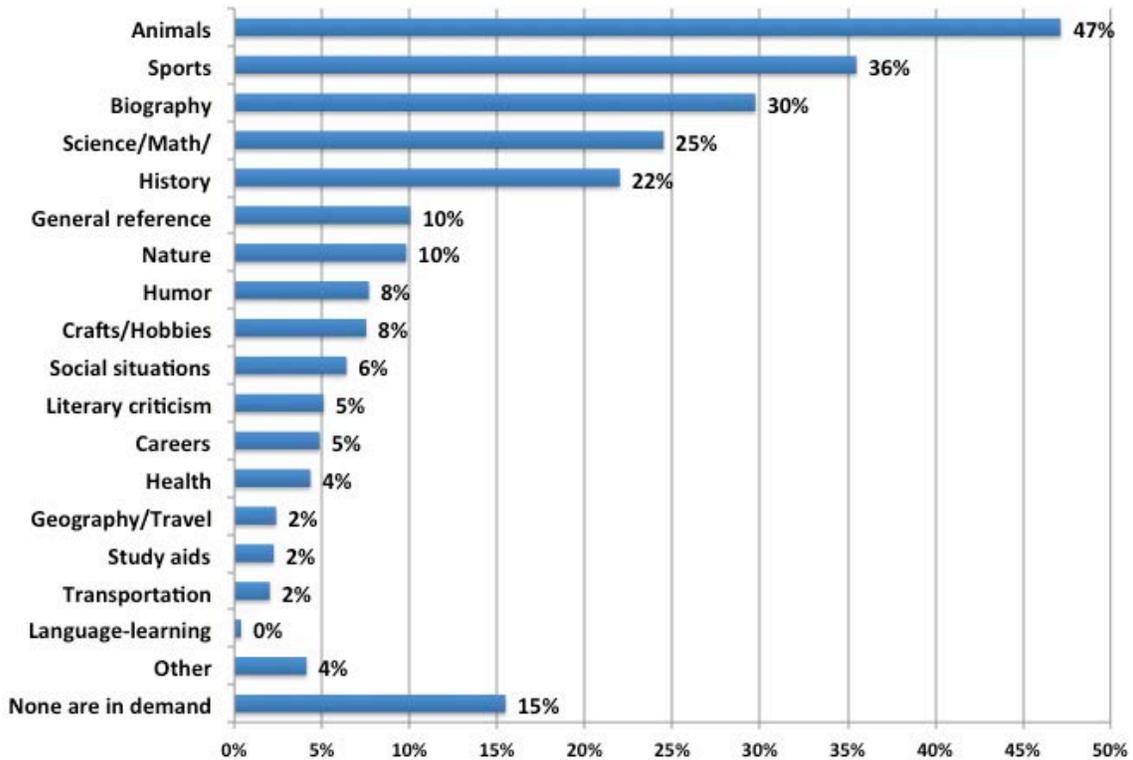
**Figure 25. Most in-demand fiction genres or categories  
% of school libraries, 2013–2015**



## Nonfiction

In terms of in-demand nonfiction genres, “animals” continues to be number one, selected by 47% of school library respondents. A distant second is “sports” (36%), followed by “biography” (30%).

Figure 26. What *nonfiction* ebook genres or categories are most in demand in your library? % of school libraries, 2015



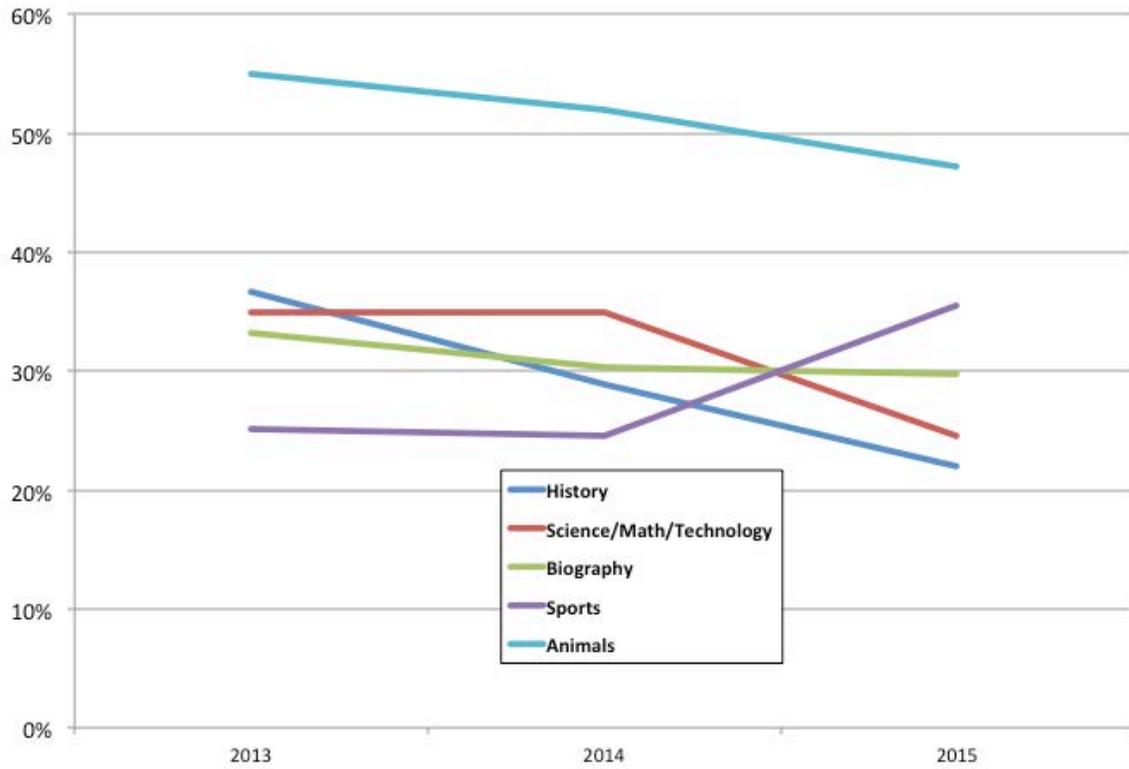
The top nonfiction genres by school level:

- Elementary schools: Animals, sports, biography, and science/math/technology.
- Middle schools: Sports, history, biography, animals, and science/math/technology.
- High schools: History, biography, literary criticism.

**Table 19: What nonfiction ebook genres or categories are most in demand in your library?  
% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015**

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Animals	67%	21%	5%	48%	23%	49%	43%	51%	47%
Sports	43%	36%	19%	37%	25%	41%	29%	33%	37%
Biography	29%	31%	26%	30%	20%	29%	36%	23%	30%
Science/Math/ Technology	29%	21%	16%	25%	20%	34%	32%	22%	15%
History	13%	31%	42%	20%	53%	16%	30%	14%	26%
General reference	4%	12%	22%	9%	20%	4%	12%	8%	14%
Nature	13%	5%	0%	10%	5%	12%	8%	17%	5%
Humor	10%	4%	1%	8%	0%	7%	5%	9%	10%
Crafts/Hobbies	10%	6%	2%	8%	8%	7%	10%	8%	6%
Social situations	2%	5%	19%	6%	8%	5%	6%	3%	10%
Literary criticism	0%	4%	23%	4%	20%	4%	7%	3%	6%
Careers	2%	4%	15%	5%	3%	10%	2%	1%	5%
Health	3%	5%	9%	5%	3%	3%	5%	5%	4%
Geography/Travel	2%	3%	2%	2%	8%	2%	4%	1%	3%
Study aids	0%	2%	8%	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%	3%
Transportation	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%	2%	0%	4%	3%
Language-learning	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Other	2%	5%	7%	4%	8%	4%	1%	1%	8%
None are in demand	14%	22%	16%	16%	13%	17%	18%	23%	10%

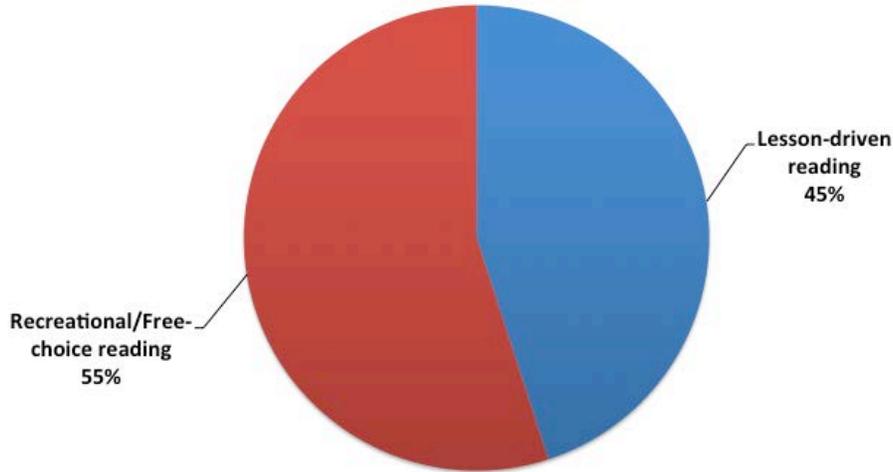
**Figure 27. Most in-demand nonfiction genres or categories  
% of school libraries, 2013–2015**



### Academic or Pleasure Reading

Last year, we asked whether ebook collections were used for pleasure reading, for academic purposes, or both. We revised the question this year, and learned that 55% of students’ ebook usage is recreational while 45% is lesson-driven.

Figure 28. Approximately what percent of your ebook usage is driven by lessons/assigned reading/research and what percent is driven by recreational/free-choice reading? all school libraries, 2015



Middle school students are the most likely to use school ebook collections for pleasure reading, while elementary and high school students use them about equally.

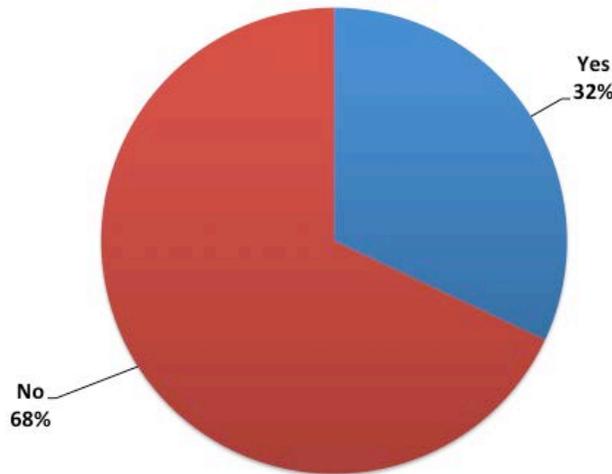
Table 20. Are your ebooks more commonly used for lessons/assigned reading or for recreational/free-choice reading? school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2014–2015

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Lesson-driven reading	45%	28%	46%	45%	44%	51%	58%	31%	41%
Recreational/Free-choice reading	55%	72%	54%	55%	56%	49%	42%	69%	59%

## Students with Disabilities

Are students with disabilities more engaged with ebooks compared to print books? One-third of libraries said yes. A big part of the appeal is that ebook readers allow type to be enlarged, which can be helpful for visually impaired students, and “read to me” features are also helpful. Not having to lug around print editions can also be convenient for students with other kinds of disabilities. Still, school libraries found that special needs students tend to prefer audiobooks to ebooks, especially as they are easier to access.

**Figure 29. Do you find that students with special needs or disabilities are more engaged with reading or read longer with ebooks than with print books?**  
 % of school libraries, 2015



**Table 21. Do you find that students with special needs or disabilities are more engaged with reading or read longer with ebooks than with print books?**  
 % of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Yes	34%	31%	24%	33%	28%	41%	31%	26%	30%
No	66%	69%	76%	67%	72%	59%	69%	74%	70%

We asked our respondents an open-ended question about ebooks and special needs students. Here are some of their responses:

- “After the novelty wears off they prefer print books. It does work well for people with sight problems as they can enlarge the page.”
- “All students like to flip through the books and see the images but to read them longer, not really.”
- “It depends if there is audio and/or interactive resources.”
- “Great for our ELL who can look up definitions, also for ADD kids—they like the electronic tablets.”

- *“I see more students using audiobooks than ebooks, especially struggling readers.”*
- *“It is hard to compare special needs students' habits with ebooks as opposed to print books. They can only read ebooks in computer lab, whereas print books can be read anywhere.”*
- *“It’s exceptionally helpful for our visually impaired students who can increase the font size on an ebook.”*
- *“Most of our students with special needs or disabilities need the book read aloud, but ebooks do not always allow for the books to be read aloud. I would like my students to have more access to audiobooks through our library catalog and for them to be able to access those audiobooks through their accounts, but based on our needs—which is typically the same titles for classes. I cannot justify the associated price tags, especially if the audiobooks are single-use.”*
- *“Our special education department has used Kindles for years, but they are not provided by the library.”*
- *“Our students with print disabilities use Bookshare which combines the audio with the text, or, for many who have learning disabilities that do not specifically have print disabilities, we find the best option is combining the print with the audio, a great reason we belong to a consortium where we can interlibrary loan both formats, if we don’t already own both formats. Ebooks don’t offer both platforms and I can’t say they make a difference—offering both audio and text does.”*
- *“Students with special needs have a more difficult time accessing ebooks due to the multiple steps involved with checking out and self-selecting the material. Also, they struggle more with the technology and file formats. They require more teacher/librarian intervention to check out or download an ebook.”*

### Non-English Ebooks

Just over one-fourth (27%) of school libraries offer non-English ebooks. As we found in our public library survey, the primary reason for such a low incidence is lack of demand.

Figure 30. Do you offer ebooks in languages other than English?  
% of school libraries, 2015

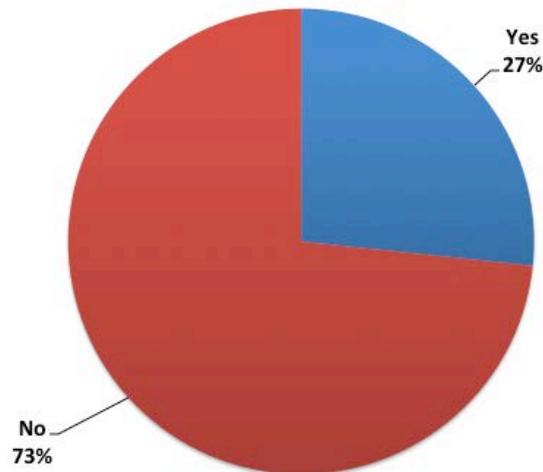


Table 22. Do you offer ebooks in languages other than English?  
% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Yes	29%	20%	24%	27%	25%	31%	24%	22%	28%
No	71%	80%	76%	73%	75%	69%	76%	78%	72%

## In Summary

Nonfiction ebooks edge out fiction in school library collections, while print collections are about equally split. Animals, sports, and biography are the top nonfiction ebook subjects. Fantasy, graphic novels and realistic fiction titles are the top fiction ebook genres. About 55% of students' ebook usage is estimated to be recreational, rather than lesson-driven. A quarter of school libraries carry ebooks in languages other than English.

## In Their Own Words

- *"I would like more publishers to offer ebooks—some are still resistant. I also hate that I have to pay jacked up prices for the most popular titles. I would prefer to have the book for 3–5 years with the right to renew and repurchase. Many of our most popular titles aren't as popular after that time period anyway."*
- *"It is difficult to get students to use an ebook for research with the student prefers to go to the Internet for facts. Students prefer not to read in depth on a topic but just get the quick facts. I would like to learn about effective ways to promote ebooks to students."*
- *"It's a confusing world out there, and an expensive one, that changes constantly, thus making the purchase of a print book much easier and cheaper in the long run. We've done a few Kindles to test the waters, but at our level (PreK-8) student interest is limited. We won't be expanding until the demand is stronger."*
- *"Kids want click and go delivery. Not passwords. Not logins. Not downloads. Click and go. Otherwise, they go unused, at least until they're desperate. A low income school I worked at would really get a lot more use but don't have devices to access. Students who do have devices will buy on demand personally before utilizing library copies."*
- *"Many print books still are unavailable as ebooks, so more offerings would be awesome, especially for a virtual school/library. Also, the change by many publishers to just offer ebooks for 12 or 24 months that you have to buy again at full price to keep on your 'shelf' is very frustrating."*
- *"Pricing and licensing are our huge challenges, followed closely by multi-platform and download/access issues. We need interoperability and we need pricing that reflects the time-honored tradition of the library being the "recruiting center" for eventual book purchases. Publishers who fail to comprehend that ebooks have led to more sales of books of all types are simply ignoring the way good marketing works. Libraries are the best advertisers in the world for books of all types."*
- *"The broader issue is coordination with public library delivery system. School library and public libraries MUST be connected with a coordinated effort for everyone."*
- *"The librarian before me got 20 Kindles, and began the ebook program via Amazon. I feel a bit stuck with using Amazon as the Kindles are compatible with few other ebook formats and I have such a large collection already."*
- *"There are often titles I would like to purchase for the library but I won't buy them because they are only 12 or 24 month access. I don't like the idea of*

*purchasing something and then having it taken away after a certain period of time.”*

- *“We tried them here, but the novelty has worn off for some, others have their own devices, the elementary school kids do check out the Nooks and read them.”*
- *“We are hoping to increase our ebooks considerably in the coming years. I like that struggling readers can use ebook readers to keep their school reading private, so they don't get teased for reading ‘easy’ books.”*
- *“We are just at the beginning since funds for our library are VERY limited (less than \$3,000 per year). The fundraising push at the end of last year enabled the purchase of the eresources (ebooks + databases). We are using our limited eresources to teach students to access and use both those owned by our library and those available through the public library. Through this strategy we aim to provide the students with 21st century access and use skills (and strategies).”*

### 3. USERS AND USABILITY

In this chapter, we will look at some of the usability issues with regard to ebooks and ebook collections. What keeps students from accessing the library's ebooks? What other usability issues do students and librarians have?

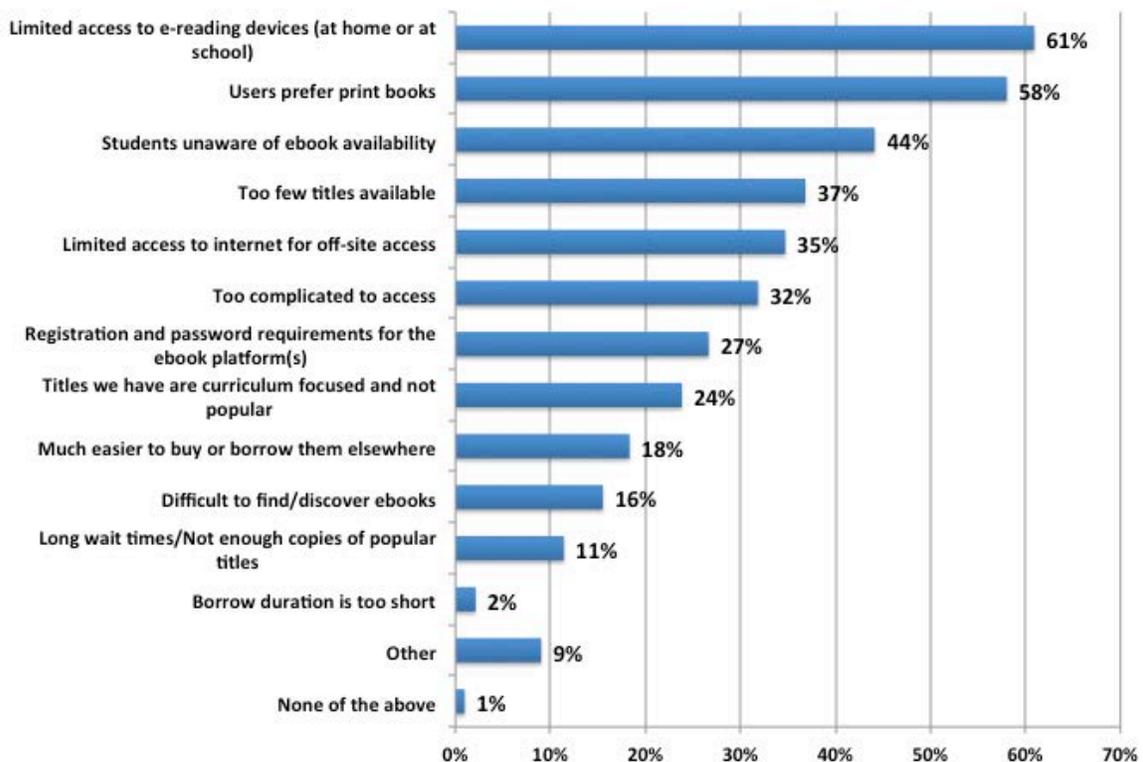
#### Hindrances and Barriers

One of our perennial questions asks about the hindrances and barriers that students encounter when trying to access ebook content. In short, what keeps kids from using ebooks?

Lack of ereading devices is a major impediment to offering ebooks in general, and here we find that "limited access to ereading devices (at home or at school)" is once again the top challenge, selected by 61% of respondents. This is up from 46% last year and is at an all-time high for this barrier.

However, a close second, once again, is "users prefer print books," which was selected by 58%, up from 45% last year and also at an all-time high. "Students unaware of ebook availability" came in at 44%, up from 40%.

Figure 31. What hinders students/faculty from reading your media center's ebooks?  
% of school libraries, 2015



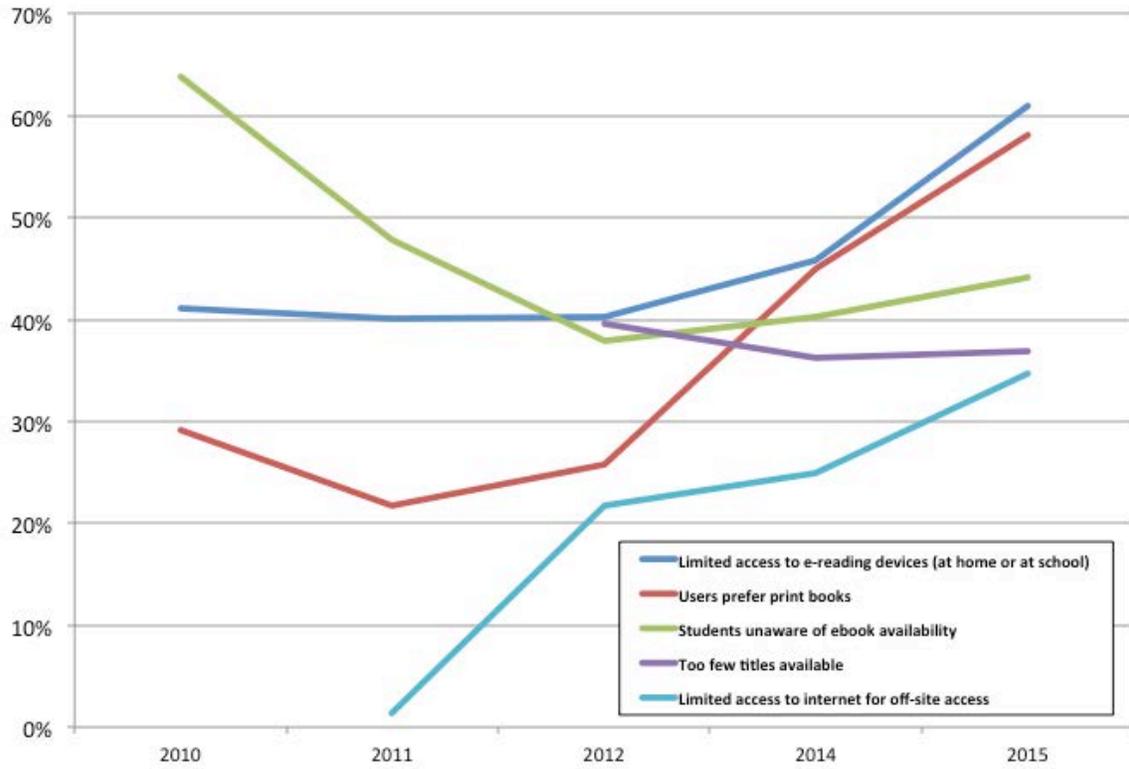
“Users prefer print books” is at its highest level among high school students (71%), compared to middle school (67%) and elementary school (50%) students—all of which are up from last year.

