

## Part 3: The Library Brand

**“Books”**  
is the library brand.

In Parts 1 and 2 of this report, we reviewed data related to respondents’ use of libraries and their familiarity with and favorability toward a variety of information sources, including libraries and their resources. We reviewed the frequency of use of library services, how respondents keep up-to-date with library services and respondents’ satisfaction levels with those services.

Information consumers are looking for “worthwhile” information.

In Part 3, we move from reviewing usage and familiarity of information sources to reporting responses related to perceptions and trust. Ubiquitous access to content is in its infancy and there is much to learn about how information consumers make choices and form preferences about electronic resources and services. How do information consumers assess and value electronic information? What, and who, do they trust? What mindshare does the “Library” hold compared to other information resources and services available to those with access to the Internet? The survey data provide some insight.

Respondents were asked to rate the specific criteria they used to evaluate and verify electronic resources. The top three evaluation criteria used by respondents are that the source *provides worthwhile information*, that it *provides free information* and that it *provides credible/trustworthy information*.

Information consumers trust information from both libraries and search engines.

Respondents rely on themselves to judge if an electronic source is trustworthy. Common sense and personal knowledge are the top verification criteria. Respondents also verify information trustworthiness based on *reputation of the company* and by *finding the information on multiple sites/cross-referencing*. Respondents believe free information is trustworthy and overwhelmingly do not trust information more if they have to pay for it. Few have paid for information.

We explored the question of product “fit” by asking respondents to tell us how well they felt different information sources fit with their lifestyle. Ease of product use and consumption or “fit” is often a key driver of both current and future use. Respondents feel search engines are a perfect fit with their lifestyle. Libraries fit but are not a perfect fit.

We examined respondents’ perceptions of the library and library information resources by asking an open-ended question about top-of-mind associations with libraries and positive and negative associations. Across all regions surveyed, respondents associate libraries first and foremost with “books.” There is no runner-up. Respondents provided thousands of positive and negative associations about libraries. Overall, respondents provided more positive than negative associations. Top positive associations are related to library products—books,

materials, computers, etc. The majority of negative associations were also related to products and offerings, followed by facilities.

Respondents were asked what they felt was the “main purpose of the library.” While about a third of respondents indicated they felt the main purpose of the library is “books,” the majority of respondents (53 percent) feel that the library’s main purpose is “information.”

### 3.1 The Value of Electronic Information Resources

***“Provides worthwhile information” is the top criterion respondents use when selecting electronic information. “Free” is also an important factor.***

Respondents use multiple criteria to determine the value of electronic information sources. Contrary to what is often attributed as the primary benefit of digital information access, speed of information delivery is not the most critical factor respondents use to evaluate electronic information resources. Three criteria were selected more frequently than speed. Seventy-seven percent of total respondents typically select an information source based on whether the source *provides worthwhile information*. Respondents also base their decision on if the source *provides free information* (72 percent) and *ease of use* (65 percent).

*Recommendations* are used by just 28 percent of respondents as a criterion for selecting an electronic information source.

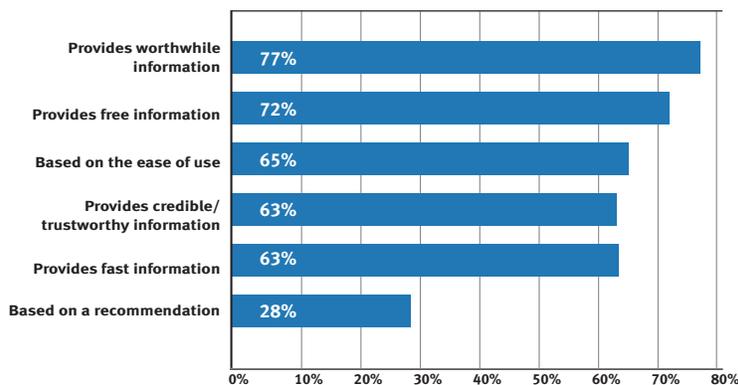
*to provide a  
free  
community  
resource  
centre*

40-year-old from Australia

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 810, “What do you feel is the main purpose of the library?”

#### ***Evaluating Information Sources—by Total Respondents***

How do you decide which electronic information source to use?  
(Select all that apply.)



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 715.

*Provides worthwhile information* is the top criterion to evaluate an information source for all regions surveyed except the U.K., where *provides free information* is the most frequently selected criterion (70 percent).

### Evaluating Information Sources—by Region of Respondent

How do you decide which electronic information source to use?  
(Select all that apply.)

	Total Respondents	Australia Singapore India	Canada	United Kingdom	United States
Provides worthwhile information	77%	82%	84%	67%	76%
Provides free information	72%	73%	69%	70%	73%
Based on the ease of use	65%	68%	62%	62%	66%
Provides credible/trustworthy information	63%	66%	67%	51%	65%
Provides fast information	63%	69%	62%	64%	61%
Based on a recommendation	28%	34%	30%	26%	26%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 715.

*Provides worthwhile information* is also the highest-rated factor in determining the value of electronic resources across U.S. age groups. The relative importance of *ease of use* as a decision factor increases with age and was cited as a selection criterion slightly more often than *credible/trustworthy information* for respondents age 25 and over.

### Evaluating Information Sources—by Age of U.S. Respondent

How do you decide which electronic information source to use?  
(Select all that apply.)

	Total U.S. Respondents	U.S. 14-17	U.S. 18-24	U.S. 25-64	U.S. 65+
Provides worthwhile information	76%	71%	77%	77%	74%
Provides free information	73%	67%	74%	73%	73%
Based on the ease of use	66%	58%	62%	68%	68%
Provides credible/trustworthy information	65%	56%	66%	65%	67%
Provides fast information	61%	61%	60%	61%	58%
Based on a recommendation	26%	22%	30%	27%	22%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 715.

### Evaluating Information Sources— by College Students across all Regions

How do you decide which electronic information source to use?  
(Select all that apply.)

	Total Respondents	College Students
Provides worthwhile information	77%	82%
Provides free information	72%	73%
Based on the ease of use	65%	64%
Provides credible/trustworthy information	63%	73%
Provides fast information	63%	62%
Based on a recommendation	28%	36%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 715.

## 3.2 Judging the Trustworthiness of Information

***Respondents rely on themselves to judge if electronic information is trustworthy.***

Respondents indicate they use a variety of criteria to select an electronic resource. As noted in Part 3.1, 63 percent of all respondents indicate that *provide credible, trustworthy information* is a key evaluation criterion.

To understand more about the criteria respondents use to judge the trustworthiness of electronic information, respondents who selected this criterion were asked to indicate how they judge trustworthiness. Eighty-six percent of all respondents indicate they use *personal knowledge/common sense* to determine trustworthiness. Three other criteria were selected by over half of respondents. These include the *reputation of the company/organization*, the ability to *find the information on multiple sites/cross-reference* and *recommendation from a trusted source*. Only 1 percent of respondents indicate that electronic information is trustworthy *because it costs money*.

U.S. respondents age 14–24 use the *professional appearance of the site* to judge trustworthiness more than other U.S. age group, roughly twice as much as U.S. respondents age 25 and over.

College students rely on *personal knowledge/common sense* and the ability to *find the information on multiple sites/cross-reference* as their top methods of evaluating trustworthiness.

### **Factors in Determining Trustworthiness of Information—by Region of Respondent**

How do you judge if electronic information is trustworthy?

Base: Respondents selecting “provides credible/trustworthy information” in question 715.

	Total Respondents	Australia Singapore India	Canada	United Kingdom	United States
Based on personal knowledge/common sense	86%	89%	86%	86%	85%
Based on the reputation of the company/organization	75%	72%	86%	73%	73%
Find the information on multiple sites/cross-referencing	65%	62%	64%	57%	67%
Recommendation from a trusted source	59%	61%	72%	56%	55%
Based on the professional appearance of the site	28%	30%	28%	21%	28%
Based on the author	26%	26%	35%	15%	26%
The fact that it costs money	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Other	3%	4%	4%	1%	2%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 725.

***endless references assistance in finding accurate information***

25-year-old from Australia

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 812a, “Please list two positive associations with the library.”

## **Factors in Determining Trustworthiness of Information— by Age of U.S. Respondent**

How do you judge if electronic information is trustworthy?

Base: Respondents selecting “provides credible/trustworthy information” in question 715.

	Total U.S. Respondents	U.S. 14-17	U.S. 18-24	U.S. 25-64	U.S. 65+
Based on personal knowledge/common sense	85%	83%	78%	88%	82%
Based on the reputation of the company/organization	73%	79%	64%	75%	72%
Find the information on multiple sites/cross-referencing	67%	72%	69%	69%	57%
Recommendation from a trusted source	55%	59%	60%	55%	51%
Based on the professional appearance of the site	28%	46%	45%	26%	16%
Based on the author	26%	29%	34%	25%	20%
The fact that it costs money	1%	3%	1%	0%	0%
Other	2%	3%	4%	2%	1%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 725.

## **Factors in Determining Trustworthiness of Information— by College Students across all Regions**

How do you judge if electronic information is trustworthy?

Base: Respondents selecting “provides credible/trustworthy information” in question 715.

	Total Respondents	College Students
Based on personal knowledge/common sense	86%	83%
Based on the reputation of the company/organization	75%	69%
Find the information on multiple sites/cross-referencing	65%	71%
Recommendation from a trusted source	59%	68%
Based on the professional appearance of the site	28%	42%
Based on the author	26%	46%
The fact that it costs money	1%	2%
Other	3%	3%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 725.

## 3.3 Trust in Library Resources and Search Engines

***Libraries and search engines both provide trustworthy information.***

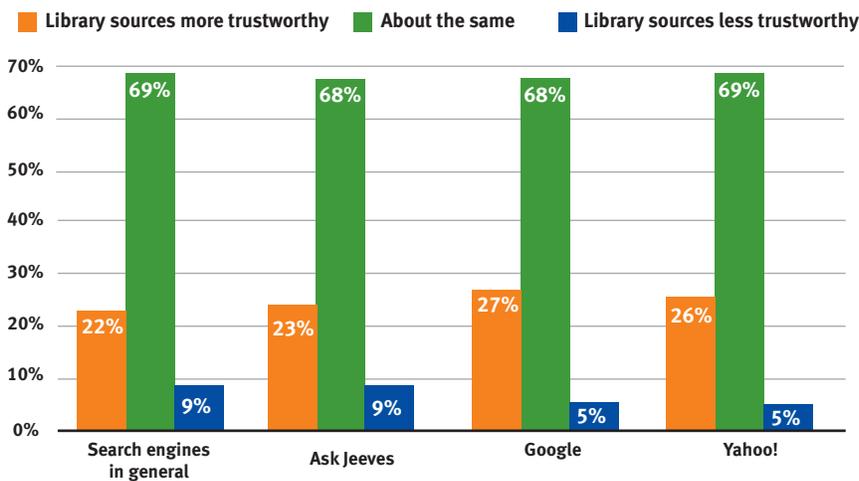
Sixty-nine percent of respondents feel that information from a search engine is at the same level of trustworthiness as a library information source. Twenty-two percent believe that information received from a library is more trustworthy than information received from a search engine and 9 percent indicated they believe it is less trustworthy than search engines.

