

Part 4: Respondents' Advice to Libraries

85%
agree the library
is a place to learn.

Keep keeping up! You are an invaluable resource/facility in the community. Without you, many people's opportunity/desire to learn & develop would be greatly diminished (think Billy Connelly & Michael Caine's love of libraries)

26-year-old from Australia

A smile goes a long way. The environment, including the friendliness of the staff, makes a difference for me.

18-year-old from Canada

A search engine of their own.

36-year-old from Canada

Advertise.

17-year-old from the United States

52%
agree their
library's content/
collection meets
their needs.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a set of phrases and characteristics to determine how information consumers see the libraries' role in today's society. When prompted, respondents agree (*completely agree* or *agree*) that libraries serve many community roles, including a place to learn, a place to read and support literacy, a place for free computer/Internet access and a place to promote childhood learning and development.

Respondents were also asked to rate their library service across six service dimensions ranging from librarian assistance to technology. Less than 25 percent of respondents *completely agree* that libraries meet their needs on any single dimension.

As the wrap-up to the survey, respondents were offered the opportunity to provide—in their own words—one piece of advice to libraries. We received over 3,000 responses. Part 4.3 includes a summary of the verbatim comments. We have included a broader sample of verbatim comments in Appendix B.

4.1 The Library's Role in the Community

When prompted, respondents agree that libraries serve many community roles.

Respondents were asked to rate the library on 14 attributes that describe potential community roles that a library could provide. Over 50 percent of respondents *agree* or *completely agree* that their library provides 12 of the 14 community services surveyed.

Eighty-five percent of all respondents agree (*completely agree* or *agree*) that the library is perceived to be a *place to learn*.

Eighty percent or more of all respondents also agree that the library is a *place to read* and *make needed information freely available*.

Respondents were least likely to recognize their library as *supporting nonnative speakers* or as a *place to meet and socialize with friends*.

More computer stations, able to bring in your own computer and hook up to internet

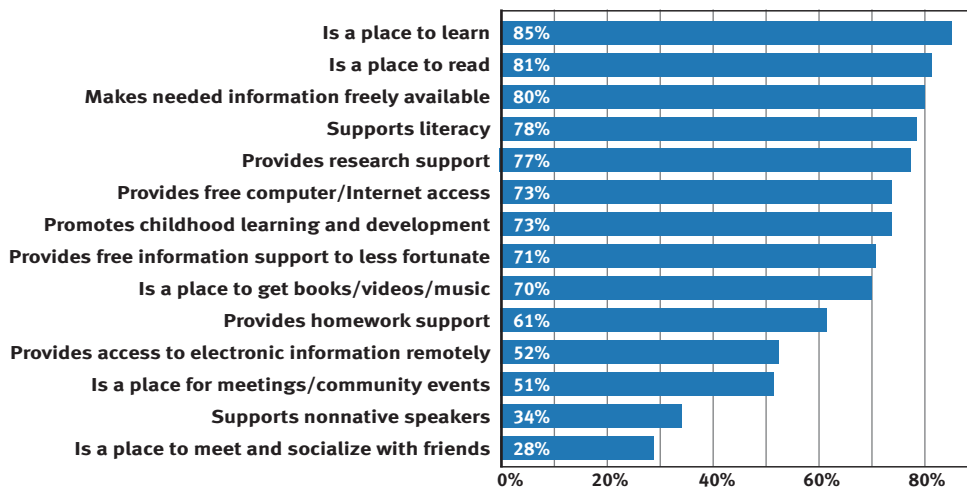
17-year-old from the United States

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?"

Library's Role in the Community— by Total Respondents

Please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your library's role in the community.

Note: This graph shows the *completely agree* and *agree* responses.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1210.

