UK Public Libraries

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

Most UK public library staff:

- Anticipate the top reason users are using their library will change in five years
- Consider demonstrating the value of their library to funders to be their top priority
- Rely on discussions with their colleagues to keep informed about library trends.

Delivering e-books and other resources is the most popular initiative for the current year.
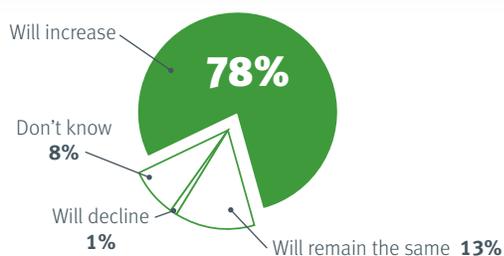
While public library staff believe that borrowing books and other materials will remain the main reason for library use in five years, they believe that accessing online resources and using the library for meetings and social gatherings will replace leisure reading and using computers in the top three reasons for library use.

Respondents by library type

Public
43%
(n=120)

Special
9%

Academic
42%

Other
6%

Total respondents (n=279)

If you would like to read similar reports about libraries in Germany, the Netherlands or the U.S., see the reports at www.oclc.org/reports at www.oclc.org/reports.
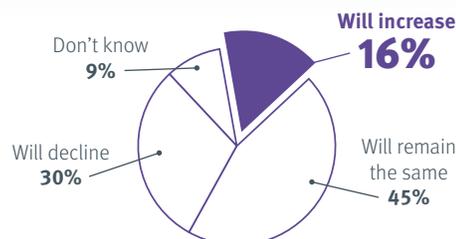
Use of the library will increase

Over three-quarters of UK public library staff expect use of the online library to increase in the next two years. Far fewer, however, expect an increase in foot traffic to their physical locations.

78% expect use of the **online library** will increase

Will increase

78%

Don't know
8%

Will decline
1%

Will remain the same **13%**

16% expect use of the **physical library** will increase

Will increase
16%

Don't know
9%

Will remain
the same
45%

Will decline
30%

Library demand to expand beyond borrowing in 2016

Public library staff indicate borrowing books and materials is the primary reason users use the library today. While public library staff believe that borrowing books and materials will remain the primary reason for using the library in 2017, accessing online databases/journals and a place for meetings/social gatherings are gaining ground.

User demand expected to change: The majority of UK public library staff surveyed indicate that borrowing books and materials is still the top reason users use the library today, with leisure reading at a distant second. Most expect the top reasons to change over the next five years. Fewer public library staff anticipate borrowing books and materials will be the top reason in five years, while more expect increased demand for access to online databases/journals and a place for meetings/social gatherings.
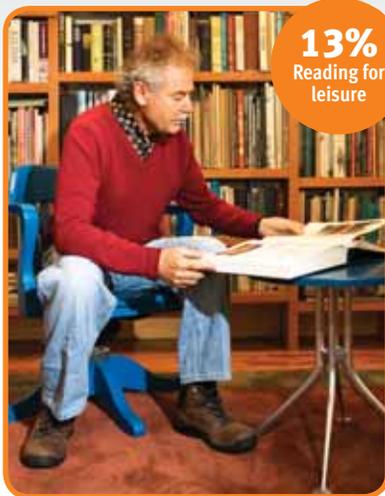
13% Reading for leisure

