



A SNAPSHOT OF PRIORITIES & PERSPECTIVES U.S. Public Libraries



OCLC conducted a member survey to understand librarians' top priorities, current key initiatives, thoughts on service and top methods for keeping current on happenings in the library field.

Most public library staff:

- Anticipate that the top reason patrons are using their library will change in five years
- Are focusing on e-books as their top initiative
- Rely mostly on listservs and e-mail to stay current—while just a few use social media.

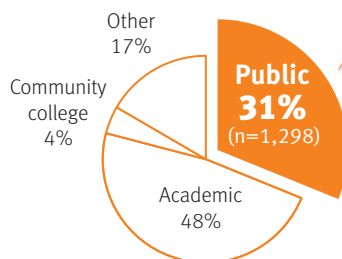
Opinions are split on the make-up of service points in the future.

For public library directors, their top priority is demonstrating value to funders.

If you would like to read similar reports about U.S. academic and community college libraries, see the reports at www.oclc.org/reports.

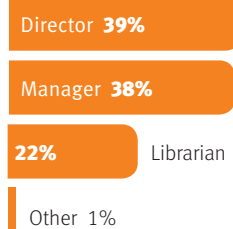
Survey demographics

Respondents by library type



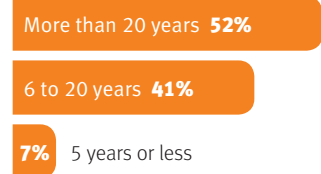
Total respondents (n=4,168)

Role



(n=1,016 of 1,298)

Length of service in libraries

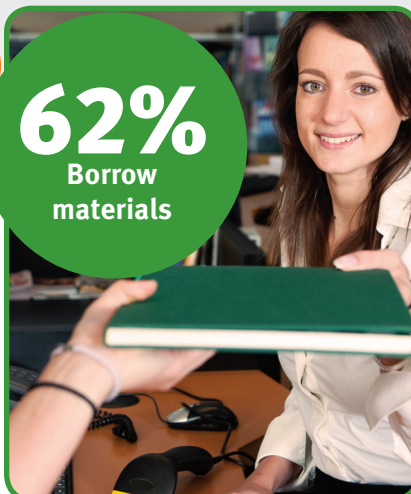


(n=1,020 of 1,298)

Patron demand expected to change: The majority of public library staff surveyed indicate that borrowing books and materials is still the top reason patrons use the public library today, followed by technology. Most expect those reasons to change over the next five years.



33%
Use
technology



62%
Borrow
materials

The primary reason patrons use the library in five years will...

- 12%** Change significantly
- 50%** Change modestly
- 33%** Remain the same
- 4%** Don't know

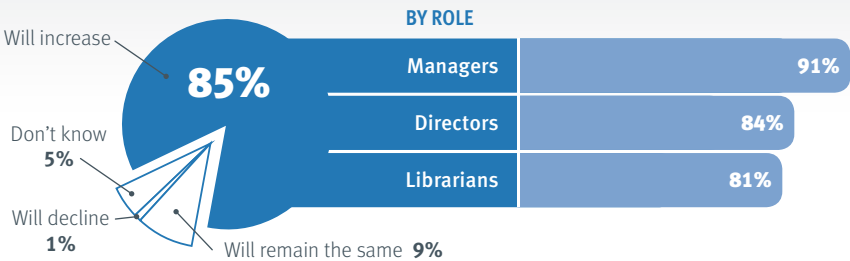
62%
Anticipate a change in the top reason patrons use the library.

More online traffic and more nontraditional service points

Public library staff expect use of the library—both physical and online—to grow in the next two years. Just 8% see a decline in in-person traffic to their library. Ideally, some would like to serve their communities with new and additional service points.

Use of the library will increase: Public library staff expect the number of unique online and in-person visitors to increase in the next two years. Managers are most likely to anticipate an increase in use of the online library.

