

Top Ten Challenged Books • E-book Controversy • Wireless Internet Usage Soars • Budget Cuts

# american libraries

SPECIAL ISSUE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



## The State of AMERICA'S LIBRARIES

A Report from the American Library Association

**Taxpayers Trust Libraries**

**Job-seekers, Entrepreneurs Turn to Libraries**

**65% of Public Visited Library**

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# The State of America's Libraries, 2011

## Executive summary

**A key resource for the jobless and entrepreneurs** — The Great Recession may have come to an end, but there's no end to libraries' key role in helping hard-pressed Americans find employment or launch a bootstraps venture.

These and other key trends in the library community are detailed in this report on the State of America's Libraries, 2011. The trends are documented in a nationwide poll commissioned by the American Library Association (ALA) as part of a Harris Interactive telephone omnibus study conducted in January with a cross-section of 1,012 adults.

The library-use figures that emerged from the poll were up several percentage points from a year earlier, testament both to Americans' entrepreneurial spirit and libraries' role in nourishing that spirit.

Sixty-five percent of those polled said they had visited the library in the past year; women are significantly more likely than men (72 percent vs. 58 percent) to fall into this category, especially working women, working mothers and women aged 18 to 54. Overall, 58 percent of those surveyed said they had a library card. Among those with a card, the largest group was, again, women, especially working women and working mothers. College graduates and those with a household income of more than \$100,000 were also well represented among card holders, according to the survey.

The Harris poll revealed that Americans value the democratic nature of libraries as places that level the playing field for all Americans in the provision of materials free of charge.

Thirty-one percent of adults — and 38 percent of senior citizens — rank the library at the top of their list of tax-supported services. Overall, the library's most highly valued services pertain to the provision of free information and programs that promote education and lifelong learning. Ninety-one percent (up 5 percentage points from the previous year) place great value in the library's provision of information for school and work.

And almost all Americans (93 percent) believe that it is important that library services are free. Nevertheless, the past year showed that some state and local budget-cutters see libraries as easy targets. Media reports of cuts and cutbacks to library budget and services abounded in 2010 and early this year. U.S. mayors reported in November that hours, staff or services at local libraries was the No. 2 budget area that had come under the budget-reduction knife, second only to maintenance and services at parks and gardens.

The Troy (Mich.) Public Library was a particularly graphic example. In November 2010, the library lost a 10-year millage vote for the second time in less than a year. (The defeat in Troy came as Michigan's 103 public libraries fought to get back \$3.2 million in state aid that they were entitled to under state law.) In February, the subject of library funding was raised once again in Troy, but the mayor and city

council members wouldn't even discuss a resolution that cited \$1.7 million in unused expenditures the city could use to operate the library. The council also failed to act on another option that would have raised a 1-mill tax solely to keep the library open.

The three-branch system is scheduled to close June 30.

Another study indicated that 19 states reported cuts in funding for public libraries from fiscal 2010 to fiscal 2011 and that more than half indicated that the cuts were greater than 10 percent. That study also found that cuts at the state level were often compounded by cuts at the local level. Library boosters have helped keep the vast majority of public-library doors open to accommodate millions of visitors seeking job-search assistance, storytimes, book clubs and other programming.

On the horizon is the phasing out of federal stimulus funds, which the National Association of State Budget Officers called the "cliff of 2012."

**Libraries are a sound economic investment** — Still, libraries have found many new supporters even as questions have been raised by some about their value.

"Libraries seem to be losing out in the funding battles, due, in part, to the mistaken belief that they are somehow anachronistic in an age when so many Americans have instant computer access to information through the Internet," Scott Turow wrote in the *Huffington Post*. "This . . . threatens to destroy a network of public assets that remains critical in our country."

ALA President Roberta Stevens rallied many of the nation's best-known authors to promote the value of libraries through public service announcements, op-ed articles and other activities. She also participated in media interviews throughout the year to drive home the impact libraries have on the public's efforts to find jobs and help create a more literate society.

At the other end of the spectrum of opinion, several Fox TV affiliates aired a segment June 28, 2010, titled: "Are Libraries Necessary, or a Waste of Tax Money?"

Fox could have found the answer in Philadelphia, where a study conducted by the University of Pennsylvania's Fels Institute of Government provided bottom-line evidence that the return on investment in library service more than justifies the costs.

The economic-impact study concludes that the library created more than \$30 million worth of economic value to the city in fiscal 2010 and that it had a particularly strong impact on business development and employment. Among the study's more astonishing findings: An estimated 8,600 businesses could not have been started, sustained or grown without the resources respondents acquired at the Free Library of Philadelphia (FLP). Direct economic impact: Almost \$4 million.

"Until now, there hasn't been a way to know exactly how much we help in dollars and cents," FLP President and Director Siobhan A. Reardon stated. "Through this groundbreaking study we put a figure to our services, providing hard evidence that we are more than a nice community resource — we're an integral economic engine for the city of Philadelphia."

In addition, taxpayers “overwhelmingly entrusted their libraries with their tax dollars,” with support for operating revenue measures passing at an 87 percent rate.

**School and academic libraries do more with less** — In terms of funding, school libraries had mixed success in dodging the economic bullets of 2010. Most school districts managed to escape large cuts, but school libraries in high-poverty areas experienced big drops in spending on information resources and in collection size. Overall, school expenditures on information resources were down more than 9 percent from the previous year.

Total school-library staff hours declined, with an average of 2.4 fewer hours per week reported in 2010 than in 2009, according to an annual survey conducted by the American Association of School Librarians, a division of the ALA. The largest decreases were in the Northeast and the Midwest.

The average number of hours school library staff spent each week delivering instruction continued to increase in the past year, even though school libraries reported being open fewer hours than in 2009. School library collection sizes remained level, despite a 2.6 percent decline in the number of books.

The 2010 survey also noted that there were no significant changes in collection size for periodicals, video materials or audio materials. Schools had more computers outside the school library but with networked access to library services, and there was also increased remote access to school libraries’ licensed databases.

Many academic libraries, on the other hand, faced budget cuts and restructuring and planned to reduce spending on information resources and staffing. Nonetheless, academic libraries continue to evolve from primarily housing collections to becoming vital places to collaborate, connect and learn. The numbers are astonishing: During a typical week, academic libraries had more than 31 million searches in electronic databases, answered more than 469,000 reference questions, and made more than 12,000 group presentations attended by more than 219,000 students and faculty. Library websites received more than 722 million virtual visits from outside the physical library building, and visits to online library catalogs totaled more than 479 million.

The increased electronic and remote use of academic libraries challenges not only their physical capabilities but their ability to help students make the best use of rapidly expanding research opportunities. In fact, college students appear to be floundering in information overload, and helping them develop research fluency remains one of the most important roles for academic librarians. Publishers, too, are beginning to realize that they must add value by curating digital information and making it easier to discover.

The year saw more than 20 new, renovated or expanded academic library building projects completed, with improved library spaces integrating information management, technology and student-centered settings. Still, academic libraries nationwide grappled with the “new normal” created by budget reductions and the restructuring that resulted from them. More than 40 percent of U.S. university libraries reported budget cuts, and many planned to reduce spending on information resources and staffing.

**Technology’s challenges (and opportunities)** — The ongoing digital revolution is challenging librarians to keep up but at the same time holding out the prospect of future library services that incorporate new philosophies, new technologies and new spaces to meet the needs of all users more effectively than ever. In a sense, the technological advances of the past decade – or the past year — are leading the library community to rethink the very definition of “library,” what one analyst calls “the sense of place, of service, and of community that has characterized the modern library for the last century.”

At issue are libraries’ changing needs in terms of physical space; what a book or a journal or a database looks like; how to organize, store and distribute information; and how best to promote information literacy in schools and other settings.

Not at issue is that librarians will continue to play a key role in the provision of these and other services. “The nature of the landscape may shift,” the analyst says, “but the need for a navigator will remain.”

The Institute of Museum and Library Services acknowledged libraries’ evolving roles as it conducted a national campaign in 2010-2011 to help libraries, museums and civic leaders assess and meet the learning needs of their communities. The campaign, “Making the Learning Connection,” would promote the development of 21st Century skills, including “the ability to think critically about [the] information that is bombarding us from so many media sources every day, ” according to IMLS Acting Director Marsha L. Semmel.