Ask Jeeves, Google and Yahoo! all have approximately the same relative level of trustworthiness compared to a library's information sources. Note that even though use varies considerably among brands of search engines (see Part 1.2), the level of trustworthiness of the three most used brands is nearly equal.

Respondents from the U.K. and the U.S. are the most likely to view the trustworthiness of libraries and search engines similarly. Canadian respondents indicated the highest level of trust in libraries.

### *Trustworthiness of Library Sources vs. Search Engines— by Total Respondents*

Thinking about your usage of your library and the things you like and dislike about it, is the information you get from the library sources more or less trustworthy compared to the information you can get from search engines?

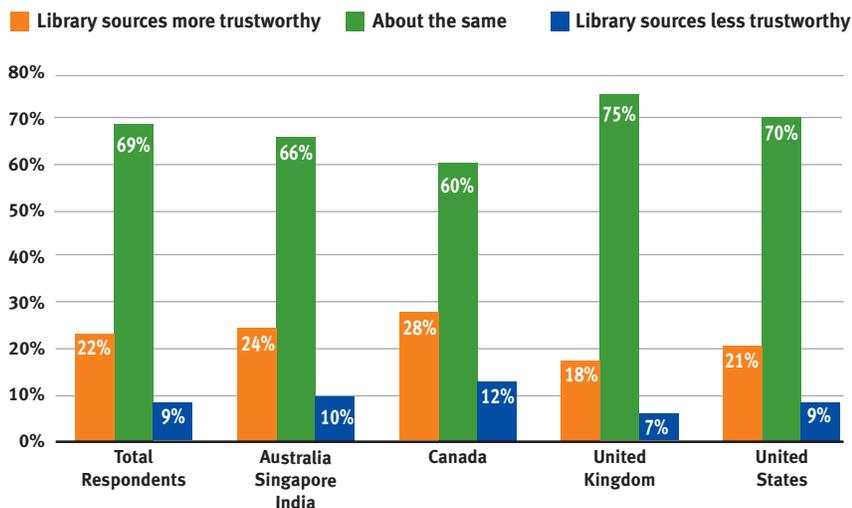


Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1205.

**69%**  
*feel libraries and search engines provide the same level of trustworthiness.*

## Trustworthiness of Library Sources vs. Search Engines— by Region of Respondent

Thinking about your usage of your library and the things you like and dislike about it, is the information you get from the library sources more or less trustworthy compared to the information you can get from search engines?



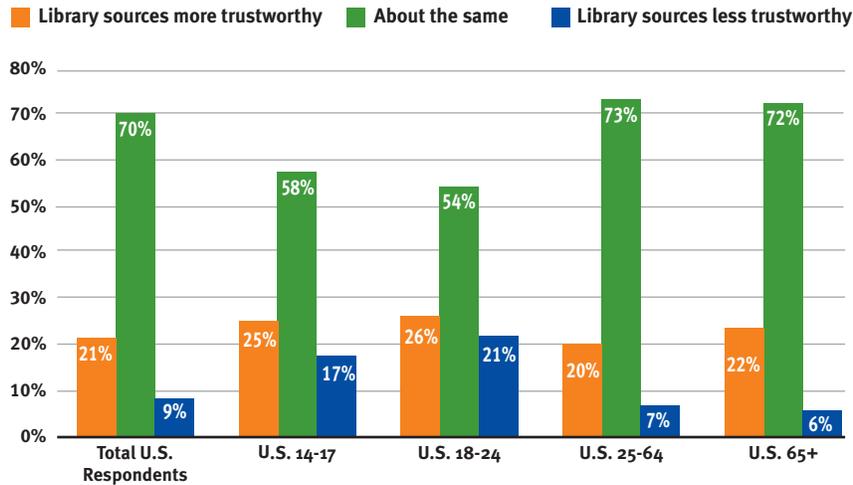
Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1205.

Results indicate that younger U.S. respondents (14- to 24-year-olds) were significantly more likely to respond that the library resources are *less trustworthy* than search engines among all U.S. age groups. The U.S. 25- to 64-year-olds and U.S. respondents 65 and older who rate the library sources *more trustworthy* than search engines do so at a margin of about three to one over those who rate it *less trustworthy*.

Although search engines have been in general use for a relatively short period of time, over 70 percent of all U.S. respondents over the age of 25, including those over 65, believe they provide the same level of trustworthiness as information providers that libraries do.

## Trustworthiness of Library Sources vs. Search Engines— by Age of U.S. Respondent

Thinking about your usage of your library and the things you like and dislike about it, is the information you get from the library sources more or less trustworthy compared to the information you can get from search engines?

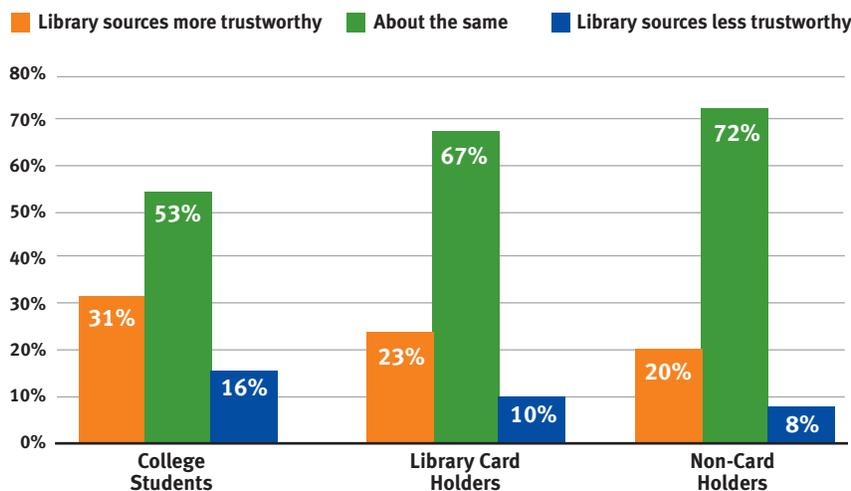


Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1205.

Almost a third of college students indicate a higher level of trust in library resources than in search engines. Fifty-three percent rate search engines' information to be about the same level of trustworthiness as the libraries' sources. There is no significant difference in the attitudes toward trustworthiness of library card holders as compared to non-card holders.

## Trustworthiness of Library Sources vs. Search Engines— by College Students, Library Card Holders and Non-Card Holders

Thinking about your usage of your library and the things you like and dislike about it, is the information you get from the library sources more or less trustworthy compared to the information you can get from search engines?



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1205.

*A library is vital in order to get information. I trust and love libraries. The web cannot take over because the library is sacred.*

18-year-old from the United States

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 810, "What do you feel is the main purpose of the library?"

## 3.4 Free vs. For-Fee Information

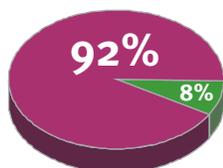
**Respondents do not trust information they have to purchase more than free information.**

The survey examined another aspect of trust by examining if respondents trust an electronic information source more if they have to pay for the information. Ninety-three percent of the total U.S. respondents said *No*, they do not trust the information more if they pay for it. This attitude was consistent across all geographic regions surveyed and library card holder status.

U.S. 14- to 17-year-olds are more likely than other U.S. age segments to trust an information source more if they have to pay for the information. Almost 20 percent of U.S. 14- to 17-year-olds indicate a higher trust level in an information source when there is a cost for the information.

### Free vs. For-Fee Information— by Total Respondents

Would you trust an electronic information source more if you have to pay for the information compared to a free source?



**No** **Yes**

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 755.

### Free vs. For-Fee Information—by Region of Respondent

Would you trust an electronic information source more if you have to pay for the information compared to a free source?

	Total Respondents	Australia Singapore India	Canada	United Kingdom	United States
No	92%	88%	94%	88%	93%
Yes	8%	12%	6%	12%	7%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 755.

### Free vs. For-Fee Information— by Age of U.S. Respondent

Would you trust an electronic information source more if you have to pay for the information compared to a free source?

	Total U.S. Respondents	U.S. 14-17	U.S. 18-24	U.S. 25-64	U.S. 65+
No	93%	81%	87%	95%	92%
Yes	7%	19%	13%	5%	8%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 755.

### Free vs. For-Fee Information— by College Students across all Regions

Would you trust an electronic information source more if you have to pay for the information compared to a free source?

	Total Respondents	College Students
No	92%	90%
Yes	8%	10%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 755.

### Free vs. For-Fee Information— by Library Card Holders across all Regions

Would you trust an electronic information source more if you have to pay for the information compared to a free source?

	Total Respondents	Library Card Holders	Non-Card Holders
No	92%	92%	90%
Yes	8%	8%	10%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 755.

**Free information from a trusted source.**

**A large quantity of books to be read for enjoyment.**

19-year-old from the United States

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 812a, "Please list two positive associations with the library."