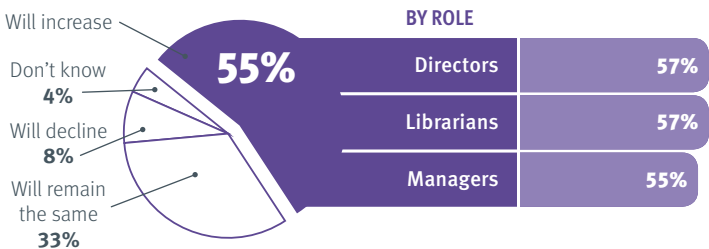
85% expect use of the online library will increase



BY LENGTH OF SERVICE

More than 20 years	87%
6 to 20 years	85%
5 years or less	80%

55% expect use of the physical library will increase



BY LENGTH OF SERVICE

6 to 20 years	59%
5 years or less	58%
More than 20 years	53%

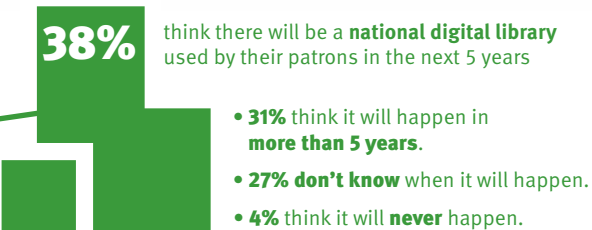
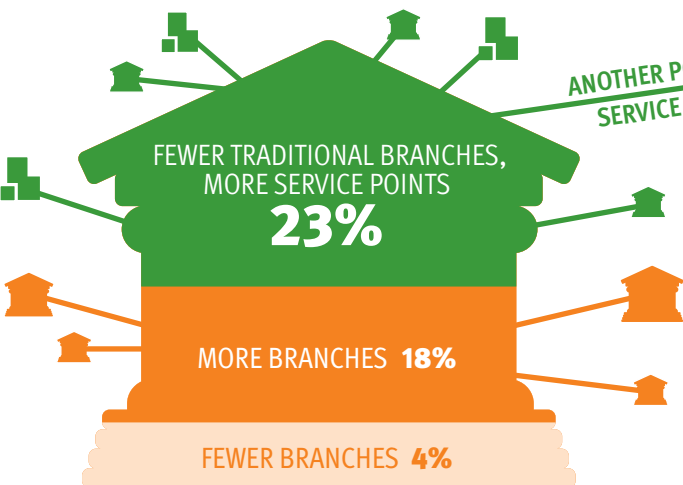
Staff split on service points: Nearly half of public library staff would ideally like the make-up of their service points to be different in five years while the other half want it to stay the same. Opinions on the likelihood and timing of a national (or large-scale) digital library are still forming.

55% of public library staff would ideally like the same number of branches in five years.

Directors are most likely to want the same number of branches.

Role	Percentage
DIRECTORS	58%
LIBRARIANS	54%
MANAGERS	49%

45% would like a change in service points.



“[My library’s] strategic plan...[includes] closure or repurposing of five small, inadequate and under-utilized libraries in favor of one, much larger branch library able to offer significant meeting and study space...”

PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTOR

“Remote service points that are not library buildings.”

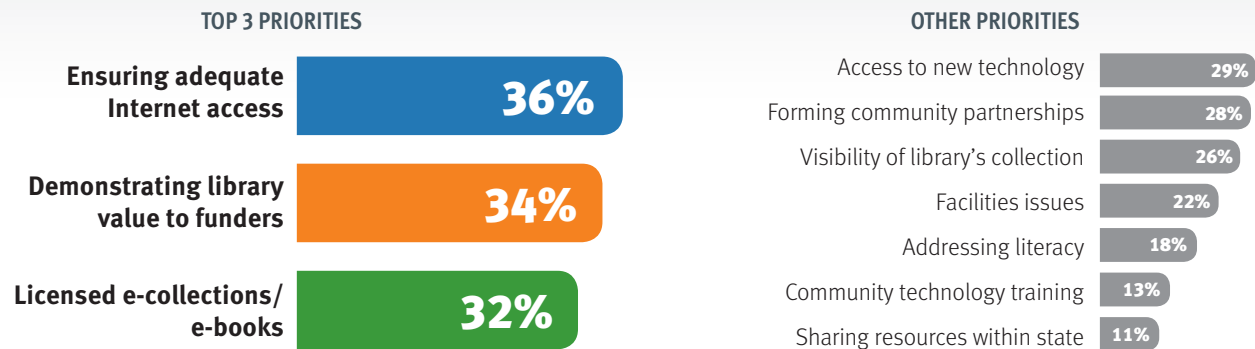
PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTOR

E-content, Internet and value: top priorities and initiatives

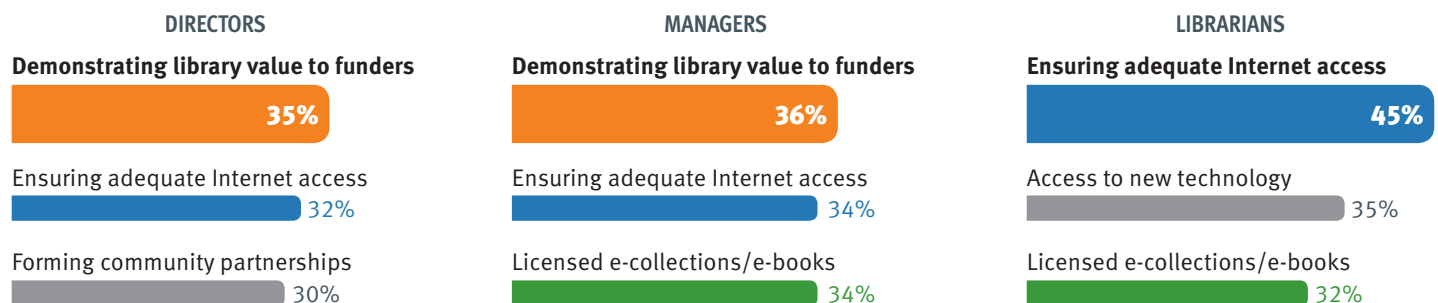
Public libraries are focused on delivering Internet access, the move to e-content and demonstrating value to funders. Top 2012 initiatives emphasize e-books.

Top priorities: A third of public libraries are focusing their priorities on ensuring adequate Internet access, demonstrating library value to funders and delivering licensed e-collections/e-books.

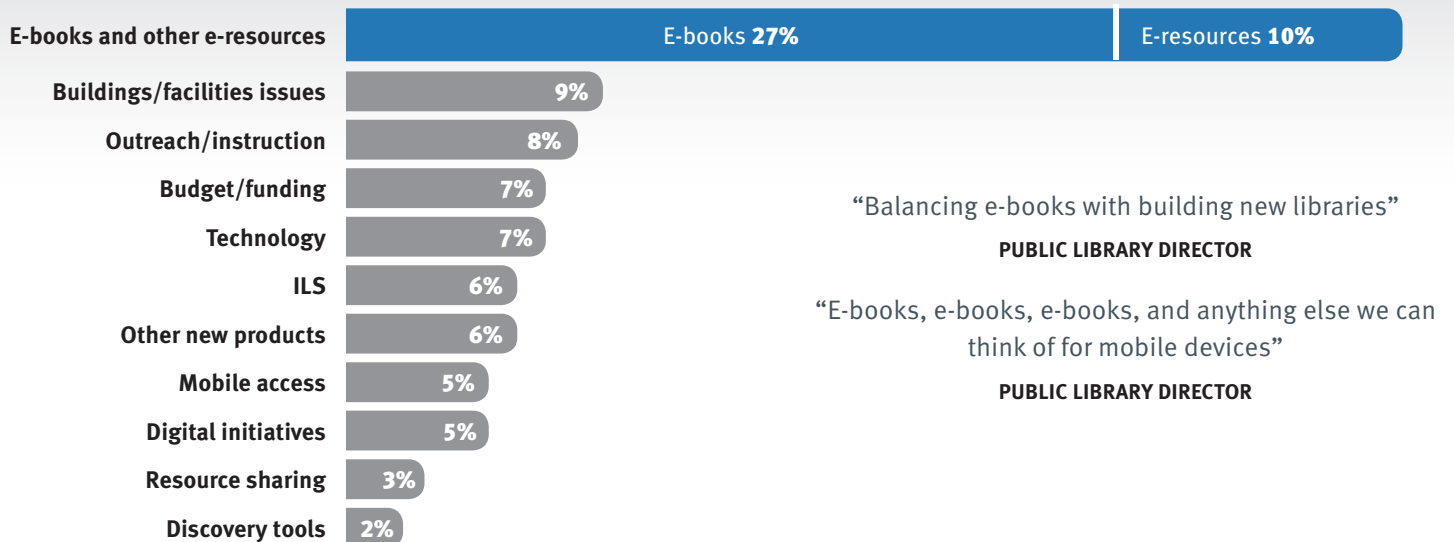
Top priorities by public library respondents