In fact, libraries already are making good progress in the 21st Century. For example:

- Computer usage at public libraries continues to grow.
- The availability of wireless Internet in public libraries is approaching 85 percent, and about two-thirds of them extend wireless access outside the library.
- Almost all academic libraries offer e-books, as do more than two-thirds of public libraries. For most libraries, e-books are still a small percentage of circulated items — but represent the fastest-growing segment.
- A battle over the future of widely used e-books was joined in March, when HarperCollins announced that it will not allow its e-books to be checked out from a library more than 26 times, raising the possibility that e-books that are not repurchased would be available at the library for only about a year. “People are agitated for very good reasons,” said ALA President Roberta Stevens. “Library budgets are, at best, stagnant. E-book usage has been surging. And . . . there is grave concern that this model would be used by other publishers.”
- Libraries are also making voracious use of social media and Web 2.0 applications and tools to connect with patrons and to market programs and services. More than 90 percent of the respondents in a survey of library administrators/managers, librarians and other staff called Web 2.0 tools important for marketing and promoting library services. Social networks and blogs remained the two most popular, with many libraries also continuing to use photo-sharing tools and online video.
- Facebook, Twitter and blogging tools top the list of Web 2.0 and social media tools in use by libraries, but as one survey respondent observed, even these “are only as effective as the user.”

## Other:

The battle against censorship goes on, and thousands of people read from banned or challenged books during Banned Books Week (Sept. 25–Oct. 2, 2010). Leading the Top Ten List of Frequently Challenged Books compiled annually by the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) were “And Tango Makes Three” (by Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson) and “The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian” (by Sherman Alexie). Aldous Huxley’s “Brave New World,” a perennial “favorite” in this category, was No. 3; it has been stimulating would-be censors almost continuously since its publication — in 1932.

In an era of body scanners at airports, hacked databases and involuntary disclosure for users of some online services, the OIF launched Choose Privacy Week, a national education and outreach campaign encouraging libraries to host conversations on privacy issues in their communities. Efforts by the ALA and the library community to protect the First Amendment also included weighing in on local book-banning controversies around the nation and ALA officials’ staging of a “Qur’an read-out” at ALA headquarters in Chicago in response to threats by the head of a small church in Florida that he planned to burn copies of the Quran on Sept. 11, 2010.

The library profession continues its active efforts to make its ranks more accessible to members of ethnic and racial minority groups and to strengthen its outreach efforts to these underserved populations. The ALA’s Spectrum Scholarship Program, for example, awarded 75 scholarships in 2010 to members of underrepresented groups to help them pursue master’s degrees in library science.

In another outreach effort, 2009-2010 ALA President Camila Alire launched the Family Literacy Focus, an initiative to encourage families in ethnically diverse communities to read and learn together.

Library funding was caught up in partisan budget battles on Capitol Hill. In December 2010, Congress passed and President Obama signed into law the Museum and Library Services Act, which includes the Library Services and Technology Act and reauthorizes all of the programs under the IMLS. The LSTA is the only federal program exclusively targeted for libraries.

At libraries of all kinds, technology continued to advance in high gear. Librarians labored — largely with success — to keep up with and to harness the power of social networking, which was also expanding and changing almost by the minute.

# Introduction

## Libraries continue to pull their weight in a weak economy

Data shows that 20 percent of Americans — more than twice the current unemployment rate — have been affected by a negative change in their employment status due to the recent recession.

And Americans who reported a negative job impact are more likely to use the library more frequently than those not affected and find greater value with both the library and the assistance from the librarian, according to a report, "[Perceptions of Libraries, 2010: Context and Community](#)," released in January.

Nevertheless, several Fox TV affiliates aired a segment June 28, 2010, titled: "[Are Libraries Necessary, or a Waste of Tax Money?](#)" The answer should have been apparent before the question was even asked: Gate counts and circulation documented that libraries were more in demand than ever, and patrons were not about to surrender their neighborhood research and recreation hubs to budget cuts.

But even more powerful in an era of budget-slashing was a study conducted by the University of Pennsylvania's Fels Institute of Government that provided bottom-line evidence that the return on investment in library service more than justifies the costs.

The first-ever economic impact study about Philadelphia's public libraries, "[The Economic Value of the Free Library of Philadelphia](#) (PDF)," concludes that the library created more than \$30 million worth of economic value to the city in fiscal 2010 and that the library had a particularly strong impact on business development and employment. Among the highlights of the report, issued in October 2010:

- Survey respondents said they couldn't have started, sustained or grown an estimated 8,600 businesses without the resources they acquired at the Free Library of Philadelphia (FLP). Direct economic impact: Almost \$4 million.
- About 1,000 said they had found work thanks to FLP resources, pumping \$30 million in salaries into the economy and \$1.2 million in tax revenue into the community.
- Philadelphia homes located within a quarter-mile of a branch library were worth an average of \$9,630 more than homes outside that radius, an indication that the presence of a library is associated with larger real estate tax revenues.

The findings were based on statistics from all FLP branches, a survey of 3,971 FLP patrons and 85 librarians, interviews with 17 librarians and 33 library patrons at 14 branches and Census data and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data for the City of Philadelphia.

"Until now, there hasn't been a way to know exactly how much we help in dollars and cents," FLP President and Director Siobhan A. Reardon stated. "Through this groundbreaking study we put a figure to our services, providing hard evidence that we are more than a nice community resource — we're an integral economic engine for the city of Philadelphia."

## **“Our Authors, Our Advocates”**

Librarians and authors have long enjoyed a mutual admiration society, but 2010 saw their love affair grow more passionate as ALA 2010-2011 President Roberta A. Stevens established “[Our Authors, Our Advocates](#)” as a major initiative.

Recognizing the need for new forms of advocacy, Stevens, at her inauguration at the association’s 2010 Annual Conference, did not give a speech but passed the microphone to Marie Arana, Sharon Draper, Carmen Agra Deedy and Brad Meltzer, who spoke about the value of libraries and librarians. Her objective, Stevens said, was to establish a cadre of nationally known writers who are ready and willing to speak out on behalf of libraries.

She succeeded.

More writers — including Scott Turow, Sara Paretsky, David Baldacci, Tony DiTerlizzi, John Grisham, Pam Muñoz Ryan, Mo Willems, Neil Gaiman and Kathy Reichs — have come forward, not just to encourage people to read but to support libraries with aggressive advocacy. They and others have recorded public service announcements for libraries, the popular Gaiman served as chair of National Library Week in 2010 and Toni Morrison delivered what *American Libraries* called “a passionate paean to libraries” at the ALA 2010 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. Grisham served as the honorary chair of National Library Week 2011, and several of the authors have written op-eds for media outlets to share their view of the enduring value of libraries. Stevens also participated in many media interviews to drive home the impact libraries have on the public’s efforts to find jobs and in creating a more literate society.

## **Librarians still stand for the freedom to read**

Libraries, bookstores — and individuals — continue to wage the battle against censorship. Once again, thousands of people celebrated the freedom to read during [Banned Books Week](#) (Sept. 25–Oct. 2, 2010) at rallies nationwide, reading from banned or challenged books and discussing the impact censorship has on civil liberties.

Since it began compiling data, in 1990, the American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom has received more than 11,000 reports on book challenges, formal written requests to have a book removed from a library or classroom because of an objection to its content. Aldous Huxley’s “Brave New World,” which is set in the London of A.D. 2540 and tries to envision what society might be like then, appears to be a perennial “favorite” in this category; it appeared as No. 3 on the OIF’s Top Ten List of Frequently Challenged Books for 2010, topped only by “And Tango Makes Three” (by Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson) and “The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian” (by Sherman Alexie). “Tango” was published in 2005, and “Absolutely True Diary” in 2007; “Brave New World,” on the other hand, has been stimulating would-be censors almost continuously since its publication — in 1932.

Other skirmishes in 2010 occurred in Burlington County, N. J., where a complaint from a resident led to the removal of “Revolutionary Voices: A Multicultural Queer Youth Anthology,” a critically acclaimed

anthology, from both the high school and public libraries; and in Stockton, Mo., where the Stockton R-1 School Board voted to ban Alexie’s “Absolutely True Diary” from both the high school curriculum and the library. The controversy in Stockton seems to have had a virus-like quality to it, since it triggered an outbreak of challenges to other books in the region.

“Not every book is right for each reader,” said the ALA’s Stevens, “but we should have the right to think for ourselves and allow others to do the same.

“The founders of this nation protected freedom of expression based on their conviction that a diversity of views and ideas is necessary for a vital, functioning democracy,” Stevens said. “Danger does not arise from viewpoints other than our own; the danger lies in allowing others to decide for us and our communities which reading materials are appropriate.”

Banned Books Week is sponsored by the American Booksellers Association, the American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression, the ALA, the American Society of Journalists and Authors, the Association of American Publishers, and the National Association of College Stores. It is endorsed by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress.

## **And at a glance . . .**

Although public outcry couldn’t entirely curtail layoffs and trimmed operating hours, boosters managed to keep the vast majority of public-library doors open to accommodate millions of visitors seeking job-search assistance, storytimes, book clubs, and other programming. Libraries themselves have not stood idly by. ALA chapters in Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio and South Carolina have created — or helped create — websites dedicated to saving the libraries in their states, and the ALA is hosting a clearinghouse website that tracks the effort and offers tips on how to spread the word.

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School libraries in high-poverty areas took a hit in 2010, with big drops in spending on information resources and in collection size. However, most school districts managed to escape the economic trials of 2010 largely unscathed, according to the 2010 version of the [School Libraries Count! survey](#) conducted annually by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), a division of the ALA.

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Meanwhile, many academic libraries have faced budget cuts and restructuring. A survey in September 2010 indicated that nearly 42 percent of U.S. university libraries reported budget cuts and that many planned to reduce spending on information resources (69.1 percent) and staffing (30.5 percent).

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And at libraries of all kinds, technology continued to advance in high gear. Librarians labored — largely with success — to keep up and to harness the power of social networking, which was also expanding and changing almost by the minute.

# Library funding

## Long-term pain persists, with minimal relief

Public libraries nationwide are straining from the effect of recurrent annual cuts in state funding, which offset the increases in fewer than a handful of states in fiscal 2011. Over the past four years, more than half the states have reported a decrease in funding, with cumulative cuts averaging greater than 10 percent.

These findings are compiled from survey responses of chief officers of state library agencies for fiscal 2008 through 2011 for the “[Public Library Funding & Technology Access Study](#),” conducted annually by the ALA Office for Research & Statistics and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the ALA.

For the 2011 report, chief officers in 45 of 50 states and the District of Columbia responded to the online survey. Preliminary findings include:

- Nineteen states reported cuts in state funding for public libraries from fiscal 2010 to fiscal 2011. Of these, more than half indicated that the cuts were greater than 10 percent.
- Fourteen states reported there had been no change from fiscal 2010 to fiscal 2011.
- Four states reported an increase in funding, but did so with caveats. In two cases, one-time supplemental funding offset state cuts. In another, the increased funding was not enough to make up for cuts in fiscal 2010, resulting in an overall decrease in funding since fiscal 2009.
- Seven states and the District of Columbia do not provide state funding.

The study also found that cuts at the state level were often compounded by cuts at the local level. When considering current local funding to public libraries, slightly more states (19 compared with 17) reported that local funding for public libraries probably decreased for a majority of libraries in the state in fiscal 2011 compared with fiscal 2010.

The annual study’s questionnaire asked again about the number of libraries that were closed as a result of funding cuts. More states in fiscal 2011 (17, compared with 13 the previous year) reported they were aware of public library closures in their states in the past 12 months. Most states reported fewer than two library outlets closed, although Pennsylvania and New Jersey reported between five and 10 libraries closed.

To meet ever-increasing demands on Internet access and speed, libraries looked to federal Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP) and Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) funding. Thirty-six states (78 percent of respondents) reported that they applied (solely or in partnership with others) for funding. The majority of states applied for BTOP Public Computer Center funding (89 percent), followed by BIP/BTOP Infrastructure (25 percent) and BTOP Sustainable Adoption (25 percent) funding. Of those that applied, 27 states (75 percent) reported they were successful in securing funding.

## **Library funding caught up in federal budget showdown**

Even as 2010 began, libraries found themselves caught in a very partisan fiscal crossfire at the federal level, as House Republicans, heavily influenced by a freshman class that is bent on deficit reduction, took a knife to the current budget.

President Obama's budget request for fiscal 2011 called for a freeze on federal library funding under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), the primary source of federal funding for libraries. He also consolidated the funds for Improving Literacy Through School Libraries, which essentially would eliminate them.

But Congress did not pass any appropriation bills, and the government remained functioning under a series of continuing resolutions.

## **Some state and local budget-cutters also see libraries as “easy targets”**

Throughout 2010 and into 2011, the media were filled with reports of cuts and cutbacks, occasional success stories and more evidence that some revenue-strapped state and local governments saw libraries as relatively easy targets for budget cuts. U.S. mayors reported in November that hours, staff or services at local libraries was the No. 2 budget area that had already come under the budget-reduction knife, according to a [report carried on PRNewswire](#). The main target was maintenance and services at parks and gardens (41 percent), with local libraries close behind, at 39 percent.

As author [Scott Turow commented in the \*Huffington Post\*](#), “Libraries seem to be losing out in the funding battles, due, in part, to the mistaken belief that they are somehow anachronistic in an age when so many Americans have instant computer access to information through the Internet. This . . . threatens to destroy a network of public assets that remains critical in our country.

“Millions of Americans simply cannot afford to replace what libraries have traditionally offered for free — access to books, computers and research assistance. Ironically, the importance of these services is even greater in a time of economic uncertainty.”

Large libraries — those with service populations of more than 1 million — took the biggest hit, according to a [survey by \*Library Journal\*](#), with 86 percent reporting budget cuts and 93 percent reporting staff reductions. Many also reported curtailed service hours. Among all respondents, 72 percent said their budget had been cut, and 43 percent reported staff cuts.

Still, 62 percent of respondents in the *Library Journal* survey expressed optimism about the future and only 18 percent pessimism. (The rest were neutral.) And the optimists seem to have been backed up by a survey by the National Conference of State Legislatures, which concluded that tax revenues were projected to increase in 40 states in fiscal 2011. Colorado, Oregon, and Washington predicted increases of more than 10 percent, 14 other states expected revenues to increase 5-10 percent, and 23 states projected revenue growth of 1-5 percent. Of the 47 states that responded to the survey, only Alaska expected tax revenues to fall — by 6 percent, due to a decline in oil prices.

Awaiting all libraries, however, is the phasing out of federal stimulus funds, which the National Association of State Budget Officers called the “cliff of 2012.”

## **A year of scary headlines . . .**

Libraries made headlines throughout the past year, and with few exceptions they were not the kind of headlines that people enjoy reading:

- “Evanston (Ill.) branches to close for good” (February 2010).
- “[Nation’s libraries get more use, less funding](#)” (February).
- “[Library systems are trimming costs to stay afloat](#)” (February).
- “[\[New York Public\] Library Faces Harshest Budget Cut in History](#)” (February).
- “[Boston trustees approve closure of four branches](#)” (April).
- “[In Midnight Deal, Florida Legislature Repeives Public Library Funding](#)” (April).
- “[Hundreds of N.J. librarians protest \\$10.4M proposed budget cuts](#)” (May).
- “[Tacoma board votes to close 2 small libraries, cut hours at main library](#)” (December).
- “[Detroit Faces Unprecedented Fiscal Crisis; Workforce Reduction Inevitable.](#)” (January 2011)

The real estate bust affected many libraries because they depend on revenue that is based on property taxes.

In Chula Vista, California, a community with one of the highest foreclosure rates in the nation, the public library is experiencing staggering funding cuts. Over the past two years, the library budget has been reduced by 40 percent, and by 60 percent over four years. The library’s book budget has been cut 80 percent, and over the past four years the staff has been reduced to 20 people — from 71.

Another example: the County of Los Angeles Public Library system, which serves 3.7 million people and faces a structural deficit of \$22 million a year for the next decade. Property-tax collections in southern California shrank 3.2 percent in fiscal 2010, with a 4.4 percent decline forecast for FY11.

Budget troubles occasionally lead to radical — and controversial — action; for example, Santa Clarita withdrew from the Los Angeles County system in October to sign a contract with Library Systems & Services LLC, a private company that promises to run libraries for less money. The move created national controversy and drew criticism from many, including ALA President Roberta Stevens (see Public Libraries section).

But other types of state and local government revenue loss can affect library budgets, too. Illinois is awash in red ink, and the state’s nine regional library systems, which provide the integrated library system, interlibrary loan, and delivery service for all public libraries in the state, were reeling during the financial crisis. The [North Suburban Library System \(NSLS\) in Wheeling, Ill., was forced to cut back its staff and services](#) in May because of continued delays in state funding. “Many NSLS staffers will be laid off,” said Executive Director Sarah Ann Long. “I will be one of the people leaving.” Only in December did the state provide the full funding for fiscal 2010, which ended June 30.

## Voters entrust libraries with their tax dollars

“Amid a bitter political climate, punctuated by the rise of a virulent anti-tax group, voters overwhelmingly entrusted their libraries with their tax dollars in referenda held between December 1, 2009, and November 30, 2010,” [reported Library Journal](#). “In addition, “Operating revenue measures passed at a spectacular rate of 87%—up slightly from last year’s 84% and continuing a ten-year upswing. Building referenda held steady, with 55% of measures passing, similar to the 2009 figure, but the average size of the projects, \$9,037,308, rose measurably from last year’s average of \$4,102,000.”