59% Borrow materials

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

15% **Change significantly**
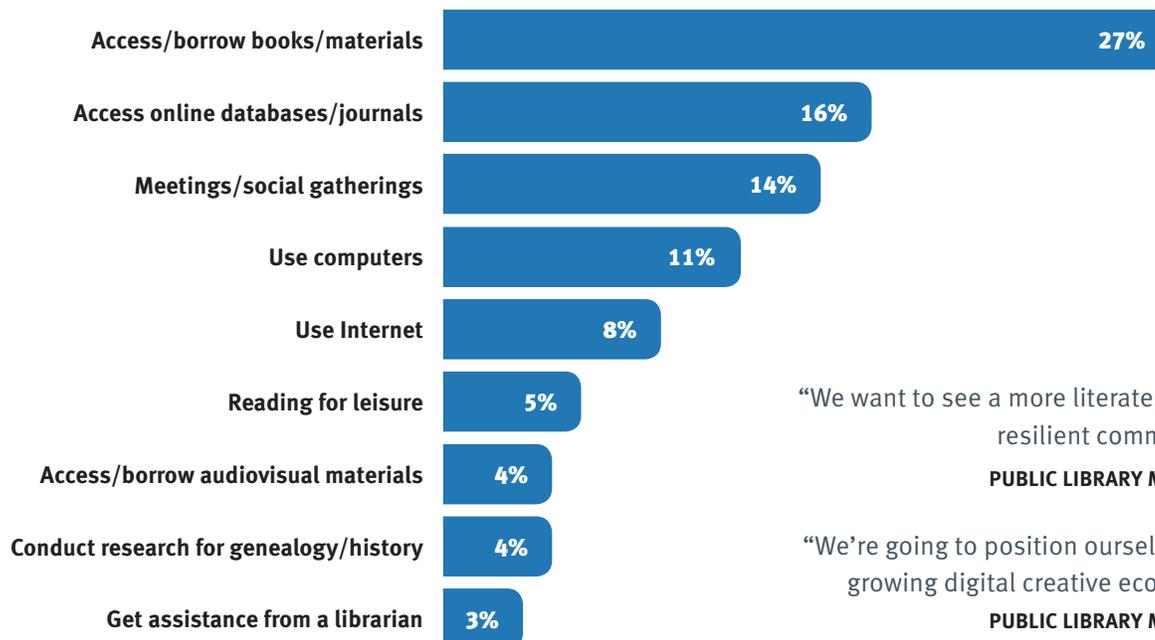
Change modestly 47%

Remain the same 35%

3% Don't know

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

Primary reasons for using the library in the next five years...

Reason	Percentage
Access/borrow books/materials	27%
Access online databases/journals	16%
Meetings/social gatherings	14%
Use computers	11%
Use Internet	8%
Reading for leisure	5%
Access/borrow audiovisual materials	4%
Conduct research for genealogy/history	4%
Get assistance from a librarian	3%

"We want to see a more literate, more tech-savvy, more resilient community."
PUBLIC LIBRARY MANAGER

"We're going to position ourselves to contribute to the growing digital creative economy in our region."
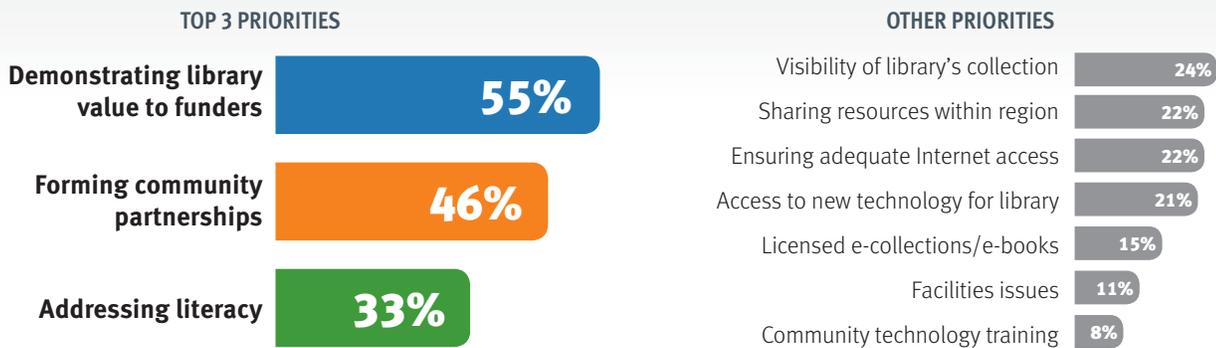**PUBLIC LIBRARY MANAGER**

