

**American Library Association**  
**@ your library: Attitudes Toward Public Libraries Survey 2006**

**1000 Interviews with Adults Nationwide, Ages 18 or Older**

Estimated Margin of Error: +/-3.1%

(T) = Trend from 2002

\* indicates less than 0.5%

**January 2006**

**USAGE**

I am going to asking some questions about public libraries.

1. (T) First, do you have a library card?

	<b>Overall 2006</b>
Yes	63
No	37
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	*

2. (T) Now, think about how many times during the past YEAR have you visited the public library or used public library services. How many times have you visited or used the public library \_\_\_\_\_:

- a. In person

	<b>Overall 2006</b>
One to five times	29
Six to ten times	12
Eleven to twenty-five times	16
Over twenty-five times	9
Not at all	32
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	3

b. By telephone

	<b>Overall 2006</b>
One to five times	12
Six to ten times	4
Eleven to twenty-five times	2
Over twenty-five times	1
Not at all	80
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	1

c. By computer

	<b>Overall 2006</b>
One to five times	12
Six to ten times	5
Eleven to twenty-five times	5
Over twenty-five times	2
Not at all	74
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	2

*IF HAVE NOT VISTED THE LIBRARY IN ANY WAY IN THE LAST YEAR, GO TO Q7*

*ASK Q3 ONLY IF VISTED PUBLIC LIBRARY IN PERSON IN THE PAST YEAR (Q2a > 0)*

3. When you have used the public library in person in the past year, which of the following services did you use? How about \_\_\_\_\_?

<b>Percent saying "yes"</b>	<b>Overall 2006</b>
a. (T) Take out books (e-books or book on paper or tape)	81
b. (T) Use reference materials, like the encyclopedia	45
c. (T) Consult the librarian	54
d. (T) Read newspapers or magazines	36
e. (T) Connect to the internet	29
f. (T) Take out CDs, videos, or computer software	38
g. (T) Hear a speaker, see a movie, or attend a special program	22
h. (T) Take a class or workshop	9
i. Check email <sup>1</sup>	13
j. Use a computer to see what the library has available <sup>2</sup>	50
k. Use a computer to write a paper or prepare a resume <sup>3</sup>	22

<sup>1</sup> Question added in 2006 survey

<sup>2</sup> Question added in 2006 survey

<sup>3</sup> Question added in 2006 survey

ASK Q4 ONLY IF USED PUBLIC LIBRARY BY TELEPHONE OR BY COMPUTER IN THE PAST YEAR (Q2b and/or Q2c > 0)

4. When you have used the public library by telephone or computer during the past year, which of the following services did you use? How about \_\_\_\_\_?

<b>Percent saying “yes”</b>	<b>Overall 2006</b>
a. Renewed borrowed items <sup>4</sup>	41
b. (T) Consulted the librarian for help	48
c. (T) Checked the library’s computerized catalog	45
d. (T) Used other resources on the library’s web page	32

ASK Q5 AND Q6 ONLY IF USED PUBLIC LIBRARY IN PERSON, BY TELEPHONE OR BY COMPUTER IN THE PAST YEAR (Q2a, 2b and/or Q2c > 0)

5. (T) Again, thinking back over the last year, which one of the following did you most use the public library for:

<b>Rank ordered by 2002</b>	<b>Overall 2006</b>
Educational purposes (for homework or to take a class)	32
Entertainment	26
Information on health issues	6
U.S. or local news or information	5
Travel or vacation information	3
To conduct a job search or write a resume	5
Financial or investment news or information	3
International news or information	2
To look for information on starting or running a business	2
Meet up with friends <sup>5</sup>	2
Check out/Read books <sup>6</sup>	5
Use the computer for email/internet <sup>7</sup>	1
Other (VOLUNTEERED; specify _____)	2
Don’t know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	6

<sup>4</sup> Question added in 2006 survey

<sup>5</sup> Response added in 2006 survey

<sup>6</sup> Response added in 2006 survey – from “other category”

<sup>7</sup> Response added in 2006 survey – from “other category”

6. (T) And, which one did you use the public library for second most often:

<b>Rank ordered by 2002</b>	<b>Overall 2006</b>
Entertainment	14
Educational purposes (for homework or to take a class)	15
Travel or vacation information	6
U.S. or local news or information	8
Information on health issues	6
International news or information	3
Financial or investment news or information	3
To conduct a job search or write a resume	4
To look for information on starting or running a business	2
Meet up with friends <sup>8</sup>	4
Check out/Read books <sup>9</sup>	3
Use the computer for email/internet <sup>10</sup>	1
Other (VOLUNTEERED; specify_____)	4
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	26

Again, thinking back over the last year, which one of the following did you most/second most use the public library for:

<b>Rank ordered by 2002</b>	<b>Overall 2006</b>
Educational purposes (for homework or to take a class)	46
Entertainment	40
Travel or vacation information	9
Information on health issues	12
U.S. or local news or information	12
Financial or investment news or information	7
International news or information	5
To conduct a job search or write a resume	9
To look for information on starting or running a business	4
Meet up with friends <sup>11</sup>	6
Check out/Read books <sup>12</sup>	7
Use the computer for email/internet <sup>13</sup>	1
Other (VOLUNTEERED; specify_____)	6
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	5

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<sup>8</sup> Response added in 2006 survey

<sup>9</sup> Response added in 2006 survey – from “other category”

<sup>10</sup> Response added in 2006 survey – from “other category”

<sup>11</sup> Response added in 2006 survey

<sup>12</sup> Response added in 2006 survey – from “other category”

<sup>13</sup> Response added in 2006 survey – from “other category”

RESUME ASKING ALL

7. (T) Overall, thinking of your public library, based on what you know or have heard or read, how satisfied are you with your public library – extremely satisfied, very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, only a little satisfied, or not at all satisfied?

	<b>Overall 2006</b>
Extremely satisfied	26
Very satisfied	44
Somewhat satisfied	18
Only a little satisfied	3
Not at all satisfied	2
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	6

**CHILD USAGE**

Now, let me ask you something slightly different.

8. (T) Do you have any children under the age of 18 currently living in your household?<sup>14</sup>

	<b>Overall 2006</b>	
Yes	35	
No	65	SKIP TO Q14
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	0	SKIP TO Q14

ASK ONLY IF YES IN Q8:

9. (T) Which of the following age groups does/do your child(ren) fall into?  
(MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED)

	<b>Overall 2006</b>
Under age 3	27
Age 3 to 6	31
Age 6 to 11	38
Age 12 to 17	45
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	1

<sup>14</sup> Question changed from: "Are you the parent or legal guardian of any children under the age of 18 currently living in your household?"

ASK ONLY IF YES IN Q8:

10. (T) Do you ever visit the library with your child?

	<b>Overall 2006</b>
Yes	65
No	35
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	0

ASK ONLY IF YES IN Q10:

11. Which of the following are the most important reasons that you personally take your child(ren) to your public library? *[MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED]*

	<b>Overall 2006</b>
I can check out books, movies and music for free	68
The library gives us something to do together	41
The library has great programs and services	23
The library is a good place to complete homework	21
The library has free Internet access	12
Other (VOLUNTEERED; specify_____)	2
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	0

ASK ONLY IF YES IN Q10:

12. And, which of the following things, if any, do your children do at the public library? Please indicate all that apply. *[MULTIPLE RESPONSES]*

	<b>Overall 2006</b>
Check out books	79
Do research for school/get homework help	44
Read for fun	44
Check out movies	34
Attend story-hour, other kids' programs	27
Use the computer/Internet	23
Check out CDs	19
Other (VOLUNTEERED; specify_____)	2
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	1

## VALUE PROPOSITION

Now, let me ask you something slightly different.

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

	<b>Overall 2006</b>
At the top of the list	36
In the middle	53
At the bottom	8
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	3

14. (T) And, how would you rank the value of librarians in public libraries compared to the value of other professionals in your community? Would you say *[READ]*:

	<b>Overall 2006</b>
At the top of the list	32
In the middle	57
At the bottom	8
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	3

15. Now, let me read you some ways in which public libraries may be valuable or beneficial to different people. For each one, please tell me how important that characteristic or service is to you personally – very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all.

*(PROMPT-- RE-READ PROMPT AFTER EVERY FEW QUESTIONS: Is that very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all to you personally?) (READ AND RANDOMIZE:)*

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not important at all	DK refused	NET Important	NET Not Important
a. Services are free	79	16	2	2	1	95	4
b. Provided information for school and work	65	21	4	7	2	87	11
c. Provides accurate and up-to-date <u>health</u> information	52	31	7	7	4	82	14
d. Provides accurate and up-to-date <u>financial</u> information	38	37	10	9	7	74	19
e. Is a source of cultural programs and activities	47	35	9	7	3	82	16
f. Is a place where I can learn for a lifetime	71	23	2	3	1	94	5
g. Serves as a community center	53	29	9	7	3	81	16
h. Helps in finding a job	36	29	13	16	6	65	29
i. Helps in starting a business	29	32	14	16	8	62	31
j. Provides computer access, training and support	46	29	9	10	5	76	19
k. Enhances my education	65	22	4	6	2	88	10



16. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.  
 [IF AGREE/DISAGREE: Do you strongly or somewhat agree/disagree with that statement?] (READ AND RANDOMIZE:)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	DK refused	NET Agree	NET Disagree
a. The public library is important to my family's education	62	28	5	2	3	90	8
b. The library improves the quality of life in our community	68	26	3	2	2	93	5
c. My public library deserves more funding	58	27	6	3	6	85	9
d. Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed	75	21	1	1	2	96	3
e. Because it provides free information regarding local, state and federal elections, the library is critical to our democracy	52	33	8	4	4	85	11

<b>ECONOMIC PROPOSITION</b>
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17. (T) Communities in the U.S. spend anywhere from less than five dollars per person on public libraries to more than one hundred dollars per person. What do you think should be spent in your community?

*READ AND ROTATE START POINT OF RESPONSE SET:*

	<b>Overall 2006</b>
100 dollars or more	19
81 to 100 dollars	9
61 to 80 dollars	6
41 to 60 dollars	18
26 to 40 dollars	8
1 to 25 dollars	19
Zero or nothing	3
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	18

18. On a scale from 0 to 10, where a 0 is "not at all supportive" and a 10 is "very supportive," how supportive are you personally of increasing public funding for the public library in your community?

	<b>Overall 2006</b>
Very supportive (8,9,10)	47
Somewhat supportive (6-7)	21
Neutral (5)	15
Not too supportive (3-4)	7
Not at all supportive (0-2)	6
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	4
<b><i>TOTAL SUPPORTIVE</i></b>	<b>68</b>
<b><i>TOTAL NOT SUPPORTIVE</i></b>	<b>13</b>

19. Now, let me read you some possible economic benefits of public libraries. For each one, please tell me how important that benefit is to you personally – very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all.

*(PROMPT-- RE-READ PROMPT AFTER EVERY FEW QUESTIONS: Is that benefit very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all to you personally?) (READ AND RANDOMIZE:)*

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not important at all	DK refused	NET Important	NET Not Important
a. Increases local property values	41	35	12	7	6	76	19
b. Attracts new business	36	35	15	9	6	71	24
c. Provides free community meeting space	48	36	7	6	3	84	13
d. Serves as a community center	49	35	8	6	2	84	14
e. Provides lifelong learning opportunities to residents	75	21	2	2	1	95	4
f. Provides free resources	78	17	2	1	1	95	4
g. Helps residents find jobs or improve their employment situation	51	32	8	6	4	83	13
h. Contributes to public education	78	18	2	2	1	95	4

## FUTURE SERVICES/IMPRESSIONS

20. (T) Let me read you two statements and please tell me which one comes closest to your own point of view.

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

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

	<b>Overall 2006</b>
Libraries will no longer exist in the future	7
Libraries will still be needed	92
None of the above (VOLUNTEERED) <sup>15</sup>	*
Don't know/refused (VOLUNTEERED)	1

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<sup>15</sup> Response added for 2006 tracking survey

## KEY FINDING

*Two-thirds – or more than 135 million adult Americans – report using their public library in-person last year.*

### **Library visitors are:**

#### **Age groups**

- 14% - 18-24
- 20% - 25-34
- 22% - 35-44
- 18% - 45-54
- 13% - 55-64
- 14% - 65+

#### **Household income**

- 15% - Less than \$25,000
- 30% - \$25,000 - \$49,999
- 16% - \$50,000 - \$74,999
- 10% - \$75,000 - \$99,999
- 11% - \$100,000 or more

#### **Gender**

- 44% - Male
- 56% - Female

#### **Education level**

- 6% - Less than High School
- 24% - High School Graduate
- 28% - Some College
- 23% - College Graduate
- 13% - Post-graduate
- 3% - Professional/ Technical School

#### **Children under 18 at home**

- 38% - Yes
- 62% - No

#### **Race/Ethnicity**

- 70% - White/Caucasian
- 12% - Black or African American
- 3% - Asian American
- 11% - Hispanic or Latino
- 2% - Something else

#### **Metro/Non-metro**

- 37% - Urban
- 44% - Suburban
- 19% - Rural

#### **Marital Status**

- 56% - Married/Living as married
- 27% - Single and never been married
- 9% - Separated or divorced
- 5% - Widowed