Some examples:

- In Ohio, 30 of 38 local library ballot issues passed. “Ecstatic today since our additional continuous levy (one mill) passed . . . and by 52.82 percent!” Therese Feicht, assistant director of the Geauga County (Ohio) Public Library, wrote to *Library Journal*. “We can restore cuts, plan, and build the library our community wants going forward.” Still, the Ohio Library Council noted that many of the winning levies “will generate only enough funds to replace the 31 percent in state funding lost in the latest round of state funding reductions.”
- Voters in California and Colorado handed resounding defeats to ballot measures that would have sharply cut library budgets in those states.
- A 53 percent “yes” vote for Hood River County (Ore.) Library enabled it to reopen after lack of funds forced its closure July 1, 2010. The down side was that the library will have to operate from a much lower tax rate and will have to make up the difference with fundraising and volunteers.
- Some 70 percent of Colorado voters dealt a decisive blow to three anti-tax measures that the Colorado Association of Libraries and other for- and nonprofits had opposed. The initiatives would have rolled back local millages despite community sentiment about and control of funding libraries and schools.
- The Indianapolis–Marion County (Ind.) Public Library announced Nov. 4 that 37 positions would be eliminated through layoffs, part of efforts to close an anticipated \$4-million budget shortfall in the year ahead. The library said the cuts would apply across the management, support and public service staffs.
- The Troy (Mich.) Public Library lost a 10-year millage vote for the second time in less than a year and its three-branch system is scheduled to close June 30. Director Cathleen Russ noted wryly that “Public libraries are not sacred cows any more.” On the other hand, setbacks in Troy and in neighboring Bloomfield Township seemed to be the exceptions statewide: 10 other library millages in Michigan passed. Michigan’s 103 public libraries have been fighting to get back \$3.2 million in state aid that they were entitled to under state law. (Troy update: On Feb. 21, Mayor Louise Schilling and City Council members turned down discussing a resolution that cited \$1.7 million in unused expenditures the city could use to operate the library. The council also ignored another option that would have raised a 1-mill tax solely to keep the library open.)
- Illinois voters showed little appetite for local library funding referenda, passing only four of the 10 measures on the ballot.

“We are in the infamous ‘interesting times,’” Greg Mullen of Santa Monica (Calif.) Public Library, wrote in response to the *Library Journal* survey. “It is the evolution of library services and library resources that will make the years ahead challenging and exciting.”

## **“You want to WHAT?”**

In an ironic twist, some public library systems found themselves in role-reversing showdowns with municipal officials. The public libraries in Trenton, N.J., and Wheaton, Ill., for example, were forced to fight in favor of sharply reduced services in order to balance their reduced budgets while city leaders ordered the libraries to maintain the status quo.

## **Annual survey shows salary increases at public and academic libraries**

In what seemed an anomaly to many in the library community, the 2010 edition of the “[ALA-APA Salary Survey: Librarian — Public and Academic](#)” revealed average increases across all library position types, ranging from 2 percent for managers of support staff to 13 percent for directors of public and academic libraries.

The 2010 survey was based on data from more than 580 library directors and human resources staff, who reported more than 11,000 salaries.

In contrast to 2009’s mean and median decrease of about 1 percent from the previous year, analysis of 2010 data for librarians with ALA-accredited master’s degrees showed a 3 percent mean increase, from \$58,860 in 2009 to \$60,734, and a 2 percent median increase, from \$54,500 in 2009 to \$55,883. Salaries ranged from \$22,000 (ALA minimum) to \$302,500.

The ALA-APA recommends a minimum of \$42,181 for librarians and \$13.52/hour for support staff, based on resolutions passed in 2007 and 2008. Based on the survey results, it appears that most full-time librarians are earning at least that amount, according to the ALA-APA. Although the lowest actual salary reported was \$22,000, beginning librarians earned an average of \$48,317, a 4.6 percent overall increase from 2009, with beginning public librarians averaging \$48,749 (5.9 percent more than in 2009) and academics \$47,000 (1.2 percent more than in 2009).

The posting of the [ALA-APA press release](#) drew a number of sharp responses — all of them anonymous — that cited individual cases and questioned the overall accuracy of the survey results. Jenifer Grady, director of the ALA-APA, responded that the survey has used a similar methodology since 1982: “Taking a representative sample of small through very large public (we added very small in 2005) and 2-year, 4-year and university libraries” and asking for actual salaries for every librarian in six positions. “The averages, medians and ranges are based on those actual salaries through February 2010,” she said.

# Public Libraries

## A key resource for the jobless, entrepreneurs — and the community

Local public libraries continue to play a vital role in communities nationwide as unemployment rates hover near 9 percent — or higher, in many areas — and people look for ways to make ends meet.

More than two-thirds of adults responding to a [January 2011 Harris Poll Quorum](#) (PDF) created for the American Library Association said that the library’s assistance in starting a business or finding a job was important to them. These figures were up from a year earlier, testament both to Americans’ entrepreneurial spirit and libraries’ role in nourishing that spirit.

The ALA conducted the January study as part of a Harris Interactive telephone omnibus study conducted Jan. 19-23 with a nationwide cross-section of 1,012 adults.

**Table 1: Who has a library card, and who goes to the library**

Most likely to have library card	Most likely to have visited the library in past year
Working mothers (81%)	Working mothers (88%)
Working women (78%)	Working women (78%)
Postgraduates (77%)	Women aged 35-54 (77%)
Women age 18-34 (75%)	Postgraduates (77%)
College graduates (71%)	Those with some college (74%)
Women (70%)	Women aged 18-34 (74%)
Household income of \$100,000+ (65%)	People in the Midwest (73%)
Democrats (65%)	Women (72%)

Source: 2011 Harris Poll National Quorum

The poll results also indicate that Americans are making use of their libraries at steady or increasing rates. Sixty-five percent of those polled said they had visited the library in the past year, including visits in person (62 percent), over the phone or online. Women (72 percent) are significantly more likely than men (58 percent) to fall into this category, especially working women, working mothers, and women aged 18 to 54. The adults most likely to have visited the library also include those who are most highly educated and those who earn the highest incomes.

Among those who visited the library in person, fully 80 percent said that the number of in-person visits they have made has either increased or stayed about the same in the past six months. Eighty-two percent of those who telephoned the library in the past year reported that their telephone use of the library has either increased (16 percent) or stayed the same (66 percent) in the past six months. This proportion reflects a notable increase from a year earlier, when 73 percent of those who telephoned the library reported increased or steady usage over the prior six months.

Notably, 90 percent of those who accessed their public library via computer reported that their computer use of library services has either remained the same (58 percent) or increased (32 percent) during the recent past, an increase from 85 percent a year earlier.

Overall, 58 percent of those surveyed said they had a library card. Among those with a card, the largest group was, again, women, especially working women and working mothers. College graduates and those with household incomes of more than \$100,000 were also well represented among card holders, according to the survey (see Table 1, above).

## Survey shows strong satisfaction with library services

Large majorities of adults agreed with five statements assessing the value of the public library as an institution in their community. The Harris Poll revealed that the most powerful message pertains to the democratic nature of libraries, as they level the playing field for all Americans in the provision of materials free of charge.

**Table 2: Assessing the public library’s value in the community**

Statement	% who agree
Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.	94
The library improves the quality of life in our community.	91
The public library is important to my family’s education.	84
Because it provides free information regarding local, state and federal elections, the library is critical to democracy.	80
My public library deserves more funding.	79

**Source:** 2011 Harris Poll National Quorum

Seven in 10 adults are very (44 percent) or extremely satisfied (26 percent) with their public library, closely matching the proportion who felt this way in 2010. When comparing the public library to other tax-supported services, almost one-third of adults (31 percent) rank the library at the top of the list. Senior citizens (38 percent) are significantly more likely than other older adults (25 percent of those aged 55 to 64) to rank the benefits of the public library at the top of the list of tax-supported services.

Americans continue to value the importance of services provided by public libraries. In fact, when considering a list of 11 library services, two-thirds or more of the American public consider every factor to be very or somewhat important to them personally, surpassing the proportions in the 2010 study. The most highly valued services pertain to the provision of free information and services that promote education and lifelong learning. More than nine in 10 Americans (93 percent) believe that it is very important or somewhat important that library services are free, representing an increase of two percentage points from 2010.

Similar proportions place great value in the library's provision of information for school and work (91 percent, up 5 percentage points), as well as the fact that the library provides a place for lifelong learning (90 percent, up three percentage points), and that the library enhances one's education (89 percent, up five percentage points).

Eighty-four percent of adults consider it very or somewhat important that the library serves as a community center, is a source of cultural programs and activities (83 percent, up four percentage points from a year earlier) and provides computer access, training and support (83 percent, up seven percentage points). Three-quarters of Americans consider it very or somewhat important that the library provides health information (75 percent, up two percentage points) and financial information (75 percent, up six percentage points) that is accurate and up-to-date.

### **Computer use increases even (or especially) during recession**

The same recession that cut into the funding of many public libraries made them a key resource for people looking for work or seeking to use online government services.

Eighty-eight percent of U.S. public libraries provide free access to job databases and other job services, and 67 percent report library staff helped patrons complete online job applications, according to the 2010 "Public Library Funding & Technology Access Study," released in June 2010 by the American Library Association. Libraries also provide access to civil service exam materials (75 percent) and software to help patrons create résumés and other employment materials (69 percent).

Public access to these resources, however, is increasingly limited in many communities (see "Library Funding," above).

Other findings from the study:

- Two-thirds (67 percent) of U.S. public libraries report they are the only provider of free public access to computers and the Internet in their communities.
- Public computer and Wi-Fi use increased last year at more than 70 percent of libraries; 82 percent of libraries now provide Wi-Fi access (see map, "[WiFi Access in U.S. Public Libraries](#)").
- The great majority (89 percent) of libraries provide formal or informal technology training, including classes in computer skills, software use and online job-seeking.
- Almost two-thirds (66 percent) of libraries provide assistance to patrons completing government forms.

"Computer and Internet access at public libraries connect millions of Americans to economic, educational, and social opportunity each year, but libraries struggle to replace aging computer workstations and provide the high-speed Internet connections patrons need," said Jill Nishi, deputy director of U.S. Libraries at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "As demand for these services rise, public and private investment to support public access technology at libraries is more critical than ever."

The study, funded by the Gates Foundation and the ALA, can be found online at [www.ala.org/plinternetfunding](http://www.ala.org/plinternetfunding).

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More than two-thirds of public libraries and an even larger proportion (94 percent) of academic libraries now offer e-books, according to a survey conducted in August 2010. See the Library Technology section to learn more about the battle over the future of widely used e-books.

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The [Christian Broadcasting Network aired a report](#) in November 2010 on the increasing use of U.S. public libraries and a decline in their funding. The newscast featured interviews with ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels and Paula Kiely, director of the Milwaukee Public Library.

***Case in point:*** The Florida Library Association took a “snapshot” of the Delray Beach Public Library Jan. 25 that showed that on that day, the library had 2,500 visitors, issued 36 library cards, gave 330 people use of its free computers, tapped another 400 wireless users into its free Wi-Fi, taught computer skills to 68 people via classes, answered 125 reference questions, helped 13 students with homework, and hosted 104 adults at library-sponsored programs . . . among other things. (The population of Delray Beach in 2010 was 65,022.)

## **For more than 87 million people, the public library is still the place to go**

Public libraries tended to experience slightly greater output in all measures last year, reversing last year’s slight dip, according to a report from the Public Library Data Service (PLDS), a project of the Public Library Association, a division of the ALA.

The PLDS received responses from 1,105 libraries ranging in size from serving 125 to serving more than 3.5 million people in their legal service areas.

PLDS libraries served 87.8 million registered patrons in 2009, 53.8 percent of a total legal service area population of 163.3 million in the United States and Canada, according to the “Public Library Data Service Statistical Report 2010”. PLDS libraries on average circulated items 1,548,590 times, performed 216,872 reference transactions, provided programs to 47,694 patrons, and provided 16,656 materials to other libraries, while receiving 16,875 materials from other libraries annually.

**Table 1: PLDS 2010 Library Output Characteristics per \$1,000 of Expenditures**

	<b>No. of libraries</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Average</b>
Library visits	889	.55	2233.4	168.21
Circulation	941	23.26	1,717.3	254.41
Program attendance	906	.17	109.82	10.53
Reference transactions	871	.02	1433.6	26.89
In-library use of materials	377	.30	557.93	49.05
Library registrations	841	.17	286.77	18.52

**Source:** *Public Library Data Service Statistical Report 2010*

Library registrations as a percent of population increased as the population size decreased, going from 51.2 percent (population 1,000,000 or more) to 88.14 percent (population Less than 5,000). Average holdings per capita show an even more dramatic shift with population served: Libraries serving populations less than 5,000 had average holdings about 4.9 times greater per capita than those of the largest libraries. Generally, as the populations served grew, the average holdings per capita decreased. Similarly, though not as skewed, library visits per capita also showed a larger value for libraries serving smaller populations.

Average circulation per capita, although showing the smallest value for the largest population group, showed a mostly linear pattern by population groupings. The average circulation per capita for all libraries reporting was 10.50. Of libraries reporting counts, print items were circulated 1,050,518 times on average and CD/DVD items were circulated 522,552 times on average.

Averaged over all respondents, library income was \$48.01 while library expenditures were \$45.31 per capita within the legal service area. Libraries that serve 25,000-49,999 people had the highest income per capita (\$55.28), whereas libraries that served 1,000,000 or more people had the lowest (\$35.66). The same population groups also represented highest and lowest expenditures per capita (\$52.60 and \$35.06, respectively).

Expenditures are expected to yield results, and the Public Library Data Service Report 2010 looked at various library “outputs” in this light (see Table 1, above). Compared with 2009 data, most numbers were up slightly on average.

The “Public Library Data Service Statistical Report 2010” is available as a digital database at the [ALA Store](#).

## **No-librarian libraries: An idea whose time has (not) come**

Is the no-librarian “express” branch the library of the future?

The [\*Wall Street Journal\* ran an article in October 2010](#) about the establishment by the Washington County (Minn.) Library of a self-service kiosk, locker system, and book return in the city of Hugo, a suburb of St. Paul, at which patrons can order, pick up and return library materials. Physically, the Hugo Library Express “branch” is a stack of metal lockers outside city hall where patrons can pick up the book or DVD they ordered on line from a digitally locked, glove compartment–sized receptacle.

To hear the *Journal* tell it, this and a similar facility planned for Mesa, Ariz., constitute nothing less than a “wave of innovation.” (The article does note that Evanced Solutions, an Indianapolis company that makes library software, has started test trials of a new vending machine, and that Public Information Kiosk Inc., a company in Germantown, M.D., that sells kiosks and vending machines to libraries, has had 25 orders for a book- and DVD–dispensing machine that the company introduced in 2009.)

Some library directors, such as James Lund, of the Red Wing (Minn.) Public Library, found the *Journal* article misleading and worrisome.

“The basis of the vending machine is to reduce the library to a public-book locker,” Lund said in an interview with *Library Journal*. “Our real mission is public education, and public education can’t be done from a vending machine. It takes educators, it takes people, it takes interaction.”

And while the *Wall Street Journal* article was more balanced than the headline (“New Library Technologies Dispense with Librarians”) and actually stressed the role and value of librarians, ALA President Roberta Stevens responded with a letter to the editor that said, in part, that “a community may save money taking this approach, but in the long run, it will find itself at a significant educational and economic disadvantage.

“Good decisions depend on good information. Machines can never replace the expertise of library staff. . . . Libraries and their staffs don’t just provide free access to books. They are part of the solution when a community is struggling economically. Across the nation, libraries continue to design and offer programs customized for their local community’s needs, providing residents with guidance (including sessions with career advisers), workshops in résumé writing and interviewing, job-search resources, and connections with outside agencies that offer training and job placement.

“In a time of intense economic insecurity, Stevens said, “U.S. public libraries are our first responders. We need them. Americans everywhere can’t close the books on libraries.”

## **Outsourcing of library services seen as another bad idea**

ALA President Roberta Stevens also reacted forcefully to statements by Frank Pezzanite, the chief executive of Library Systems & Services, who pledged to save \$1 million a year as his firm takes over operation of the library system in Santa Clarita, Calif., mainly by cutting overhead and replacing unionized employees.

“There’s this American flag, apple pie thing about libraries,” Pezzanite said. “Somehow they have been put in the category of a sacred organization.” His company runs 14 library systems operating 63 locations. Its basic pitch to cities is that it fixes broken libraries — more often than not by firing all existing staff.

“A lot of libraries are atrocious,” [Pezzanite told the \*New York Times\*](#) on Sept. 26, 2010. “Their policies are all about job security. That’s why the profession is nervous about us. You can go to a library for 35 years and never have to do anything and then have your retirement. We’re not running our company that way. You come to us, you’re going to have to work.”