In the U.S., 14- to 17-year-olds and 18- to 24-year-olds are significantly more likely to be *neutral* in their agreement that their library:

- *makes needed information freely available*
- *supports literacy*
- *provides free information to support those less fortunate*
- *promotes childhood learning and development*

Eighty-three percent of U.S. respondents perceive the library as a place to learn. This perception varies considerably by age. Sixty-nine percent of U.S. 14- to-17-year olds hold this perception as compared to an overwhelming 94 percent of U.S. respondents age 65 and over.

Free access for all people Programs for children.

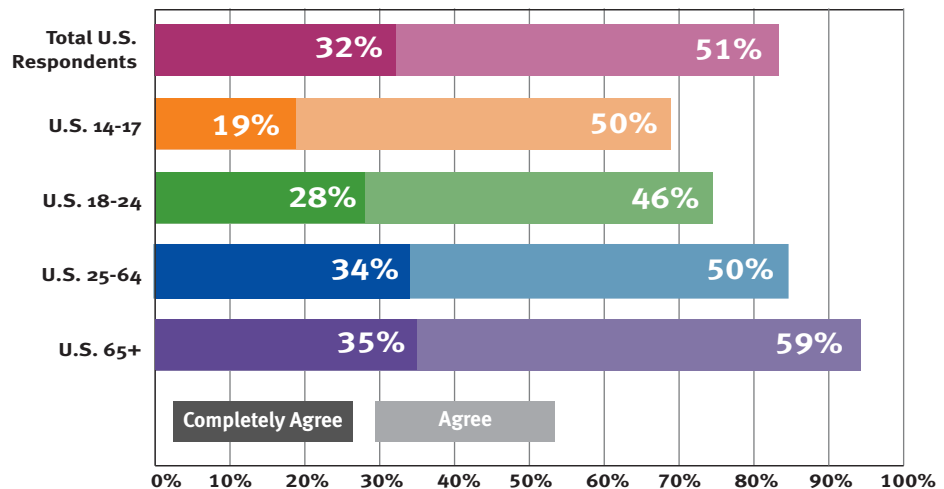
41-year-old from Australia

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

Agreement that the "Library is a Place to Learn"— by Age of U.S. Respondent

Please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement, "The library is a place to learn."

Note: This graph shows the *completely agree* and *agree* responses.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1210.

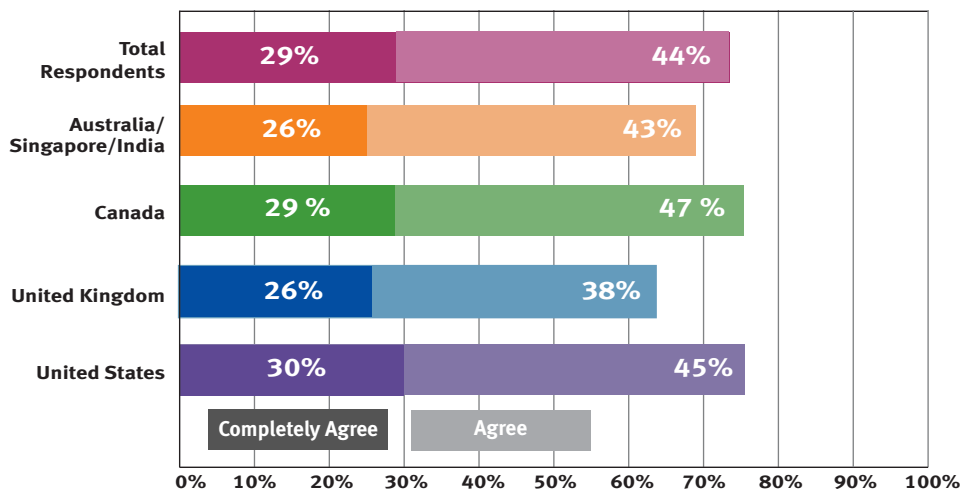
Part 4: Respondents' Advice to Libraries

Respondents indicate that they are aware of the availability of free computer and Internet access at the library across all geographic regions surveyed. Seventy-three percent of respondents *completely agree* or *agree* that their library *provides free computer/Internet access*.