**Table 23. What hinders students/faculty from reading your media center’s ebooks?  
% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015**

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Limited access to e-reading devices (at home or at school)	69%	46%	43%	63%	24%	62%	54%	55%	68%
Users prefer print books	50%	67%	71%	57%	73%	46%	68%	57%	60%
Students unaware of ebook availability	42%	53%	61%	44%	54%	42%	52%	47%	39%
Too few titles available	38%	32%	26%	37%	29%	24%	29%	50%	43%
Limited access to internet for off-site access	40%	32%	23%	36%	10%	53%	16%	29%	37%
Too complicated to access	31%	35%	34%	30%	51%	28%	37%	27%	34%
Registration and password requirements for the ebook platform(s)	29%	27%	24%	26%	37%	26%	34%	28%	22%
Titles we have are curriculum focused and not popular	21%	19%	25%	25%	17%	22%	29%	26%	20%
Much easier to buy or borrow them elsewhere	18%	17%	25%	17%	34%	12%	18%	22%	20%
Difficult to find/discover ebooks	17%	10%	17%	16%	12%	9%	16%	13%	20%
Long wait times/Not enough copies of popular titles	14%	16%	7%	12%	10%	5%	10%	14%	15%
Borrow duration is too short	2%	1%	4%	2%	2%	0%	1%	3%	4%
Other	7%	11%	12%	8%	20%	20%	5%	8%	5%
None of the above	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	3%	1%	0%

Of the top five hindrances, the only one that has declined (only slightly) is “too few titles available.”

**Figure 32. Change in selected barriers/hindrances to accessing ebook content % of school libraries, 2010–2015**

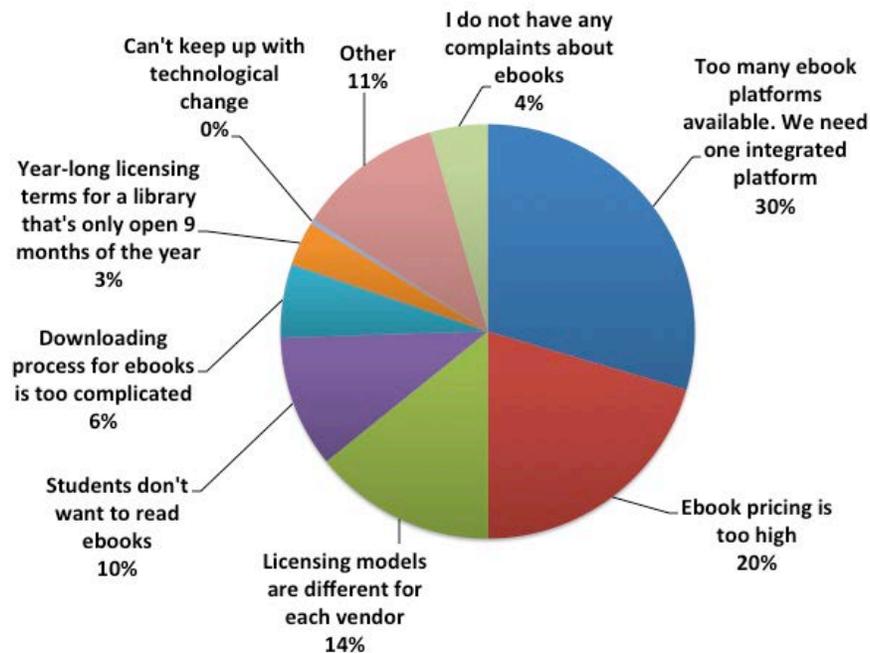


## Common Complaints

Over the six school ebook usage studies we have conducted, we have heard many complaints about ebooks, vendors, platforms, and so on. What, though, is the *biggest* complaint? We gave libraries some common choices and 50% of them chose one of two: “too many ebook platforms” (30%) and “ebook pricing is too high” (20%). An additional 14% chose “licensing models are different for each vendor” as their biggest gripe.

Figure 33. Thinking about the following common complaints about ebooks, which one is your biggest complaint?

% of school libraries, 2015



There are some differences by school level. Elementary schools have bigger issues with the plethora of platforms (34%), while middle schools are more concerned with pricing (26%). High schools are the most likely to say that students don't want to read ebooks (17%).

**Table 24. Thinking about the following common complaints about ebooks, which one is your biggest complaint?****% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015**

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Too many ebook platforms available. We need one integrated platform	34%	24%	21%	29%	23%	28%	30%	18%	36%
Ebook pricing is too high	19%	26%	22%	21%	23%	16%	19%	25%	21%
Licensing models are different for each vendor	17%	9%	8%	15%	10%	11%	18%	12%	15%
Students don't want to read ebooks	8%	8%	17%	10%	15%	11%	10%	15%	8%
Downloading process for ebooks is too complicated	4%	8%	12%	5%	13%	2%	9%	7%	5%
Year-long licensing terms for a library that's only open 9 months of the year	2%	3%	6%	4%	0%	4%	4%	3%	3%
Can't keep up with technological change	0%	1%	2%	0%	3%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Other	10%	15%	8%	11%	13%	17%	7%	17%	8%
I do not have any complaints about ebooks	5%	5%	3%	5%	3%	11%	4%	1%	2%

## In Summary

Lack of access to ereaders and general dislike of ebooks on the part of students are their top barriers to ebook usage. Some of the verbatim comments in the previous chapters put some of these data in perspective, and the most frequent comment is in fact that kids prefer to read books—especially for pleasure—in print. For some students, it's a physical tactile or reading comfort issue, others are frustrated by the plethora of platforms and the downloading process, and others are too distracted by the other things that can be done on electronic devices, like play games or access the Internet.

Librarians' biggest pet peeves with ebooks are that there are too many ebook platforms, each requiring a separate login and password by students, and that ebook pricing is too high.

## In Their Own Words

- *“We are just beginning to purchase and use ebooks at our elementary school. It will become more important to our collection as well as to our student learning in the future.”*
- *“We are just beginning to sample the ebook world and hope to increase titles and awareness in the near future.”*
- *“We are on a five-year plan and then will re-assess their use.”*
- *“We dipped our toes in the water this year. Limited success. Kids really prefer print.”*
- *“We expect higher use as the ebook program is phased into our middle school which feeds into the high school program that I serve.”*
- *“We had high hopes for our purchased ebooks, but kids just aren't interested. We need to work harder on promotion, but manpower is down and library hours are shorter. It's a struggle.”*
- *“We have been using ebooks for about ten years. They have changed the research process dramatically.”*
- *“We haven't given up on them! I think there is definitely a future for e-books in our program.”*
- *We passed nearly two decades without a basic library materials budget. Ebook and other digital technological advances caused the ‘powers that be’ to recognize that the library was failing miserably in teaching and preparing students (the average copyright date for print materials is 1981). Digital resources are ‘sexy’—that, plus years of argumentative persuasion, hard work, and comparative statistics resulted, finally, in a library budget last year: and one that includes ebooks!”*
- *“We’re so glad we made the jump to ebooks and OverDrive in particular. We just wish more titles were available in OverDrive (i.e., if it’s available from Amazon, why can’t I buy it from OverDrive?).”*
- *“What we have is invaluable—I hope it continues to grow as robustly as it has in the past two years. Our state library aided in the development of the eRead Illinois program, and it should be a model of service for other states because of the availability it offers at a low cost. Our District could not afford membership in most and I am not in favor of materials that cannot be accessed through many platforms or as a stand-alone system, such as most vendors, like Follett, offer.”*
- *“When I have teachers asking to purchase class sets of novels, they are never available in multi-use. Also, our students do not have access to devices to download ebooks. It is also less expensive to purchase a paperback that will have a shelf life long enough to actually remain ‘popular,’ then to purchase licenses for single/use.”*
- *“Without funding I must be very cautious with my spending. The EBSCO subscription offers the best price for a large quantity of titles. Their collection is largely nonfiction and exclusively used for research by my students. It fills the need.”*

- *I would love for them to circulate more. Make it easier to find and use and have one platform across the board so students don't need to login again just to read an ebook."*

## 4. BUDGETS AND BUYING

This section looks at ebooks in the context of school libraries' budgets. How much is spent on ebooks? How much do they expect to spend on ebooks? Where does funding for ebooks come from? What purchasing terms do they typically employ? Which vendors do school libraries use, and which do they prefer?

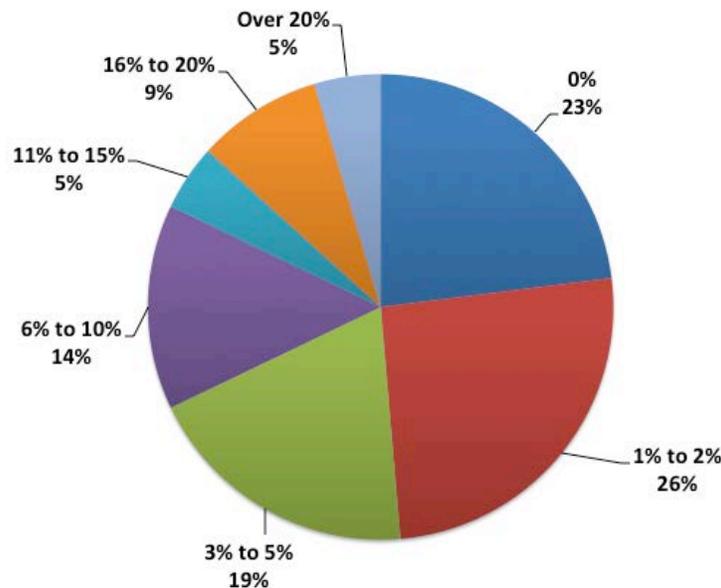
### Ebooks and Library Materials Budgets

In this section, we look at the percentage of school libraries' materials budgets dedicated to ebooks last year, this year, and predicted for five-years ahead.

#### Last Year's Budget

In the 2013–2014 school year, ebooks represented, on average, 5.5% of school libraries' materials budgets. Twenty-three percent of respondents said that none of their materials budget went for ebooks. Note that ebooks often come out of other budgets (like technology) or special fundraising initiatives like book fairs, donations, or grants. Some—although not many—obtain ebooks solely through a consortium.

Figure 34. Approximately what percentage of your library's materials budget did ebooks represent last year? (2013–2014 school year)  
% of school libraries, 2015  
Mean: 5.5%



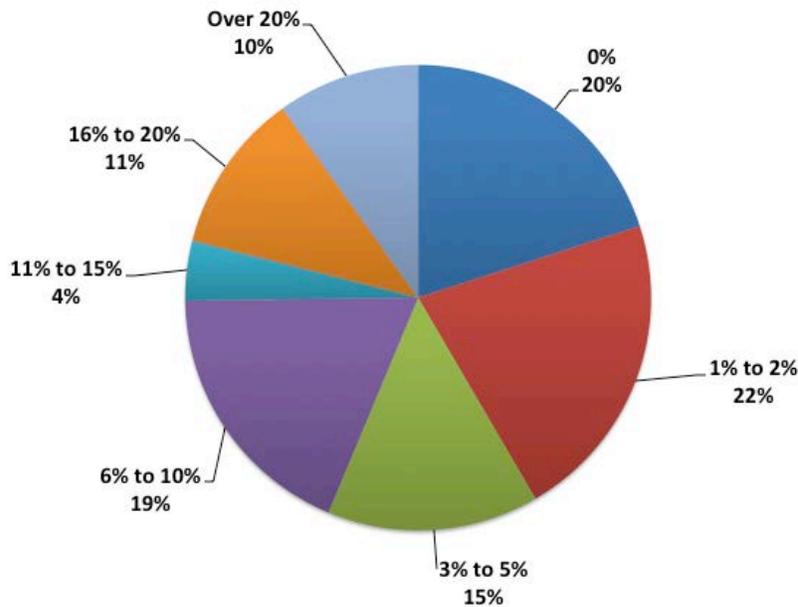
**Table 25. Approximately what percentage of your library's materials budget did ebooks represent last year? (2013–2014 school year)**  
*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
0%	29%	20%	14%	23%	21%	28%	16%	36%	17%
1% to 2%	27%	30%	23%	27%	15%	23%	32%	26%	23%
3% to 5%	16%	15%	19%	18%	23%	15%	26%	7%	24%
6% to 10%	13%	16%	16%	14%	18%	15%	10%	12%	18%
11% to 15%	3%	6%	8%	5%	8%	6%	7%	4%	3%
16% to 20%	10%	5%	9%	9%	8%	9%	2%	11%	12%
Over 20%	1%	6%	11%	5%	8%	4%	7%	4%	4%
Mean %	4.5	5.6	7.5	5.5	6.7	5.4	5.1	5.0	6.1

**This Year's Budget**

In the current (2014–2015) school year, the percentage of materials budgets spent on ebooks increased, representing a mean of 7.2%. Also note that 20% said that ebooks did not represent any part of the materials budget.

**Figure 35. Approximately what percentage of your library's materials budget did ebooks represent in 2014–2015 school year?**  
*% of school libraries, 2015*  
**Mean: 7.2%**



High school libraries spend the most on ebooks—even though their students seem to be the least interested in ebooks.

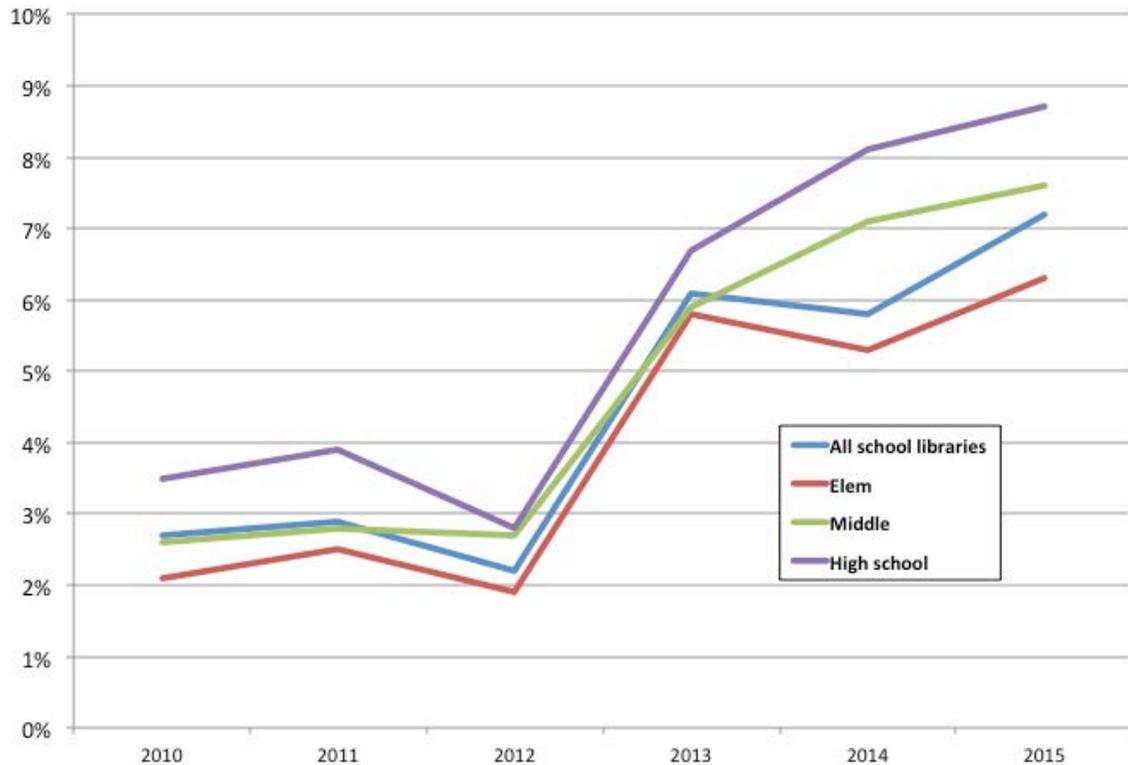
**Table 26: Approximately what percentage of your library's materials budget did ebooks represent in 2014–2015 school year?**

*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
0%	22%	15%	19%	20%	16%	27%	10%	34%	15%
1% to 2%	26%	18%	17%	23%	8%	17%	26%	13%	26%
3% to 5%	13%	18%	12%	15%	16%	17%	23%	7%	12%
6% to 10%	18%	22%	16%	18%	26%	10%	22%	25%	19%
11% to 15%	2%	8%	10%	4%	8%	7%	3%	1%	5%
16% to 20%	11%	11%	14%	11%	13%	9%	7%	10%	15%
Over 20%	8%	8%	12%	10%	13%	12%	7%	11%	9%
Mean %	6.3	7.6	8.7	7.0	9.2	7.1	6.5	6.9	7.8

Across all school levels, mean ebook spending as a percentage of the materials budget has been on the rise.

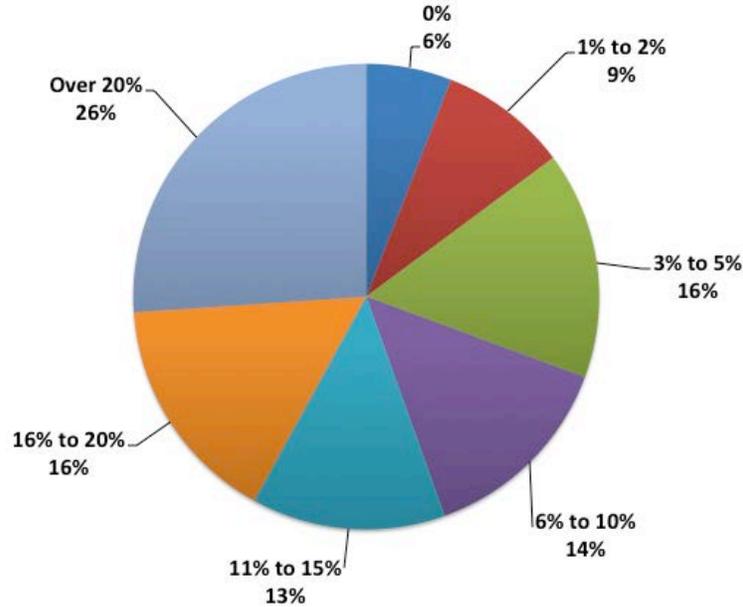
**Figure 36: Mean percentage of current materials budget represented by ebooks by type of school, 2010–2015**



### 2020 Budget

How much of the materials budget will ebooks represent in five years (2020)? On average, school libraries say that ebooks will account for 12.4% of the materials budget in five years. Only 6% of respondents believe that ebooks will not represent any part of their materials budget in 2020.

**Figure 37. Approximately what percentage of your library's materials budget do you predict ebooks will represent in 5 years?**  
*% of school libraries, 2015*  
 Mean: 12.4%



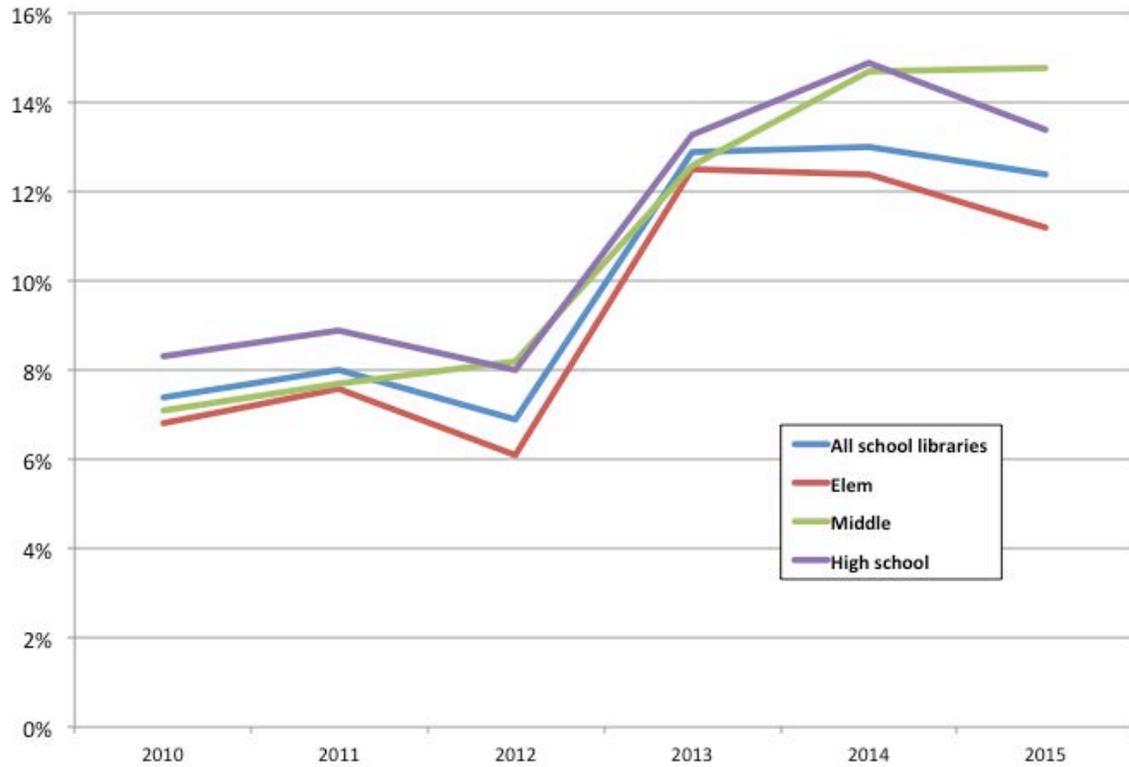
High schools and middle schools are pretty closely matched in their expectations of future spending on ebooks. Elementary schools trail behind, but not by very much.

**Table 27. Approximately what percentage of your library's materials budget do you predict ebooks will represent in 5 years?**  
*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
0%	7%	2%	5%	6%	5%	5%	4%	10%	5%
1% to 2%	10%	8%	5%	9%	11%	8%	13%	10%	6%
3% to 5%	17%	10%	14%	17%	3%	17%	21%	5%	17%
6% to 10%	17%	11%	14%	14%	8%	18%	5%	17%	15%
11% to 15%	14%	13%	14%	13%	14%	10%	23%	13%	10%
16% to 20%	15%	26%	20%	15%	32%	15%	14%	15%	18%
Over 20%	20%	32%	28%	26%	27%	28%	18%	29%	29%
Mean %	11.2	14.8	13.4	12.2	14.6	12.4	11.2	12.6	13.0

In our 2010 survey, respondents felt that in five years (that is, in 2015) ebooks would represent 7.3% of their materials budgets. Now that it's actually 2015, we see that they were right on the money (actual 7.2%).

**Figure 38: Mean percentage of materials budget represented by ebooks in five years by type of school, 2010–2015**



### This Year's Spending

In the school year surveyed (2014–2015), school libraries spent on average \$1,197 (median \$357) on ebooks. The mean is virtually unchanged from last year (\$1,199) while median spending is down from \$402 last year. We can interpret this through a recurring theme throughout the various verbatim comments we received in this survey: given how poorly many school libraries' ebook collections have been received, librarians see little incentive to devote scarce, precious resources to something that students don't use, or use infrequently.