Stevens took sharp exception in a letter to the editor of the *Times*.

“The American Library Association opposes shifting policy-making and management oversight of library services from the public to the private sector, not because of its impact on job security, but rather because communities may lose access to trained information professionals — librarians,” she said in a statement.

“Implying that library staffs are just waiting around to cash in on retirement, when in fact there are thousands of librarians serving 1.5 billion visitors a year with dedication, assumes that people will fall for the ‘demonization’ of the public sector.

“Libraries and their employees, who are often paid salaries far below the demands placed on them and the education required for their positions, serve as a lifeline for millions of Americans. From free access to books and online resources to library business centers that help support entrepreneurship and retraining, libraries with top-notch staff are needed now more than ever in our increasingly competitive global economy.”

Stevens affirmed the ALA’s position that “publicly funded libraries should remain directly accountable to the publics they serve.”

## School Libraries

Averages for:	2007	2008	2009	2010	2009-2010 change
<b>All schools</b>	\$11,169	\$11,390	\$13,525	\$12,260	– \$1,265 (– 9.4%)
<b>Elementary schools</b>	\$7,032	\$6,720	\$7,772	\$8,408	+ \$636 (+ 8.2%)
<b>Middle schools</b>	\$10,563	\$11,173	\$11,892	\$11,642	– \$250 (– 2.1%)
<b>High schools</b>	\$16,473	\$18,550	\$23,679	\$19,129	– \$4,550 (– 19.2%)

Source: *School Libraries Count! National Longitudinal Survey of School Library Programs.*

### **Table 1: School expenditures on information resources take some hits**

No doubt reflecting financial woes at the federal and state levels, many school libraries — especially at the middle school and high school levels — saw their budgets reduced in 2010 from 2009 levels. In areas of high poverty, however, the reductions were significantly larger; average spending in these areas decreased to \$10,378 in 2010 from \$13,935 in 2009, a loss of 25.5 percent.

### **School libraries squeak by — except in high-poverty areas**

Most school libraries managed to escape the economic trials of 2010 largely unscathed—with the exception of those in high-poverty areas, which saw significant declines in spending on information resources and in collection size.

These trends are revealed in the 2010 version of the [School Libraries Count! survey](#) conducted annually by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), a division of the ALA.

Overall survey results show that school expenditures on information resources were approximately \$12,260 in 2010, compared to \$13,525 the previous year, a decrease of 9.4-percent. However, average spending on information resources in schools in high-poverty areas decreased 25-percent, or \$3,557, on average, compared to 2009 survey results.

The survey also found that school libraries in high-poverty areas saw significant declines in collection size in 2010. While schools in low-poverty areas that registered slight increases in most areas of collection size, schools in high-poverty areas reported a 4 percent decrease in books, an 11 percent decrease in video materials and a whopping 22 percent decrease in periodical subscriptions. The only collection area to report an increase at schools in high-poverty areas was audio materials, and even there the modest increase — 3 percent — was dwarfed by a 12 percent increase in schools in low-poverty areas. (See Table 1, above, for a summary of changes in school library collection sizes.)

Total library staff hours declined, with an average of 2.4 fewer hours per week reported in 2010 than 2009, the survey indicated. The regions reporting the largest decreases were the Northeast, reporting 5.3 fewer hours, and the Midwest, with 3.1 fewer hours. Among certified school librarians, the survey found an increase of 0.8 hours per week.

The School Libraries Count! survey was conducted March 4–May 17, 2010, and had 5,191 respondents, mainly (95 percent) from public schools. The preponderance of the respondents (65 percent) represented metropolitan schools; 42 percent were from elementary schools, and 42 percent were from the South.

Other key findings included:

- The average number of hours school library staff spent each week delivering instruction continued to increase (0.5 hours more than in 2009, for a total of 15 hours). The number of hours they spent on budgeting or on meeting with teachers to plan instructional units did not change significantly.
- School libraries reported being open fewer hours than in 2009, but the availability of flexible hours remained constant.
- School library collection sizes were consistent with the previous years, but there was a decline (2.6 percent) in the number of books. This decline was most evident in high-poverty areas.
- There were no notable changes in the collection size for periodicals, video materials, or audio materials, though decreases in video materials were noted among schools with enrollment of 1,000-1,999 and schools in metropolitan areas and high-poverty areas. There were statistically significant increases in audio materials among public schools and non-metropolitan schools.
- Schools had more computers outside the school library but with networked access to library services. There was also increased remote access to school libraries' licensed databases.

The survey's margin of error was 1.4 percentage points, with a 95 percent confidence interval.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2010 change
<b>Average number of books</b>	12,889	12,672	13,086	12,741	–345 (2.6%)
<b>Average number of periodical subscriptions</b>	22.8	23.7	30.6	27.0	– 3.6 (11.8%)
<b>Average number of video materials</b>	445.9	471.7	495.6	470.7	– 24.9 (5.0%)
<b>Average number of audio materials</b>	86.3	89.9	98.4	98.4	+ 0.2 (0%)
<b>Average copyright year for the Dewey range 610-619, health and medicine</b>	1993	1994	1994	1995	1

Source: *School Libraries Count! National Longitudinal Survey of School Library Programs.*

**Table 2: In school library collections, periodicals take the largest proportional hit**

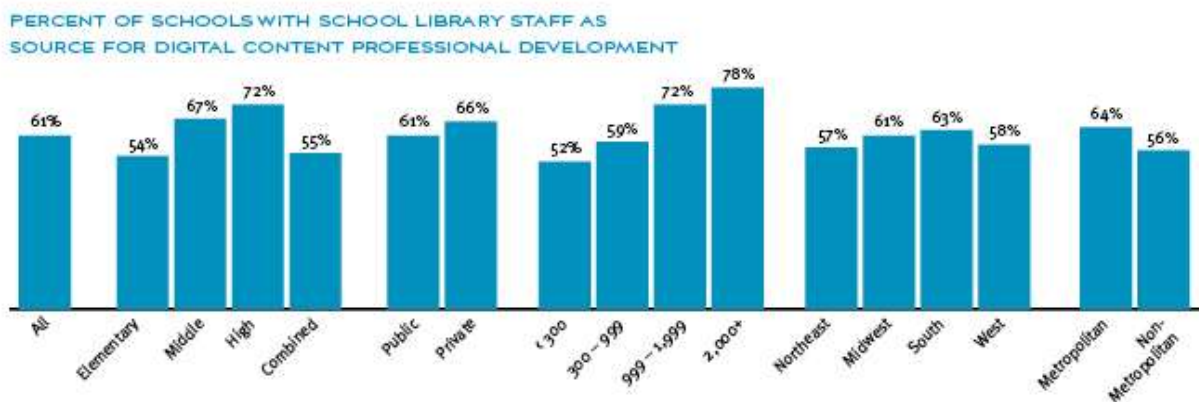
School library collection size generally held steady or experienced small declines in 2010, with the exception of periodical subscriptions, which declined almost 12 percent. The overall figures shown here hide some anomalies, such as a sharp loss in book holdings in high-poverty areas; larger-than-average decreases in video materials in schools with enrollments of 1,000-1,999, metropolitan areas, and high-poverty area; and statistically significant increases in audio materials at public schools and non-metropolitan schools.

## Survey focus in 2010: Digital content and resources

The 2010 version of the *School Libraries Count!* survey indicated that 61 percent of school library staff provide professional development for teachers in the use of digital content. Of those providing training, 71 percent spent between one and six hours or more a week training teachers on digital resources.

These data were gathered as part of the survey's continuing practice of focusing each year on a specific current issue within the school library field — in 2010, digital content and resources.

**Figure 1**



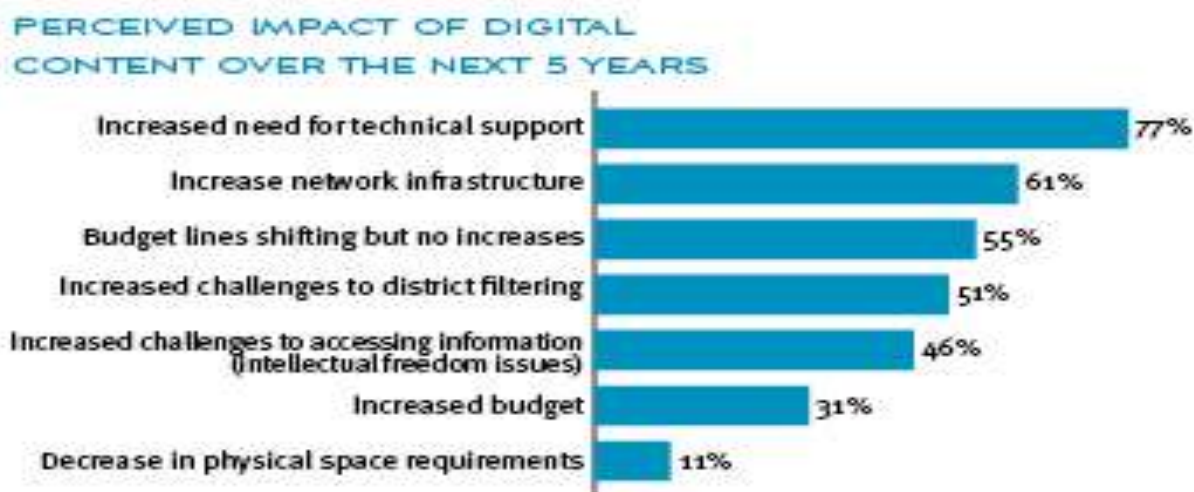
**Source:** *School Libraries Count! National Longitudinal Survey of School Library Programs.*

The survey revealed a limited shift from print to digital content; 86 percent of elementary schools and 51 percent of high school libraries reported that less than 5 percent of their collection had moved to digital content. The figure for middle school libraries was 69 percent.

Almost half the responding schools (49 percent) reported that their libraries have more than five database subscriptions.

When asked what impact digital content will have on the future of school library programs, 77 percent of respondents said they thought there would be an increased demand for technical support. Six in 10 of those surveyed reported that such an increase in digital content would cause an increased demand for network infrastructure in schools. However, more than half of respondents believe budget lines would shift but without increases.

**Figure 2**



Source: *School Libraries Count! National Longitudinal Survey of School Library Programs.*

Survey responses indicated a belief that the impact of increased digital content would extend beyond the school library walls. Fifty-eight percent of respondents felt that as digital resources continue to have an impact on school library programs and student learning, there would be an increased need for remote access to school library resources from within the school. Forty-nine percent noted that this impact would also create an increased demand for remote access from outside the school.

Fifty-one percent of survey respondents also noted that increased access to digital content will bring increased challenges to district filtering. Forty-six percent see increased intellectual freedom issues related to digital materials.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2010 change
<b>Average number of computers in school library</b>	22.6	23.9	25.6	27.4	+1.8 (7%)
<b>Average number of school computers outside library with access to library services</b>	136.8	168.3	178.4	194	+15.6 (8.7%)
<b>Total of library and library-connected computers</b>	159.2	190.6	203.6	220.4	+16.8 (8.3%)

Source: *School Libraries Count! National Longitudinal Survey of School Library Programs.*

**Table 3: Networked access to school library resources is expanding**

While the average number of computers in school libraries increased only slightly in 2010, access to school library resources from outside the library expanded. School Libraries Count! respondents reported that the number of school computers outside the library with networked access to library resources jumped more than 8 percent and that remote access to school library databases increased 3 percent overall.

## Young-adult librarians go to bat for their constituencies

Schoolchildren benefit from library services both in and out of school, of course, and the Young Adult Library Services Association created a number of new advocacy resources in 2010 to bring public attention to the value of libraries.

One of these was a downloadable brochure, “[Teens Need Libraries](#) (PDF),” which contains statistics from a range of sources to help young-adult librarians and others advocate for better teen services in their communities. The brochure was developed for librarians to print out and distribute to government officials or concerned citizens to demonstrate the importance of funding teen library services and how teen success is dependent upon that funding.

A few of the data from the brochure:

- Three-quarters of Americans believe it is a high priority for public libraries to offer places where teenagers can study and congregate.
- Forty-nine percent of public libraries do not have one full-time staff member dedicated to youth services.
- Eighty percent of public libraries offer online homework resources, and 90 percent offer access to online databases, with content in virtually every school subject.
- Ninety percent of students recognize that the school library helps boost their confidence as proficient information-seekers and -users, and 92 percent appreciated the school library’s help in sorting and analyzing information and gaining media literacy.
- Students in programs with more school librarians and extended library hours scored 8.4 to 21.8 percent higher on ACT English tests and 11.7 to 16.7 percent higher on ACT Reading tests compared to students in schools where libraries had fewer resources.
- Twenty-one percent of public secondary schools do not have a paid, full-time, state-certified librarian.

YALSA also created “[Why YA? Recruiting for YA Librarianship](#),” an online toolkit aimed at encouraging library students to become YA librarians.

And the organization also launched an update of its national guidelines, “[YALSA’s Competencies for Librarians Serving Youth: Young Adults Deserve the Best](#).” The competencies, first developed in 1981 and last updated in 2003, reflect changes in youth services, particularly in the area of technology. YALSA developed the competencies for individuals and institutions, offering librarians guidelines for providing quality library service in collaboration with teenagers and giving libraries a framework for improving overall service capacities and increasing public value to their respective communities.

Research shows that the most significant factor in determining the level of education a young person attains is the number of books in the home — but a number of studies have shown that thousands of families in low-income areas have few or no books in the home. With that in mind, YALSA launched a fundraising initiative, Books for Teens, powered by Facebook, with the goal of providing low-income youth with free new age-appropriate books. Funds raised will be distributed to libraries in communities with a high level of poverty, where teen-services librarians

will buy and distribute new books, encourage teens to obtain library cards and provide them with reading-focused events and activities.

## **“Vision Tour” shines a bright light on outstanding school libraries**

Nancy Everhart, president of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), wants to make sure that exemplary school libraries nationwide get the recognition they deserve — and a chance to serve as models for others.

And so she has undertaken what she calls her [Vision Tour](#), a series of road trips from her home base in Tallahassee, Fla., to 35 states to gain support for Learning4Life, the AASL’s national plan for implementing two AASL publications, “[Standards for the 21st-Century Learner](#)” and “[Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs](#).”

Learning4Life has two objectives: 1) to identify exemplary models and transferable visual products for implementation at the local, district, state, and national levels; and 2) to develop a national roster of celebrities, well-known educators and organizations, and other public figures as advocates for school librarians and library programs. School libraries on the tour were selected by their state’s AASL affiliate to represent them.

Everhart chooses schools by asking the AASL state organizations to provide the name of an outstanding school library in the state. When the school is chosen and the visit scheduled, the hosts generally arrange a program that’s designed to let people know what school libraries are all about — and to show them what kids without school libraries are missing. Often these occasions include student performances of the Vision Tour theme song, appropriately titled “Check It Out.”

The events are attended by parents, principals, school superintendents, school board members, area school and public librarians, state library personnel, mayors and state representatives and other government officials. Rep. Fred Upton (R–Mich.) had a commendation read into the Congressional Record about Portage Northern High School’s honor. Some celebs participate in other ways; Robin Roberts, host of ABC-TV’s “Good Morning America,” sent video congratulations to Byrd Middle School in Richmond, Va., that was screened during a school-wide assembly.

Everhart says the tour can produce major changes for the good. “In one instance, a school librarian who had her job reduced was reinstated to full time. In another district, school board members left the Vision Tour celebration noting that cuts they had been contemplating were not going to happen — and they’ve stuck to it,” Everhart says. “It’s all part of the message of the tour — to let everyone know what outstanding school libraries are all about.”

# Academic Libraries

## Economic Challenges: The New Normal

Faced with continuing recessionary pressures, many academic libraries in the United States (and elsewhere) grappled with the “new normal” created by budget reductions and the restructuring that resulted from them. According to an international survey that appeared in *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* in September 2010, nearly 42 percent of U.S. university libraries reported budget cuts; many planned to reduce spending on information resources (69.1 percent) and staffing (30.5 percent).

Although the [\*Chronicle of Higher Education\* reported](#) in September that the increase in the Higher Education Price Index was lower than the inflation rate for the first time since 1995, many academic libraries expect budgets to stagnate in the face of declining state support and charitable donations to higher education, according to Giving USA. Federal stimulus money prevented major cuts to higher education in 2009 and 2010, according to the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) (PDF).

On the other hand, although the Obama administration increased federal support for student aid, the [National Center for Education Statistics](#) (PDF) reported that Washington failed to deliver a \$12 billion program that would “rebuild crumbling community-college facilities” at a time when more students than ever are turning to community colleges because of cost concerns. More than two-thirds of high school seniors said their families’ economic concerns “greatly” or “somewhat” influenced their choice of school.