Top priority: demonstrating value
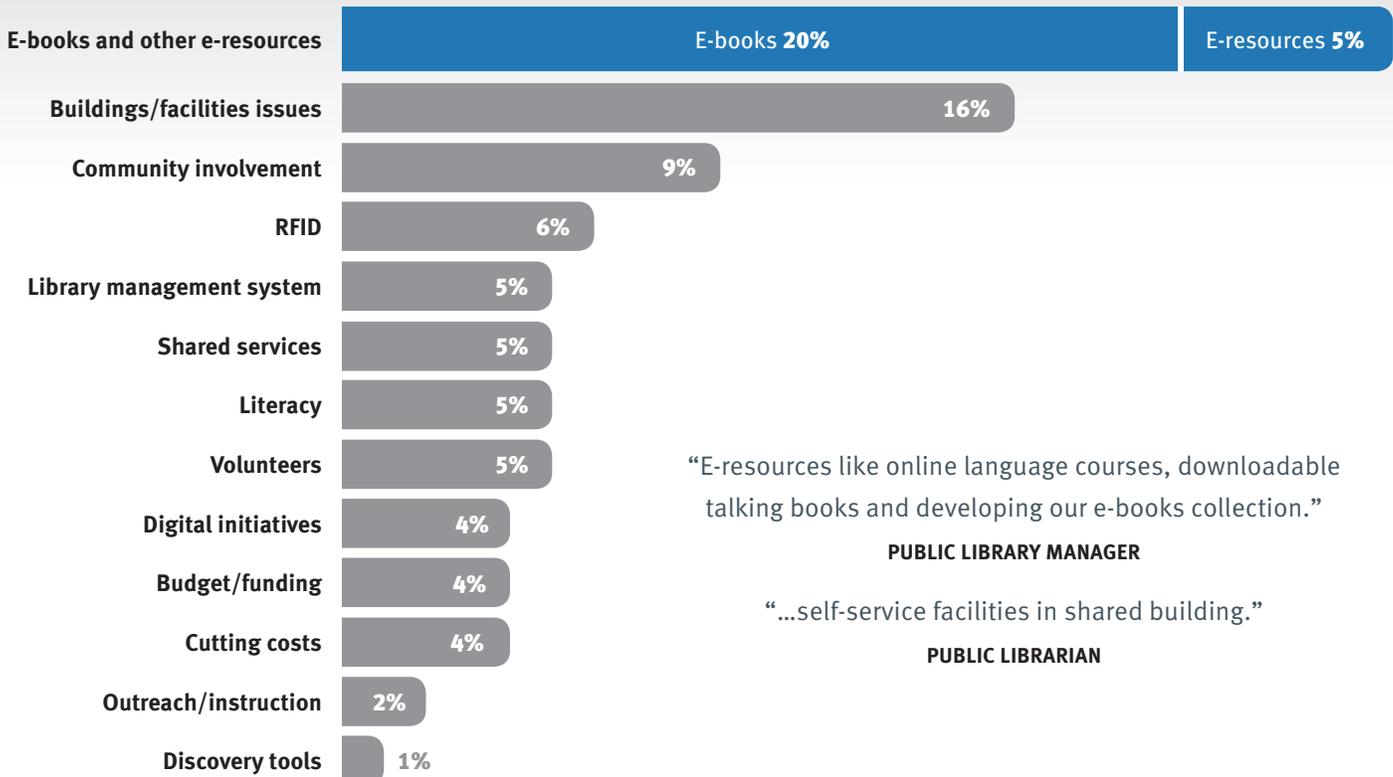# Top initiative: e-content

UK public libraries are focused on demonstrating their value to funders as their first priority.
Delivering e-books and other e-resources is their top current initiative.

Top priorities: Demonstrating library value to funders is the top priority for many public library staff, while forming community partnerships and addressing literacy round out the top three.