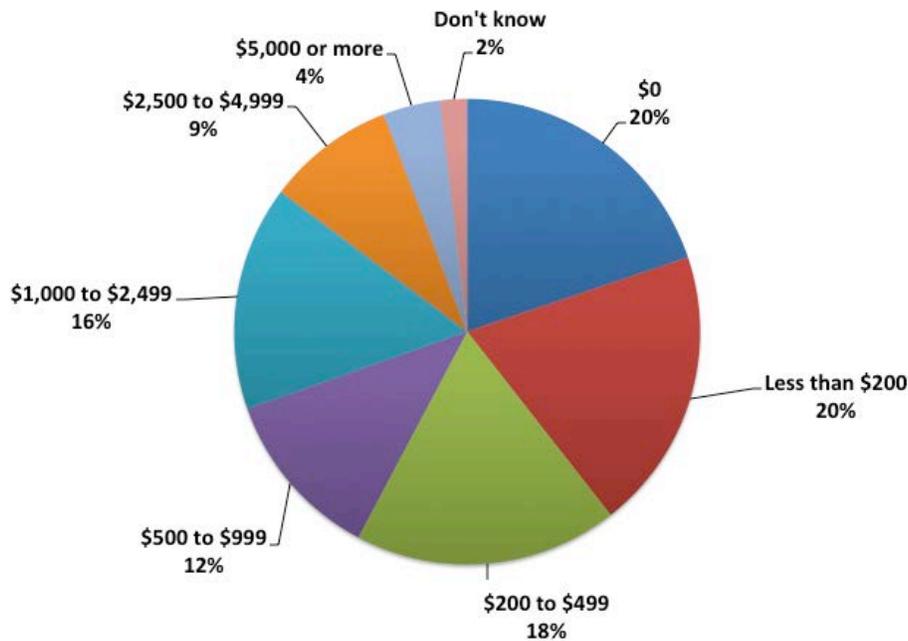
We also note that 20% responded that all ebooks are provided by the state, school district, or consortium.

**Figure 39. How much would you estimate your library spent on ebooks for the current school year (2014–2015)?**

*% of school libraries, 2015*

Mean: \$1,197

Median: \$357



High schools spend more than twice as much as elementary schools, and one and a half times as much as middle schools on ebooks.

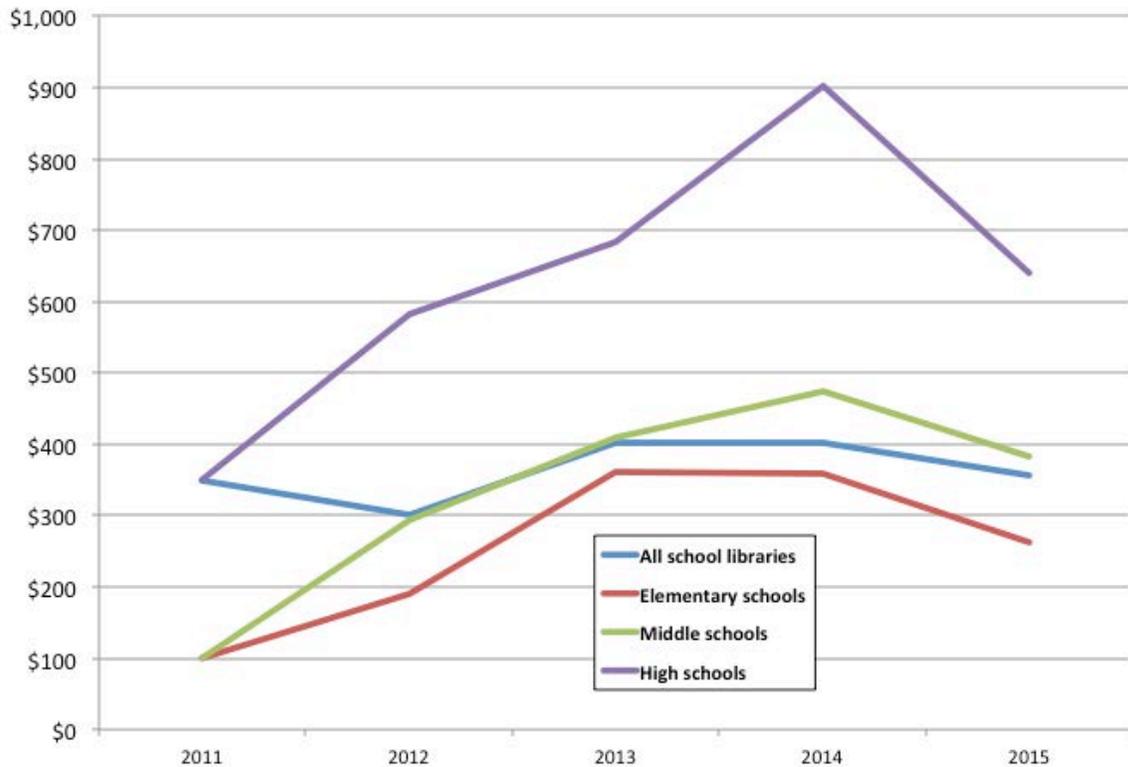
**Table 28. How much would you estimate your library spent on ebooks for the current school year (2014–2015)?**

*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
\$0	24%	21%	18%	19%	23%	29%	14%	24%	16%
Less than \$200	22%	16%	15%	21%	5%	18%	16%	20%	23%
\$200 to \$499	18%	21%	13%	18%	21%	19%	22%	15%	17%
\$500 to \$999	12%	11%	11%	11%	15%	13%	11%	7%	14%
\$1,000 to \$2,499	14%	18%	18%	16%	13%	15%	18%	16%	14%
\$2,500 to \$4,999	5%	7%	16%	9%	13%	2%	14%	7%	11%
\$5,000 or more	3%	5%	8%	4%	8%	5%	1%	5%	5%
Don't know	2%	1%	0%	2%	3%	0%	4%	6%	0%
Mean \$	914	1,312	2,027	1,210	1,974	998	1,194	1,183	1,334
Median \$	262	382	640	350	500	262	445	255	393

Overall, spending on ebooks is down across all school types.

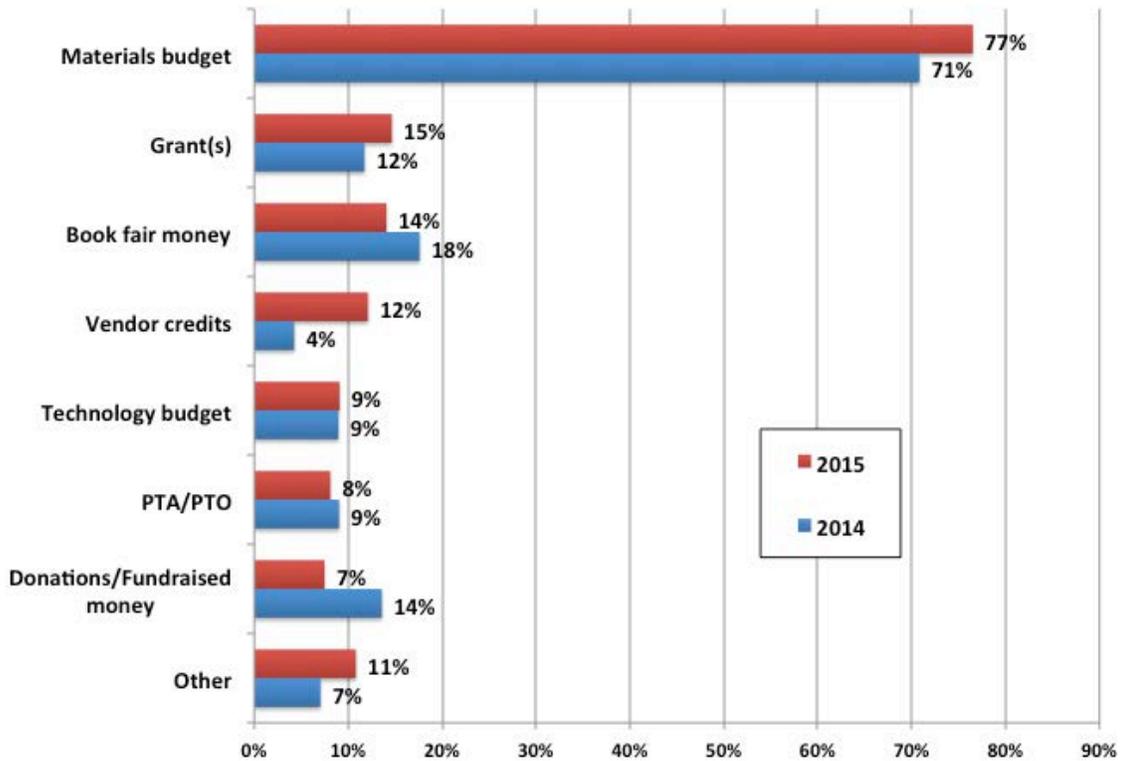
**Figure 40: How much would you estimate your library spent on ebooks for the current school year? median \$ by type of school, 2011–2015**



### Source(s) of Funding

We remarked earlier that school libraries often have other options available when it comes to paying for ebooks, and here we see that there are not too many changes in funding sources. Libraries rely mostly on their materials budgets for ebook funding, but grants and vendor credits are up. Donations and fundraising are down slightly.

**Figure 41. Where did the money to purchase ebooks come from?**  
*% of school libraries, 2014–2015*



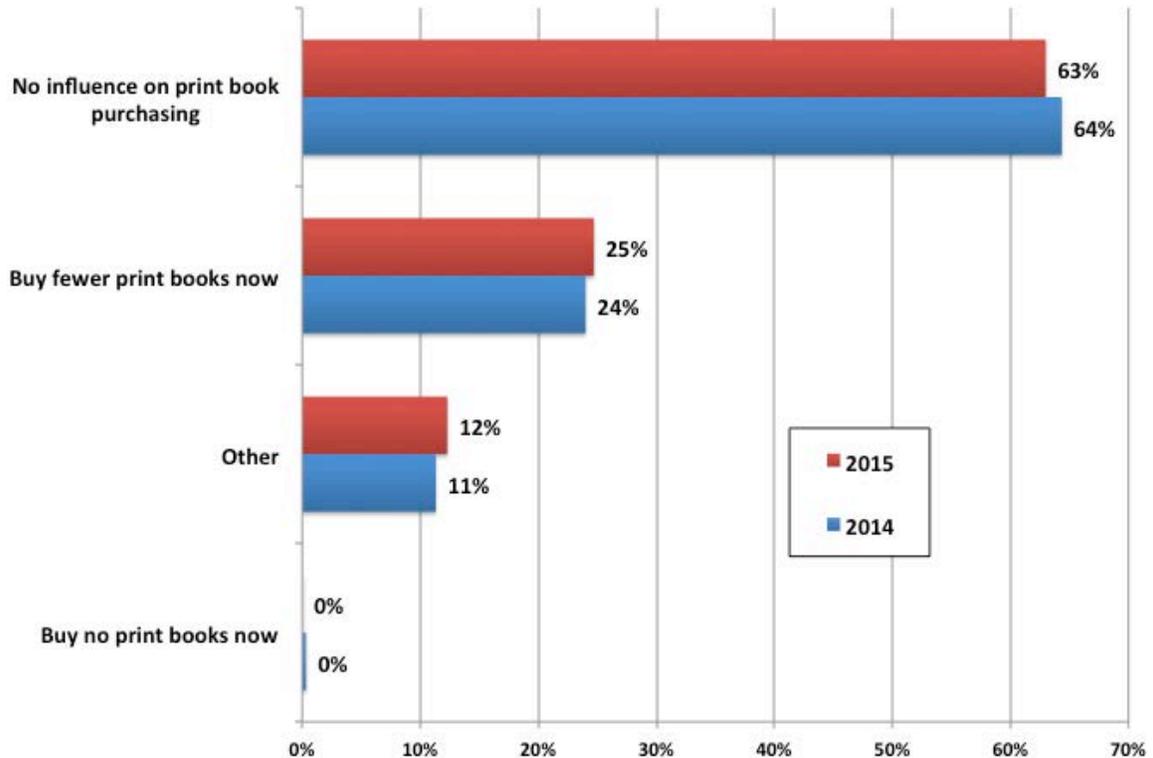
**Table 29. Where did the money to purchase ebooks come from?**  
*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2014–2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
<b>2015</b>									
Materials budget	73%	87%	84%	76%	90%	72%	83%	59%	82%
Grant(s)	15%	13%	10%	14%	10%	26%	11%	21%	8%
Book fair money	21%	6%	0%	14%	17%	21%	6%	16%	15%
Vendor credits	15%	6%	5%	12%	3%	17%	9%	8%	14%
Technology budget	11%	7%	5%	10%	0%	2%	24%	6%	4%
PTA/PTO	14%	2%	2%	9%	3%	8%	0%	15%	10%
Donations/Fundraised money	8%	5%	3%	6%	14%	12%	4%	9%	7%
Other	10%	9%	12%	11%	10%	10%	6%	23%	9%
<b>2014</b>									
Materials budget	63%	76%	78%	70%	85%	84%	75%	81%	58%
Book fair money	21%	13%	3%	18%	10%	20%	4%	11%	26%
Donations/Fundraised money	17%	11%	9%	13%	13%	12%	19%	8%	13%
Grant(s)	12%	15%	14%	11%	4%	8%	12%	9%	15%
PTA/PTO	11%	8%	4%	10%	0%	10%	5%	24%	6%
Technology budget	11%	6%	8%	9%	6%	10%	18%	8%	4%
State/County/District funds (write-in)	7%	3%	5%	7%	2%	7%	1%	3%	11%
Vendor credits	6%	5%	3%	5%	4%	1%	8%	0%	5%
Other	8%	7%	4%	8%	0%	6%	5%	10%	8%

### Impact on Print Books

There are no real changes over the past year on the impact of ebook acquisition on print book buying. Sixty-three percent continue to report that ebooks have no impact or influence on print book purchasing, and one-fourth say they buy fewer print books.

**Figure 42. How has the addition of ebooks to your collection influenced your purchase of print book formats?**  
*% of school libraries, 2014–2015*



Ebooks have had the largest impact on print book purchasing at the high school level, where 38% say they buy fewer print books now.

**Table 30. How has the addition of ebooks to your collection influenced your purchase of print book formats?**  
*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2014–2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
<b>2015</b>									
No influence on print book purchasing	71%	57%	50%	63%	60%	57%	62%	62%	68%
Buy fewer print books now	18%	29%	38%	25%	25%	31%	24%	28%	20%
Buy no print books now	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	11%	14%	12%	12%	15%	12%	14%	10%	13%

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
<b>2014</b>									
No influence on print book purchasing	63%	63%	50%	65%	50%	64%	60%	61%	68%
Buy fewer print books now	26%	27%	29%	24%	25%	26%	28%	22%	22%
Buy no print books now	0%	0%	1%	0%	4%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Other	11%	10%	20%	11%	21%	10%	11%	17%	10%

## P vs. E

We asked our survey respondents an open-ended question about how they choose which format of a title—print or electronic—to buy. Generally, school librarians purchase print as a default, and an ebook version as an alternative. Commonly repeated criteria include cost/affordability/budget, demand from teachers or students, whether it's part of the curriculum, and what they think will circulate in which format. Some other unique comments:

- *“Actually, in order to introduce the ebooks, I’ve been purchasing both formats.”*
- *“All curriculum books as eBooks, all books for pleasure reading in print.”*
- *“Availability. A number of authors are now writing short stories or novellas that are only available in the electronic format. For students who love those series, it is imperative we offer them.”*
- *“Depends on how it will be used. I buy most ebooks for reference and research—these must be easily accessible through our OPAC as complicated sign-ins to separate systems just alienate and confuse students.”*
- *“I am buying fewer nonfiction print titles and relying more on digital resources for research. I still buy nonfiction print for fun reading. I buy more print fiction. I am buying more print fiction to give it a chance because I am losing so much money each year in lost books and damaged books that students will not pay for.”*
- *“I currently do not because it would not be cost-effective. I personally LOVE ebooks but our little school could not afford it. With my print books, I get circulation well beyond what an ebook license would allow before having to renew it.”*
- *“I focus on its curricular use since teachers are more likely to use it for instruction than kids are to use it for pleasure reading.”*
- *“I guess! It's definitely a quandary.”*
- *“I look for titles that support the curriculum and have multi-use capability. However, no matter how hard I push and try to educate students, staff and parents I cannot make them use them. It reminds me of video disks. Consequently, I am not spending as much because they are not using them as much as I would like and it is not worth spending the money. I do flyers, instructions on the school webpage, parent sessions, demonstrations in media and at grade level meetings.”*

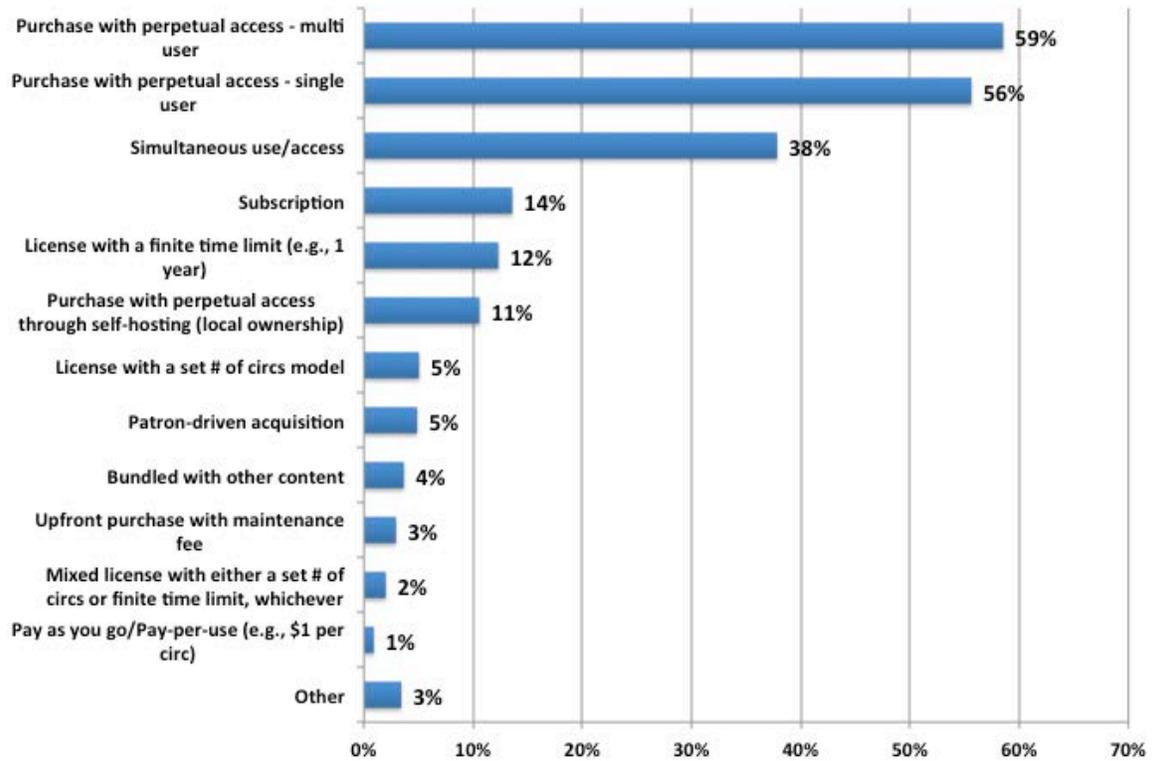
- *“I typically purchase print, but when I have wanted a title in electronic format my first consideration is, ‘Is it available through Follett Shelf?’ I don’t want more than one way to access ebooks, it’s confusing enough as is. I have looked into titles for classes in which our students have 1-1 Chromebooks but often those titles are not available for Follett shelf. 2nd I consider the type of license for the ebook. I don’t like having to go through and purchase the book year after year. And I look at simultaneous checkouts.”*
- *“If the book has won literary awards and is a highly recommended title by School Library Journal or LMC that I believe our many of our students would enjoy, then I purchase the ebook. Also, if a teacher will use a classroom set, I will purchase the unlimited access ebook.”*

## Purchasing Terms

A perennial question on our survey asks about the contentious issue of purchasing terms. We altered some of the selections on this year’s survey to more accurately reflect changes in purchasing terms, so historical comparisons are tricky.

Specifically, we broke “purchase with perpetual access”—long a top purchasing term (it was selected by 61% of libraries in last year’s survey)—into “single user” and “multi user.” This year, “purchase with perpetual access–multi user” came in as the top purchasing term, selected by 59% of libraries. “Purchase with perpetual access–single user” is not far behind at 56%. “Simultaneous use/access” is a distant third at 38%.

**Figure 43. What type(s) of purchasing and/or licensing terms does your library typically use when acquiring ebooks?**  
*% of school libraries, 2015*



**Table 31. What type(s) of purchasing and/or licensing terms does your library typically use when acquiring ebooks?**  
*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

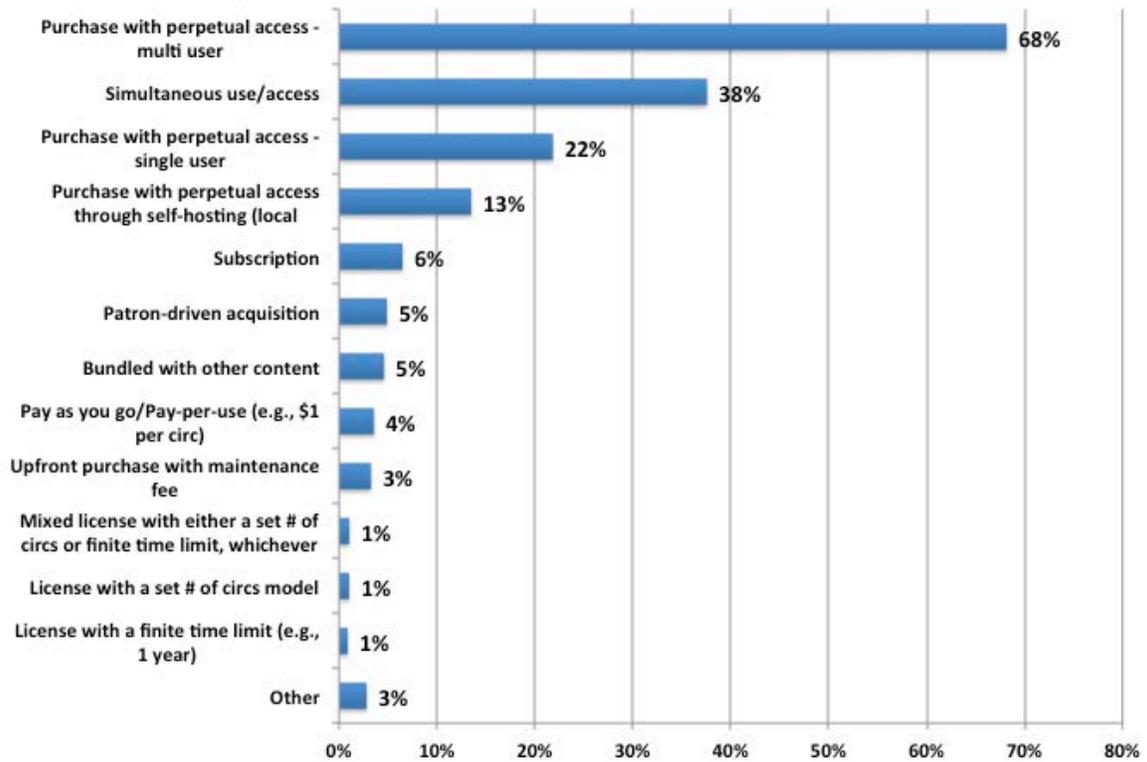
	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Purchase with perpetual access - multi user	62%	56%	47%	60%	41%	67%	55%	59%	56%
Purchase with perpetual access - single user	52%	60%	59%	56%	46%	42%	51%	62%	63%
Simultaneous use/access	38%	40%	32%	38%	31%	34%	46%	31%	38%
Subscription	13%	10%	15%	13%	26%	17%	18%	7%	12%
License with a finite time limit (e.g., 1 year)	9%	14%	20%	12%	26%	8%	16%	10%	14%
Purchase with perpetual access through self-hosting (local ownership)	13%	8%	9%	10%	13%	7%	8%	15%	12%
License with a set # of circs model	3%	7%	14%	4%	21%	2%	2%	2%	10%
Patron-driven acquisition	6%	4%	5%	5%	8%	4%	3%	6%	6%
Bundled with other	3%	3%	3%	4%	8%	2%	5%	6%	3%

	<i>Type of School</i>			<i>Public or Private</i>		<i>Geographical Region</i>			
	<i>Elem</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Mid-west</i>	<i>North-east</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>South</i>
content									
Upfront purchase with maintenance fee	0%	7%	11%	3%	10%	1%	1%	5%	5%
Mixed license with either a set # of circs or finite time limit, whichever comes first	1%	4%	5%	2%	10%	2%	2%	4%	1%
Pay as you go/Pay-per-use (e.g., \$1 per circ)	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	3%	1%	0%	0%
Other	1%	5%	5%	3%	8%	6%	2%	4%	2%

### Preferred Purchasing Terms

What would be the number one preferred ebook purchasing model? There is no 100% *clear* consensus, but the number one option, selected by 68% of libraries, is “purchase with perpetual access–multi-user.” A distant second, selected by 38%, is “simultaneous use/access.”