Top 3 priorities by job role



E-books dominate initiatives today: E-books are the most popular new initiative this year.



Listservs still hot

Public library staff rely primarily on listservs/e-mail lists and journals for library information.

Listservs are top information sources: Listservs/e-mail lists top the list of sources for staying informed about the library industry among all public library staff. In contrast, few follow Twitter to stay informed. Library staff with 5 years or less tenure are generally more likely to use social media and least likely to use journals and e-mail.

	Public library respondents	Directors	Managers	Librarians	5 years or less	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years
Listservs/e-mail lists	62%	62%	67%	55%	53%	62%	64%

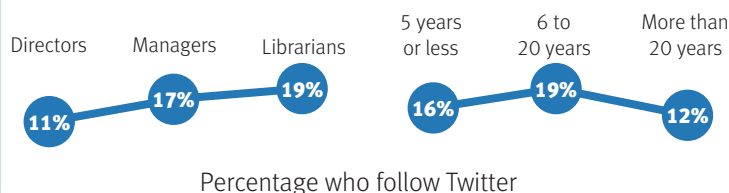
Library industry journals	47%	43%	55%	44%	40%	46%	49%
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Blogs	13%	10%	15%	13%	17%	15%	11%
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Facebook	5%	5%	3%	4%	8%	6%	3%
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Twitter	2%	1%	2%	5%	1%	4%	1%
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Twitter yet to take off

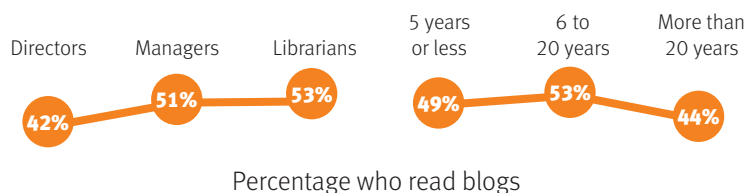


85%
do not use
Twitter as a way
to keep up with
library trends

Most-followed Twitter handles

- ALA News (@alanews) **5%**
- Library Journal (@LibraryJournal) **5%**
- American Libraries (@amlibraries) **4%**

Half of public library staff read blogs



47%
read blogs
to keep
current with
library trends

Top 6 blogs

- Annoyed Librarian (Library Journal)
- Librarian in Black (Sarah Houghton-Jan)
- BlogJunction (WebJunction)
- Library Technology Guides (Marshall Breeding)
- Stephen's Lighthouse (Stephen Abram)
- Free Range Librarian (Karen Schneider)

Top journals read



Library Journal **76%**
American Libraries **52%**
Public Libraries **45%**

"I don't do blogs or Twitter."

PUBLIC LIBRARY MANAGER

"I look at these [blogs] if they are referenced on a listserv, or e-mail, or in conversation."

PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTOR

"E-mail communication is vital."

PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTOR