



April 9, 2010

The ALA participated in the January 2010 Harris Poll Quorum conducted by Harris Interactive. The survey was conducted by telephone within the United States between January 20 and 24, 2010 among a nationwide cross section of 1,025 adults (aged 18 and over). Eighteen questions were asked by Harris for the ALA. Top-line results are included at the end of this document. In addition to those summary results, more detailed results are highlighted here.

KEY FINDINGS

Two-thirds (65%) of Americans indicate they have used their public library either in-person, by telephone or computer in the past year, representing 151.4 million Americans.

- **Sixty-eight percent (68%) of employed adults had used their library in the past year, 62% of unemployed adults, and 53% of retired adults.**
- **Eighty percent (80%) of those ages 18 24, 73% ages 35 44 and 70% ages 25 34 have used their library in the past year.**

Three in ten (30%) respondents (representing about 45.4 million adult Americans), who have visited their public library in the past year report increasing their public library use in the last 6 months.

Among those who have used their public library more in the past 6 months:

- **Nearly half (43%) of those between the ages 18 24, and one third (32%) of those between ages 35 44 have increased use over the past 6 months. Further, 37% of respondents in the Northeast and 35% in the West report increasing use of public libraries.**

37% of respondents in the Northeast (37%) and West (35%) report increasing use of public libraries.

Among those who have visited the library by computer in the past year, one third (35%) report increasing their public library access by computer over the past 6 months. Respondents were read a series of statements about their public libraries and asked the degree to which they agreed/disagreed with them.

- **96% of Americans (223.7 million) agreed that because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.**
- **94% of Americans (219.0 million) agreed that the library improves the quality of life in their community.**

When asked about services used at the public library in the past year, 77% of Americans reported taking out books (e-books, or books on paper or tape) as the number one use. Second was consulting a librarian (67%), followed by connecting to the Internet (41%) and checking email (25%).

Among those who have used the public library by phone or computer in the past year, six in ten (60%) report that they have renewed materials online or by telephone, up from

January 2010 Harris Poll Quorum

January 27, 2010

Created for: American Library Association

Presented by: Harris Interactive

Interviewing: January 20-24, 2010

Respondents: 1,025 Adults 18+

*NOTE: A (*) means less than one-half percent responding; and a (-) means non-response or zero percent*

PUBLICNo

*	Don't know/refused

Q2. Now, think about how many times during the past YEAR you have visited the public library or used public library services. How many times have you visited or used the public library...?

In person

1025	BASE
36%	Not at all
27%	One to five times
10%	Six to ten times
13%	Eleven to twenty-five times
13%	Over twenty five times
1%	Don't know/refused

By telephone

1025	BASE
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1%	Eleven to twenty-five times
1%	Over twenty five times
1%	Don't know/refused

By computer

1025	BASE
70%	Not at all
15%	One to five times
4%	Six to ten times
6%	Eleven to twenty-five times
3%	Over twenty five times
1%	Don't know/refused

SUMMARY TABLE OF LIBRARY VISITATION

1025	BASE
65%	Visited Library (NET)
62%	In Person
14%	By Telephone
28%	By Computer
33%	Did Not Visit Library
2%	Don't know/refused

Q3.

- Q
- Q
- Q
- Q
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- Q

BASE: USED PUBLIC LIBRARY IN PERSON, BY TELEPHONE OR BY COMPUTER IN THE PAST YEAR

Q6. Thinking back over the last year, which one of the following did you most use the public library for?

663	BASE
29%	Educational purposes (for homework or to take a class)
23%	Entertainment
7%	To use a computer
7%	Borrow books/novels (unspecified)
5%	To conduct a job search or write a resume
4%	U.S. or local news or information
4%	To look for information on starting or running a business
3%	International news or information
2%	Information on health issues
2%	Travel or vacation information
1%	Meet up with friends
1%	Financial or investment news or information
1%	Borrow music/CDs/DVDs/audio books
*	Make photocopies
*	Children's services/borrow children's books
*	Personal reasons/uses (unspecified)
3%	Other
*	None/none of the above/no other reason/don't use the library
6%	Don't know/refused

BASE: USED PUBLIC LIBRARY IN PERSON, BY TELEPHONE OR BY COMPUTER IN THE PAST YEAR

Q7. And from the remaining items, which one did you use the public library for second most?

610	BASE
13%	Entertainment
13%	Educational purposes (for homework or to take a class)
10%	To use a computer
8%	U.S. or local news or information
6%	To conduct a job search or write a resume
5%	Travel or vacation information
4%	Meet up with friends
4%	Information on health issues
3%	Borrow books/novels (unspecified)
3%	International news or information
2%	To look for information on starting or running a business
2%	Financial or investment news or information
1%	Children's services/borrow children's books
1%	Research/reference materials (unspecified)
1%	Borrow music/CDs/DVDs/audio books
*	General information
*	Make photocopies
*	Personal reasons/uses (unspecified)
2%	Other
3%	None/none of the above/no other reason/don't use the library
19%	Don't know/refused

SUMMARY TABLE OF Q6/Q7

663	BASE
41%	Educational purposes (for homework or to take a class)
35%	Entertainment
17%	To use a computer
11%	U.S. or local news or information
11%	To conduct a job search or write a resume
10%	Borrow books/novels (unspecified)
7%	Travel or vacation information
6%	International news or information
6%	To look for information on starting or running a business
6%	Information on health issues
5%	Meet up with friends
3%	Financial or investment news or information
1%	Children's services/borrow children's books
1%	Borrow music/CDs/DVDs/audio books
1%	Research/reference materials (unspecified)
*	Make photocopies
*	General information
*	Personal reasons/uses (unspecified)
5%	Other
*	None/none of the above/no other reason/don't use the library
6%	Don't know/refused

Q8. 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?

