

Generation X hardest hit by the economy

The recent recession had the greatest impact on the employment status of Generation X, Americans ages 25–45. More than a quarter (28%) experienced a negative job impact (unemployed, reemployed at a lower salary or potentially working multiple jobs to make ends meet, etc.). Generation X was also the group most likely to be laid off and still unemployed at the time of the study—with 11% unemployed.

Gen Xers have made lifestyle changes as a result of the recession. Two-thirds of them (68%) are spending less on dining out and more than half of them have reduced their spending on books, CDs and DVDs (51%) and on entertainment (60%). More than a third have had to decrease the amount they can add to their savings and retirement accounts as a result of a negative job impact. They are spending less and saving less—but they are using the library more. The top reason for their increased use of the library—to save money.

A quarter (25%) of Gen Xers—more than any other age group—have increased their use of libraries during the recession. Among those who increased their library use, borrowing books, CDs and DVDs (84%), reading magazines (35%) and attending child-related events (25%) are some activities they are doing more often.

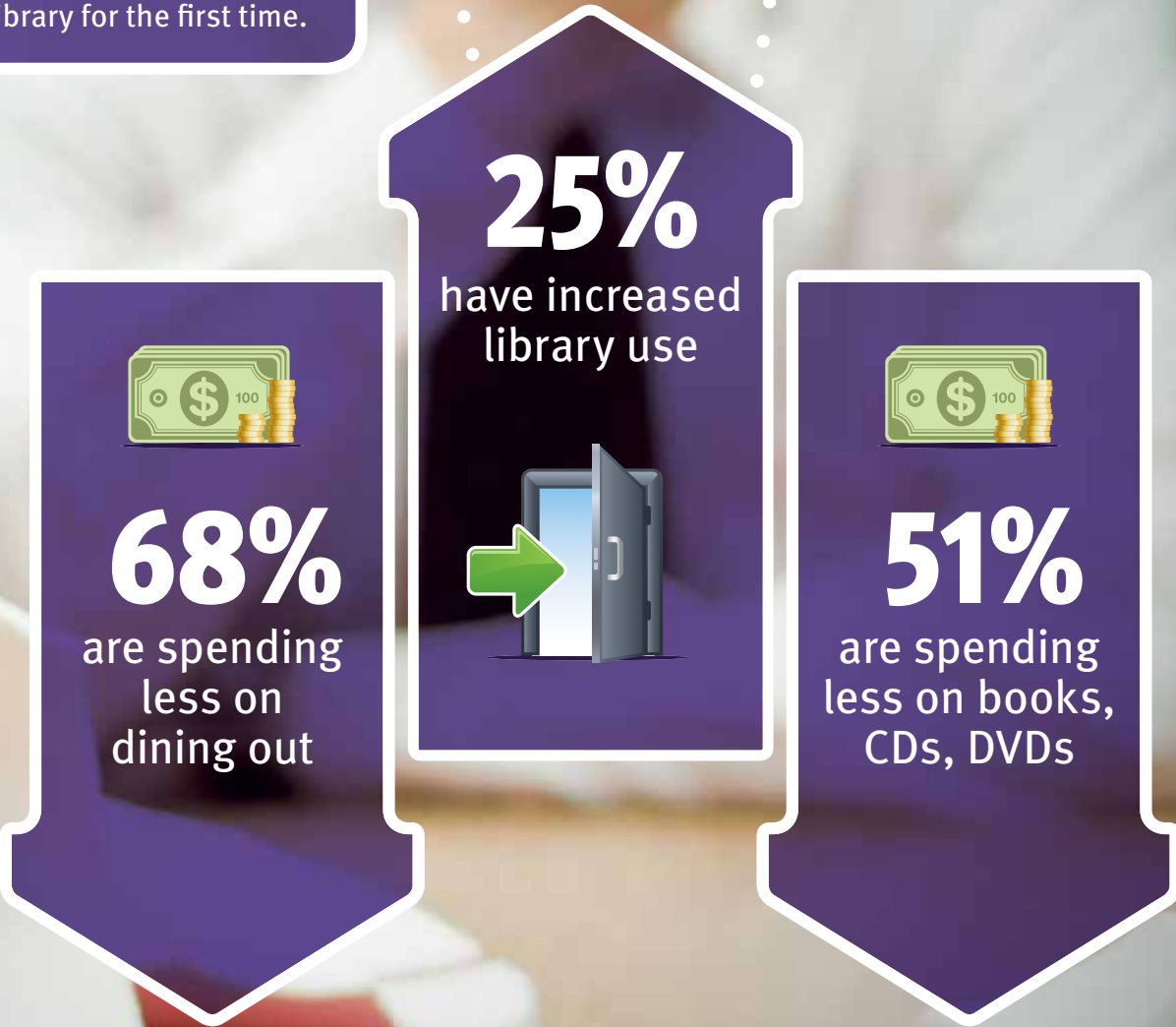
Many Gen Xers are also using the library for the first time for technology-related needs, such as accessing free Internet (30%) and using the computer (22%). Roughly 15% of these library users are attending training or educational programs, and seeking job/ career and unemployment information for the first time due to the recession.

