

GENERATIONS AT THE LIBRARY

Libraries play critical roles for Americans throughout their life stages. Whether they are checking out books, DVDs and other materials, seeking information to help revive their careers or using computer and Internet access, Americans are using libraries and find value in what libraries and librarians can do for them.

Americans who have had a negative job impact rely on the library. Eight out of ten economically impacted Americans have a library card and three-fourths of them visit the library annually. Those affected by the economy are among the most likely to see value in the library and librarians. The vast majority of economically impacted Americans believe that librarians add value to their search experience (88%) and are satisfied with their experience with librarians (92%).

Teens are among the heaviest library users. While two out of every three Americans have library cards, 75% of teens (ages 14–17) have one. The majority (62%) of Americans visit their library annually, and teens are even more likely to do so (72%). Teens are also the most likely to use the library’s computer and Internet access, with more than half doing so annually.

Americans value librarians. Americans, regardless of their age, overwhelmingly believe that librarians are valuable. Across all generations and life stages, more than three-fourths of Americans who have used librarians recognize that librarians add value to their search process. And more than three-fourths of them indicate that they are satisfied with their experience with librarians. Generation X (ages 25–45) and economically impacted Americans are most likely to believe that the librarian adds value to the search process, at 88% each.

Profile Americans at the library

- 20% ARE ECONOMICALLY IMPACTED
- 73% CONSIDER THEMSELVES A READER



HAVE A LIBRARY CARD



VISIT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY ANNUALLY



VISIT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY MONTHLY



HAVE EVER USED THE LIBRARY WEB SITE



ACCESS FREE INTERNET ANNUALLY AT THE LIBRARY



USE A COMPUTER ANNUALLY AT THE LIBRARY



BELIEVE THE LIBRARIAN ADDS VALUE TO SEARCH PROCESS



ARE SATISFIED WITH OVERALL EXPERIENCE WITH LIBRARIAN

Americans...at the library

- Two-thirds (68%) of online Americans have a library card; the majority (62%) visit the library annually
- Over 80% of Americans who use librarians believe the librarian adds value to the search process

	TOTAL	ECONOMICALLY IMPACTED	COLLEGE STUDENTS	AGE 14-17	AGE 18-24	AGE 25-45	AGE 46-64	AGE 65+
HAVE A LIBRARY CARD	68%	81%	73%	75%	68%	70%	67%	63%
VISIT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY ANNUALLY	62%	74%	64%	72%	59%	66%	59%	56%
VISIT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY MONTHLY	28%	36%	25%	36%	23%	30%	25%	25%
HAVE EVER USED THE LIBRARY WEB SITE	33%	38%	57%	42%	54%	36%	22%	21%
ACCESS FREE INTERNET ANNUALLY AT THE LIBRARY	28%	35%	49%	51%	47%	27%	23%	13%
USE A COMPUTER ANNUALLY AT THE LIBRARY	27%	35%	48%	57%	46%	21%	24%	12%
BELIEVE THE LIBRARIAN ADDS VALUE TO SEARCH PROCESS	83%	88%	78%	82%	76%	88%	76%	86%
ARE SATISFIED WITH OVERALL EXPERIENCE WITH LIBRARIAN	87%	92%	90%	76%	89%	94%	85%	84%

■ HIGHEST PERCENTAGE FOR EACH ACTIVITY

The majority of Americans use almost all of the online information resources examined in this study. Nearly all Americans are e-mailing and searching the Web, and many have come to rely on Wikipedia. Two-thirds of Americans use social networking and social media sites. Four out of ten Americans use ask-an-expert sites, and use of these sites has shown triple-digit growth in the last five years.

Nearly all Americans use e-mail and search engines. Nine out of ten Americans, from all age groups, use these most popular information resources. Older Americans, who in 2005 lagged behind in the use of both e-mail and search engines, now use these resources at rates similar to younger Americans.

Two-thirds of Americans use social networking sites. And college students are most likely to use them. With 92% of college students using them, social networking sites are among the most popular online resources. This finding isn't surprising considering that one of the most well-known social sites, Facebook, was open only to college students when it first launched.

Wikipedia is used by three-fourths of Americans. Although the majority of our survey respondents (51%) rate information from library sources as more trustworthy than from Wikipedia, the fact is Americans are using Wikipedia. Teens (ages 14–17) and college students are among those most likely to use Wikipedia, with 88% of both groups using it. The majority of older Americans also use Wikipedia.









Profile Americans online

84% START THEIR INFORMATION SEARCH WITH A SEARCH ENGINE

73% USE WIKIPEDIA

Americans...online

- Nearly all Americans use e-mail and search engines
- Two-thirds of Americans use social sites

	TOTAL	ECONOMICALLY IMPACTED	COLLEGE STUDENTS	AGE 14-17	AGE 18-24	AGE 25-45	AGE 46-64	AGE 65+
 USE E-MAIL	94%	92%	99%	96%	98%	92%	95%	92%
 USE SEARCH ENGINES	92%	96%	93%	92%	92%	93%	91%	86%
 USE WIKIPEDIA	73%	71%	88%	88%	84%	80%	61%	60%
 USE ONLINE BOOKSTORES	72%	78%	78%	58%	79%	71%	75%	69%
 USE SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES	66%	80%	92%	72%	88%	80%	52%	40%
 USE SOCIAL MEDIA SITES	66%	71%	81%	85%	88%	73%	58%	34%
 USE ASK-AN-EXPERT SITES	43%	45%	52%	62%	54%	39%	42%	32%
 USE BLOGS	28%	30%	38%	28%	38%	30%	27%	18%

■ HIGHEST PERCENTAGE FOR EACH ACTIVITY