1025	BASE
71%	Satisfied (NET)
29%	Extremely satisfied
43%	Very satisfied
14%	Somewhat satisfied
4%	Not/Only a Little Satisfied (NET)
2%	Only a little satisfied
2%	Not at all satisfied
10%	Don't know/refused

LIBRARY USAGE BY CHILDREN

Now, let me ask you something slightly different.

D2a. Do you have any children? (IF YES, ASK) Are any of them living at home with you?

1025	BASE
70%	Have Children (NET)
41%	Yes, have children and living at home
29%	Yes, have children, but none living at home
30%	No, do not have any children/never had children
*	Refused

BASE: HAVE CHILDREN (D2a=1, 2)

D2b. What ages are your children?

781	BASE
16%	3 or younger

BASE: VISIT LIBRARY WITH CHILDREN

Q13. And, which of the following things, if any, do your

VALUE PROPOSITION

Q15. 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...?

1025	BASE
36%	At the top of the list
49%	In the middle
11%	At the bottom
5%	Don't know/refused

Q16. 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...?

1025	BASE
35%	At the top of the list
51%	In the middle
9%	At the bottom
4%	Don't know/refused

Q17. 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.

SUMMARY TABLE OF IMPORTANT (Very or Somewhat)

1025	BASE
91%	Services are free
87%	Is a place where I can learn for a lifetime
86%	Provides information for school and work
84%	Enhances my education
83%	Serves as a community center
79%	Is a source of cultural programs and activities
76%	Provides computer access, training and support
73%	Provides accurate and up-to-date health information
69%	Provides accurate and up-to-date financial information

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Is a place where I can learn for a lifetime

1025	BASE
87%	Important (NET)
68%	Very important
19%	Somewhat important
11%	Not Important (NET)
6%	Not too important
5%	Not important at all
2%	Don't know/refused

Serves as a community center

1025	BASE
83%	Important (NET)
53%	Very important
30%	Somewhat important
14%	Not Important (NET)
6%	Not too important
7%	Not important at all
3%	Don't know/refused

Helps in finding a job

1025	BASE
66%	Important (NET)
41%	Very important
25%	Somewhat important
30%	Not Important (NET)
14%	Not too important
16%	Not important at all
5%	Don't know/refused

Helps in starting a business

1025	BASE
61%	Important (NET)
29%	Very important
32%	Somewhat important
32%	Not Important (NET)
15%	Not too important
16%	Not important at all
7%	Don't know/refused

Provides computer access, training and support

1025	BASE
76%	Important (NET)
51%	Very important
25%	Somewhat important
21%	Not Important (NET)
9%	Not too important
12%	Not important at all
3%	Don't know/refused

Enhances my education

1025	BASE
84%	Important (NET)
62%	Very important
22%	Somewhat important
14%	Not Important (NET)
5%	Not too important
9%	Not important at all
2%	Don't know/refused

Q18. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Do you strongly or somewhat agree/disagree with that statement?

SUMMARY TABLE OF AGREE (Strongly or Somewhat)

1025	BASE
96%	Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed
94%	The library improves the quality of life in our community
87%	The public library is important to my family's education
83%	Because it provides free information regarding local, state and federal elections, the library is critical to our democracy
81%	My public library deserves more funding

SUMMARY TABLE OF DISAGREE (Strongly or Somewhat)

1025	BASE
13%	My public library deserves more funding
13%	Because it provides free information regarding local, state and federal elections, the library is critical to our democracy
10%	The public library is important to my family's education
5%	The library improves the quality of life in our community
3%	Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed

The public library is important to my family's education

1025	BASE
87%	Agree (NET)
59%	Strongly agree
28%	Somewhat agree
10%	Disagree (NET)
6%	Somewhat disagree
4%	Strongly disagree
3%	Don't know/refused

The library improves the quality of life in our community

1025	BASE
94%	Agree (NET)
63%	Strongly agree
31%	Somewhat agree
5%	Disagree (NET)
2%	Somewhat disagree
2%	Strongly disagree
2%	Don't know/refused

My public library deserves more funding

1025	BASE
81%	Agree (NET)
55%	Strongly agree
27%	Somewhat agree
13%	Disagree (NET)
8%	Somewhat disagree
5%	Strongly disagree
6%	Don't know/refused

Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed

1025	BASE
96%	Agree (NET)
76%	Strongly agree
19%	Somewhat agree
3%	Disagree (NET)
2%	Somewhat disagree
1%	Strongly disagree
1%	Don't know/refused

Because it provides free information regarding local, state and federal elections, the library is critical to our democracy

1025	BASE
83%	Agree (NET)
49%	Strongly agree
34%	Somewhat agree
13%	Disagree (NET)
8%	Somewhat disagree
5%	Strongly disagree
4%	Don't know/refused

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