Figure 44. Which ebook purchasing terms would you most prefer? % of school libraries, 2015



There is quite a bit of consensus across all school levels, although elementary schools are not as sanguine about “purchase with perpetual access–single user” as other school libraries.

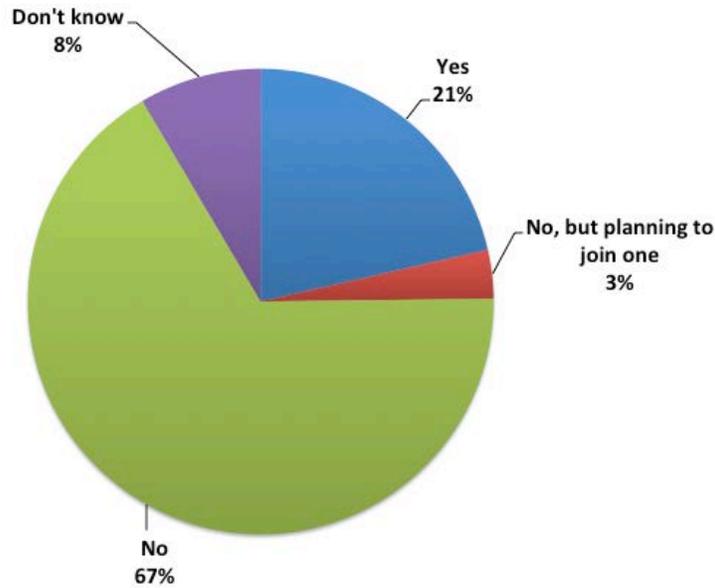
**Table 32. Which ebook purchasing terms would you most prefer?**  
*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Purchase with perpetual access - multi user	71%	66%	64%	67%	76%	74%	68%	61%	68%
Simultaneous use/access	38%	35%	35%	39%	22%	30%	46%	31%	40%
Purchase with perpetual access - single user	14%	31%	37%	21%	27%	25%	17%	15%	26%
Purchase with perpetual access through self-hosting (local ownership)	14%	12%	14%	12%	22%	10%	13%	13%	16%
Subscription	5%	4%	9%	6%	14%	3%	9%	8%	6%
Patron-driven acquisition	4%	2%	6%	5%	8%	2%	2%	10%	6%
Bundled with other content	5%	2%	1%	5%	5%	9%	2%	5%	3%
Pay as you go/Pay-per-use (e.g., \$1 per circ)	2%	5%	4%	3%	5%	6%	1%	4%	4%
Upfront purchase with maintenance fee	1%	7%	4%	3%	8%	1%	3%	7%	3%
Mixed license with either a set # of circs or finite time limit, whichever comes first	2%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	2%
License with a set # of circs model	0%	1%	4%	1%	3%	1%	0%	0%	2%
License with a finite time limit (e.g., 1 year)	0%	0%	3%	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%	1%
Other	3%	2%	1%	3%	0%	9%	1%	2%	1%

### Consortium Membership

Last year, we had remarked that consortium membership among school libraries was at its lowest point in the history of our survey. What a difference a year makes. In 2015, consortium membership is at an all-time high, and among all types of school libraries. Twenty-one percent now say they are part of a consortium, and 3% say they plan to join one.

**Figure 45. Is your library part of a consortium or state license program for its ebook collection? % of school libraries, 2015**



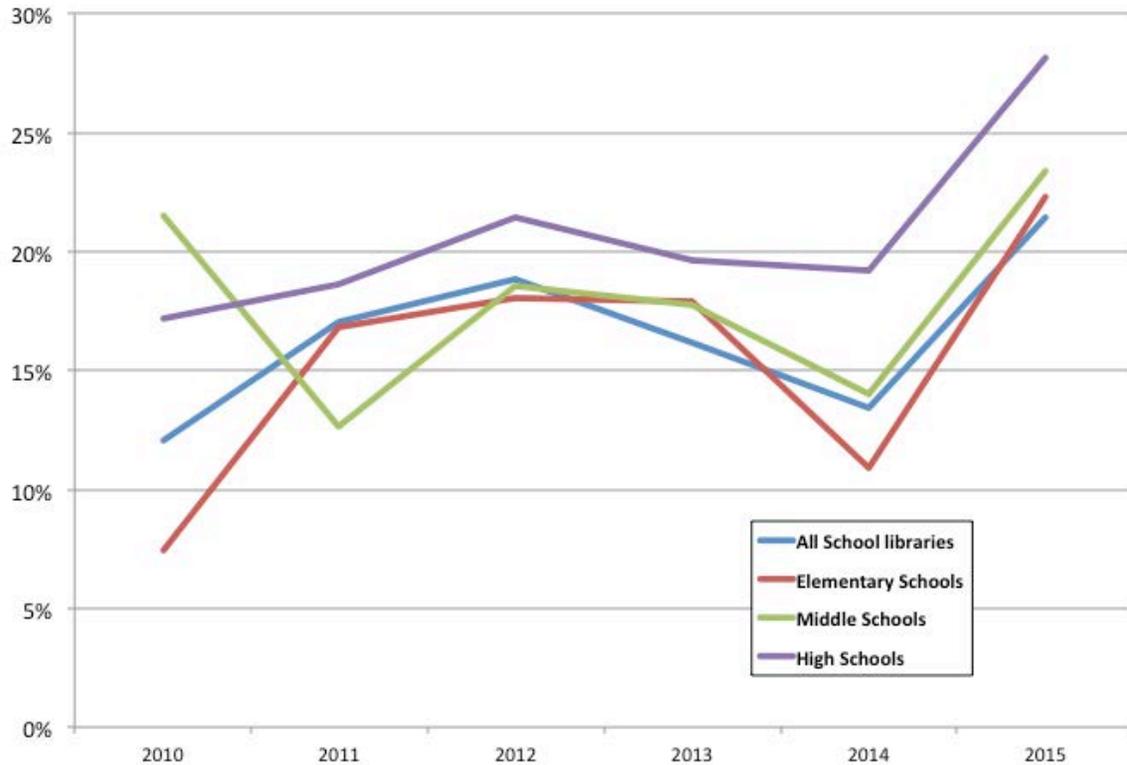
Consortium membership doesn't vary appreciably by type of school, although schools in the Northeast are a bit more likely to be members.

**Table 33. Is your library part of a consortium or state license program for its ebook collection? % of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015**

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Yes	22%	23%	28%	22%	21%	14%	25%	26%	21%
No, but planning to join one	4%	1%	3%	3%	8%	0%	10%	0%	3%
No	64%	67%	64%	66%	72%	73%	57%	66%	69%
Don't know	10%	9%	5%	9%	0%	12%	9%	8%	6%

High schools have historically been more likely than other schools to be part of a consortium.

**Figure 46. Yes, library is part of a consortium or state license program for its ebook collection  
% of school libraries by type of school, 2010–2015**



Consortia are popular among public libraries (in our complementary public library report, we found that consortium membership also rose to a record high of 72%), but not so much among school libraries, and that is largely because schools—and school districts—tend to have their own missions that may be incompatible or work at cross-purposes with other schools and districts. School libraries do, however, develop cooperative ventures with local public libraries. In fact, some school libraries have shifted some of the responsibility for providing ebook titles and other related resources (like ereaders) to their public libraries. This helps preserve school library resources for school-specific supplies and initiatives while at the same time not duplicating the efforts of others.

*“Using my dwindling budget to purchase ebooks which are available from the public library is not an option for me.”*

*“Public Libraries and school libraries are creating double creations; a statewide ebook library makes more sense to me (modeled after the Consortium purchasing model done in Minnesota) than individual schools paying such widely varied amounts for the same service that has not yet been adopted as a true classroom literacy practice.”*

### Buy Independently

School libraries bought or licensed a mean of 193 (median 36) ebooks in the 2014-2015 school year. One-fourth, however, acquired no ebooks independently, rather they relied on their consortium or state license program. Schools that are consortium members purchased a mean of 266 (median 38) ebooks, in addition to the ebooks supplied through the consortium.

Figure 47. How many ebook volumes did your library purchase and/or license independently in the 2014–2015 school year?

% of school libraries, 2015

Mean: 193

Median: 36

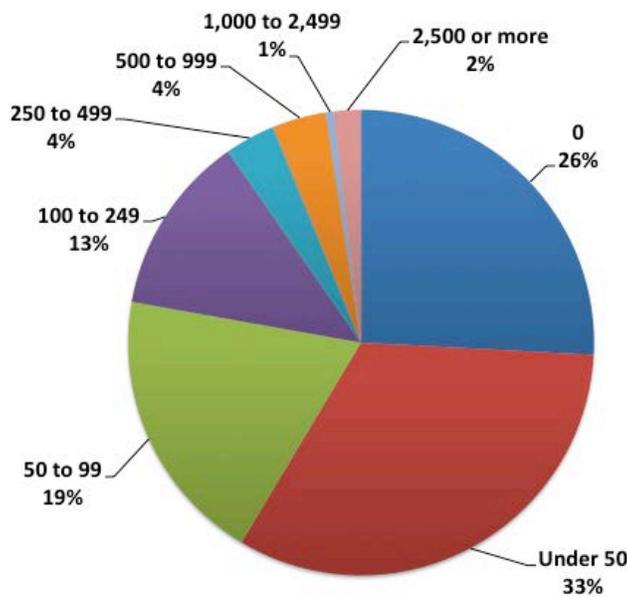


Table 34. How many ebook volumes did your library purchase and/or license independently in the 2014–2015 school year?

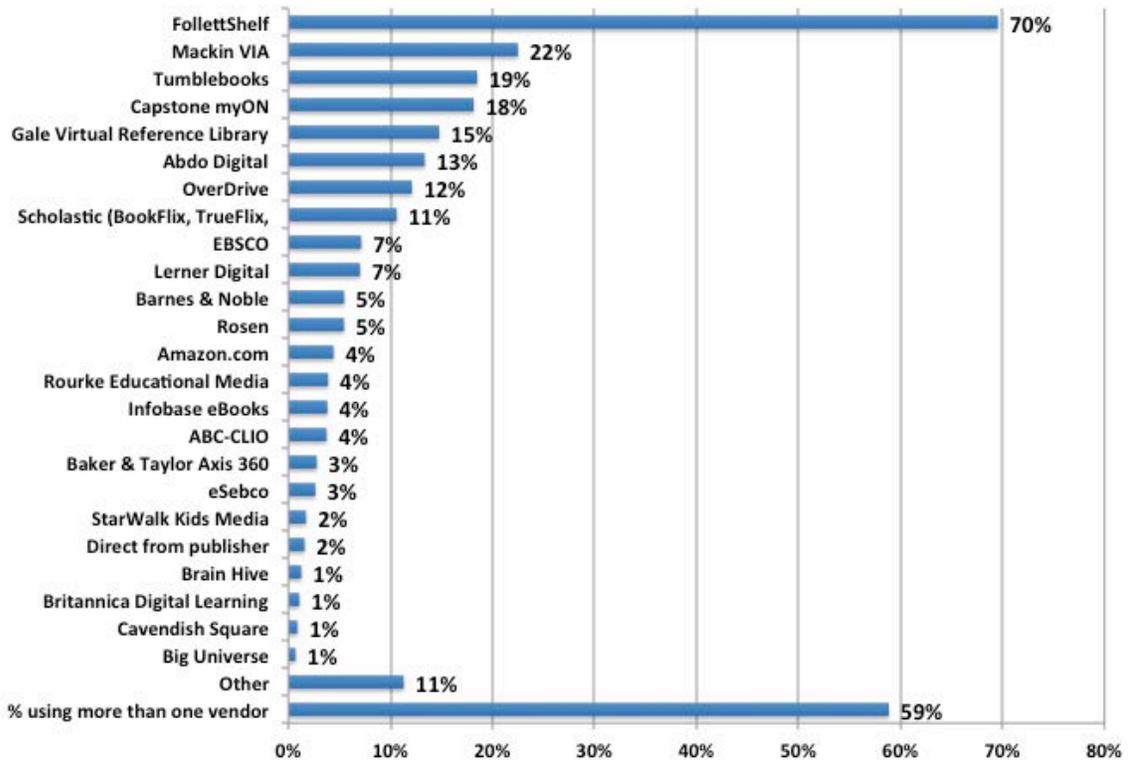
% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
0	31%	24%	23%	25%	28%	30%	19%	36%	22%
Under 50	33%	34%	33%	34%	23%	31%	36%	30%	34%
50 to 99	19%	19%	13%	18%	21%	17%	27%	13%	19%
100 to 249	11%	14%	17%	13%	15%	10%	11%	14%	14%
250 to 499	1%	5%	6%	3%	5%	3%	3%	1%	5%
500 to 999	4%	2%	1%	4%	3%	7%	1%	4%	4%
1,000 to 2,499	0%	0%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
2,500 or more	1%	2%	4%	2%	5%	3%	2%	2%	1%
Mean# of ebooks	129	1,013	1,030	191	2,778	247	211	160	163
Median # of ebooks	29	37	41	36	46	32	42	23	41

## Vendors Used and Preferred

Although OverDrive has come to dominate the ebook space for public libraries, schools are far more likely to use FollettShelf—70% of all school libraries use Follett. A distant second is MackinVIA, used by 22% of school libraries. Six out of ten school libraries use more than one vendor, even though they would prefer to centralize everything with a single vendor. Managing multiple accounts, user IDs, passwords, and so forth is what many of our commenters have said drives kids and librarians alike away from ebooks.

Figure 48. From which vendor(s) does your library acquire ebooks?  
% of school libraries, 2015



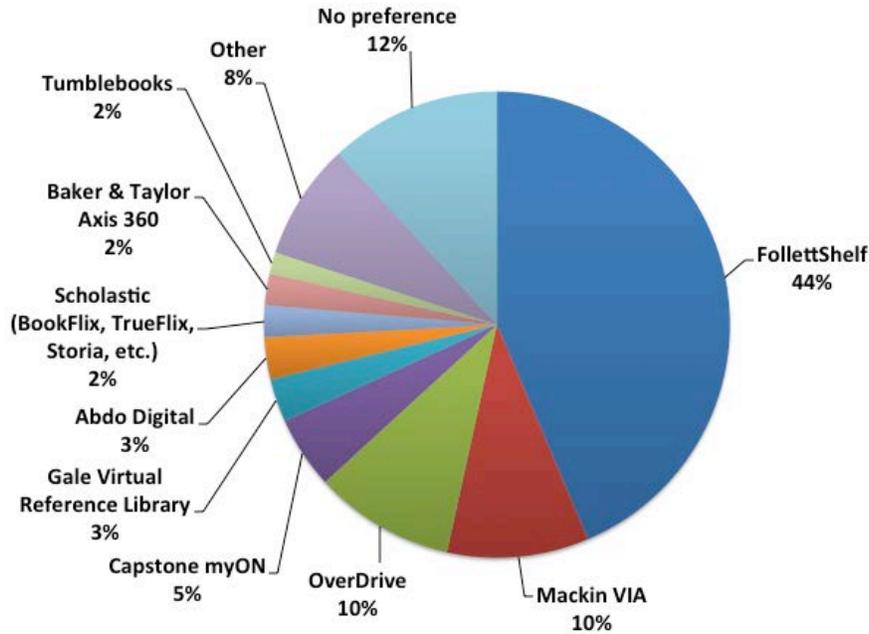
Different vendors are more suited to different types of libraries. Middle and high schools require greater access to reference materials, hence they are more likely to use Gale Virtual Reference Library, and TumbleBooks offers a greater selection of children's titles, so they are more likely to be used by elementary schools.

**Table 35. From which vendor(s) does your library acquire ebooks?  
% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015**

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
FollettShelf	68%	71%	59%	71%	49%	68%	74%	78%	64%
Mackin VIA	22%	21%	20%	23%	11%	37%	8%	21%	24%
Tumblebooks	26%	4%	3%	20%	0%	18%	16%	12%	24%
Capstone myON	26%	5%	1%	18%	8%	18%	28%	14%	14%
Gale Virtual Reference Library	5%	17%	40%	14%	27%	13%	18%	13%	15%
Abdo Digital	18%	9%	5%	14%	11%	22%	7%	11%	14%
OverDrive	10%	12%	22%	12%	16%	3%	9%	17%	17%
Scholastic (BookFlix, TrueFlix, Storia, etc.)	14%	3%	1%	10%	5%	14%	21%	0%	7%
EBSCO	3%	5%	18%	6%	22%	7%	5%	16%	4%
Lerner Digital	10%	1%	1%	7%	0%	11%	10%	0%	6%
Barnes & Noble	4%	7%	9%	5%	19%	5%	4%	6%	7%
Rosen	7%	1%	5%	6%	3%	0%	13%	5%	4%
Amazon.com	2%	5%	10%	4%	22%	2%	5%	4%	6%
Rourke Educational Media	5%	2%	0%	4%	0%	11%	6%	0%	0%
Infobase eBooks	0%	6%	14%	4%	8%	2%	8%	2%	3%
ABC-CLIO	2%	1%	10%	3%	8%	7%	1%	9%	1%
Baker & Taylor Axis 360	1%	9%	8%	2%	16%	3%	2%	4%	2%
eSebco	3%	1%	1%	3%	3%	3%	4%	0%	3%
StarWalk Kids Media	2%	0%	0%	2%	3%	3%	1%	1%	2%
Direct from publisher	2%	1%	1%	1%	5%	0%	4%	0%	2%
Brain Hive	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	4%	2%	0%	0%
Britannica Digital Learning	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	4%	0%
Cavendish Square	0%	1%	3%	1%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%
Big Universe	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Other	11%	8%	15%	11%	19%	8%	10%	12%	14%
% using more than one vendor	57%	38%	65%	59%	68%	57%	60%	58%	60%

In terms of preferred vendor, FollettShelf is far and away the top choice among libraries that have a preference, cited by 44%. The next most preferred, MackinVIA and OverDrive, tied at 10%. Only 12% this year (down from 32% last year) had “no preference.”

**Figure 49. Which is your preferred ebook vendor?**  
*% of school libraries, 2015*



**Table 36. Which is your preferred ebook vendor?**  
*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
FollettShelf	43%	47%	31%	44%	24%	42%	48%	51%	38%
Mackin VIA	9%	11%	8%	10%	5%	15%	1%	16%	9%
OverDrive	8%	10%	21%	10%	13%	6%	5%	10%	15%
Capstone myON	8%	3%	0%	5%	3%	7%	7%	1%	5%
Gale Virtual Reference Library	1%	3%	12%	3%	3%	1%	4%	4%	3%
Abdo Digital	5%	1%	1%	3%	3%	3%	0%	1%	6%
Scholastic (BookFlix, TrueFlix, Storia, etc.)	3%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	7%	0%	2%
Baker & Taylor Axis 360	1%	6%	4%	2%	11%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Tumblebooks	2%	0%	0%	2%	0%	3%	0%	0%	2%
Amazon.com	1%	4%	3%	2%	5%	1%	0%	2%	2%
EBSCO	0%	0%	4%	1%	5%	1%	3%	1%	0%
Brain Hive	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Lerner Digital	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
StarWalk Kids Media	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Infobase eBooks	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Barnes & Noble	0%	3%	1%	0%	3%	0%	1%	0%	0%

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Rourke Educational Media	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Cavendish Square	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Rosen	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
eSebco	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	1%	3%	1%	2%	8%	4%	1%	2%	1%
No preference	14%	8%	11%	11%	18%	13%	18%	10%	9%

## In Summary

Spending on ebooks is down a little this year, in response to lukewarm reception among students. That said, consortium membership is up to a record high (although not as high as for public libraries), and one-fourth of respondents say they buy no books independently, so that can play a part of the decline in spending as well.

Given that librarians report an articulated preference for printed books among kids of all ages, few school libraries have purchased ebooks at the complete expense of printed books, and for the foreseeable future, for many titles—especially fiction or “please reading” books, print will continue to be the default format.

FollettShelf remains the most widely used and most preferred school ebook vendor, gaining in favor in the last year.

## In Their Own Words

In this survey, we asked school libraries to explain why they chose their preferred vendor. Here is a sample of their comments (lightly edited).