Libraries and Free Computer/Internet Access— by Region of Respondent

Please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement,
“The library provides free computer/Internet Access.”

Note: This graph shows the *completely agree* and *agree* responses.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1210.

4.2 Rating Library Services

Sixty-five percent of respondents agree that assistance from a librarian is available when needed.

Fifty-four percent agree that library technology meets their needs.

The survey asked respondents to rate their library's performance across six service dimensions ranging from librarian support to content to resource availability. While less than 25 percent of respondents *completely agree* their library provides these services, the majority at least agree (*completely agree* or *agree*) that most services meet their needs.

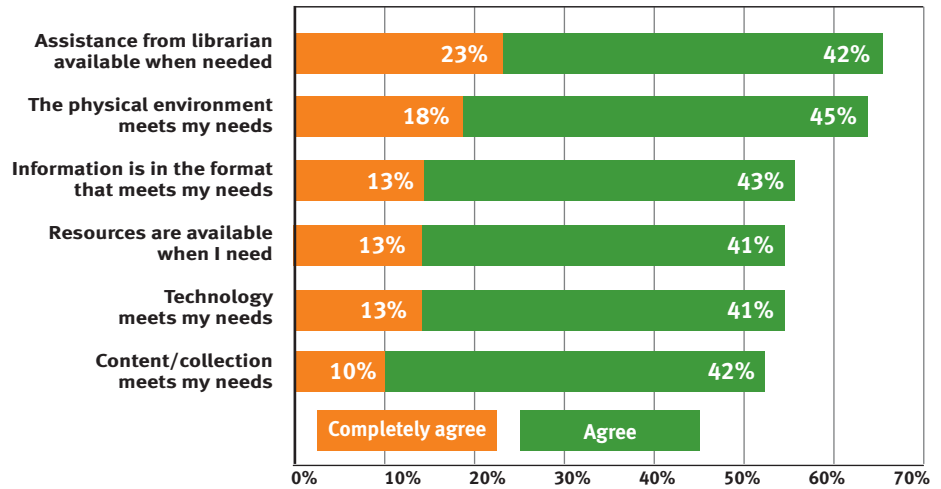
Sixty-five percent of respondents agree (*completely agree* or *agree*) that the *assistance of a librarian is available when needed*. This level of agreement is consistent among all geographic regions and U.S. age groups.

Roughly half (48 percent) of respondents are neutral or disagree that their content and collection needs are met.

Librarian and Library Services— by Total Respondents

Please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your library.

Note: This graph shows the *completely agree* and *agree* responses.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1207.

Books improve your life, by inspiring, teaching, keeping you involved and interested, and
FREE TO THINK.
LITERACY and being informed raise the standard of living of individuals and societies.

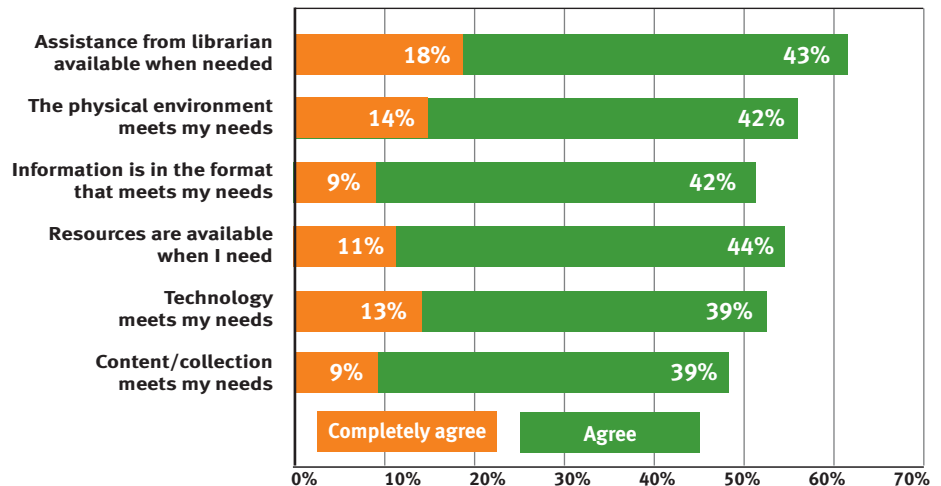
41-year-old from the United States

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

Librarian and Library Services— by U.S. 14- to 17-year-olds

Please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your library.