### Paying for Information via an Electronic Information Source

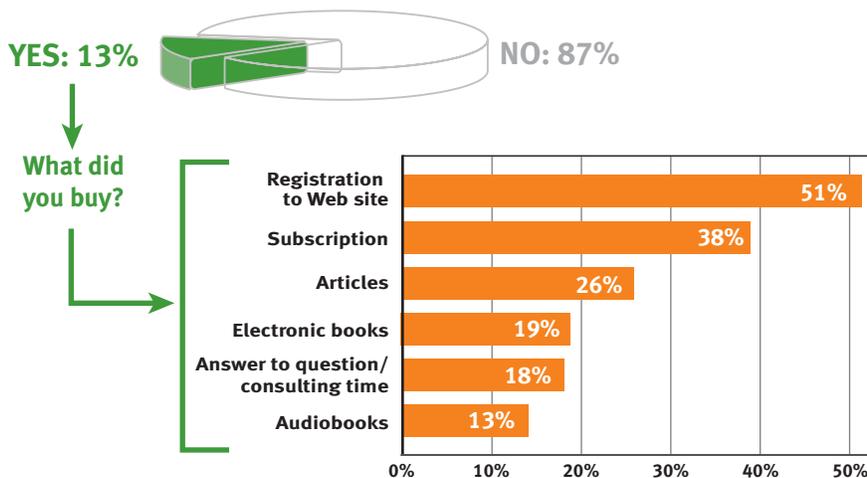
**The majority of respondents have never paid for information.**

The survey asked respondents to indicate if they have ever paid for information from an electronic information source. Eighty-seven percent indicated they have not.

While few respondents have paid for information from an electronic information source, of those who have, nearly a third or more have purchased a registration to a Web site, a subscription or an article (51 percent, 38 percent and 26 percent, respectively).

### Free vs. For-Fee Information— by Total Respondents

Have you ever paid for information from an electronic information source?  
What did you buy?



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, questions 625 and 630.

The survey also asked respondents who have purchased information from an electronic information source if the future frequency of purchasing would be more, less or about the same. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents report frequency will remain the same, 25 percent say frequency will be less and 16 percent say frequency will be more. Anticipated increased use of free information was generally consistent across all geographic regions and all U.S. age groups surveyed.

### *Information Purchases in the Future— by Region of Respondent*

Do you anticipate you will be paying more frequently, less frequently, or about the same frequency for electronic information in the future?

	Total Respondents	Australia Singapore India	Canada	United Kingdom	United States
More frequently	16%	17%	16%	15%	11%
About the same	59%	56%	57%	67%	54%
Less frequently	25%	27%	27%	19%	34%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 635.

## Free vs. For-Fee Verbatim Comments

**Would you trust an electronic information source more if you have to pay for the information compared to a free source?**

Respondents provided 1,873 comments to an open-ended question asking why they would or would not trust an electronic source more if they had to pay for the information. Responses indicate a wide range of perceptions and expectations with regard to for-fee information, from an expectation that for-fee information is more likely to be trustworthy because it is likely more scrutinized prior to release, to opinions that because so much free information is readily available it is hard to justify any payment.

The traditional notion that higher price equals higher quality appears to not hold true for information as a commodity. There is a clear theme expressed through the comments that information should be free and available to all.

Note: All verbatim comments presented as entered by survey respondents, including spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors.

*If I knew that the source was reputable (e.g., New York Times) it would probably be worth it.*

17-year-old from the United States

*If you trust information from a free source why wouldn't you trust information from a source where you had to pay? Because I cross reference, I would only pay for information if I needed the extra data.*

68-year-old from Australia

*I also exercise my own judgement and cross referencing with friends and teachers. Having to pay for the information does not make the information more or less trust worthy.*

33-year-old from Singapore

*Because information should be free for everyone to know, I can very easily get in my car and drive to the library to see find the information without having to pay for it. Because you can get info from the library for free.*

16-year-old from the United States

*I would think it would be safe to assume that if you have to pay for something it would be trustworthy and true. The information being provided probably needs to meet certain criteria and costs them money; therefore they need to charge to release the information. Opposed to free information, anyone can provide information whether it's trustworthy or not without having to meet certain criteria.*

24-year-old from the United States

*Something paid for results in value. Often free gets what one pays for.*

48-year-old from Canada

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 760, "Would you trust an electronic information source more if you have to pay for the information compared to a free source? Why is that?"

*All my life before  
electronic info I was  
able to get info  
I needed without  
paying for it....*

*why  
start  
now?*

78-year-old from the  
United States

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and  
Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005,  
question 760, "Would you trust an elec-  
tronic information source more if you  
have to pay for the information com-  
pared to a free source? Why is that?"

*I do not think that I should have to pay for information that I can get freely from  
other sources on the internet or at the local library for free.*

40-year-old from the United Kingdom

*are you saying if information is free, it's not to be trusted!!!!!!!*

52-year-old from the United Kingdom

*Too many free sources from free websites to libraries to radio to broadcast  
to get information, I think it would be almost impossible to justify paying  
for what so many sources offer for free both online and offline.*

35-year-old from the United States

*Would you trust my survey responses more if you had to pay me for it? :)  
Having to pay, while it psychologically leverages you to commit to the  
experience more, doesn't validate the veracity of the information gained  
through the transaction experience. The two things are independent.*

38-year-old from Australia

## 3.5 Validating Information

### ***Respondents most often cross-reference other Web sites to validate electronic information.***

Sixty-five percent of respondents judge the trustworthiness of electronic information sources by cross-referencing to other sources (see Part 3.2).

The survey explored cross-referencing as a method of information validation. Survey respondents were given a list of possible cross-referencing sources and asked to select all that they use.

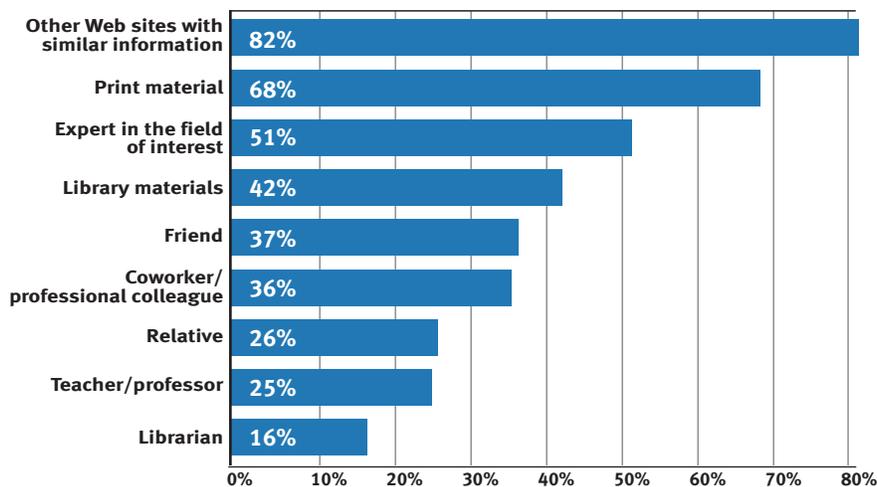
Over 80 percent of total respondents use *other Web sites with similar information* as a validation tool. *Print material* is selected as a cross-reference source by 68 percent of all respondents.

*Librarians* are rated as the least-used cross-referencing source for validation, at 16 percent of all respondents. Use of the librarian to validate electronic information was considerably higher for college students and U.S. youth. Twenty-six percent of U.S. 14- to 17-year-olds use *librarians* to validate information and 36 percent of college students use the librarian.

### ***Cross-referencing Sources to Validate Information—by Total Respondents***

What other source(s) do you use to validate the information?

Base: Respondents selecting “find the information on multiple sites/cross-referencing” in question 725.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 735.

*Looking and reading an entire book*

***takes too long***

*when the specific information can be gained online in a matter of minutes. Cross referencing takes a lot of time and effort.*

**38-year-old from the United States**

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 812b, “Please list two negative associations with the library.”

Regional differences were observed, although using *other Web sites with similar information* to validate information was the top choice across all geographic regions surveyed. Nine percent of respondents from the U.K. use a *teacher or professor* to validate information compared to 32 percent of Canadians and 25 percent of total respondents. U.S. respondents are least likely to use a librarian (14 percent).

The use of *library materials* as cross-referencing sources to validate information is relatively consistent across regions, ranging from roughly 40 to 50 percent. Again, the use of *library materials* as sources to validate information is higher among college students at 64 percent.

### Cross-referencing Sources to Validate Information— by Region of Respondent

What other source(s) do you use to validate the information?

Base: Respondents selecting “find the information on multiple sites/cross-referencing” in question 725.

	Total Respondents	Australia Singapore India	Canada	United Kingdom	United States
Other Web sites with similar information	82%	86%	78%	82%	82%
Print material	68%	68%	76%	53%	68%
Expert in the field of interest	51%	63%	54%	46%	48%
Library materials	42%	45%	48%	39%	40%
Friend	37%	46%	48%	39%	32%
Coworker/professional colleague	36%	38%	47%	39%	33%
Relative	26%	30%	35%	20%	24%
Teacher/professor	25%	28%	32%	9%	26%
Librarian	16%	19%	22%	15%	14%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 735.

*I need to go get a card! As it is a good place to cross reference items. I do enjoy reading book's!*

70-year-old from the United States

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 807, “What is the first thing you think of when you think of a library?”

### Cross-referencing Sources to Validate Information— by Age of U.S. Respondent

What other source(s) do you use to validate the information?

Base: Respondents selecting “find the information on multiple sites/cross-referencing” in question 725.

	Total U.S. Respondents	U.S. 14-17	U.S. 18-24	U.S. 25-64	U.S. 65+
Other Web sites with similar information	82%	79%	78%	85%	75%
Print material	68%	63%	65%	70%	61%
Expert in the field of interest	48%	40%	51%	51%	36%
Library materials	40%	47%	58%	37%	36%
Friend	32%	54%	35%	29%	34%
Coworker/professional colleague	33%	10%	21%	41%	15%
Relative	24%	34%	33%	20%	29%
Teacher/professor	26%	70%	60%	16%	19%
Librarian	14%	26%	32%	10%	10%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 735.

### Cross-referencing Sources to Validate Information— by College Students across all Regions

What other source(s) do you use to validate the information?

Base: Respondents selecting “find the information on multiple sites/cross-referencing” in question 725.

	Total Respondents	College Students
Other Web sites with similar information	82%	80%
Print material	68%	76%
Expert in the field of interest	51%	59%
Library materials	42%	64%
Friend	37%	35%
Coworker/professional colleague	36%	37%
Relative	26%	29%
Teacher/professor	25%	78%
Librarian	16%	36%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 735.

### Cross-referencing Sources to Validate Information— by Library Card Holders across all Regions

What other source(s) do you use to validate the information?

Base: Respondents selecting “find the information on multiple sites/cross-referencing” in question 725.

	Total Respondents	Library Card Holders	Non- Card Holders
Other Web sites with similar information	82%	84%	76%
Print material	68%	72%	53%
Expert in the field of interest	51%	53%	43%
Library materials	42%	50%	13%
Friend	37%	37%	37%
Coworker/professional colleague	36%	37%	35%
Relative	26%	26%	27%
Teacher/professor	25%	30%	10%
Librarian	16%	19%	4%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 735.