Top priorities by public library respondents

TOP 3 PRIORITIES

Demonstrating library value to funders	**55%**
Forming community partnerships	**46%**
Addressing literacy	**33%**

OTHER PRIORITIES

Visibility of library's collection	24%
Sharing resources within region	22%
Ensuring adequate Internet access	22%
Access to new technology for library	21%
Licensed e-collections/e-books	15%
Facilities issues	11%
Community technology training	8%

E-books dominate initiatives today: E-content—e-books and other e-resources—and building/facilities projects are the most popular new initiatives this year.

E-books and other e-resources	E-books **20%** E-resources **5%**
Buildings/facilities issues	16%
Community involvement	9%
RFID	6%
Library management system	5%
Shared services	5%
Literacy	5%
Volunteers	5%
Digital initiatives	4%
Budget/funding	4%
Cutting costs	4%
Outreach/instruction	2%
Discovery tools	1%

"E-resources like online language courses, downloadable talking books and developing our e-books collection."
PUBLIC LIBRARY MANAGER

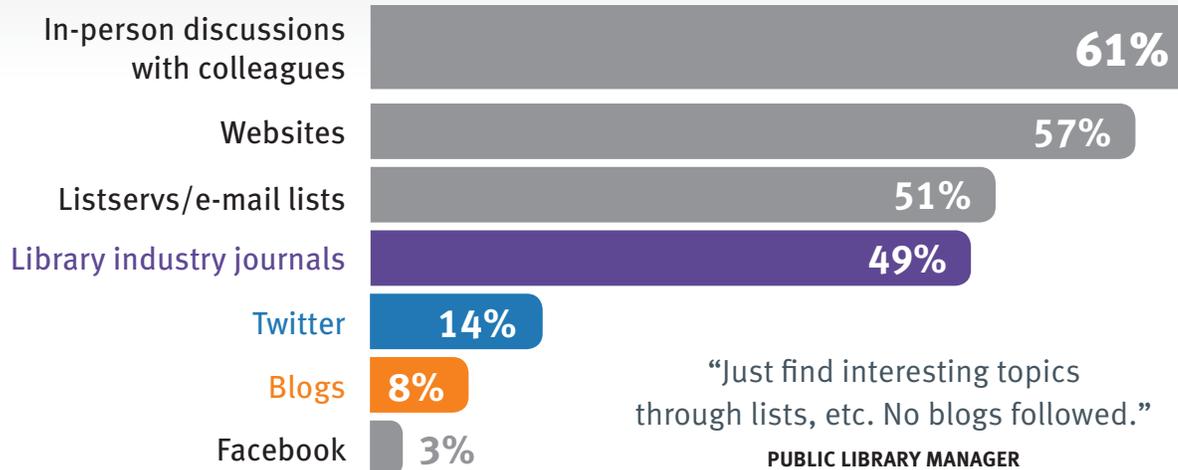"...self-service facilities in shared building."
PUBLIC LIBRARIAN

Colleagues keep each other informed

UK public library staff rely primarily on their colleagues for library information.

Discussions with colleagues are top sources of information: In-person discussions with colleagues top the list of sources UK public library staff rely on for staying informed about the library industry.
Half or more of the staff also rely on websites, listservs/e-mail and journals.

Percentage of UK public library staff who selected the following sources as one of their top three

Source	Percentage
In-person discussions with colleagues	**61%**
Websites	**57%**
Listservs/e-mail lists	**51%**
Library industry journals	**49%**
Twitter	**14%**
Blogs	**8%**
Facebook	**3%**

"Just find interesting topics through lists, etc. No blogs followed."
PUBLIC LIBRARY MANAGER

Do UK public library staff read blogs and journals or follow Twitter to stay informed?

Three-quarters of UK public library staff read journals

77%
read journals
to keep current
with library trends

Top 3 journals
- CILIP Update
- The Bookseller
- Information World Review

Fewer than a quarter of public library staff read blogs

22%
read blogs
to keep current
with library trends

Top blogs mentioned
- CILIP
- Voices for the Library

Twitter yet to take off

81%
do not use Twitter
as a way to keep up
with library trends

Top 3 Twitter handles
- CILIP (@CILIPinfo)
- Voices 4 the Library (@UKpling)
- Library Chat (@UKLibChat)

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