Note: This graph shows the *completely agree* and *agree* responses.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1207.

4.3 Advice to Libraries

Respondents had opinions on all aspects of library staff, products and services, and facilities.

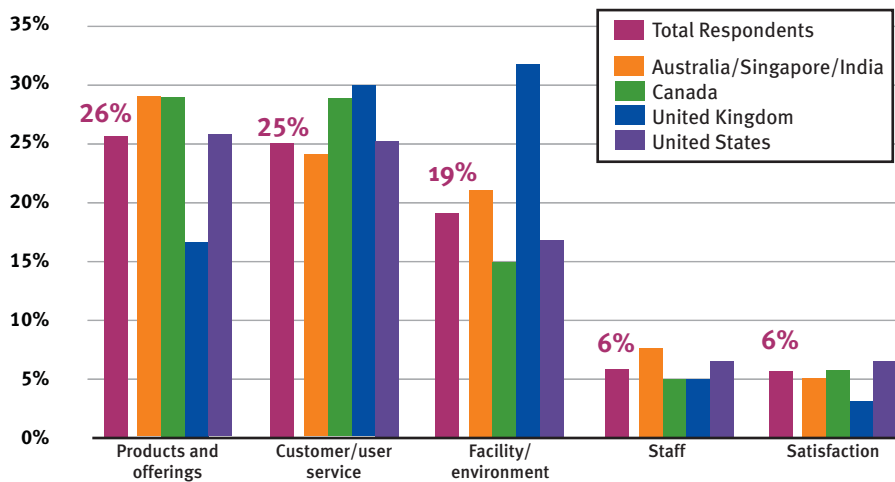
Respondents were invited to offer one piece of advice to libraries as a wrap-up to the survey. Some respondents offered more than one piece of advice and others declined to comment. 3,026 comments were received from 2,968 respondents. We categorized the advice into the following five themes: products and offerings, customer/user service, facility/environment, staff and satisfaction.

Tables detailing advice for libraries by region and U.S. age are included in Appendix A.

Advice for the Library—by Region of Respondent

If you could provide one piece of advice to your library, what would it be?

Note: This graph shows the percentage of respondents who offered advice related to the following themes: products and offerings, customer/user service, facility/environment, staff and satisfaction.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1240.

The advice received covered a wide range of topics across a wide range of library services. We have summarized the advice received under each broad theme from products and offerings to staffing. A sample of the verbatim advice concludes this section. A larger sample of verbatim responses is included in Appendix B.

Respondents' Advice

If you could give one piece of advice for your library, what would it be?

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

Products and Offerings

Add to collection: 13 percent of total respondents advised libraries to add materials to their collections.

- Add more copies of books and other materials so that best-sellers and other popular materials would circulate faster.
- Add additional titles and other materials to the collection.
- Add new resources to the collection, such as audiobooks.
- Add new information, such as genealogy materials.

Update collection: 7 percent of total respondents suggested that libraries update their collection with new books, materials, information and other resources.

Computers: 5 percent of total respondents advised that libraries should add or update their computers.

Online catalogs: 1 percent suggested making local library catalogs more user-friendly and improving search capabilities.

Get more copies of current and classic bestsellers, then sell off the books to reduce inventory when they are no longer in as high demand.

29-year-old from Singapore

A more flexible lending programme, particularly allowing longer lending periods if the resource/book isn't being asked for by someone else...

54-year-old from the United Kingdom

Needs a broad range of things, such as Audio Books and Comic books. Also needs more up to date books, new releases.

17-year-old from Australia

e-mail reminders warning when books are due

19-year-old from the United States

Please have more genealogy research materials available.