## Trusted Sources for Recommendations

***Experts, other Web sites and print materials are the top trusted sources for validating information. Two percent of respondents consult librarians when seeking help from a trusted source.***

While 65 percent of respondents judge the trustworthiness of electronic resources by *finding information on multiple sites/cross-referencing*, 59 percent of respondents indicate they use *recommendations from a trusted source*. We asked this subset of respondents to identify who or what is their most trusted source they typically use. Nine options were provided and respondents were asked to select one. Nineteen percent of respondents use an *expert in the field of interest* as the trusted source they typically use to help judge if electronic information is trustworthy. *Other Web sites with similar information* are used by 17 percent of respondents. *Librarians* were selected as a trusted source for validating information by 2 percent of respondents.

College students rely on their *teachers and professors* as trusted sources to validate information, more than any other source. Library card holders tend to show the smallest amount of variation among sources they trust to validate information.

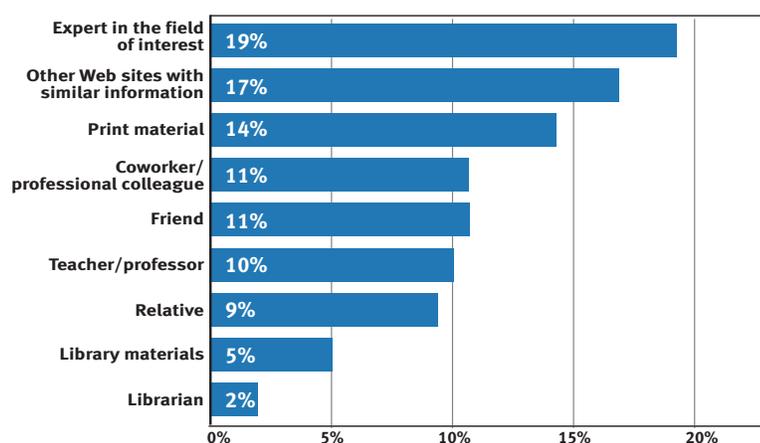
Respondents use a wide range of trusted sources to validate electronic information and show regional differences. Twenty-three percent of respondents from the U.K. trust *coworkers*, which is double that of the 11 percent of total respondents. Conversely, only 9 percent of U.S. respondents use *coworkers* as sources of validation.

U.S. 14- to 17-year-olds name *teachers and professors* as their trusted sources to validate electronic information. Two percent of college students across all regions use *librarians* as their trusted source for validation. U.S. respondents age 65 and older use *experts, print materials* and *relatives* as their top trusted sources of validation for electronic information.

### Trusted Sources for Validating Information— by Total Respondents

Who or what is that trusted source you most typically use?

Base: Respondents selecting “recommendation from a trusted source” in question 725.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 745.

### Trusted Sources for Validating Information— by Region of Respondent

Who or what is that trusted source you most typically use?

Base: Respondents selecting “recommendation from a trusted source” in question 725.

	Total Respondents	Australia Singapore India	Canada	United Kingdom	United States
Expert in the field of interest	19%	23%	19%	15%	19%
Other Web sites with similar information	17%	18%	16%	14%	17%
Print material	14%	15%	8%	9%	16%
Friend	11%	13%	16%	10%	9%
Coworker/professional colleague	11%	11%	12%	23%	9%
Teacher/professor	10%	6%	11%	8%	11%
Relative	9%	6%	8%	10%	10%
Library materials	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%
Librarian	2%	2%	1%	4%	1%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 745.

### Trusted Sources for Validating Information— by Age of U.S. Respondent

Who or what is that trusted source you most typically use?

Base: Respondents selecting “recommendation from a trusted source” in question 725.

	Total U.S. Respondents	U.S. 14-17	U.S. 18-24	U.S. 25-64	U.S. 65+
Expert in the field of interest	19%	9%	4%	23%	20%
Other Web sites with similar information	17%	10%	13%	19%	12%
Print material	16%	14%	7%	17%	21%
Friend	9%	17%	8%	8%	10%
Coworker/professional colleague	9%	0%	4%	12%	4%
Teacher/professor	11%	33%	40%	4%	6%
Relative	10%	9%	10%	7%	21%
Library materials	5%	2%	10%	5%	1%
Librarian	1%	4%	2%	1%	1%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 745.

### Trusted Sources for Validating Information— by College Students across all Regions

Who or what is that trusted source you most typically use?

Base: Respondents selecting “recommendation from a trusted source” in question 725.

	Total Respondents	College Students
Expert in the field of interest	19%	9%
Other Web sites with similar information	17%	15%
Print material	14%	13%
Friend	11%	3%
Coworker/professional colleague	11%	2%
Teacher/professor	10%	45%
Relative	9%	4%
Library materials	5%	6%
Librarian	2%	2%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 745.

**Unlimited resources and cross-reference abilities.**

17-year-old from the United States

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 812a, “Please list two positive associations with the library.”

The trusted source most typically used to validate electronic information resources varied depending on whether the respondents are library card holders or not. Non-card holders select *coworkers* as their trusted source more often than library card holders do (21 percent compared to 9 percent.) Non-card holders typically do not select *library materials* or *librarians* as their trusted sources.

### ***Trusted Sources for Validating Information— by Total Respondents, Library Card Holders and Non-Card Holders across all Regions***

Who or what is that trusted source you most typically use?

Base: Respondents selecting “recommendation from a trusted source” in question 725.

	Total Respondents	Library Card Holders	Non-Card Holders
Expert in the field of interest	19%	18%	25%
Other Web sites with similar information	17%	16%	18%
Print material	14%	16%	6%
Friend	11%	10%	14%
Coworker/professional colleague	11%	9%	21%
Teacher/professor	10%	12%	3%
Relative	9%	8%	10%
Library materials	5%	6%	0%
Librarian	2%	2%	0%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 745.

## 3.6 Libraries—Positive and Negative Associations

***“Books” and “information” are the highest positive associations with libraries. “Customer/User services” yielded the highest number of negative associations.***

Survey respondents were asked to provide—in their own words—two positive and two negative associations about libraries. 3,034 respondents provided 5,271 positive comments (an average of 1.74 comments per respondent) and 2,985 respondents provided 4,793 negative comments (an average of 1.61 comments per respondent).

Verbatim responses were grouped into four categories: Products and Offerings, Customer/User Service, Staff and Facility/Environment. These primary categories were used to group both positive and negative associations. As the following graph indicates, respondents’ positive and negative comments are matched across the four categories. Respondents had strong positive associations with books; respondents also had strong negative associations with books.

### Part 3: The Library Brand

Overall, the positive associations of libraries for survey respondents are ones libraries have long been valued for: providing freely available materials and facilities that support individual inquiry. Many of the negative associations relate to the availability and conditions of the materials and facilities.

Over 3,100 positive associations with products and offerings were provided by respondents. This category yielded the most positive associations. Comments relating to products and offerings also were the most frequently cited negative associations, at 35 percent. The negative associations include unavailable or out-of-date items/information, unavailable or out-of-date computers and limited variety in the collection.

Other frequently cited negative associations relate to facilities and environment, at 26 percent. Most frequently cited were noise levels (too loud or too quiet), being too crowded, limited parking and the need to travel to the library.

Negative customer/user service associations outnumber positive customer/user service associations. Limited library hours were the most cited negative association. Fees, inflexible return policies and other policy concerns were cited frequently.

U.S. respondents over age 65 had the strongest positive associations with library staff among U.S. respondents, while young people in the U.S. age 14–17 had the strongest negative associations with library staff.

For the full data tables, please see Appendix A.

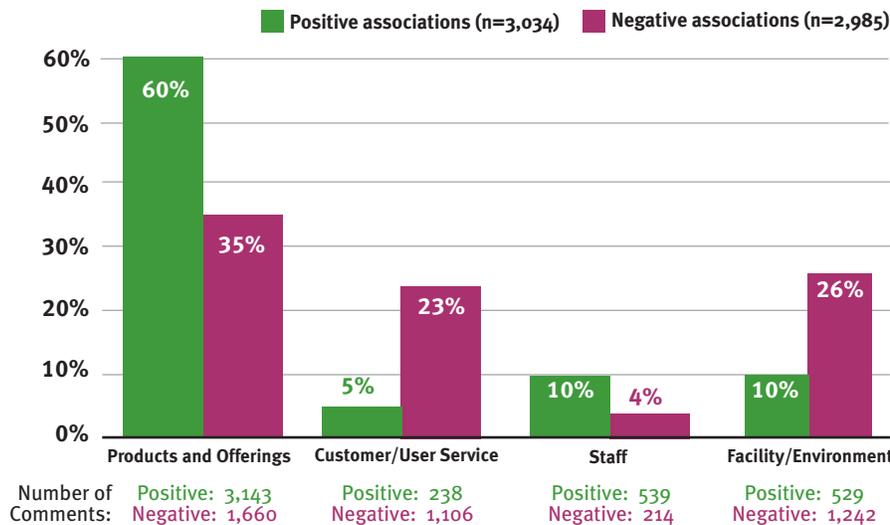
*when they don't  
have the book  
you need  
that darn  
dewey thing*

15-year-old from the  
United States

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 812b, "Please list two negative associations with the library."

### Positive and Negative Associations of Libraries— by Total Respondents

Please list two positive and two negative associations with the library.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 812.

The data show relative consistency across regions, with strong consistency for the positive associations. Negative associations are slightly more varied. For example, Canadian respondents registered more negative comments about customer/user service than other regions, and respondents for the U.K. registered more negative comments about the facilities and the environment.

Positive associations with regard to library staff and customer/user service were offered more often by U.S. respondents age 65 and over than by U.S. respondents in any other age group. U.S. respondents 14 to 17 years old had the highest positive association with books than any other U.S. age group at 22 percent, while 13 percent reported *books* as a negative association.

### Positive Associations of Libraries—by Region of Respondent

Please list two positive associations with the library.

	Total Respondents	Australia Singapore India	Canada	United Kingdom	United States
<b>Products and Offerings</b>					
Books	18%	16%	17%	21%	18%
Information	14%	16%	14%	14%	14%
Materials	9%	9%	10%	12%	9%
Free	8%	8%	7%	11%	8%
Computers	3%	2%	3%	3%	4%
Resources	3%	3%	4%	2%	4%
Easy	3%	4%	4%	4%	3%
<b>Staff</b>					
Staff	10%	9%	10%	10%	11%
<b>Facility/Environment</b>					
Environment	10%	11%	9%	7%	11%
<b>Customer/User Service</b>					
Service	5%	5%	6%	4%	4%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 812a.

### Positive Associations of Libraries— by Age of U.S. Respondent

Please list two positive associations with the library.

	Total U.S. Respondents	U.S. 14-17	U.S. 18-24	U.S. 25-64	U.S. 65+
<b>Products and Offerings</b>					
Books	18%	22%	16%	18%	13%
Information	14%	14%	18%	13%	13%
Materials	9%	7%	7%	12%	13%
Free	8%	8%	8%	9%	4%
Computers	4%	4%	5%	4%	3%
Resources	4%	3%	5%	5%	2%
Easy	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%
<b>Staff</b>					
Staff	11%	8%	9%	11%	17%
<b>Facility/Environment</b>					
Environment	11%	12%	11%	9%	8%
<b>Customer/User Service</b>					
Service	4%	4%	2%	4%	6%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 812a.

## Positive Associations

Note: All verbatim comments presented as entered by survey respondents, including spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors.

### Products and Offerings

**Books:** 18 percent of respondents provided positive associations related to books. These comments included free books, many or a variety of books, borrowing books, good books, available or accessible books, browsing books and current books.

**Information:** 14 percent of respondents included positive thoughts related to information, including free information, accurate/trustworthy information, reliable information, access to information, current information and comprehensive information.

**Materials:** 9 percent of respondents offered comments associated with library materials, such as a variety or many materials available, free materials and borrowing materials.

**Free:** 8 percent of the respondents have positive associations related to the concept of “free” or “free access.”

**Computers:** 3 percent of the positive comments related to computer or Internet access.

**Resources:** 3 percent of the positive associations were associated with access to free or a variety of resources.

**Easy to access/find:** 3 percent of the respondents provided positive statements about the ease of accessing or finding information or resources.

*Libraries are embracing computer technology and now offer library users the best of both worlds when they visit. They can borrow conventional books, magazines and newspapers and they can also log on to the computer system and find lots of information there. Teachers and school administrators still advocate the use of libraries and encourage their students to visit, so I think libraries will be here for a while yet.*

41-year-old from Canada

*most of the information and research available are trustworthy*

29-year-old from Singapore

*Generally Free (Inter)National cooperation*

27-year-old from Canada

*books. classics, in depth research. facility, the way to obtain hard to get information.*

73-year-old from the United Kingdom

### Facility/Environment

10 percent of the respondents have positive associations of the library related to the:

- Quiet environment
- Friendly and comfortable surroundings
- Work environment

*Can access info in tangible form - ie can pick it up and look at it. can go there for peace and quiet if you need to study without distractions*

26-year-old from the United Kingdom

*source of learning*

*they have become more child friendly*

33-year-old from the United Kingdom

## Positive Associations (cont.)

Note: All verbatim comments presented as entered by survey respondents, including spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors.

### Staff

10 percent of respondents provided positive comments related to the library staff, including:

- Helpful
- Friendly
- Knowledgeable
- Available

*lots of information helpful staff*

14-year-old from the United States

*learn always & almost all references needed.*

71-year-old from India

*There are many sources of information available through the library, and the people there are always very friendly. It is also a very community oriented thing.*

16-year-old from the United States

### Customer/User Service

5 percent of the respondents have positive associations of the service provided by libraries. Some of the positive associations are:

- The online catalog
- The practice of being open to the public
- Interlibrary loan and library “linking”
- The ability to self-service and search
- The option to browse and borrow materials
- The way libraries are organized
- The hours libraries are open

*Recreation for 75 years of my life  
Resource for education purposes*

82-year-old from the United States

*The possible ability to acquire information that may not be available from other sources. the option of alternative medium types, ie cd, dvd, video, etc*

71-year-old from Australia

*A form of entertainment. A knowledgeable place.*

44-year-old from Singapore

*1. Any one can get information about all subject in library generally. 2. Its the cheapest means to get knowledge.*

35-year-old from India

### Negative Associations of Libraries— by Region of Respondent

Please list two negative associations with the library.

	Total Respondents	Australia Singapore India	Canada	United Kingdom	United States
<b>Products and Offerings</b>					
Books	13%	16%	14%	14%	11%
Materials	10%	10%	12%	8%	10%
Information	7%	9%	8%	6%	6%
Time-consuming	3%	4%	3%	1%	3%
Computers	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
<b>Facility/Environment</b>					
Environment	11%	11%	8%	15%	11%
Travel there	7%	8%	7%	6%	7%
Not convenient	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Dull	2%	1%	1%	4%	2%
<b>Customer/User Service</b>					
Service	23%	19%	28%	20%	23%
<b>Staff</b>					
Staff	4%	3%	2%	4%	5%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 812b.

### Negative Associations of Libraries— by Age of U.S. Respondent

Please list two negative associations with the library.

	Total U.S. Respondents	U.S. 14-17	U.S. 18-24	U.S. 25-64	U.S. 65+
<b>Products and Offerings</b>					
Books	11%	13%	12%	10%	10%
Materials	10%	9%	10%	8%	8%
Information	6%	4%	9%	6%	5%
Time-consuming	3%	4%	4%	2%	2%
Computers	3%	3%	3%	1%	4%
<b>Facility/Environment</b>					
Environment	11%	12%	14%	9%	11%
Travel there	7%	5%	5%	10%	11%
Not convenient	5%	4%	3%	7%	5%
Dull	2%	5%	3%	9%	0%
<b>Customer/User Service</b>					
Service	23%	23%	23%	26%	21%
<b>Staff</b>					
Staff	5%	9%	5%	3%	4%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 812b.

## Negative Associations

Note: All verbatim comments presented as entered by survey respondents, including spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors.

### Products and Offerings

**Books:** 13 percent of the respondents had negative associations with the library books, including that they are:

- Not available
- Difficult to access
- Heavy to carry
- Not what is needed
- Not current
- Not taken care of or are dirty
- Of limited variety

Other comments suggested that there are too many books and that the respondents have to return the books to the library.

**Materials:** 10 percent of the negative comments related to library materials, including:

- The limited variety
- Are hard to access/find/use
- Are not what's needed
- Are not circulated
- Not available
- Are not current
- Are not taken care of/dirty

**Information:** 7 percent of the respondents made negative comments regarding information, including:

- Hard to access/find/use
- Not available
- Too much
- Not current
- Not what is needed
- Limited variety

**Computers:** 2 percent of the respondents have negative associations regarding:

- Outdated computers
- Use of the Internet filters
- Computers that are not available

**Time-consuming:** 3 percent of respondents made negative comments indicating that use of the library is time-consuming.

*old people, old books, fines, outdated information, archaic research tool*

17-year-old from the United States

*Sometimes it is very hard to find the books. Sometimes it is difficult to find someone to help.*

21-year-old from the United States

*I always have to ask information about where to look for the information I need. It is too difficult to find it by myself, because there is so much information.... I could waste too much time looking for it.*

80-year-old from the United States

*we get to pay charges to renew the same book. Many books have the pages torn out, esp. the good recipes.*

48-year-old from Singapore

*really old old books.*

24-year-old from Singapore

*Nothing negative about a library. It just can't compete with individuals using computers to get information. The trip to the computer is a few seconds, where the trip to the library is measured in minutes.*

43-year-old from the United States

## Negative Associations (cont.)

Note: All verbatim comments presented as entered by survey respondents, including spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors.

### Facility/Environment

11 percent offered negative comments about the library environment, including:

- Too quiet
- Limited parking
- Dirty
- Too noisy
- Too small
- Homeless people
- Too crowded
- Confusing layout
- Not safe

**Travel there:** 7 percent of respondents have negative associations with travel to the library.

**Dull:** 2 percent of the respondents indicated that libraries are dull.

**Not convenient:** 5 percent of the respondents commented that the library is not convenient.

*Perceived as a hidebound and stuffy entity where silence is golden. Large institution which can be somewhat intimidating for people who are not confident with learning or exploring.*

43-year-old from Australia

*homeless people / bad bathrooms*

43-year-old from the United States

*HAVE TO LEAVE THE HOME TO GET THIS INFORMATION*

60-year-old from the United Kingdom

### Customer/User Service

23 percent of the respondents provided negative associations related to:

- Limited or poor hours of operation
- Fees and policies associated with using the library
- Stringent return dates and other limits on circulation
- Use of the online catalog
- Poor service

*Fines  
Hassle of keeping card*

21-year-old from the United States

*Poor selection of books  
Inconvenient opening hours*

34-year-old from the United Kingdom

### Staff

4 percent of the respondents indicated negative associations related to the library staff, including:

- Unfriendly
- Not knowledgeable
- Unavailable
- Not helpful

*Unfriendly staff, having to wait a long time for a book or do not have it in any library and have to wait for them to get a loan from outside the area.*

40-year-old from the United Kingdom

*not to much help, you feel like you should know how it all works and if you don't they sometimes don't seem to want to help you. To quiet, sometimes you have to work in groups and you always feel like you can't talk*

30-year-old from Canada

*Moody librarians! Insufficient books on certain topics*

40-year-old from Australia

## 3.7 Lifestyle Fit

**Respondents are reading less and using the library less since they started using the Internet.**

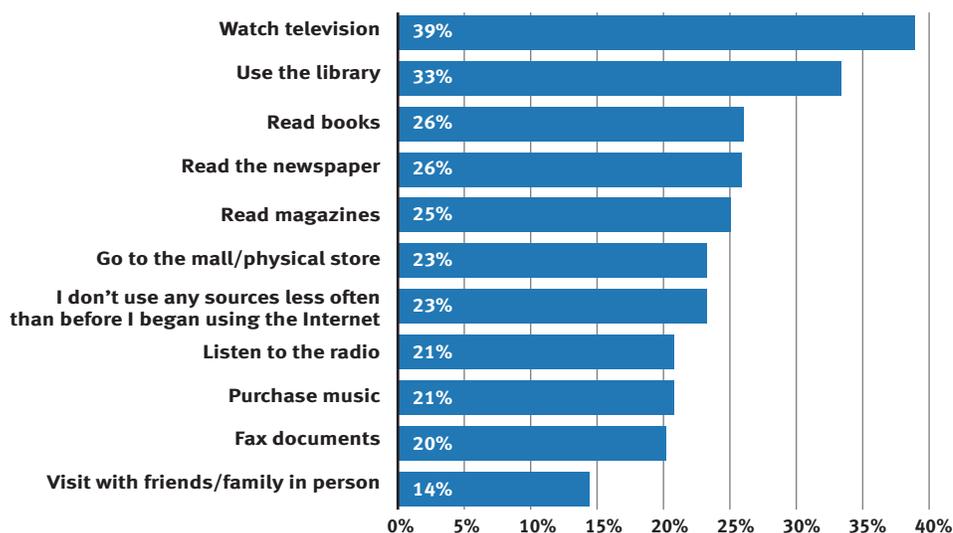
Watching television, using the library, reading books and reading the newspaper are the top four activities respondents report doing less frequently since they began using the Internet. Fourteen percent of respondents say they visit with family and friends less often.