Generation X
are most
impacted by
the economic
downturn

28% had a negative
job impact—that’s
18 million Americans.

Many Gen X library
users are accessing free
Internet (30%), using
the computer (22%) and
searching for job/career
information (16%) at the
library for the first time.

Gen Xers have increased
their use of libraries
during the recession
more than any other
age group.



Gen X use of online information sources soars

Generation X Americans increased their use of all online information sources from e-mail to search engines, online bookstores and library Web sites.

In 2010, Gen Xers used e-mail and search engines at rates consistent with teens and young adults. Gen Xers lagged behind the younger generations in their use of blogs and instant messaging in 2005, but their usage growth in five years now puts them ahead of teens (14–17-year-olds).

Teens and young adults were at least 50% more likely to be using social sites in 2007 compared to Gen Xers. In three years, triple-digit growth in social site use among 25–45-year-olds has narrowed that usage gap for both social networking and social media sites. Eighty percent (80%) of Americans ages 25–45 now use social networking sites—more than twice as many as in 2007 (36%), resulting in a 122% three-year growth rate and now surpassing teen use (72%).

While social media site use more than doubled from 30% to 73% in three years, Gen Xers still trail teens and young adults in their propensity to use social media sites.

Three-fourths (74%) of Generation X Americans consider themselves readers. Ninety-four percent (94%) who have been assisted by a librarian are satisfied with the support they receive from librarians. Their top piece of advice to their library: add and update the collection. Extending library hours for the convenience of working Americans also is requested.

Profile
Generation X (Age 25–45)

- 28% ARE ECONOMICALLY IMPACTED
- 74% CONSIDER THEMSELVES A READER

At the library

- 70% HAVE A LIBRARY CARD
- 66% VISIT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY ANNUALLY
- 36% HAVE EVER USED THE LIBRARY WEB SITE
- 27% ACCESS FREE INTERNET ANNUALLY AT THE LIBRARY
- 21% USE A COMPUTER ANNUALLY AT THE LIBRARY
- 88% BELIEVE THE LIBRARIAN ADDS VALUE TO SEARCH PROCESS
- 94% ARE SATISFIED WITH OVERALL EXPERIENCE WITH LIBRARIAN

Generation X: 25- to 45-year-olds

- Are most impacted by the economy—28% have had a negative job impact
- Are most likely to have increased their library use due to the economic downturn (25%)
- Use social networking sites at rates now surpassing teens (80% vs. 72%)
- Use social networking sites at more than double the rate of three years ago (80% vs. 36%)
- Doubled their use of ask-an-expert sites in five years (39% vs. 18%)
- Are most likely to believe the librarian adds value to the search process (88%)

Generation X
are using...

- 92% E-MAIL
- 93% SEARCH ENGINES
- 80% WIKIPEDIA

80%
SOCIAL NETWORKING
SITES

73%
SOCIAL MEDIA
SITES

39%
ASK-AN-EXPERT
SITES

16%
MOBILE DEVICES
TO SEARCH WEB

Generation X advises libraries

Gen Xers want libraries to offer more books, DVDs and other materials and to extend their hours.

23% Add or update services.

- 13% Add/update collection
- 6% Add/update computers
- 3% Add programs/classes
- 1% Make services available online

“carry comic books”
31-YEAR-OLD

“More computer
terminals with
Internet.”
35-YEAR-OLD ECONOMICALLY
IMPACTED

“Add more job skills
classes.”
31-YEAR-OLD COLLEGE
UNDERGRADUATE

22% Increase customer service.

- 10% Extend hours
- 7% Re-examine rules
- 3% Add staff/more knowledgeable helpful staff
- 2% Promote the library/advertise more

“Have extended hours
at least one day per
week to allow 9 to
5ers the opportunity
to use the library.”
38-YEAR-OLD

“The staff could be
more knowledgeable
about the basics.”
28-YEAR-OLD ECONOMICALLY
IMPACTED

12% Improve the facility and environment.

- 8% Renovate/expand facility
- 3% Make finding books easier
- 1% Study areas/meeting rooms/seating/café

“Become a center for
community activities.”
45-YEAR-OLD

“Less Cluttered more
space and light.”
27-YEAR-OLD

“Remodel your
interior to look more
modern.”
24-YEAR-OLD

5% I'm satisfied with my library.

“...doing a great job.”
31-YEAR-OLD

“...it is a nice place.”
45-YEAR-OLD