### **Abdo Digital**

- *“Only because they offered 20 free ebooks and then offered another ‘buy an ebook, get the print version free,’ so I took advantage of that.”*
- *“The books are unlimited, simultaneous access.”*
- *“They have provided more help, free books, and they do not overload with calls or emails.”*

### **Amazon.com**

- *“Easy to order. Availability of titles.”*
- *“I like the matching audio books that can go with the ebooks.”*
- *“Quick access to new ebooks, title selection is amazing, can download the book RIGHT AWAY, cost is more user-friendly, students prefer that format, easier for them to get to the books on their own device.”*
- *“They’re usually the cheapest.”*
- *“We purchased Kindles for checkout to students, and thus are limited to Amazon as our preferred vendor.”*

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**B&T Axis361**

- *“B&T has the best app (at least they developed a better app first) which is compatible with the most devices.”*
- *“Deep discounts on current fiction.”*
- *“Their books can be accessed and downloaded on a variety of devices.”*
- *“They have a multiple-use policy and from looking through their offerings they have the type of non-fiction books I would like to see our consortium purchase for research purposes. At this time our consortium is focused on pleasure reading rather than research.”*

**Barnes & Noble**

- *“They’re known from an earlier time and what we mostly have comes from them.”*
- *“We have Nooks.”*

**BrainHive**

- *“Because I only pay if an ebook is read. If I see an ebook getting a lot of use, I can then purchase it at a discount and own it with no more pay per use.”*

**Capstone myON**

- *“Can purchase ebooks with reward points.”*
- *“Easy access for my patrons. I plan on joining the Illinois state ebook group but I need to work on the open access to adult materials for my younger readers.”*
- *“Kids love and use the databases.”*
- *“My teachers and students really like the Capstone Interactive ebooks.”*
- *“Their ebooks are the most user-friendly for young readers.”*
- *“Titles can be played from OPAC link (no separate site to visit); naturalistic reading style, appeal to students; quality of graphics.”*
- *“We like the ‘pay \$1 per book checked out as you go’ program. It makes it affordable, especially since the ebooks aren’t taking off. I am hoping that they are able to offer more popular fiction in their database of ebooks.”*

**EBSCOhost**

- *“Affordability/simultaneous usage/titles available for the cost.”*
- *“They have an excellent collection that fits our school’s NF needs for research.”*
- *“They offer a large number of ebooks that can be integrated into our OPAC. They also update materials and remove outdated materials, which saves me time.”*
- *“This is the site where most of the students look first to access materials for research.”*

**FollettShelf**

- *“Basically because they can provide ebooks from other publishers and in keeping access to ebooks consistent/universal; eliminating several log-ins. However, I would like to choose other vendors to meet the needs for educators like EBSCO whereby Follett cannot offer—therefore providing one platform.”*

- *“Because I already have a FollettShelf set up, and Follett is my #1 vendor for print books. They have great customer service and tech help.”*
- *“Because they offer great fiction and informational text options AND the option for downloadable audiobooks.”*
- *“Best customer service. Easiest use/user friendly. Fast service. Generally lower cost. Free shipping for actual books. Wide variety. Compatible with the Library program: direct access through Destiny to download new materials and MARC records.”*
- *“Easy to use since we use Follett for our Library Management System.”*
- *“I needed a free platform that truly works like a virtual library (the books can be accessed from any device) and I wanted the school to own the ebooks (I don't have the budget to waste on renting ebooks) and it has the most extensive list of interesting and popular high school fiction ebook titles to buy.”*
- *“I committed to their platform a while ago and am appreciative of the improvements that they are finally making.”*
- *“I have been using them for years. They are very dependable, the service is good, the reps are great and it works seamlessly with our library software.”*
- *“It is easiest for my kids to access on phones, and has titles they like best since the school won't let me use Amazon.”*
- *“It is the easiest to use. The interface for choosing/purchasing is easy, and the records go right into the Destiny system without much fuss or bother. In addition, it is the easiest for students to use—they can read on the computer without downloading, and there is only one app necessary to read on devices. Plus, there is no annual fee. The selection needs to be bigger, but for now it suits us.”*
- *“It is the only one I use. Ebooks are not that popular with students. Follett's choices for ebooks are 12 month access titles and they are not cost efficient with decreased budgets.”*
- *“This vendor provides the most easily integrated ebook format and single authentication login for my patrons. Students use the same UN/PW combination they use to access the computer, so the process is seamless. Everyone else requires some other type of authentication regimen.”*
- *“We use Destiny software so ebooks are easily integrated in the OPAC.”*

#### **Gale Virtual Reference Library**

- *“Already pleased with digital content (databases); relationship with company; sought reference titles for our first eBook collections and felt they offered the best platform, pricing, accessibility for our campus, etc.”*
- *“Because they've given us the majority of our ebook collection for free so far.”*
- *“I have been buying the For Students series for several years now in print and recently have matched many of my Gale print titles with ebooks.”*
- *“Most-used reference materials come from Gale.”*
- *“The reference books are amazing, and they are all searchable as a database. All the reference books are multi user access, the articles can be emailed home, and there are citations.”*

- *“Unlimited access, quality reference ebooks, easy to use and download, current.”*
- *“We buy non-fiction from Gale, which currently is used far more than the fiction we buy from OverDrive. No complaints about OverDrive, however.”*

#### **Infobase Ebooks**

- *“Unlimited simultaneous use and no hosting fee. Plus the book prices are reasonable!!!!.”*

#### **Mackin VIA**

- *“Because it doesn't cost to access them and they will work to integrate into any automation system.”*
- *“Easy to use platform and easy to use same password and log in as we use for other school-based accounts.”*
- *“I like that MackinVIA provides a single sign-on to access a variety of resources. I may also buy from Follett before the end of the year if they have titles I cannot purchase from Mackin.”*
- *“I like their platform. The kids think it's cool too.”*
- *“I like their selection and the user interface of their reading app is more kid-friendly.”*
- *“I tried another vendor, but MackinVIA had a much friendly platform for the students and ability to run reports, manage groups and expand into the classrooms.”*
- *“MackinVIA allows access to ebooks that you've purchased from other vendors. The user interface is friendly, and easy for kids to navigate. They offer free promotions, allowing me to build my library's ebook collection for free.”*
- *“MackinVIA provided a startup program with a set of free ebooks for each library in our district.”*
- *“Their MackinVIA portal has been adopted by our district to easily house all of our digital content. They have great customer service and work with us on every purchase and technical issue.”*
- *“They know schools, they understand our needs, MackinVIA works with our library program. They bend over backwards for us. If they only got Scholastic books, they would be perfect.”*
- *“They work with me, a real person answers the phone to help me problem solve, I upload my users to them for convenience for the students and staff to use, they give back to the community, they offer an app for students to download free, they locate books I need, our district limits who we can use and so I chose to go with them and do not want multiple platforms for my students to know how to access.”*
- *“We want to keep all ebooks through one portal for ease of access. MackinVIA provides a very convenient way to do this. Also like the annotation tools (highlighting, underlining, notetaking, citations) it provides.”*
- *“When I called to set up an account at the beginning of the school year (to purchase print books), the sales rep helped me to access MackinVIA and put about 60 ebooks and audiobooks on our school account. It was easy to want to add to this collection.”*

**OverDrive**

- *“I use OverDrive from my public library. I find that their service is easy to use and it has many popular titles available.”*
- *“If the kids have an Amazon account, which many in our Middle School do, they can access the books relatively easily if they take the time to go through the steps.”*
- *“It has more of the popular fiction titles students want.”*
- *“OverDrive really limits books from other collections, but at the time we made the investment it had a more dynamic user interface and allowed students to download materials and take them off campus (we are a rural school where students have internet here but not at home).”*
- *“The books are so easy to access—it's a great interface, and they have a lot of the titles that the kids want.”*
- *“They have the easiest, most dependable format for access. It is also the same format used by the county and university libraries in our area.”*
- *“They look cool and their books work on a wide variety of devices.”*
- *“Use of multiple devices, personal downloads, ease of use. However, dislike that I'll lose all books if I don't stay with OverDrive and that its books are kind of one at a time only.”*
- *“We prefer OverDrive because their apps are easier for students to use, and they offer more YA fiction titles.”*
- *“When I was first considering ebooks, OverDrive was the only provider I found that offered books in formats for Kindle, Nook, and iPad—these formats allow all my students to use whatever device they may have.”*

**Scholastic**

- *“Books fit curriculum, audio support, keep adding and updating, additional resources (websites, videos, articles).”*
- *“I use them most often in introducing ebooks to students during instructional use.”*
- *“Our subscription to TrueFlix is by far the most widely used electronic format used by our teachers.”*

**TumbleBooks**

- *“The rep for these companies is the most helpful in the purchases.”*
- *“Variety of books by license at a reasonable price.”*
- *“Works great for little kids. Includes stories, lesson plans, and games.”*

## 5. EBOOKS AND EREADERS

This chapter looks at preferred ereaders and school libraries that circulate ereading devices. This section also looks at the transition to etextbooks, as well as the proliferation of “one-to-one schools.”

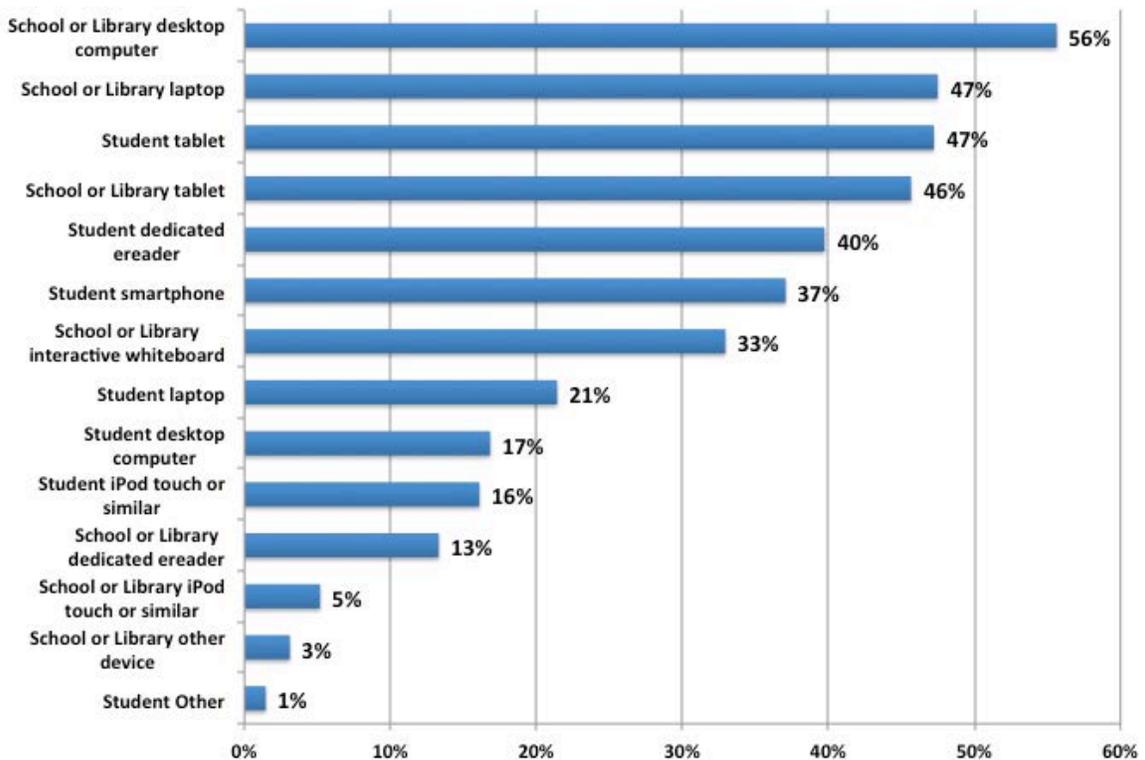
### Ereaders Used

Every survey, we ask about the devices on which students read ebooks, and the rate at which new devices and models have appeared to some extent makes historical comparison difficult.

The “school or library desktop computer” remains the top method by which students access the library’s ebook collection, selected by 56% (down from 68%) of respondents. “School or library laptop” and “student tablet” are tied at 47%, the former down from 50%, the latter down from 52%. “School or library tablet” was selected by 46%, up from 38%. “Student smartphone” is essentially unchanged at 37%.

Generally, school-owned devices are used more often than student-owned devices.

Figure 50. What device(s) are most commonly used by students to read ebooks?  
% of school libraries, 2015



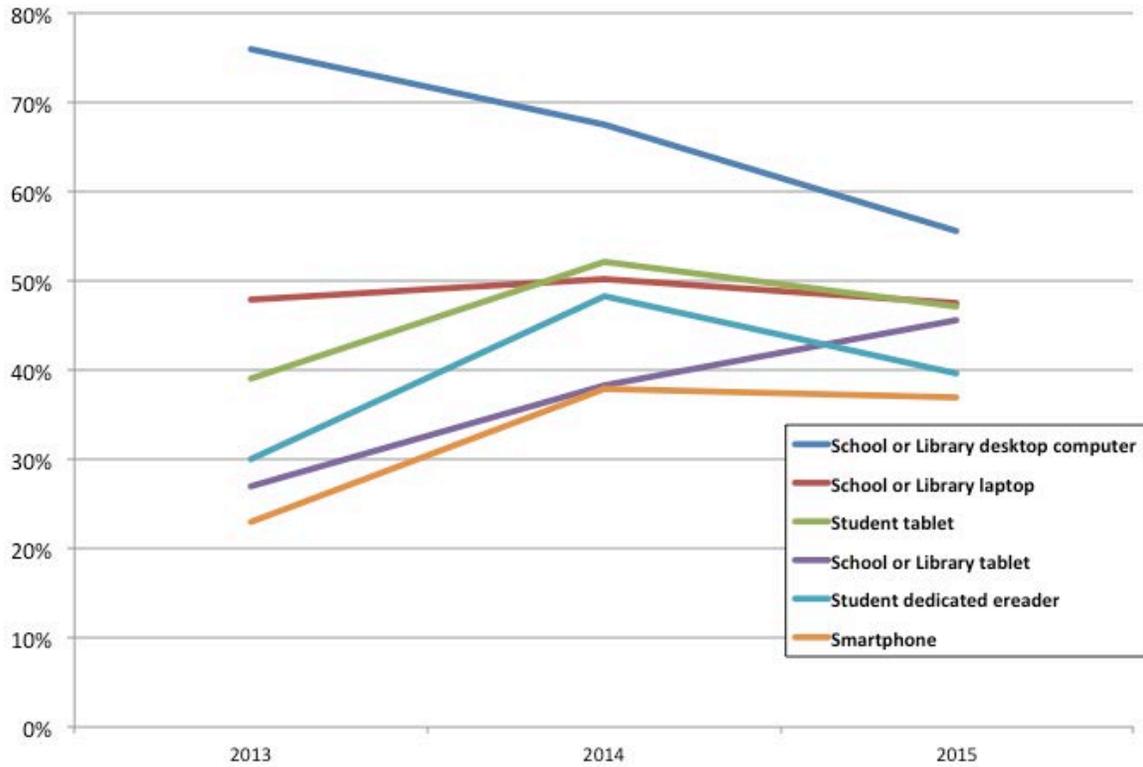
Elementary school students are the most likely to use school-owned devices for ebook reading, with school desktops, tablets and laptops the most common ereaders. Smartphones have emerged as the top ereading device for middle and high school students, not so much because their usage has increased, but because usage of other types of readers (except for school tablets) has decreased.

**Table 37. What device(s) are most commonly used by students to read ebooks?  
% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015**

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
School or Library desktop computer	62%	44%	49%	57%	37%	63%	61%	57%	47%
School or Library laptop	50%	38%	42%	48%	37%	42%	61%	47%	43%
Student tablet	45%	57%	51%	47%	59%	35%	48%	54%	51%
School or Library tablet	53%	38%	33%	45%	49%	54%	43%	32%	50%
Student dedicated ereader	38%	51%	40%	40%	44%	24%	46%	49%	41%
Student smartphone	23%	61%	63%	37%	46%	42%	31%	30%	41%
School or Library interactive whiteboard	45%	11%	10%	34%	15%	37%	47%	23%	27%
Student laptop	20%	21%	31%	20%	51%	7%	27%	24%	26%
Student desktop computer	20%	13%	14%	16%	20%	7%	23%	22%	17%
Student iPod touch or similar	14%	30%	27%	17%	12%	13%	15%	15%	19%
School or Library dedicated ereader	10%	17%	21%	13%	24%	12%	16%	11%	14%
School or Library iPod touch or similar	6%	4%	3%	6%	0%	4%	2%	8%	7%
School or Library other device	3%	4%	1%	3%	5%	7%	1%	0%	4%
Student Other	2%	2%	1%	2%	0%	4%	0%	0%	2%

School or library tablet is the only one of the top five ereading devices to see a rise in usage this year. Desktops—as with desktops in general—are substantially on the wane.

**Figure 51. What device(s) are most commonly used by students to read ebooks?**  
*% of school libraries, 2013–2015*



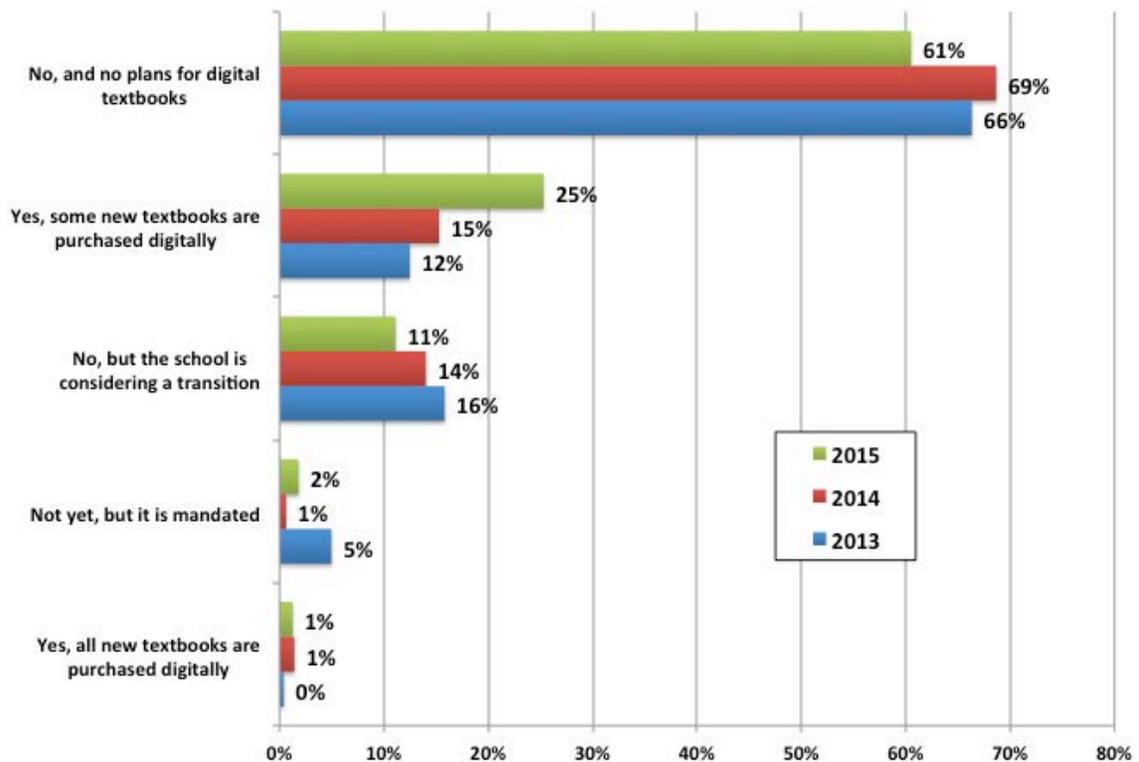
### Transition to Electronic Textbooks

Two years ago, an emerging trend in schools was the replacement of printed textbooks with electronic textbooks, delivered as ebooks, apps, or other digital content, as well as the transition of many schools to “one-to-one schools,” where each student is supplied with a tablet (examples: an iPad or Samsung Galaxy Tablet) or Google Chromebook, and learning and assignments take place largely via these devices.

Related to, or part of, this initiative is a transition to etextbooks. The advantages of etextbooks for schools are obvious: information in etextbooks can be updated regularly, they can be accessed from anywhere, take no shelf space, are lighter to carry and result in no lost books. Much of that likely amounts to lower costs for texts in the long run. What is the status of the etextbook initiative?

It’s happening very slowly. Six out of ten schools (61%) still have no plans to transition to digital textbooks, although that is down from 69% last year. One-fourth acquires some textbooks digitally, up ten percentage points. Overall, though, there doesn’t seem to be much movement afoot to transition to etextbooks. Whether that has been influenced by recent research (see the Key Findings section) that shows that reading comprehension and retention are diminished when reading electronically remains to be seen.

Figure 52. Has your school implemented a transition from print textbooks to digital textbooks? % of school libraries, 2013–2015



**Table 38. Has your school implemented a transition from print textbooks to digital textbooks?  
% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2013/2014**

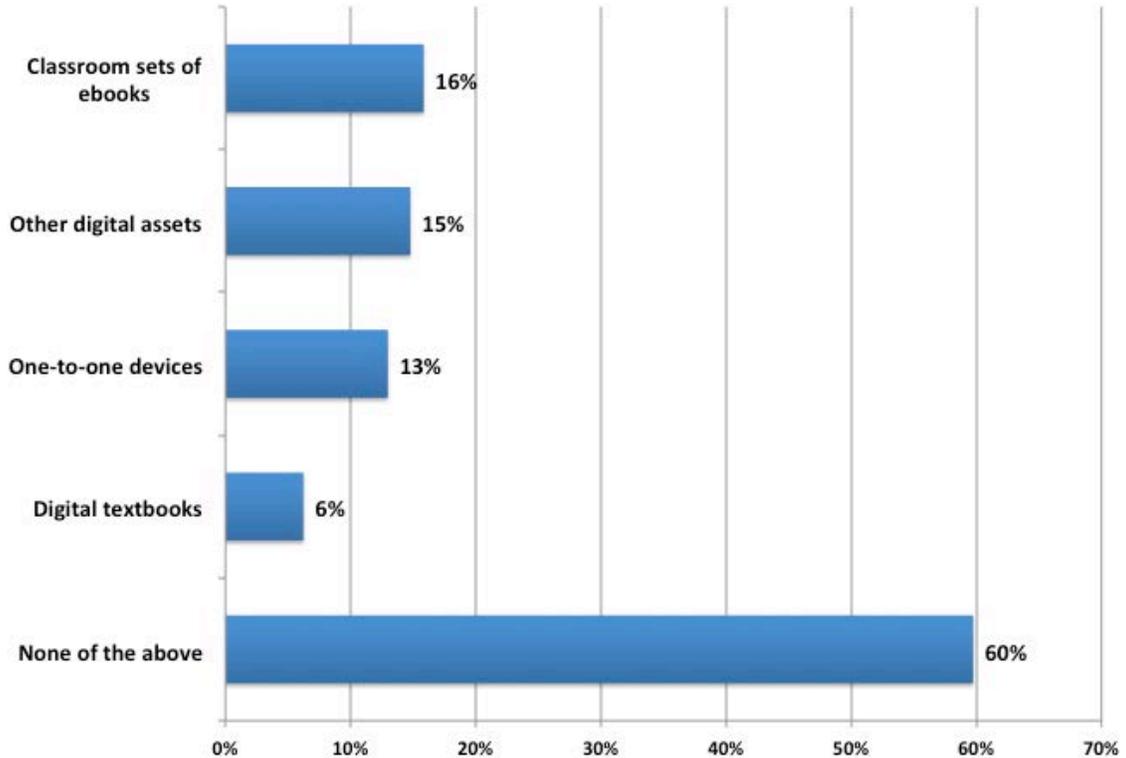
	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
<b>2015</b>									
No, and no plans for digital textbooks	76%	41%	39%	62%	28%	67%	59%	71%	52%
No, but the school is considering a transition	6%	15%	20%	11%	8%	8%	14%	8%	13%
Not yet, but it is mandated	2%	2%	2%	2%	0%	6%	0%	0%	1%
Yes, some new textbooks are purchased digitally	16%	38%	38%	24%	63%	18%	27%	17%	34%
Yes, all new textbooks are purchased digitally	0%	4%	1%	1%	3%	1%	0%	5%	0%
<b>2014</b>									
No, and no plans for digital textbooks	75%	55%	52%	70%	41%	64%	76%	65%	69%
No, but the school is considering a transition	13%	15%	20%	14%	9%	17%	7%	15%	15%
Not yet, but it is mandated	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Yes, some new textbooks are purchased digitally	10%	25%	25%	14%	48%	19%	16%	18%	12%
Yes, all new textbooks are purchased digitally	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	3%
<b>2013</b>									
No, and no plans	70%	57%	53%	68%	36%	62%	77%	55%	68%
No, but the school is considering a transition	14%	22%	24%	15%	26%	17%	10%	26%	13%
Not yet, but it is mandated	6%	2%	3%	5%	2%	6%	0%	10%	5%
Yes, some new textbooks are purchased digitally	9%	18%	19%	12%	34%	14%	13%	9%	13%
Yes, all new textbooks are purchased digitally	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%

As for when specifically schools that do plan a transition to etextbooks intend to make that transition, most don't know, although 16% of the scant few who expect a transition say it will take place in 2017.

### Digital Assets

A new question we added to this survey asked about the overall digital materials or assets that libraries are involved in coordinating for classroom use. It turns out...not too many. Sixty percent said “none of the above,” although 16% of school libraries do coordinate ebook sets for classrooms.

Figure 53. Which of the following digital assets are you involved in coordinating for classroom use? % of school libraries, 2015



A quarter of middle school and 20% of high school librarians say they are involved in coordinating one-to-one devices in their schools. The percentage rises to 30% in private schools.

Table 39. Which of the following digital assets are you involved in coordinating for classroom use? % of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015

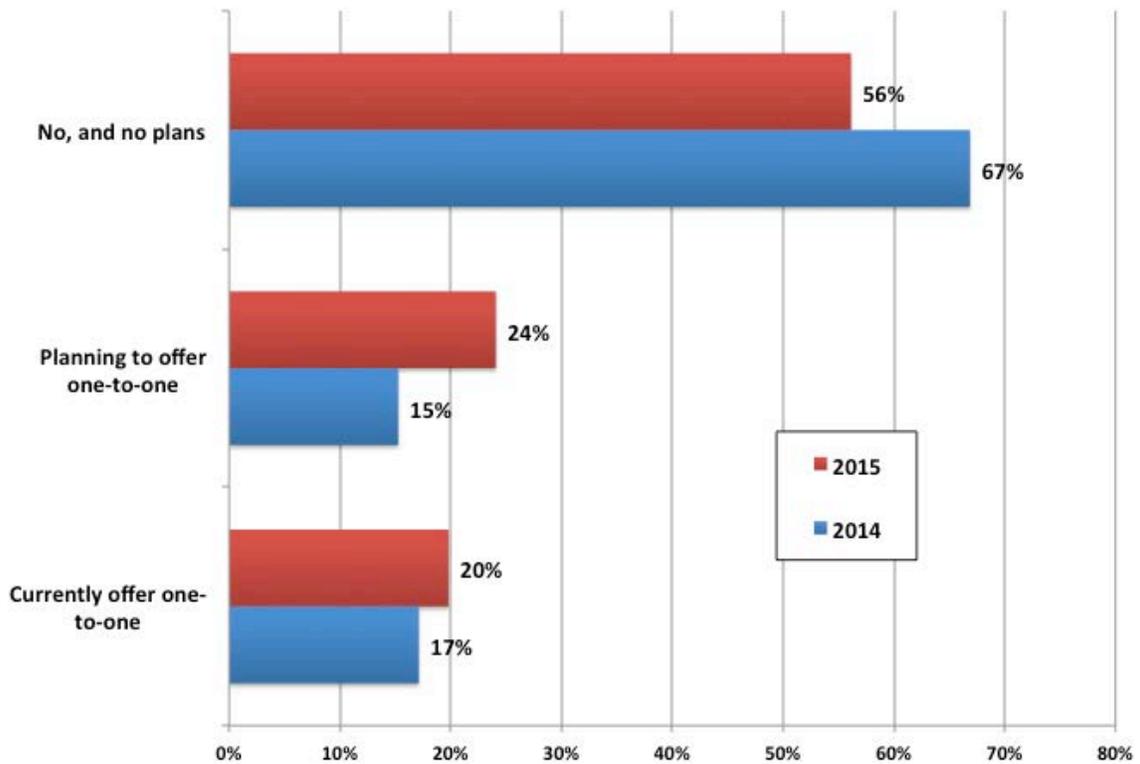
	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Classroom sets of ebooks	15%	17%	14%	16%	10%	17%	6%	16%	21%
Other digital assets	15%	12%	13%	15%	10%	15%	12%	18%	14%
One-to-one devices	8%	26%	20%	12%	30%	7%	13%	17%	15%
Digital textbooks	5%	11%	5%	6%	15%	9%	6%	6%	5%
None of the above	63%	55%	61%	61%	53%	63%	66%	51%	59%

## One-to-One Device Programs

Last year, we began asking about one-to-one (aka “1:1”) programs, whereby a school allocates a tablet or laptop computer to each student, and assignments, class readings, homework, etc., are accomplished digitally on these devices. One-to-one programs can be thought of in the same context as—but exist in contrast to—BYOD (“bring your own device”) programs (see below), where students are encouraged to bring their own web-enabled devices to school.

One-to-one programs are creeping forward. This year, one-fifth of schools offer a one-to-one program, up three percentage points, while almost one-fourth (24%, up from 15%) plan to offer one. Those who don’t offer one, and have no plans to offer one, are down from two-thirds to 56%.

**Figure 54. Does your school have a one-to-one device program currently in place or planned?**  
*% of school libraries, 2015*



Middle schools led the growth in one-to-one programs, with more high schools planning to offer one.

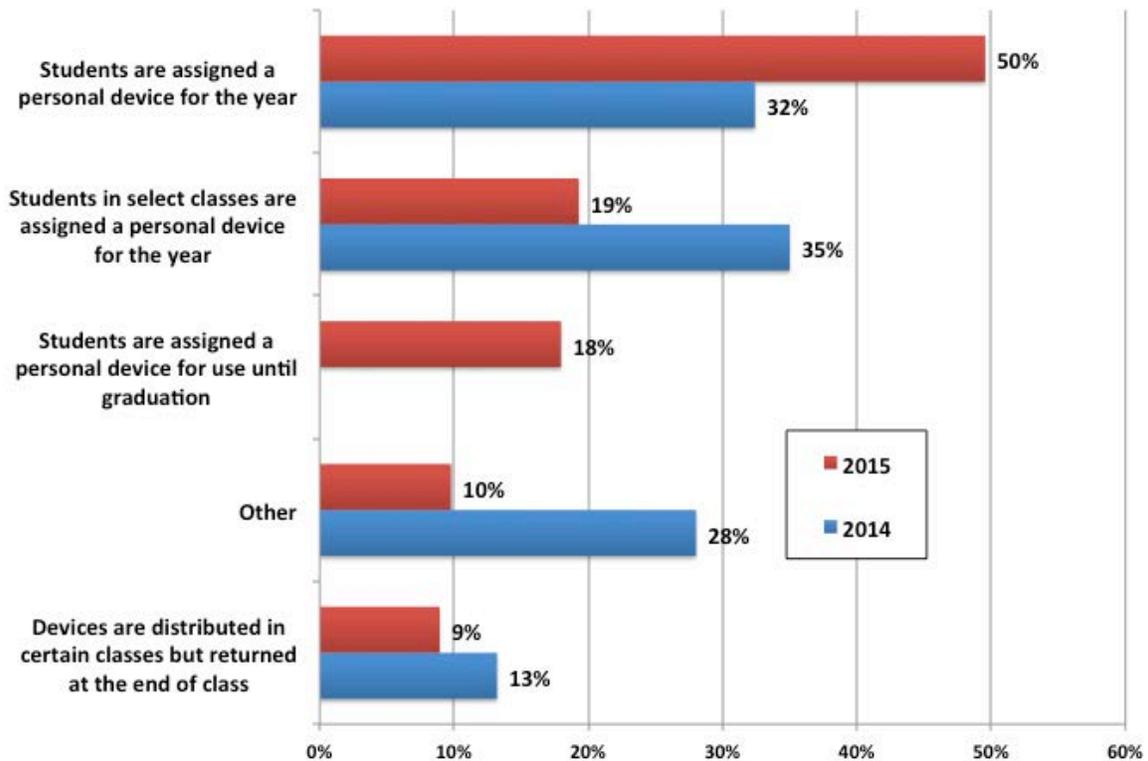
**Table 40. Does your school have a one-to-one device program currently in place or planned?  
% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2014–2015**

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
<b>2015</b>									
Currently offer one-to-one	14%	30%	24%	18%	51%	11%	22%	19%	25%
Planning to offer one-to-one	22%	25%	32%	25%	15%	24%	28%	15%	27%
No, and no plans	64%	45%	45%	58%	34%	66%	51%	67%	48%
<b>2014</b>									
Currently offer one-to-one	16%	20%	24%	14%	53%	19%	20%	11%	17%
Planning to offer one-to-one	13%	22%	24%	16%	18%	20%	10%	11%	17%
No, and no plans	71%	57%	52%	70%	29%	61%	70%	77%	64%

One-to-one programs can work in a variety of ways: devices can be given to all students for an entire school year or until graduation, they can be provided to students in select classes and kept for the entire year, or they can be supplied to students in select classes and returned at the end of each class.

The most common one-to-one device methodology is to “assign a personal device to each student for the year” (cited by 50% of the 20% of schools that have a one-to-one program). This has pulled ahead of “students in select classes are assigned a personal device for the year” (19%, down from 35%). Eighteen percent keep the same device until they graduate.

**Figure 55. How does your school’s one-to-one program work?**  
*% of school libraries that have a one-to-one device program, 2014–2015*



**Table 41. If yes, how does your school's one-to-one program work?**  
*% of school libraries that have a one-to-one device program, by type of school and geographic region, 2014–2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
<b>2015</b>									
Students are assigned a personal device for the year	50%	55%	43%	51%	24%	86%	29%	15%	64%
Students in select classes are assigned a personal device for the year	36%	0%	0%	20%	14%	0%	45%	18%	12%
Students are assigned a personal device for use until graduation	0%	27%	43%	17%	24%	14%	19%	24%	16%
Devices are distributed in certain classes but returned at the end of class	14%	3%	0%	9%	10%	0%	3%	35%	4%
Other	7%	18%	17%	7%	38%	0%	7%	9%	14%
<b>2014</b>									
Students in select classes are assigned a personal device for the year	40%	15%	20%	35%	26%	31%	43%	41%	31%
All students are assigned a personal device for the year	35%	59%	49%	35%	37%	47%	17%	23%	35%
Devices are distributed in certain classes but returned at the end of class	10%	18%	10%	16%	4%	0%	13%	12%	22%
Other	25%	24%	24%	22%	48%	35%	41%	30%	16%

iPads remain the top device used by elementary schools that have implemented a one-to-one device program (53%), although they're down from 64%. Google Chromebooks and netbooks leapt up from 13% to 30%, however this is somewhat misleading because the question asked for a write-in answer in 2014. Laptops have lost considerable ground.

Figure 56. If yes, what type(s) of one-to-one devices does your school provide for students?  
 % of school libraries that have a one-to-one device program, 2014–2015

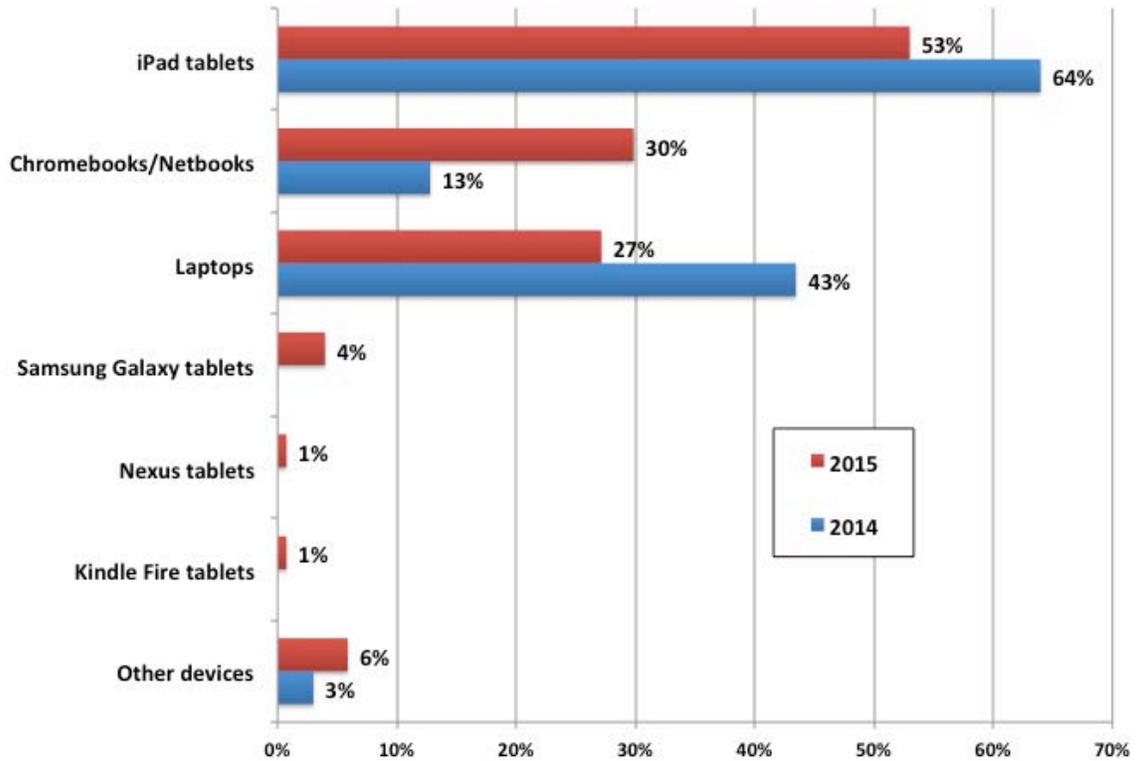


Table 42. If yes, what type(s) of one-to-one devices does your school provide for students?  
 % of school libraries that have a one-to-one device program, by type of school and geographic region, 2014–2015

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
<b>2015</b>									
iPad tablets	64%	38%	51%	49%	62%	49%	34%	46%	67%
Chromebooks/Netbooks	29%	26%	23%	34%	10%	29%	61%	27%	15%
Laptops	36%	24%	14%	26%	14%	15%	18%	45%	28%
Samsung Galaxy tablets	7%	0%	0%	4%	5%	0%	13%	4%	0%
Kindle Fire tablets	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	4%	0%
Nexus tablets	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	4%	0%
Other devices	0%	18%	14%	4%	29%	15%	10%	0%	3%

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
<b>2014</b>									
iPad tablets	72%	47%	43%	69%	46%	85%	58%	31%	64%
Laptops	39%	47%	50%	39%	62%	12%	48%	69%	53%
Chromebooks/Netbooks (write-in answer)	11%	19%	12%	16%	4%	3%	10%	44%	11%
Other tablets	0%	0%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Other	0%	0%	2%	1%	4%	0%	0%	6%	3%

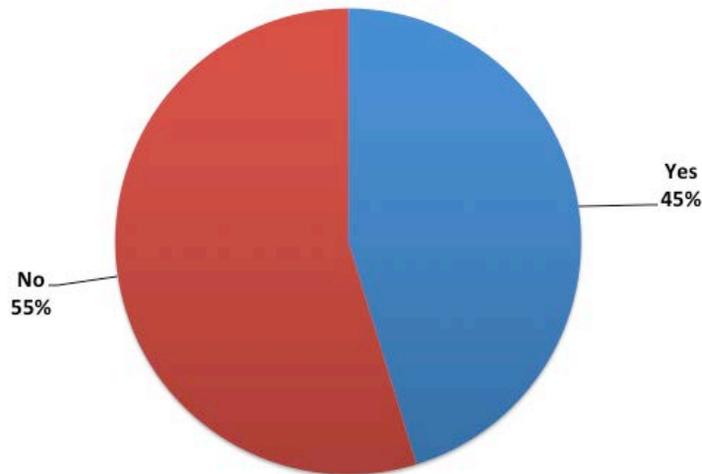
### Availability of Reading Devices

In this section we look at libraries that make ereaders available to students. But first...

#### BYOD Schools

Forty-five percent of schools have a “bring your own device” policy by which students are allowed to bring their own reader, tablet, or other mobile device to school for class assignments. Just over half (55%) do not have a policy allowing for this.

Figure 57. Does your school have a BYOD policy allowing students to bring their own devices into the classroom to aid instruction? % of school libraries, 2015



BYOD policies increase in frequency with grade level, with two-thirds of high schools having such a policy.

**Table 43. Does your school have a BYOD policy allowing students to bring their own devices into the classroom to aid instruction?**

*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

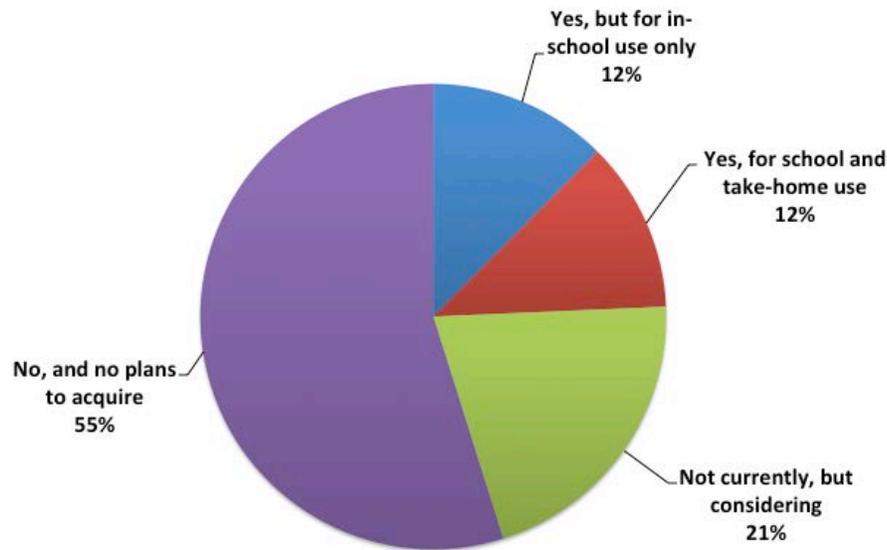
	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Yes	36%	58%	66%	45%	56%	41%	43%	51%	46%
No	64%	42%	34%	55%	44%	59%	57%	49%	54%

### Ereader Availability

The number of schools that have ereaders available for students have leveled off, but still remain fairly low: 24% of school libraries circulate ereaders either for in-school or take-home purposes. One-fifth (21%) are considering making ereaders available, but 55% have no plans to acquire any. The open-ended comments to one of the follow-up questions—as well as data we have reported elsewhere in this study—suggests that lack of demand and lack of funds are the primary reasons that more schools do not make ereaders available to students.

**Figure 58. Does your library have ereading devices available for students to borrow?**

*% of school libraries, 2015*



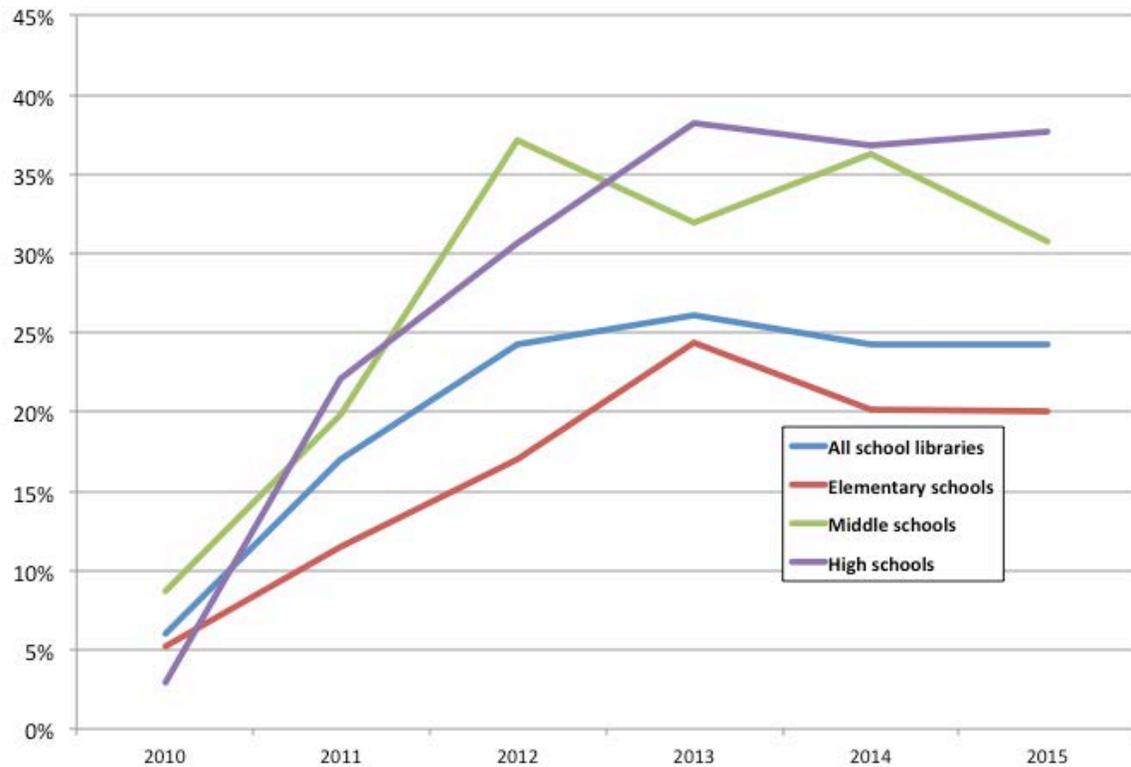
High schools and to a lesser extent middle schools are the most likely to make ereaders available for students. More than one-fourth of middle schools are considering it.

**Table 44. Does your library have ereading devices available for students to borrow?**  
*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Yes, but for in-school use only	13%	10%	8%	12%	5%	12%	13%	8%	14%
Yes, for school and take-home use	7%	21%	29%	11%	37%	9%	11%	9%	16%
Not currently, but considering	20%	27%	14%	21%	12%	24%	22%	19%	19%
No, and no plans to acquire	60%	42%	48%	55%	46%	54%	53%	64%	51%

Back in 2010, less than 10% of school libraries circulated ereaders, although by 2013, more than one-fourth did—including almost 40% of high schools. In the last year, high schools are slightly up, elementary schools are flat, and middle schools have dropped. We remarked last year that middle schools were one year out of phase with other schools, and that continues to be the case.

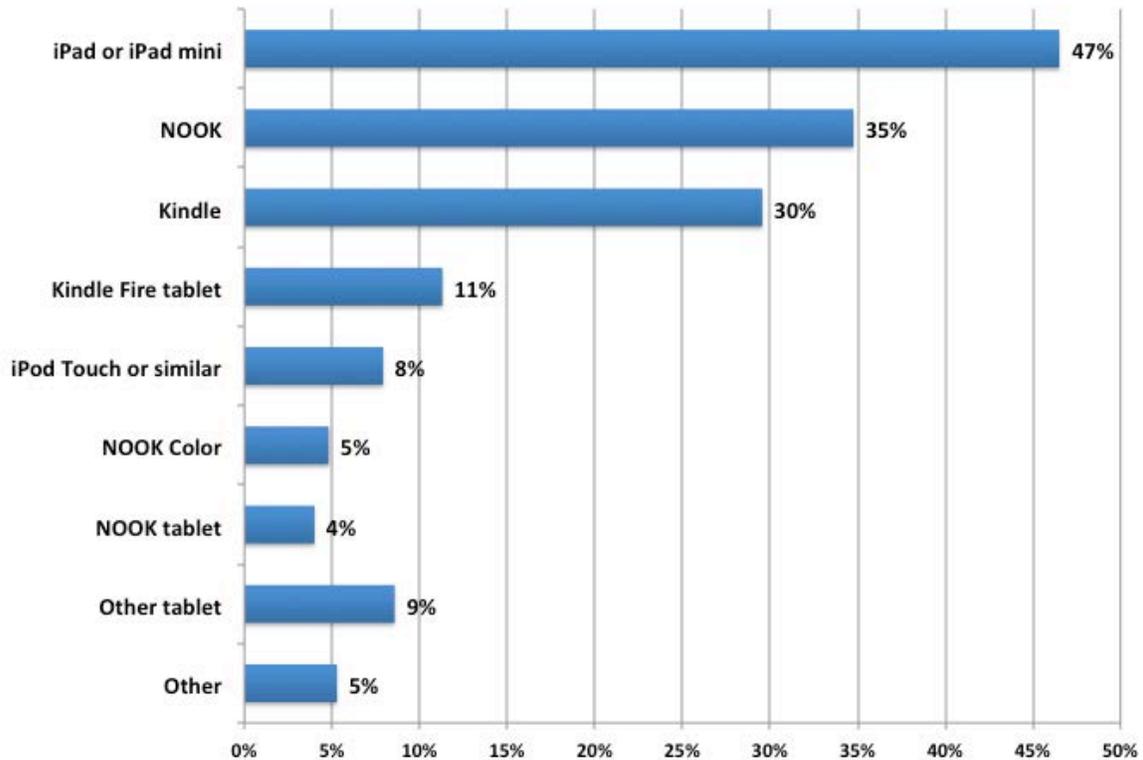
**Figure 59. Libraries that provide ereaders**  
*% of school libraries by type of school, 2010–2015*



### Which Ereaders Do Libraries Lend?

Of the 24% of school libraries that lend ereaders to students, the iPad or iPad Mini continues to surpass all others as the top device, offered by 47%, down from 54%. The NOOK has surpassed the Kindle in this survey, chosen by 35%, up more than ten percentage points. The Kindle had been on the decline for a few surveys, but as climbed two points this year to 30%.

**Figure 60.** If yes, which ereading device(s) does your library currently have available?  
% of school libraries that circulate ereaders, 2015



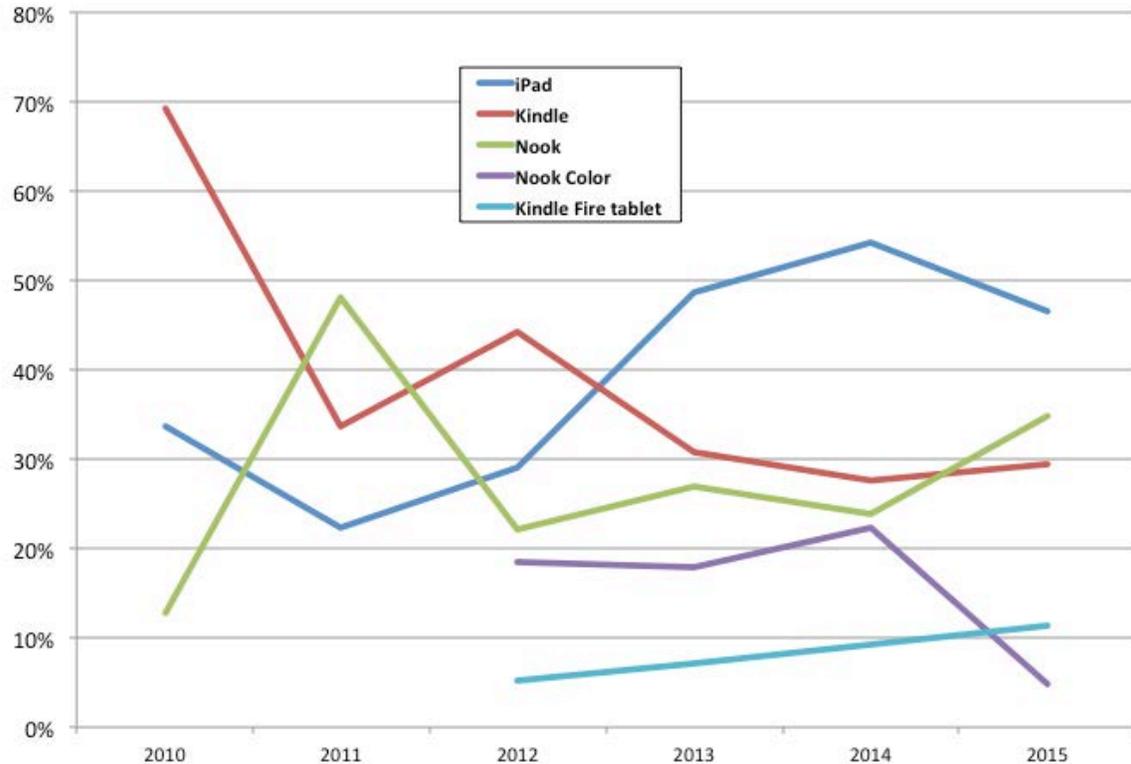
The iPad finds greater popularity among elementary schools than other schools.

**Table 45. If yes, which ereading device(s) does your library currently have available?**  
*% of school libraries that circulate ereaders, by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
iPad or iPad mini	65%	40%	29%	48%	29%	41%	42%	40%	53%
NOOK	35%	34%	38%	35%	35%	31%	43%	34%	33%
Kindle	20%	40%	40%	29%	65%	35%	21%	31%	31%
Kindle Fire tablet	5%	11%	16%	11%	24%	7%	3%	35%	10%
Other tablet	10%	6%	5%	6%	12%	7%	12%	5%	9%
iPod Touch or similar	10%	0%	5%	9%	0%	0%	3%	0%	16%
NOOK Color	5%	14%	13%	5%	12%	4%	6%	5%	5%
NOOK tablet	5%	6%	7%	5%	6%	0%	0%	0%	9%
3M Cloud Readers	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	5%	3%	7%	5%	6%	0%	6%	0%	9%

In the last year, the iPad is losing some ground as the NOOK gains ground, and the Kindle is flat. Now that Barnes & Noble has spun off the NOOK into a separate company, its future seems a bit uncertain.

**Figure 61. If yes, which ereading device(s) does your library currently have available?**  
*% of school libraries that circulate ereaders, 2010–2015*



Note: 2010 and 2011 surveys did not include Kindle Fire or NOOK Color

### How Many Ereaders?

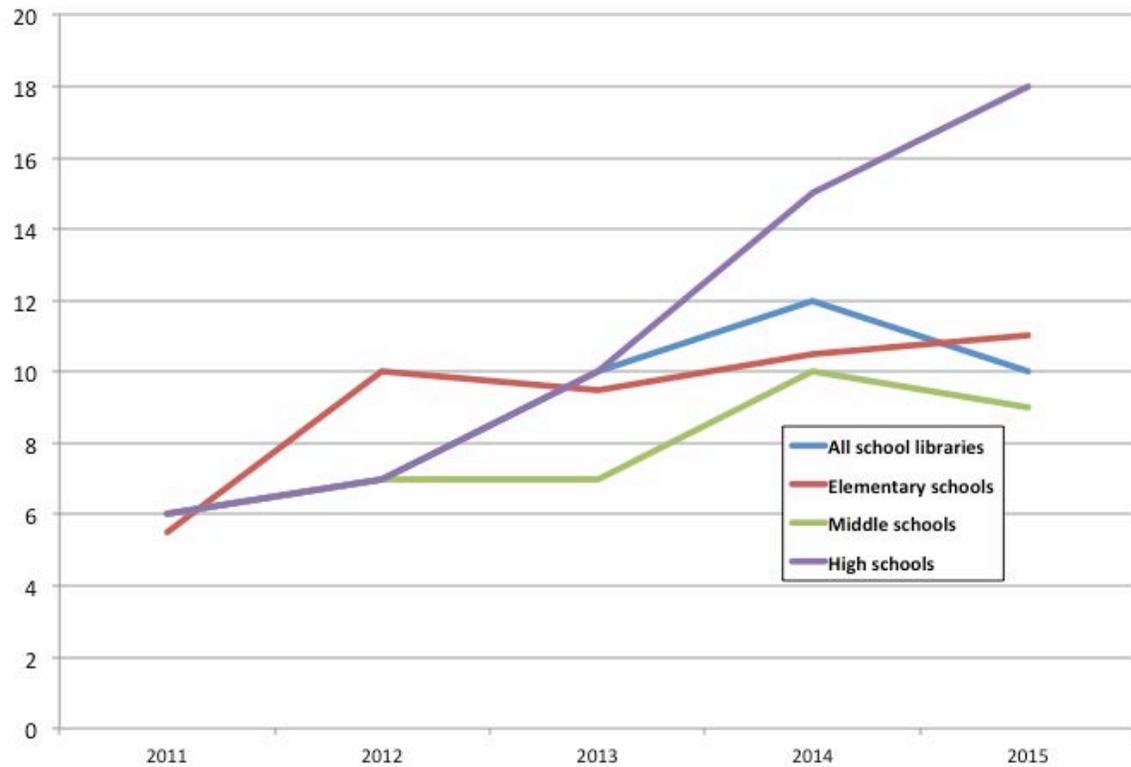
Libraries that offer ereaders to students (24% of all school libraries) have a mean 14.3 (median 10.0) ereaders on hand. This is down from a median of 12 devices on hand last year.

**Table 46. If yes, how many ereading devices does your library have available for students to borrow? % of school libraries that circulate ereaders, by type of school and geographic region, 2014**

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Mean # devices	13.3	14.5	18.9	13.9	13.0	21.3	16.2	6.1	11.5
Median # devices	11.0	9.0	18.0	9.0	13.0	15.0	10.0	5.0	9.0

The number of ereading devices made available per school for students' use is up substantially among high schools, up slightly among elementary schools, and down among middle schools.

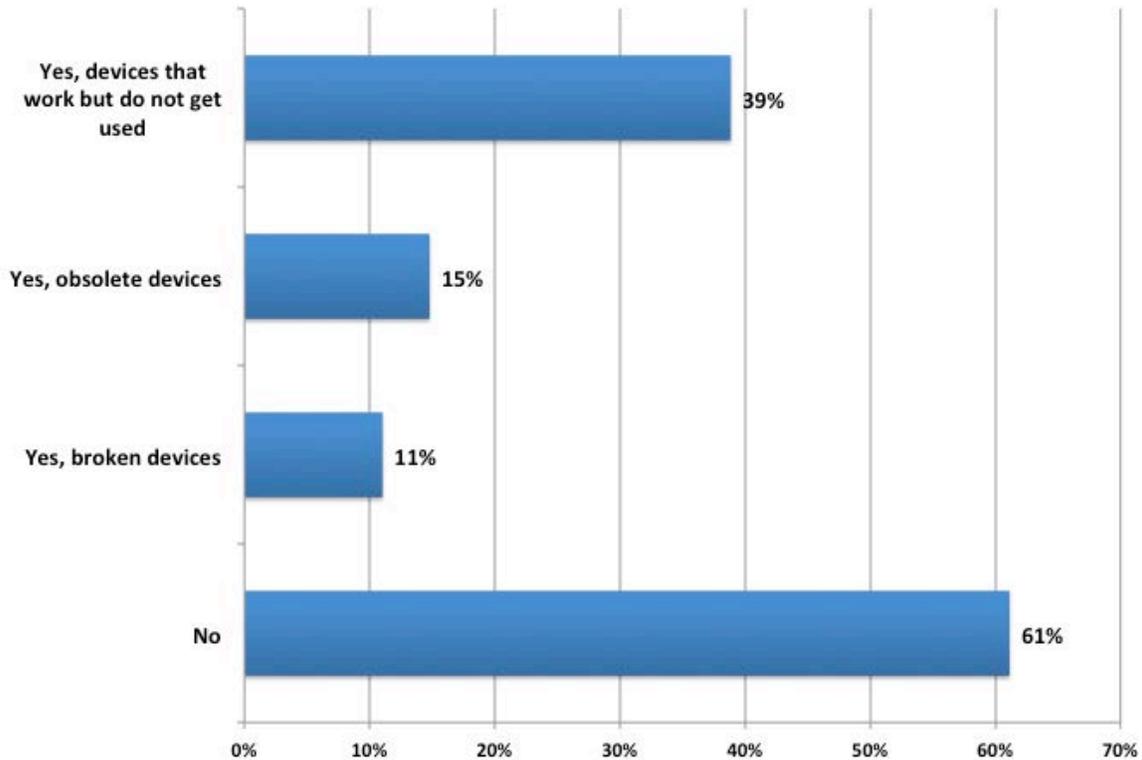
**Figure 62. If yes, how many ereading devices does your library have available for students to borrow? median no. of ereaders by type of school, 2011–2015**



### Obsolete Devices

Obsolescence is an occupational hazard when it comes to any kind of technology, but school libraries do a good job of not hanging onto unused, obsolete tech—61% have no devices hanging around that they once offered but are no longer used. Still, and this is another sign of lack of interest in ebooks, 39% have devices that work but are simply not used. Only 15% have obsolete devices on hand, and 11% have broken devices.

Figure 63. Are there devices that your library once offered that are no longer used?  
% of school libraries, 2015



Since elementary school libraries came later to the device table, it makes sense that fewer of them have obsolete, unused devices hanging around.

Table 47. Are there devices that your library once offered that are no longer used?  
% of school libraries, by type of school and geographical region, 2015

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Yes, devices that work but do not get used	21%	37%	52%	35%	71%	19%	53%	38%	40%
Yes, obsolete devices	5%	14%	22%	11%	29%	11%	24%	0%	15%
Yes, broken devices	5%	11%	11%	9%	24%	4%	12%	12%	14%
No	79%	63%	48%	65%	29%	81%	47%	62%	60%

We asked a follow-up, open-ended question about what school libraries do with broken or obsolete devices. Many donate, sell, or recycle them, but others have not had to face the issue yet. Here is a smattering of responses:

- *“We continued to offer the use of them. Replace with newer when damaged.”*
- *“Difficult issue, because of financial limitations of a nonpublic inner-city school. All devices have been purchased with grants and/or state funds over several consecutive years.”*
- *“Find ways to pass them on in the district, offer to teachers for in school use, students to take home/personal use, keep one or two for just in case.”*
- *“Generally gathering dust.”*
- *“Haphazardly purchase replacements as money becomes available.”*
- *“I have only had one device break and I did not replace it as demand for devices has not been high.”*
- *“I usually wait one to two years before discarding what I consider obsolete. I define this as a device that is no longer checked out and used, though teachers are aware of it. Our county has a discard policy to which I must adhere. The district collects and discards all assets.”*
- *“Recycled.”*
- *“Stashed in a closet until they can be removed from inventory.”*
- *“They are just gathering dust in the storage room.”*
- *“They are recycled or donated if they still work.”*
- *“They are sent to an electronics recycling place.”*

## In Summary

School-owned devices of various kinds are the default ereading devices, although desktop computers are on their way out (as they are everywhere else). School laptops are on the rise, as are tablets. More and more students read ebooks on their phones, although verbatim comments elsewhere in this report suggest that students don't like to use their own phones for ereading (power charging is an issue).

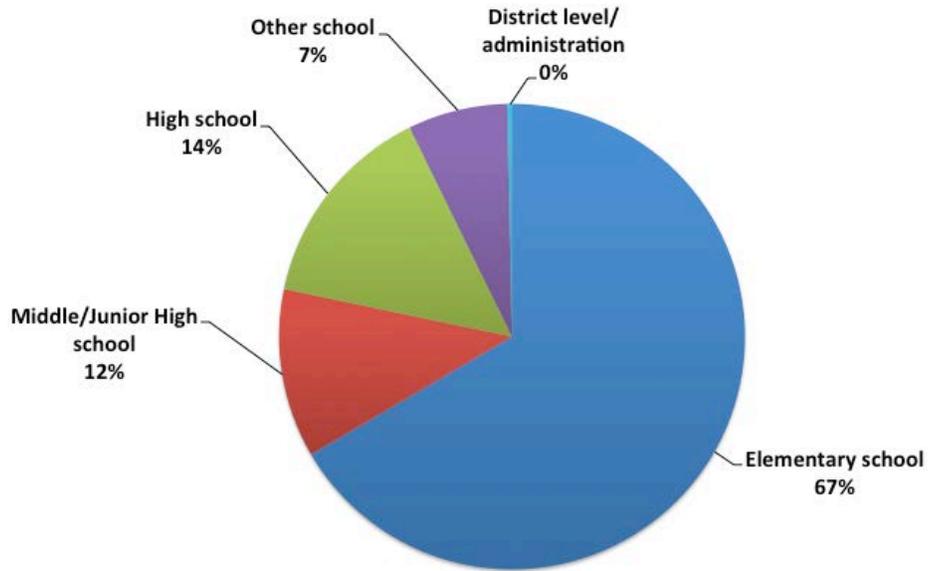
That said, school libraries offering ereaders to students is low but unchanged from last year. A lot of the problem is lack of money to buy ereaders, but many respondents indicate lack of demand.

All this may end up a moot point. Almost half of schools in our sample have “bring your own device” policies in place, and one-in-five has a “one-to-one device” program in place. If our respondents are accurate about their plans, in the next year or two nearly half of schools will have some kind of one-to-one program, obviating the need for many school libraries to provide ereaders.

## APPENDIX A. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

This section provides a basic demographic profile of the libraries that responded to our 2015 survey. Respondents were weighted so that 67% of the school libraries responding to this questionnaire described themselves as an “elementary school,” 14% “high school” and 12% “middle/junior high school.” We also captured a small number of other types of schools (generally schools that teach a mix of lower to upper grades), weighted to 7%. The preponderance of elementary schools also allows this survey to be *somewhat* predictive of middle and high school trends in the next few years as kids move up through the grades and take their ebook experiences and preferences with them. As we’ll see, however, students can be more inclined to develop an interest in—and a preference for—ebooks as they get older.

**Figure 64. What type of school do you work in?**  
 % of school libraries, 2015



The table below breaks the data down by public/private and geographic region.

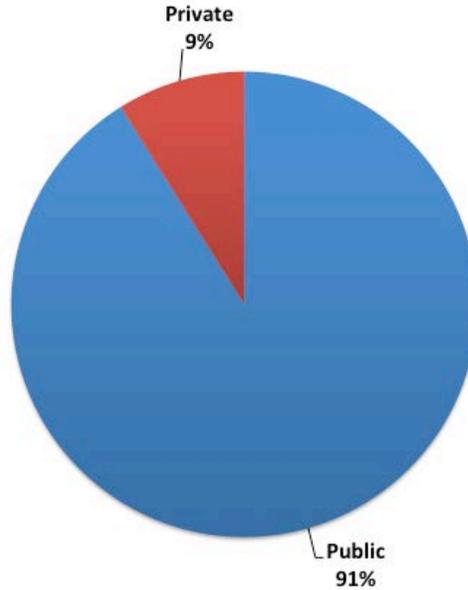
**Table 48. Which of the following best describes your library?**  
 % of school libraries by geographic region, 2015

	Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Public	Private	Midwest	North-east	West	South
Elementary school	69%	22%	66%	66%	72%	63%
Middle/Junior High school	13%	19%	14%	11%	10%	12%
High school	14%	35%	13%	16%	12%	16%
Other school	5%	40%	6%	7%	5%	9%
District level/administration	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%

### Public or Private

The majority (91%) of respondents to our survey were public schools, while 9% were private schools.

**Figure 65. Is your institution public or private?**  
*% of school libraries, 2015*



The following table breaks the public/private data down by type of school and geographic region.

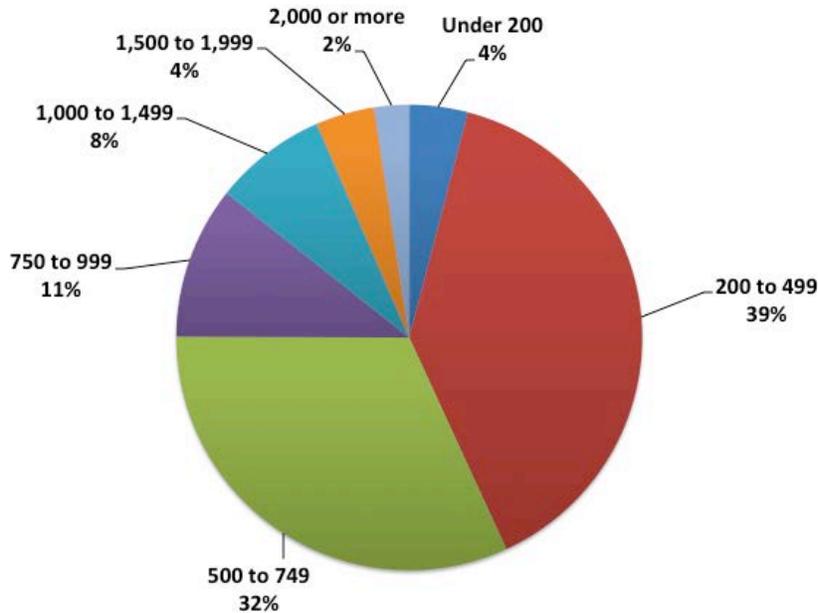
**Table 49. Is your institution public or private?**  
*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

	Type of School			Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Midwest	North-east	West	South
Public	92%	91%	86%	91%	89%	95%	89%
Private	8%	9%	14%	9%	10%	5%	11%
Other	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%

### Number of Students

School libraries responding to our survey had an average (mean) of 671 students in their school (median 553).

**Figure 66. Approximately how many students attend the school you work in?<sup>6</sup>**  
*% of school libraries, 2015*  
**Mean number of students: 671**  
**Median number of students: 553**



**Table 50. Approximately how many students attend the school you work in?**  
*% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015*

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Under 200	4%	4%	4%	3%	15%	3%	3%	7%	4%
200 to 499	47%	24%	19%	37%	53%	37%	47%	24%	46%
500 to 749	35%	31%	19%	34%	17%	30%	25%	43%	30%
750 to 999	9%	19%	14%	11%	10%	13%	11%	10%	9%
1,000 to 1,499	3%	18%	15%	8%	3%	12%	10%	8%	4%
1,500 to 1,999	1%	2%	15%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%
2,000 or more	0%	2%	14%	3%	0%	0%	1%	5%	3%
Mean # students	537	756	1158	696	470	668	628	747	648
Median # students	490	676	897	574	397	579	498	614	506

<sup>6</sup> The survey question included the qualification, “If you work in more than one school or at the district level, please answer for the largest school you serve.”

## Materials Expenditure

The mean materials expenditure for the 2014–2015 school year for school libraries responding to our survey was \$6,071 (median \$4,180), down from last year’s mean expenditures of \$7,012. Eight percent reported *no* materials budget at all.

Figure 67. What was your library media center’s total materials expenditure this past year (2014–2015 school year)?

% of school libraries, 2015

Mean materials budget: \$6,071

Median materials budget: \$4,180

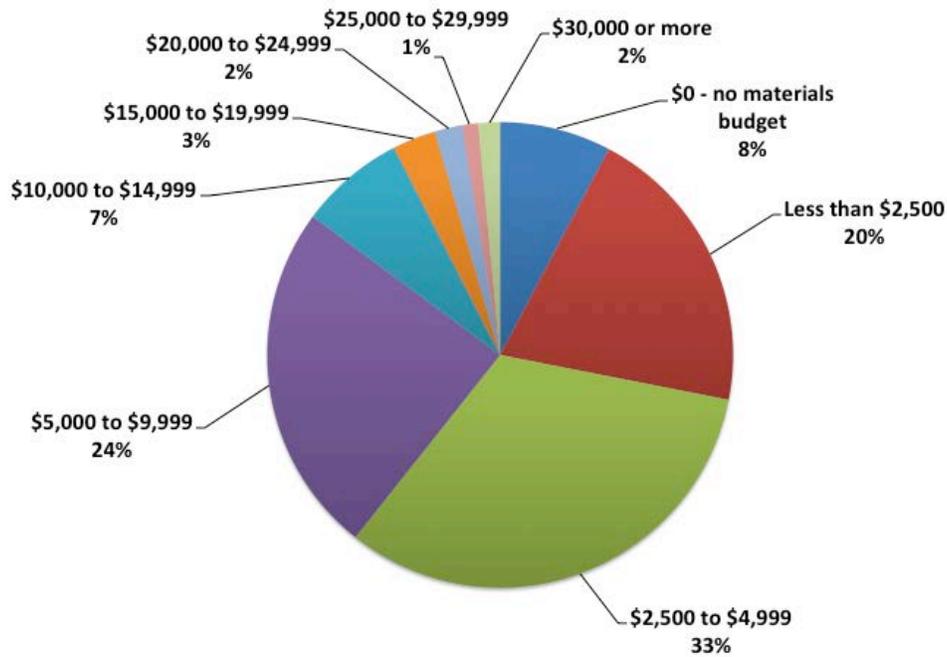


Table 51. What was your library media center’s total materials expenditure this past year (2014–2015 school year)?

% of school libraries by type of school and geographical region, 2015

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
\$0 - no materials budget	9%	9%	6%	8%	0%	9%	1%	12%	8%
Less than \$2,500	23%	13%	13%	18%	33%	18%	11%	36%	16%
\$2,500 to \$4,999	37%	26%	18%	33%	24%	29%	36%	28%	36%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	25%	26%	24%	25%	17%	31%	33%	16%	21%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	4%	13%	14%	8%	8%	6%	8%	2%	11%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	2%	3%	5%	3%	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	0%	4%	9%	2%	4%	1%	2%	1%	3%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	1%	0%	3%	1%	1%	0%	4%	1%	1%
\$30,000 or more	1%	5%	8%	1%	9%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Mean \$	4,584	8,154	11,379	6,090	10,004	5,826	7,916	4,152	6,459
Median \$	3,716	5,233	7,717	4,253	4,305	4,416	5,232	2,661	4,310

## Library Location

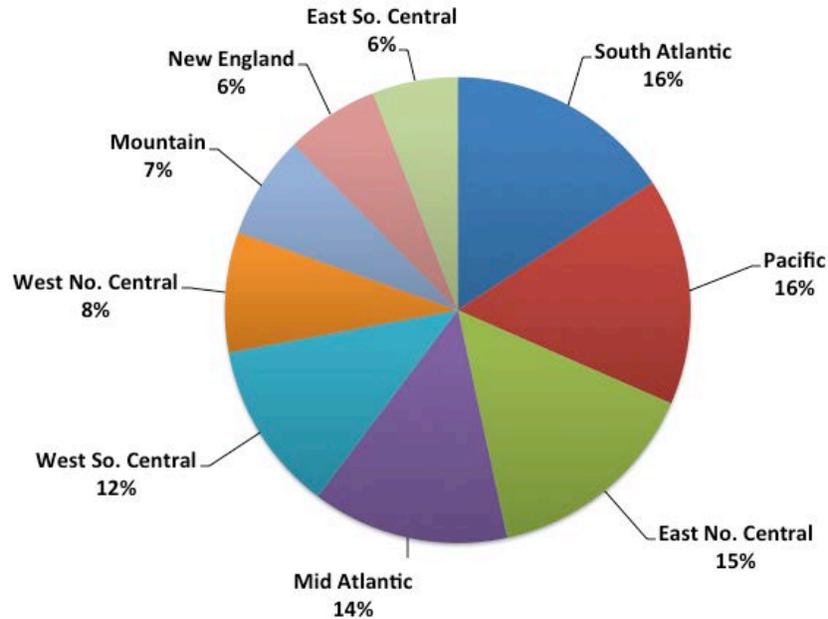
The following figure shows the geographical location of the libraries responding to our survey, based on U.S. Census Bureau regional classifications:

- New England: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
- Mid-Atlantic: New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania
- South Atlantic: Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, District of Columbia
- East North Central: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin
- West North Central: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota
- East South Central: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee
- West South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
- Mountain: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming
- Pacific: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington

These nine regions are also grouped into four larger U.S. regions:

- Northeast: New England and Mid-Atlantic
- Midwest: East North Central and West North Central
- South: South Atlantic, East South Central and West South Central
- West: Mountain and Pacific

**Figure 68. In which region of the country is your library located?**  
*% of school libraries, 2015*



Looking at the four major geographical divisions, we see that our sample skewed a little heavily toward the South, and away from the Northeast.

Northeast	20%
Midwest	23%
South	34%
West	23%

**Table 52. In which region of the country is your library located?**  
*% of school libraries by type of school, 2014*

	<i>Type of School</i>			<i>Public or Private</i>	
	<i>Elem</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>
South Atlantic	14%	15%	12%	16%	17%
Pacific	16%	13%	11%	17%	12%
East No. Central	16%	18%	16%	15%	13%
Mid Atlantic	14%	16%	14%	13%	15%
West So. Central	11%	8%	12%	11%	18%
West No. Central	7%	11%	10%	9%	5%
Mountain	8%	5%	7%	7%	3%
New England	7%	8%	12%	7%	10%
East So. Central	6%	6%	7%	5%	8%
Northeast	21%	24%	26%	20%	26%
Midwest	24%	29%	26%	24%	18%
South	31%	29%	30%	32%	42%
West	24%	18%	18%	24%	14%

### Respondent Job Title/Ebook Recommendation Authority

Most of the respondents to our survey gave their job title as library media specialist (49%) or teacher librarian (29%). Ten percent described themselves simply as “librarian.”

Figure 69. Which of the following comes closest to your job title?  
% of school libraries, 2015

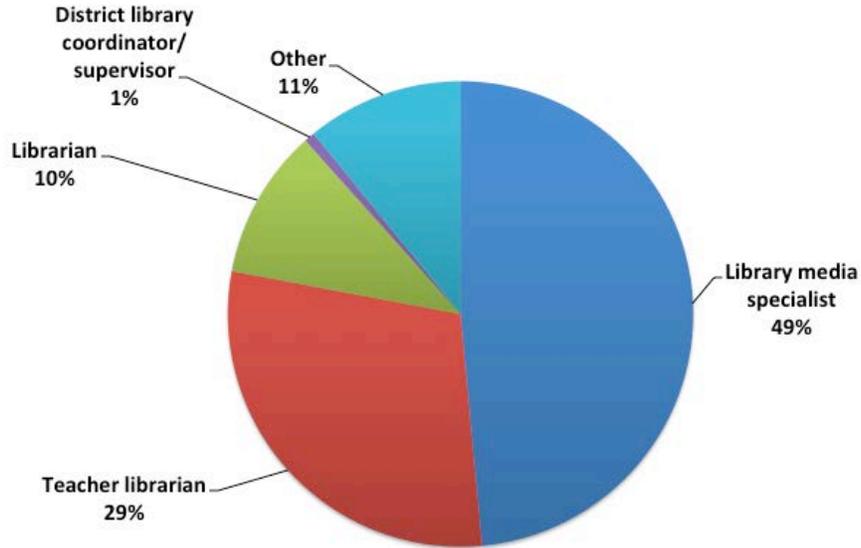


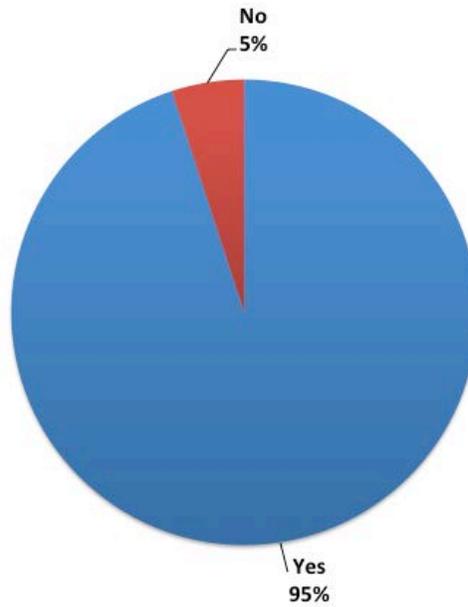
Table 53. Which of the following comes closest to your job title?  
% of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Library media specialist	45%	54%	49%	51%	22%	62%	58%	33%	45%
Teacher librarian	31%	22%	27%	29%	31%	27%	31%	36%	26%
Librarian	11%	11%	13%	8%	35%	6%	6%	9%	17%
District library coordinator/supervisor	1%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Other	13%	11%	9%	11%	12%	5%	5%	22%	11%

### Role in Ebook Decisions

Virtually all of our survey respondents—95%—have a role in making ebook purchasing recommendations and decisions.

**Figure 70. Do you have a role in recommending/purchasing ebook titles for your school? % of school libraries, 2015**



**Table 54. Do you have a role in recommending/purchasing ebook titles for your school? % of school libraries by type of school and geographic region, 2015**

	Type of School			Public or Private		Geographical Region			
	Elem	Middle	High	Public	Private	Mid-west	North-east	West	South
Yes	94%	97%	98%	95%	98%	94%	100%	91%	95%
No	6%	3%	2%	5%	2%	6%	0%	9%	5%

## APPENDIX B. SCHOOL LIBRARIES QUESTIONNAIRE

### The Survey Methodology

The ebook survey was developed by *Library Journal* and *School Library Journal* to measure current and projected ebook availability in libraries, user preferences in terms of access and subjects, and library purchasing terms and influences. The present report is one-half of an overall survey, the companion of which looked at public libraries.

*LJ's* school library ebook survey was fielded from April 3, 2015, to June 3, 2015. A survey invite and reminder were emailed to a selection of *Library Journal* and *School Library Journal* newsletter subscribers. The survey link was advertised in *School Library Journal* newsletters and via *SLJ's* social media outlets in April and May. A drawing for an Apple iPad mini was offered as incentive to reply.

Data presented in this report includes information from 916 U.S. school libraries. The questionnaire was developed, programmed, hosted and tabulated in-house. Public school numbers were weighted based on NCES (National Center for Education Statistics) data for percentages of elementary, middle and high schools nationwide.

Previous data sets used for comparisons were comprised of 835 U.S. school libraries in 2014, 1,271 U.S. school libraries in 2013, 1,427 U.S. school libraries in 2012, 905 U.S. school libraries in 2011, and 697 U.S. school libraries in 2010.



## School Library Ebook Survey

Numbers in *green* indicate new question added in 2015.

**If you work in more than one school, please answer all questions for the largest school you serve.**

**1. In which state is your library located? \_\_\_\_\_ (dropdown U.S. only)**

**2. How long has your school offered ebooks?**

- We do not offer ebooks [If your school has no ebooks, skip to Q 49]
- Less than 6 months
- 6 to 12 months
- 1 to 2 years
- 3 to 4 years
- Longer than 4 years

**3a. How many ebook volumes does your library have available in your total collection, including ebooks accessible through your district, state, consortium, or through ebook subscriptions?**

Please answer # of ebook copies, not titles.

- Under 100, specify # \_\_\_\_\_
- 100 to 249
- 250 to 499
- 500 to 999
- 1,000 to 2,499
- 2,500 to 4,999
- 5,000 or more, specify # \_\_\_\_\_

**3b. For comparison, what is the approximate size of your print book collection? \_\_\_\_\_**

**4. How would you describe your students' overall interest in ebooks?**

- Interest is high
- Interest is moderate
- Interest is low
- No interest in ebooks

**5. [if low interest or no interest] If possible, please speculate why there is little to no student interest in ebooks?**

**6. Approximately, what was your total ebook and print book usage/circulation for the last complete school year (2013-2014)?**

2013-2014 school year:

Ebook usage/circulation: \_\_\_\_\_

Print book circulation: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Compared to last year, do you expect this year’s usage of ebooks will have increased, decreased, or stayed the same?**

Increased, by what percentage? \_\_\_\_\_%

Stayed the same

Decreased, by what percentage? \_\_\_\_\_%

**8. [If decreased] If possible, please describe what you think is behind the decrease in usage below:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**9. Approximately what percent of your ebook usage is driven by lessons/assigned reading or research, and what percent is driven by recreational/free-choice reading?**

\_\_\_\_\_ % Lesson-driven (teacher selected/assigned title or research)

\_\_\_\_\_ % Recreational/free-choice reading

**10. What percentage of your library’s ebook collection allows for simultaneous access?**

Simultaneous access \_\_\_\_\_ %

**11. Of the library’s ebooks that were borrowed in the last year, what percent would you estimate were downloaded and what percent were read online? Answers should add to 100%**

\_\_\_\_\_ % downloaded

\_\_\_\_\_ % read online

**12a. Approximately what percent of the ebook titles you have available are fiction versus nonfiction?**

**Ebook collection**

\_\_\_\_\_ % fiction

\_\_\_\_\_ % nonfiction

**12b. For comparison, what is the fiction/nonfiction breakdown for your print book titles?**

**Print book collection**

\_\_\_\_\_ % fiction

\_\_\_\_\_ % nonfiction

**13. Do you find that students with special needs or disabilities are more engaged with reading or read longer with ebooks than with print books?**

- Yes
- No

**Optional Comments:**

---

**14. Do you offer ebooks in languages other than English?**

- Yes, please specify language(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- No

**15. Are ebooks discoverable through your library’s general OPAC?**

- Yes  No

**16. What fiction and nonfiction ebook genres or categories are most in demand in your library? Please select up to three categories for each.**

Fiction Ebooks	Nonfiction Ebooks
<input type="checkbox"/> Adventure/Thrillers	<input type="checkbox"/> Animals
<input type="checkbox"/> Classic literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Biography
<input type="checkbox"/> Dystopian fiction	<input type="checkbox"/> Careers
<input type="checkbox"/> Fantasy	<input type="checkbox"/> Crafts/Hobbies
<input type="checkbox"/> Folktales, Fables, Myths	<input type="checkbox"/> General reference
<input type="checkbox"/> Graphic novels	<input type="checkbox"/> Geography/Travel
<input type="checkbox"/> Historical fiction	<input type="checkbox"/> Health
<input type="checkbox"/> Horror/Scary stories	<input type="checkbox"/> History
<input type="checkbox"/> Humor	<input type="checkbox"/> Humor
<input type="checkbox"/> Mystery	<input type="checkbox"/> Language-learning
<input type="checkbox"/> Picture books	<input type="checkbox"/> Literary criticism
<input type="checkbox"/> Poetry & Drama	<input type="checkbox"/> Nature
<input type="checkbox"/> Realistic fiction	<input type="checkbox"/> Science/Math/Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> Romance	<input type="checkbox"/> Social situations
<input type="checkbox"/> Science fiction	<input type="checkbox"/> Sports
<input type="checkbox"/> Sports fiction	<input type="checkbox"/> Study aids
	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
None are in demand	None are in demand

**17. Please share your observations about how students choose the format they wish to borrow from your library (print or electronic)?**

---

**18. What hinders students/faculty from reading your media center's ebooks? Check all that apply.**

- Too few titles available
- Difficult to find/discover ebooks
- Too complicated to access
- Limited access to e-reading devices (at home and/or school)
- Limited access to internet for off-site access
- Users prefer print books
- Long wait times/Not enough copies of popular titles
- Students unaware of ebook availability
- Titles we have are curriculum focused and not popular
- Registration and password requirements for the ebook platform
- Much easier to buy or borrow them elsewhere
- Borrow duration is too short
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- None of the above

**19. How are you facilitating ebook discovery in your library? Check all that apply.**

- E-readalikes in library catalog
- Book reviews and links on website
- New book lists on website or social media
- e-lists on website
- Social media book lists and review links
- Articles about ebooks and ebook lists in library newsletter
- Physical shelf talkers
- Electronic shelf talkers
- Readers' advisory online
- Flyers/Bookmarks
- Touchscreen browsing in library
- Communicate/collaborate with teachers
- Introduce or integrate ebooks into library instruction
- Refine/expand metadata
- Embed in online instruction
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- None of the above

**20. Do you have a coordinated, school-wide plan in place regarding the collection of ebooks by librarians and teachers?**

- Yes, briefly explain: \_\_\_\_\_
- No
- Don't know

**21. Have you met with faculty and department chairs to develop a strategy for ebook use in the curriculum?**

- Yes
- No, this is done at the district level
- No, there is no coordinated strategy for ebook use and the curriculum
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**22. What device(s) are most commonly used by students to read ebooks? Please select up to five devices.**

	School or library owned devices	Student owned devices
Desktop computer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laptop	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dedicated ebook reader (e.g., Kindle, Nook, Sony Reader)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tablet (e.g., iPad, Kindle Fire, Galaxy, Nexus)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smartphone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iPod Touch or similar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interactive whiteboard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**23. Does your school have a one-to-one device program currently in place or planned for?**

- Currently offer one-to-one
- Planning to offer one-to-one, when? \_\_\_\_\_ [skip to Q26]
- No, and no plans [skip to Q26]

**24. (If currently have 1:1) How does your school’s one-to-one program work?**

- Students are assigned a personal device for use until graduation
- Students are assigned a personal device for the year
- Students in select classes are assigned a personal device for the year
- Devices are distributed in certain classes but returned at end of class
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**25. (If currently have 1:1) What type(s) of 1:1 devices does your school provide for students?**

- Laptops
- iPad tablets
- Kindle Fire tablets
- Nexus tablets
- Samsung Galaxy tablets
- Chromebooks/Netbooks
- Other devices, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**26. Does your school have a BYOD policy allowing students to bring their own devices into the classroom to aid instruction?**

- Yes       No

**27. Has your school implemented a transition from print textbooks to digital textbooks?**

- No, and no plans for digital textbooks  
 No, but the school is considering a transition by (specify year) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not yet, but it is mandated by (specify year) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Yes, some new textbooks are purchased digitally  
 Yes, all new textbooks are purchased digitally

**28. Which of the following digital assets are you involved in coordinating for classroom use?**

- Classroom sets of ebooks  
 Digital textbooks  
 One-to-one devices  
 Other digital assets, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 None of the above

**29. Does your library have ereading devices available for students to borrow?**

- Yes, but for in-school use only  
 Yes, for school and take-home use  
 Not currently, but considering [\[go to Q34\]](#)  
 No, and no plans to acquire [\[go to Q34\]](#)

**30. If yes, which ereading device(s) does your library currently have available? Check all that apply.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kindle             | <input type="checkbox"/> iPad or iPad mini            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kindle Fire tablet | <input type="checkbox"/> 3M Cloud Readers             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kobo Reader        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other tablet, specify: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NOOK               | <input type="checkbox"/> iPod Touch or similar        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NOOK Color         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NOOK tablet        |   |

**31. [\[If Yes\]](#) How many ereading devices does your library have available for borrow? \_\_\_\_\_**

**32. Are there devices that your library once offered that are no longer used?**

- Yes, devices that work but do not get used  
 Yes, obsolete devices  
 Yes, broken devices  
 No

**33. [\[if yes\]](#) How have you handled turnover of devices/obsolete devices?**

---

**34. Do you have a role in recommending/purchasing ebook titles for your school?**

- Yes       No (If No, go to Q51)

**35. How has the addition of ebooks to your collection influenced your purchase of print book formats?**

- No influence on print book purchasing  
 Buy fewer print books now  
 Buy no print books now  
 Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**36. How do you decide whether to purchase/license a title in electronic format versus print?**

---

**37. Approximately what percentage of your library’s materials budget did ebooks represent last year, in the current school year and what percent do you predict ebooks will represent in 5 years?**

	0%	1%-2%	3%-5%	6%-10%	11%-15%	16%-20%	Over 20%
Last year	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Currently	<input type="checkbox"/>						
In 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>						

**38. Is your library a member of a consortium or state license program for its ebook collection?**

- Yes  
 No, but planning to join one  
 No  
 Don’t know

**39. How many ebook volumes did your library purchase and/or license independently in the 2014/2015 school year (In other words, not including consortium or state supplied ebooks.)?**

- None       250 to 499  
 Under 50, specify # \_\_\_\_\_       500 to 999  
 50 to 99       1,000 to 2,499  
 100 to 249       2,500 or more, specify # \_\_\_\_\_

**40. How much money would you estimate your library spent on ebooks in the current 2014/2015 school year?**

- \$0 – all ebooks were free or provided by state/district/consortium  
 Less than \$200  
 \$200 - \$499  
 \$500 - \$999

- \$1,000 - \$2,499
- \$2,500 - \$4,999
- \$5,000 or more (specify) \$\_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know

**41. [If Q40 > \$0] Where did the money to purchase ebooks come from? Check all that apply.**

- Materials budget
- Technology budget
- Donations/Fundraised money
- Vendor credits
- Grant(s)
- PTA/PTO
- Book fair money
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**42. From which vendor(s) do you acquire ebooks for your library? (Check all that apply)**

**43. Which is your most preferred ebook vendor? Please select only one.**

	Q42. Ebook vendor(s) used	Q43. Most Preferred ebook vendor
ABC-CLIO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Abdo Digital	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Amazon.com	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baker & Taylor Axis 360	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Barnes & Noble	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Big Universe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brain Hive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Britannica Digital Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Capstone myON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cavendish Square	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EBSCO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
eSebco	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FollettShelf	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gale Virtual Reference Library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Infobase eBooks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ingram MyiLibrary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lerner Digital	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MackinVIA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Odilo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OverDrive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rosen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rourke Educational Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scholastic (BookFlix, TrueFlix, Storia, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
StarWalk Kids Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total Boox		
TumbleBooks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Direct from publisher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (Specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Preference		<input type="checkbox"/>

**44. Briefly, why did you name that company as your preferred vendor?**

---

**45. Thinking about the following common complaints about ebooks, which ONE is your biggest complaint?**

- Too many ebook platforms available. We need one integrated platform.
- Downloading process for ebooks is too complicated
- Ebook pricing is too high
- Can't keep up with technological change
- Licensing models are different for each vendor
- Year-long licensing terms for a library that's only open 9 months of the year
- Students don't want to read ebooks
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- I do not have any complaints about ebooks

**46. What type(s) of purchasing and/or licensing terms does your library typically use when acquiring ebooks? Check all that apply.**

- Purchase with perpetual access – single user       License with a finite time limit (e.g., 1 year)
- Purchase with perpetual access – multi user       License with set # of circs model
- Purchase with perpetual access through self-hosting (local ownership) of circs or finite  Subscription       Mixed license with either a set # time limit, whichever comes first
- Simultaneous use/access       Patron-driven acquisition
- Bundled with other content maintenance fee       Upfront purchase with
- Pay as you go/Pay-per-use (e.g., \$1 per circ)       Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**47. Which ebook purchasing term would you most prefer? If it is not listed below, please write in an answer.**

- Purchase with perpetual access – single user       License with a finite time limit (e.g., 1 year)
- Purchase with perpetual access – multi user       License with set # of circs model
- Purchase with perpetual access through self-hosting (local ownership) of circs or finite  Subscription       Mixed license with either a set # time limit, whichever comes first
- Simultaneous use/access       Patron-driven acquisition
- Bundled with other content maintenance fee       Upfront purchase with

- Pay as you go/Pay-per-use (e.g., \$1 per circ)  Other  
(specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**48. If you have any comments about ebooks in your media center/school, please write them below.**

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(after answering, please skip to Question 51)

**THE 2 NEXT QUESTIONS ARE FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT CURRENTLY OFFER EBOOKS.**

**49. Why doesn't your library offer ebooks? Check all that apply.**

- No money for ebooks  
 Lack of ereading devices  
 Lack of technical support  
 Don't understand logistics of ebooks  
 No demand for them from users  
 Waiting to see what the best platform will be  
 Staff/administrative resistance  
 Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**50. What are your library's plans for ebook purchases in the next two years?**

- We will definitely purchase ebooks to add to our collection  
 We may purchase ebooks but it is not a priority  
 We will definitely NOT purchase ebooks to add to our collection  
 Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS**

**51. What type of school do you work in? Check all that apply.**

- Elementary school  
 Middle/Junior High school  
 High school  
 Other school (K-8, K-12, etc.), specify grades:\_\_\_\_\_  
 District level/administration

**52. Is your school public or private?**

- Public  
 Private  
 Other

**53. Approximately how many students attend the school you work in? If you work in more than one school or at the district level, please answer for the largest school you serve.**

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 200 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1,000 – 1,499                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 200 – 499 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1,500 – 1,999                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 500 – 749 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2,000 or more, specify # _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 750 - 999 |   |

**54. What is your library media center's total materials budget for this school year (2014-2015)? If you work in more than one school or at the district level, please answer for the largest school you serve.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$0 – no materials budget        | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15,000 - \$19,999              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$2,500, specify _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 - \$24,999              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500 - \$4,999                | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000 - \$29,999              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 - \$9,999                | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 or more, specify: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 - \$14,999              |   |

**55. Which of the following comes closest to your job title?**

- Library Media Specialist
- Teacher Librarian
- Librarian
- District library coordinator/supervisor
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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