Tables detailing decreased activities due to Internet use by region, U.S. age, college students and library card holders are included in Appendix A.

**33%**  
use the library  
less often since  
they started using  
the Internet.

### Decreased Activities Due to Internet Use—by Total Respondents

What activities do you engage in less often since you began using the Internet?



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 415.

## Information Sources and Lifestyle Fit

**Over half of respondents say search engines fit perfectly with their lifestyle.**

Understanding how compatible a product or service is to a consumer's lifestyle and consumption habits can provide interesting insights into how a consumer may use that product or a competing product or service in the future.

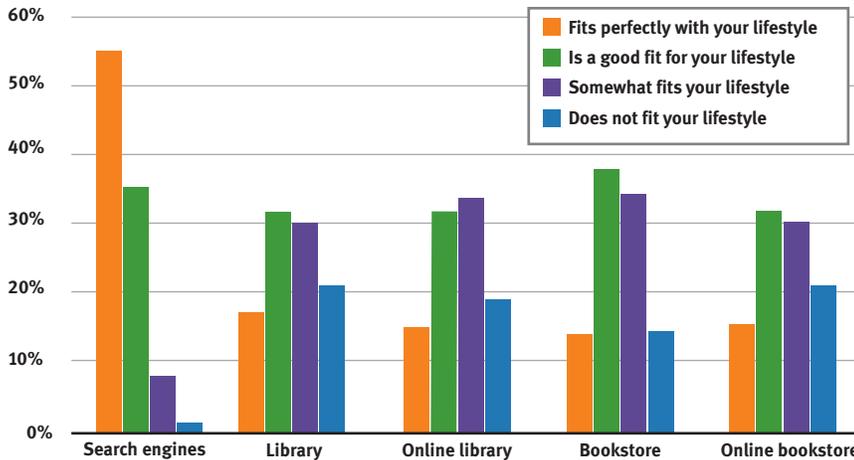
Respondents rated search engines, libraries, online libraries, bookstores and online bookstores as information sources that did, or did not, fit with their lifestyle.

Fifty-five percent of all respondents feel search engines *fit perfectly* with their lifestyles, and 90 percent of respondents feel search engines are a *good to perfect fit*. Forty-nine percent feel the library is a *good to perfect fit*. U.S. respondents 65 and older rate search engines' lifestyle fit substantially lower than younger age groups.

Library card holders expressed a higher level of *perfect lifestyle fit* for all information sources than non-card holders. Library card holders were four times more likely than non-card holders to see libraries as a perfect lifestyle fit.

### Information Sources by Lifestyle Fit— by Total Respondents

Thinking of each information source and your information needs and lifestyles, would you say it...?



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1345.

### Information Sources with Perfect Lifestyle Fit— by Region of Respondent

Thinking of each information source and your information needs and lifestyles, would you say it *fits perfectly with your lifestyle*?

	Total Respondents	Australia Singapore India	Canada	United Kingdom	United States
Search engines	55%	62%	55%	53%	54%
Library	17%	17%	18%	12%	18%
Online library	15%	16%	18%	11%	15%
Bookstore	14%	13%	16%	9%	15%
Online bookstore	16%	15%	17%	16%	16%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1345.

*Layout of the library should be more lifestyle based and user friendly.*

*It should offer its patrons the wow factor from the instance you walk in the door that this is the place you want to be in and have the comfort and ease to locate what you are after and feel at home and want to spend time there, quality and quantity.*

40-year-old from Australia

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1240, "If you could provide one piece of advice to your library, what would it be?"

**My schedule  
rarely fits  
their  
schedule.**

21-year-old from the  
United States

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 812b, "Please list two negative associations with the library."

### Information Sources with Perfect Lifestyle Fit— by Age of U.S. Respondent

Thinking of each information source and your information needs and lifestyles, would you say it *fits perfectly with your lifestyle*?

	Total U.S. Respondents	U.S. 14-17	U.S. 18-24	U.S. 25-64	U.S. 65+
Search engines	54%	52%	54%	58%	38%
Library	18%	17%	17%	17%	22%
Online library	15%	10%	14%	16%	10%
Bookstore	15%	16%	17%	15%	11%
Online bookstore	16%	10%	19%	18%	10%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1345.

### Information Sources with Perfect Lifestyle Fit— by College Students across all Regions

Thinking of each information source and your information needs and lifestyles, would you say it *fits perfectly with your lifestyle*?

	Total Respondents	College Students
Search engines	55%	64%
Library	17%	24%
Online library	15%	30%
Bookstore	14%	21%
Online bookstore	16%	24%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1345.

### Information Sources with Perfect Lifestyle Fit— by Library Card Holders across all Regions

Thinking of each information source and your information needs and lifestyles, would you say it *fits perfectly with your lifestyle*?

	Library Card Holders	Non-Card Holders
Search engines	57%	52%
Library	22%	5%
Online library	18%	7%
Bookstore	15%	10%
Online bookstore	18%	11%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1345.

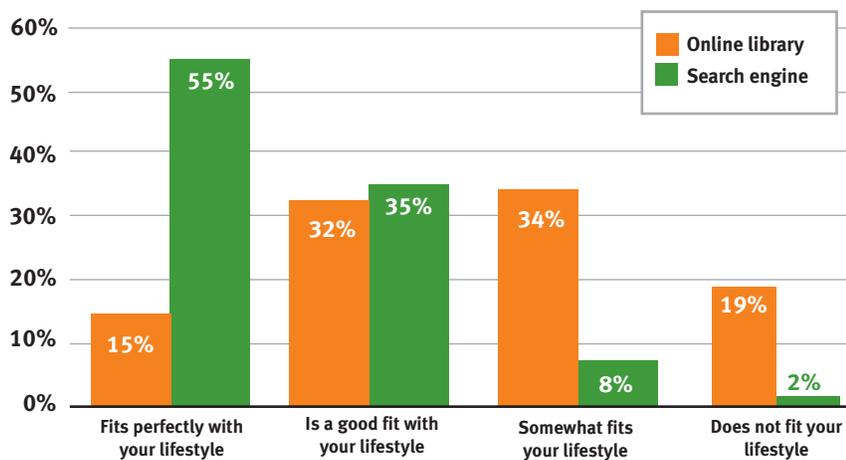
## Online Libraries and Lifestyle Fit

***Ninety percent of respondents see search engines as a good lifestyle fit.  
 Nearly half see online libraries as a good lifestyle fit.***

Although both information sources are Internet-based, substantially more respondents rate search engines as a *perfect fit* than online libraries. Fifteen percent of total respondents say the online library *fits perfectly* with their lifestyle. Fifty-five percent rate search engines as a *perfect fit*. College students indicate the best fit with the online library, with 30 percent of them stating that it *fits perfectly* with their lifestyles.

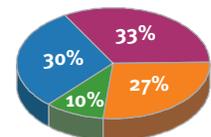
### Online Libraries Compared to Search Engines— by Total Respondents

Thinking of each information source and your information needs and lifestyles, would you say it...?



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1345.

### Online Libraries and the Lifestyle Fit— by College Students across all Regions



- Fits perfectly with your lifestyle
- Is a good fit with your lifestyle
- Somewhat fits your lifestyle
- Does not fit with your lifestyle

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1345.

## 3.8 Books—the Library Brand

***The library brand is “books.”***

*Books, books, books, rows and rows of books, stacks of books, tables filled with books, people holding books, people checking out books. Libraries are all about books. That is what I think and that is what I will always think.*

41-year-old from Canada

***Plenty of books, movies, cds and other media that I have access to free of charge. It’s great!***

16-year-old from the United States

In the introduction to this report, we noted that one of the most important goals of the project is to begin to provide a clearer understanding of the “Library” brand.

What do information consumers think about libraries? How do information consumers identify libraries in the growing universe of alternatives? What is the “Library” brand image from the viewpoint of the online information consumer?

“Brand” is derived from the Old Norse word “brandr,” which means “to burn,” as brands were the means by which owners of livestock marked their animals to identify them.<sup>1</sup> The American Marketing Association defines “brand image” as “the perception of a brand in the minds of persons. The brand image is a mirror reflection (though perhaps inaccurate) of the brand personality or product being. It is what people believe about a brand—their thoughts, feelings, expectations.”<sup>2</sup>

We asked a variety of questions in this survey to help us collect information about the library’s brand image, and about the information consumer’s thoughts, feelings and expectations.

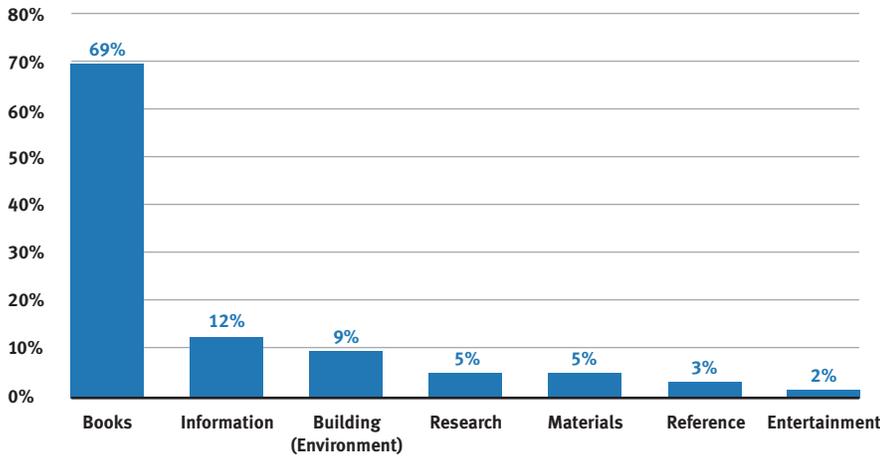
We asked the open-ended question: “What is the first thing you think of when you think of a library?” 3,785 verbatim comments from 3,163 respondents were grouped by main theme. Roughly 70 percent of respondents, across all geographic regions and U.S. age groups, associate library first and foremost with *books*. There was no runner-up.

Tables detailing data on top-of-mind associations with libraries by region, U.S. age, college students and library card holders are in Appendix A.

1. Kevin Lane Keller, *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity*, (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1998), 2.  
2. <http://www.marketingpower.com/mg-dictionary.php?Searched=1&SearchFor=brand%20image> (accessed October 15, 2005).

### First (Top-of-mind) Association with the Library— by Total Respondents

What is the first thing you think of when you think of a library?



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 807.  
 Note: The percentage is based on the number of comments received divided by the number of respondents. Some respondents chose to provide more than one response, and all responses were included.

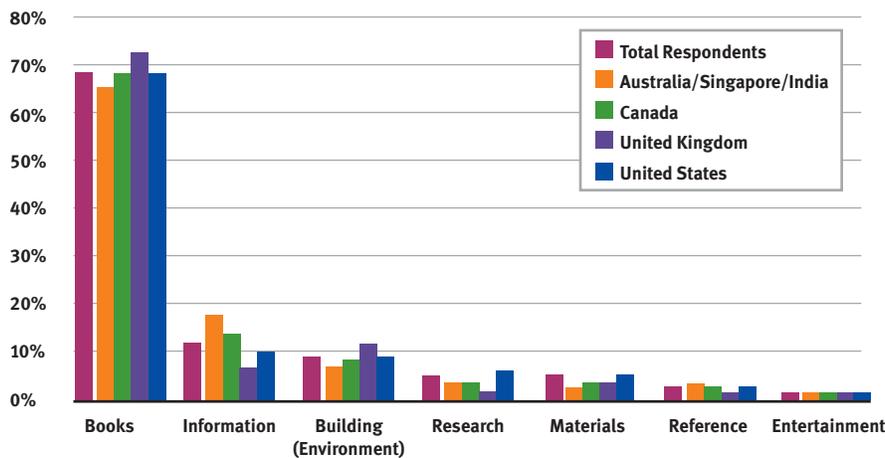
**Books,**  
*in fact it's the  
 only thing  
 I think of  
 when thinking about  
 a library.*

69-year-old from England

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 807, "What is the first thing you think of when you think of a library?"

### First (Top-of-mind) Association with the Library— by Region of Respondent

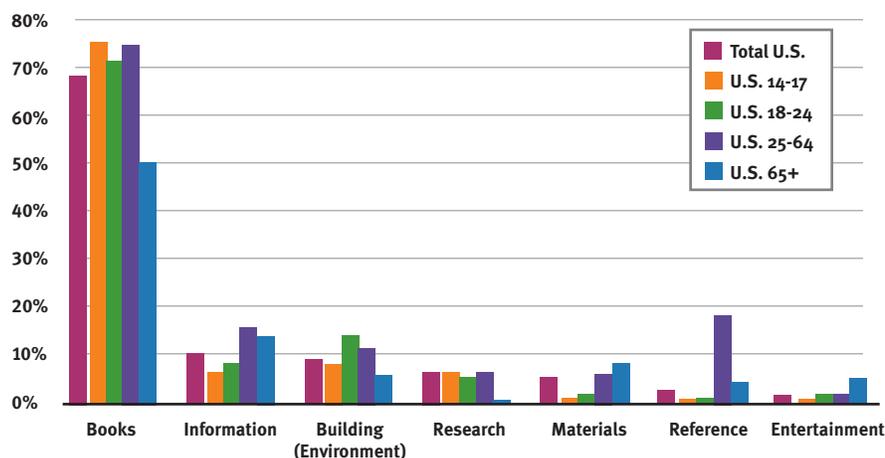
What is the first thing you think of when you think of a library?



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 807.  
 Note: The percentage is based on the number of comments received divided by the number of respondents. Some respondents chose to provide more than one response, and all responses were included.

## First (Top-of-mind) Association with the Library— by Age of U.S. Respondent

What is the first thing you think of when you think of a library?



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 807.

Note: The percentage is based on the number of comments received divided by the number of respondents. Some respondents chose to provide more than one response, and all responses were included.

**Great access to a multitude of books—**  
I buy favorites but have a much broader range of book availability, including some I wish to only read once or those I need specific information from, through the library.

51-year-old from the United States

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 807, “What is the first thing you think of when you think of a library?”

## Brand Associations

**“Free,” “access” and “information” were occasionally mentioned.**

The responses from the 3,163 respondents were also analyzed for secondary themes or descriptors that could lend understanding of library brand image. The words “book” or “books” were mentioned 2,152 times. The word “information” was the top-of-mind recall 291 times. “Free” was mentioned 70 times. Other descriptors mentioned infrequently included access, the physical building, the librarian and library as “a place for information,” but the overwhelming response is that the “library brand equals books.”

Words often used by librarians to describe libraries and library services include “trust,” “privacy,” “authoritative information,” “quality information,” “education,” “learning,” “community” and “access.” We reviewed the over 3,500 verbatim responses from 3,163 respondents to the question “What is the first thing you think of when you think of a library?” to see how many times “trust,” “quality,” “authoritative,” “education” and “privacy” and other often used library attributes were mentioned as the top-of-mind library image.

The words *trust*, *authoritative* and *privacy* were never mentioned. *Community* was mentioned in one response. *Quality* was mentioned twice. *Education* was mentioned four times; *learning* was mentioned nine times. *Free* was mentioned 70 times. *Books* were mentioned 2,152 times.

We also analyzed brand associations by looking at the respondents’ open-ended positive and negative associations. This set of questions was asked in the library section of the survey. (See Part 3.6: “List two positive and two negative associations with the library.”)

### Part 3: The Library Brand

We reviewed word count to identify potential brand image associations against the same list of traditional library attributes. Total mentions were as follows:

Positive Library Associations Word Count	
• Authoritative	– 0
• Quality	– 1
• Privacy	– 2
• Trust	– 14
• Community	– 21
• Education	– 25
• Entertainment	– 36
• Learning	– 89
• Internet/Web	– 91
• Knowledge	– 92
• Research	– 155
• Access	– 264
• Free	– 652
• Information	– 727
• Books	– 1,106

Again, *books* surfaced as the leading positive association. It was mentioned by 37 percent of respondents who provided positive association comments. *Information* and *free* were mentioned in approximately 24 percent and 21 percent of responses, respectively.

So why the overwhelming brand image of library as *books*?

As mentioned in the introduction, *Environmental Scan* discussions with librarians over the past two years have often surfaced a view that a potential reason for the disconnect between the user's perception of libraries as books and the librarian's association with a much broader set of products and services is a lack of user education. Many have expressed a feeling that today's information consumer is just not aware of what is currently available at libraries. The survey data would support the assertion that library users are not aware of many electronic library resources. As reported in Part 2, online information consumers are unaware or unfamiliar with many of the products and services currently available at the library. Fifty-eight percent of total respondents do not know that libraries offered electronic journals. Fifty-eight percent are not aware that libraries provide online databases. Thirty-three percent did not know their libraries have Web sites.

Why are information consumers so uninformed? Seventy-two percent hold a library card. Is the lack of awareness of the libraries' online electronic resources a cause or an effect of the view of the library brand as a book provider? Are respondents (all of whom took the survey online) not aware that the library has a Web site or electronic databases because they do not expect or look for the libraries to be more than books?

**Books,**  
*though I know they  
have other media  
available*

55-year-old from Canada

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 807, "What is the first thing you think of when you think of a library?"

We analyzed the top-of-mind brand association of the library for the subset of respondents who indicated that they are *extremely familiar* or *very familiar* with the physical library (see Part 2). 1,557 respondents or 46 percent of total survey respondents indicated that they were *very familiar* or *extremely familiar* with the library. Top-of-mind brand image of the library for this subset of respondents yielded the following word associations:

## Old book smell.

*Not a bad thing though, it's comforting!*

23-year-old from the United States

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 807, "What is the first thing you think of when you think of a library?"

### Top-of Mind Library Association: Respondents who are *Extremely Familiar* or *Very Familiar* with the Physical Library Word Count

- Trust – 0
- Authoritative – 0
- Privacy – 0
- Community – 0
- Education – 1
- Learning – 1
- Internet/Web – 4
- Entertainment – 7
- Access – 16
- Knowledge – 23
- Free – 30
- Research – 54
- Information – 135
- Books – 1,013

For this same subset of respondents (those who are *extremely familiar* or *very familiar* with the physical library), we also analyzed their usage patterns of library electronic resources.

The survey results suggest that the respondents who indicate they are *very familiar* or *extremely familiar* with libraries use library electronic resources more frequently than total respondents.

We reviewed the top-of-mind library image for this group of respondents who indicate they are *extremely familiar* or *very familiar* with and use library resources. Their brand image of libraries is "books." Over 60 percent of responses included the word "book" or "books."

Based on the results of the survey, the library brand—across geographic regions, across U.S. ages, across those who use the library often—is books.

## A Sample of Respondents' Verbatim Comments:

### ***What is the first thing you think of when you think of a library?***

Tables detailing a larger sample of verbatim responses are included in Appendix B.

Note: All verbatim comments presented as entered by survey respondents, including spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors.

*The first thing that I think of when I think of 'library' is the broad range of resources it offers, such as internet access, periodicals, and of course, books.*

47-year-old from the United States

*Equality. Libraries more than any other institution make the access of information available to anyone who wants it. Libraries run literacy programs, have volunteers teach ESL courses, Give open access joyfully to all the literatue, art, periodicals and plain old 'how to' instructions. Give access to Natural History, Music. Libraries are the treasure of our Civilization. AND They are the great equalizers. The first time I used a computer was in a library. The first thing I think of when I think of a library is MAGIC!*

61-year-old from Canada

*Boring.*

33-year-old from the United Kingdom

*The wealth of knowledge that resides in books.*

17-year-old from the United States

*Peace and quiet.*

41-year-old from the United Kingdom

*It's in the centre of the town where I live and it's difficult to get to, i.e., no nearby free parking. I think it's an old fashioned way of getting information.*

60-year-old from the United Kingdom

*Quiet.*

32-year-old from Australia

*The librarian hushing everyone .*

17-year-old from the United States



## A Sample of Respondents' Verbatim Comments (continued):

### ***What is the first thing you think of when you think of a library?***

Note: All verbatim comments presented as entered by survey respondents, including spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors.