72-year-old from the United States

Hold events which attract people back into the libraries such as book club evenings

43-year-old from the United Kingdom

Have more internet terminals

28-year-old from Singapore

Maintenance and upkeep of books to be improved.

62-year-old from India

Respondents' Advice

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

Customer/User Service:

Service: 16 percent of total respondents provided advice related to the service.

- Extend the hours of operation.
- Reexamine the “rules” and fines/fees associated with using library materials.
- Offer the ability to reserve materials online.
- Make renewals easier.
- Offer longer lending periods for materials.
- Eliminate the fees for photocopies.

Promote: 6 percent of total respondents advised libraries to increase their promotion and advertising.

Access: 4 percent of total respondents suggested that libraries increase access to the collections, both physically for the disabled and virtually to allow easier remote access.

Run the library like a bookstore.

55-year-old from the United States

Provide a guide—I have no idea how to find books that I need in the library without feeling really stupid.

18-year-old from the United States

Open 24 hours all days

54-year-old from Singapore

I think this survey is right on track. The libraries should look at community spaces like Starbucks and Borders, and should also look at the value of online material like Google, and they should try to be more relevant in the current age.

51-year-old from the United States

Have hours like booksellers

49-year-old from the United States

Review the current search catalog system as it is hard to find material relevant to the topic you search for.

18-year-old from Australia

Have a No Late Fee policy like Blockbuster.

49-year-old from the United States

Have a beginners class for using the library and computer systems. Better prepared at the beginning ensures better usage.

51-year-old from the United States

To bring out a library website with a whole lot of information. free access to the internet. Bring about new Technologies. Weekly career related programmes. Latest books, magazines and various journals...

27-year-old from India

Respondents' Advice

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

Facility/Environment

Environment: 19 percent of respondents provided advice related to the physical library environment or facility.

- Increase the amount of seating and make it more comfortable.
- Expand the facility.
- Make the environment more inviting and up-to-date.
- Add café or snack shop.
- Decrease the noise level.

Increase the **organization** and reshelve materials more quickly.

Improve the lighting.

Improve the parking.

Add or update restroom facilities.

Place catalog computers on the second and third floors, so I will not have to run up and down the staircases everytime a call number does not bring a book up.

17-year-old from the United States

Brighter lights

15-year-old from the United States

Keep the areas warm

57-year-old from the United Kingdom

Our library needs music!!

14-year-old from the United States

Please install toilets

57-year-old from the United Kingdom

Acquire better parking.

38-year-old from Canada

Stop making it feel like church.

47-year-old from the United Kingdom

Do something about the bums and transients

24-year-old from the United States

Respondents' Advice

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

Staff

6 percent of total respondents provided advice regarding the library staff.

- Have friendlier staff.
- Increase the number of staff to help library users.
- Hire more helpful and knowledgeable staff.

*Turf out the present city council.
Political support is imperative.*

45-year-old from Canada

Our library staff is very busy and help is difficult to get while there. I always have felt that I am an imposition if I ask a question. This needs to change to a more friendly environment to encourage more visits.

61-year-old from the United States

*Train the staff to be friendlier
and have better customer service.*

35-year-old from the United States

Have friendly staff who explain how the library works/is laid out to anyone who seems unfamiliar with libraries.

58-year-old from Australia

Don't be so uptight about kids hanging out in the library.

17-year-old from the United States

Respondents' Advice

Satisfaction

6 percent of total respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the library and the services offered.

Keep up the good work

Mentioned 61 times by respondents ranging in age from 15 to 82 from Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and the United States

Keep it up, I appreciate everything you do.

16-year-old from the United States

I cannot think of one thing I have wanted or needed that the library has not supplied

80-year-old from the United States

*I really think our library is well done.
No complaints.*

17-year-old from the United States

Keep up the great work. I have no complaints, Would like to see more people try using the library website.

80-year-old from the United States

I don't have any advice. Our public library is great.

38-year-old from Australia