*Provide information, knowledge, resources and relaxation to*

***everyone and anyone***

*who needs it. It also helps a person to upgrade oneself.*

31-year-old from Singapore

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 807, "What is the first thing you think of when you think of a library?"

***Great place to get a book I am interested in.***

45-year-old from Australia

***last place I want to go for info***

68-year-old from the United States

***Quiet, books, boring, helpful.***

17-year-old from the United States

***difficult to find what you really need without spending hours looking.***

32-year-old from the United Kingdom

***Pleasure.***

46-year-old from the United Kingdom

***An study place for students.***

18-year-old from the United States

***Good collection of fiction and non-fiction books.***

23-year-old from the United States

***A large building with books on all subjects.***

65-year-old from the United States

***Need to be quiet, need to hunt around for what you want, lots of leg work.***

39-year-old from Canada

***Enjoyment.***

72-year-old from the United States

***Great access to a multitude of books-I buy favorites but have a much broader range of book availability, including some I wish to only read once or those I need specific information, from the library.***

51-year-old from the United States

## 3.9 Brand Potential—Libraries, Books and Information

*The majority of respondents indicated that the main purpose of libraries was broader than books.*

*To be an ‘information station’.*

57-year-old from the United States

*Getting book, studying material for school or college, using a computer if you don’t own one.*

69-year-old from the United States

*Books and lending.*

38-year-old from Canada

As important as it is to know what your brand image is today, it is equally important to understand brand potential. What are the possibilities? Can brand image be changed or expanded? Can brand image be “refreshed?” What potential exists for expanding the “Library” brand beyond books?

To explore “Library” brand potential, we asked respondents to look beyond first impression and indicate what they felt is the purpose (mission) of the library.

Slightly over half of respondents (53 percent) indicated that they feel the main purpose of the library is *information*. Thirty-one percent of respondents indicated that the main purpose of the library is *books*.

Responses were generally consistent across both region and age. Respondents from the United Kingdom were more likely to link the main purpose of the library to *books* (42 percent) than respondents from other geographic regions. Australia/Singapore/India residents indicated *books* as the main purpose of the library less than respondents from all other regions, at 22 percent.

U.S. respondents 65 and over indicated *information* as the main purpose of the library more than any other age group, at 62 percent. At 45 percent, U.S. respondents age 14–17 selected *information* less than other age groups. They indicated *books* as the main purpose of the library more than any other age group (at 40 percent).

Tables detailing the library’s main purpose by region, U.S. age, college students and library card holders are included in Appendix A.

**53%**  
*feel the main  
purpose of the  
library is  
information.*

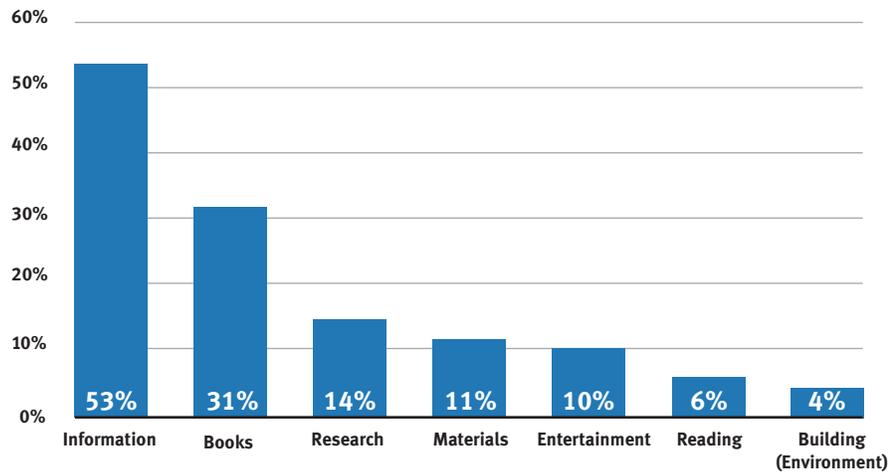
## A place to seek knowledge.

21-year-old from the United States

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 810, "What do you feel is the main purpose of the library?"

### Main Purpose of the Library—by Total Respondents

What do you feel is the main purpose of the library?



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 810.

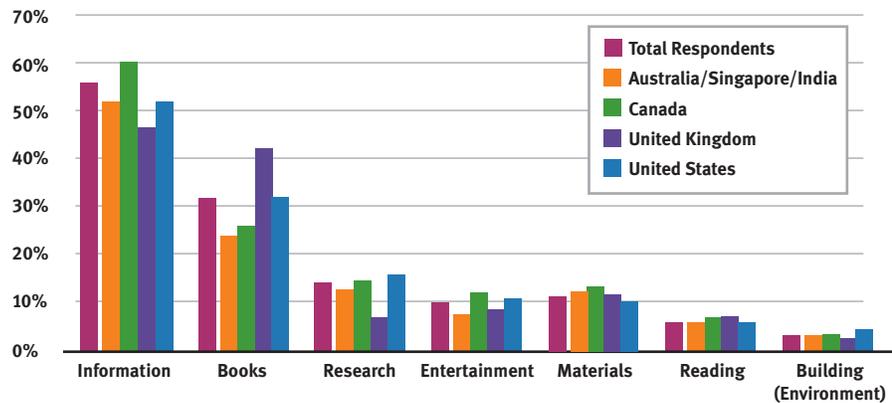
## Books for fun and research

57-year-old from the United States

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 810, "What do you feel is the main purpose of the library?"

### Main Purpose of the Library—by Region of Respondent

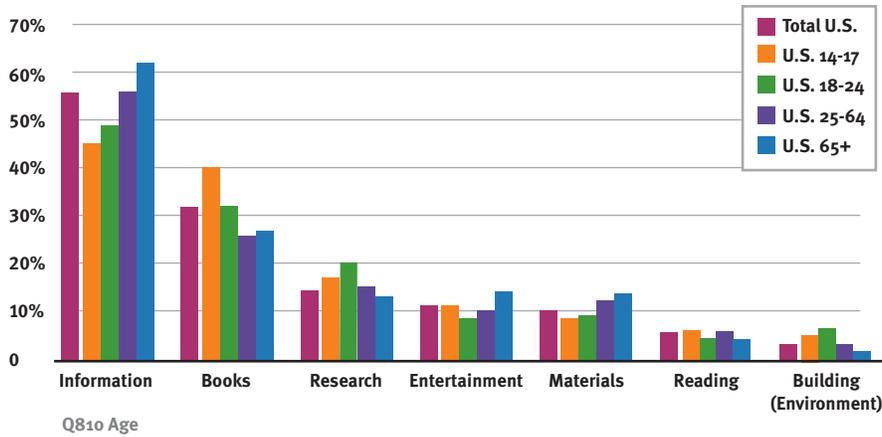
What do you feel is the main purpose of the library?



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 810.

## Main Purpose of the Library— by Age of U.S. Respondent

What do you feel is the main purpose of the library?



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 810.

## An information and entertainment resource center.

48-year-old from Canada

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 810, “What do you feel is the main purpose of the library?”

Responses to the question “What do you feel is the main purpose of the library?” varied in both content and length. Some responses were one- or two-word replies; others were lengthy answers indicating more than one main purpose of the library.

Responses such as “provide resources for learning and research and to provide books for one’s enjoyment” (16-year-old from the U.S.) indicate a multidimensional view of the purpose of the library. Learning, research, books and enjoyment are all mentioned. The majority of respondents indicated that their view of the main purpose of the library was broader than just books. When books were mentioned, other activities or services were also frequently mentioned.

*to allow  
everyone  
the opportunity and  
access to  
resource  
information  
and reading*

46-year-old from Canada

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 810, "What do you feel is the main purpose of the library?"

Again, when we reviewed the 3,161 responses by word count against the list of traditional brand attributes, we see similar attributes mentioned but with higher frequency for many attributes. *Information*—1,290 mentions related to the main purpose compared to 727 mentions for top-of-mind, *education*—87 mentions compared to 25 mentions and *research*—420 mentions compared to 155 mentions. *Community* was mentioned 98 times in response to the library's main purpose. This represents less than 1 percent of the responses, but four times more than either top-of-mind or positive library associations.

Main Purpose of the Library Word Count	
• Authoritative	– 0
• Privacy	– 0
• Trust	– 5
• Internet/Web	– 45
• Education	– 87
• Learning	– 91
• Community	– 98
• Entertainment	– 146
• Knowledge	– 161
• Free	– 253
• Access	– 275
• Research	– 420
• Books	– 1,019
• Information	– 1,290

Attributes that were not frequently mentioned in any set of brand association responses (the top-of-mind, positive associations or main purpose responses) are *privacy*, *Internet or Web* and *trust*.

The data suggest that, when prompted, many online information consumers can see a role for libraries beyond books. Information is seen as that expanded role for libraries by the largest number of respondents.

## A Sample of Respondents' Verbatim Comments:

### ***What is the main purpose of the library?***

Tables detailing a larger sample of verbatim responses are included in Appendix B.

Note: All verbatim comments presented as entered by survey respondents, including spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors.

*To provide and give people access to information.*

28-year-old from Canada

*A central source for the general public to be able to access many things, including the borrowing of books, reference material, computer access and daily/weekly newspapers/magazines. Also a great learning environment for children.*

50-year-old from Australia

*Books and information for free.*

17-year-old from the United States

*For people who cannot afford things like computers and books to have free access to information. That is something that is necessary in a free and open society.*

22-year-old from the United States

*Provide resources for learning and research and to provide books for one's enjoyment.*

16-year-old from the United States

*Serve as a centralized information repository.*

21-year-old from the United States

*To provide access to materials needed for personal and research purposes. A public library has a bit different of a function within the community, to enhance intergroup understandings and encourage or facilitate growth etc. Academic libraries need to have print materials and electronic resources, as well as professional librarians to assist researchers.*

29-year-old from Canada

*Provide both electronic and hard copy information on topics both factual and fictional. A local point in which to store the information.*

45-year-old from Australia