Almost 47 percent of U.S. academic libraries are introducing or increasing user charges, while 40 percent are looking externally for new funding sources and 19 percent are advocating internally for a greater share of the institutional budget. Additionally, almost two-thirds of academic libraries are accelerating the shift from print to electronic resources, and many (29 percent) are increasingly directing users to free electronic resources. Even more significantly, 12 percent are pursuing “more effective benchmarking and performance indicators,” as well as trying to demonstrate value through better usage and outcomes pricing.

## Demonstrating Value: Reinvent, Reset, Reappraise

Pressure on the higher-education community to demonstrate value took on new urgency and importance in 2010. The federal government “has demanded results in exchange for federal dollars, requiring grant applicants to set benchmarks for improvement and threatening to withhold aid from programs that fail to prepare students for jobs,” according to the [\*Chronicle of Higher Education\* \(Oct. 10, 2010\)](#). Accreditation commissions have been asked to develop a common set of standards “to use when assessing colleges’ quality to reassure the public that there

is consistency in their approaches” ([Chronicle, Sept. 13](#)). Boards of directors have been challenged to focus on student learning outcomes and educational quality. Colleges face renewed pressure to become more transparent by making information about student learning outcomes easily accessible and understandable on various parts of their websites.

It is in this environment that the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) published “[The Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report](#)” in order to “provide academic librarians with a clearer understanding of what research about the performance of academic libraries already exists, where gaps in this research occur, and to identify the most promising best practices and measures correlated to performance.” Academic libraries are clearly seeking “a better understanding of the value proposition they offer their universities, and of the linkages between their inputs and the teaching, learning, and research outcomes that are achieved with their support,” David Nicholas and others wrote in the September 2010 issue of *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*.

### **Academic libraries: Vital to student success**

In the age of Google, students and faculty are using academic libraries more than ever. During a typical week, academic libraries had more than 31 million searches in electronic databases, answered more than 469,000 reference questions and made more than 12,000 group presentations attended by more than 219,000 students and faculty. Library websites received more than 722 million virtual visits from outside the physical library building, and visits to online library catalogs totaled more than 479 million.

However, new research shows that college students are clearly floundering in information overload, and helping them develop research fluency remains one of the most important roles for academic librarians. Students come to college thinking that “Google placed it number one, so of course it’s credible,” [Eszter Hargittai and others wrote in the \*International Journal of Communication\*](#), so it is important for librarians and faculty to work more closely to improve student success (and demonstrate their contribution to that success). Publishers, too, agree that they must add more value by curating digital information and making it easier to discover.

Academic libraries continue to evolve from being storage spaces, becoming vital places to collaborate, connect and learn, as evidenced by the more than 20 new, renovated or expanded building projects that were completed during the first 11 months of 2010. “Students expect value for their money, and libraries are one of the most obvious things on their value-for-money tick list,” according to a September 2010 article in *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*. Heightened focus on the quality of student experience has led to increased support for some academic libraries.

The new and improved library spaces integrate information management, technology, and student-centered settings, according to an [article in \*Inside Higher Ed\*](#), with some library areas “beginning to look like Apple Computer Stores” (often the most heavily used areas within the library). More and more academic libraries are designed to achieve LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) gold certification. More than 300 U.S. academic libraries manage

institutional repositories or participate in consortia to provide online repositories for materials produced by faculty, students and/or the campus community.

## Rethinking the future

In short, both American academic libraries and the institutions of higher education they serve are under increasing pressure to adapt so that they will be able to continue to thrive in the future. James J. Duderstadt, president emeritus of the University of Michigan, is quoted in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 21, 2010) as saying that higher education could be among the next economic sectors to “undergo a massive restructuring” like the one contemplated for the banking industry. Given the significant economic, political, social and educational challenges facing higher education, it is not surprising that serious planning was the watchword for the year. Studies from a number of groups, such as the ACRL’s “[Futures Thinking for Academic Librarians](#) (PDF)” report, explored scenarios and outlined methodologies available to academic librarians to “build capacity to engage in strategic thinking and planning, supporting librarians in making better decisions now that can address a variety of possible futures.”

The future of e-books and their impact on higher education and libraries was another major topic of discussion during the year. Nicholas Negroponte, chairman emeritus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Media Lab, predicted that printed books will soon be rare luxury items and e-books the norm, according to an [article in the \*Chronicle of Higher Education\*. \*Inside Higher Ed\* reported](#) that the California State University system had begun a pilot program in which professors in 32 course sections would require their students to buy e-textbooks. The American Council of Learned Societies “tested the use of digital scholarly monographs for research purposes on various handheld reading devices.”

E-books currently represent 27 percent of academic library holdings, and content in electronic formats accounts for 57 percent of library resource budgets, according to *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*. Digital content offers big benefits for higher education and academic libraries; faculty and students rate cost savings to students as the top benefit of digital content, followed by instant access to content, access to current content and ease of note-taking.

## Advocacy matters

In order to help shape the future of higher education, academic libraries and librarians continued to monitor legislation and litigation that would either enhance or hinder their ability to provide access to information and pave the way for innovation. Issues of critical interest in 2010 included:

- *Google book search settlement.* A federal judge in March ruled against a proposed Google book search (GBS) settlement that the company had hammered out in years of negotiations with the American Association of Publishers and the Authors Guild, which had sued Google over the project in 2005. Members of the academic library community had closely monitored progress on the GBS, which would have resolved a legal dispute over the scanning of millions of books provided by research libraries. But Judge Denny Chin threw Google’s plan

to create the world's largest digital library and bookstore into legal limbo when he ruled that the GBS would have granted the company a "de facto monopoly." Judge Chin did seem to suggest that a substantially revised agreement could pass legal muster, so it was left to the author and publisher groups to decide whether to resume their copyright case against Google, drop it or try to negotiate a new settlement. To facilitate understanding of the complex GBS, the ALA, the ACRL and the ARL had released "[A Guide for the Perplexed Part III: The Amended Settlement Agreement](#) (PDF)," which emphasized aspects of the proposed settlement that were relevant to libraries. "[A Guide for the Perplexed Part IV: The Rejection of the Google Books Settlement](#) (PDF)," which contains an analysis of Judge Chin's recent ruling, is now available.

- *Expanded public access to taxpayer-funded research.* The ACRL joined the ALA in submitting comments to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy supporting increased public access to research funded by federal science and technology agencies. The recommendations include which agencies should be covered, that policies should be mandatory, that earlier access is better, version and format recommendations, how to keep implementation costs reasonable and the importance of supporting emerging scholarly practice. [View text of the comments.](#)
- *Federal Research Public Access Act.* The academic library community continued its long-standing support of H.R. 5037, the Federal Research Public Access Act (FRPAA). As organizations and through grassroots advocacy efforts, the ALA and the ACRL were active in calling for an open hearing before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Information Policy, the Census and National Archives. The hearing was held in July 2010, an important step in seeing the bill move forward. The legislation expand a mandate by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) that all research funded by NIH grants be made freely available in PubMed Central within one year of publication.
- *Access to information in the digital environment.* The Library Copyright Alliance, consisting of the ALA, the ACRL and the ARL, works toward a unified voice and common strategy for the library community in responding to and developing proposals to amend national and international copyright law and policy for the digital environment. In 2010, the group filed comments on a World Intellectual Property Organization draft proposal to facilitate access to copyrighted works for people who are blind or have visual impairments and other reading disabilities; it also issued briefs and comments on a number of other current topics relating to international copyright and libraries. The alliance also filed briefs on cases dealing with consumers' rights and the first sale doctrine in a battle over an Internet auction of used computer software, as well as the right of Internet service providers not to be held liable for copyright infringement by third-party users. Complete details on LCA activities are available on the [alliance website](#).

## **Staying afloat in the academic job pool**

There has never been a more challenging time to find a position as an academic librarian, especially for those who have recently completed their library education, according to a new publication from ALA Editions. In "How to Stay Afloat in the Academic Library Job Pool," editor Teresa Y. Neely and a team of experts offer advice on how the job-search process works,

including the how-tos of reading between the lines of a job listing and assembling a compelling application packet; keys to understanding how search committees work; and what criteria may be used to choose successful candidates. “How to Stay Afloat” is available at the [ALA Store](#).

# Library Technology

## The digital revolution: Tough challenges and exciting possibilities

A decade into the 21st century, the digital revolution shows no signs of slowing, and the library community is both struggling to keep up and envisioning future library services that incorporate new philosophies, new technologies and new spaces to meet the needs of all users more effectively than ever before.

The changes “go beyond merely incorporating technological advances to include rethinking the very core of what defines a library — the sense of place, of service, and of community that has characterized the modern library for the last century,” Jennifer C. Hendrix writes in a brief, “[Checking Out the Future: Perspectives from the Library Community on Information Technology and 21st-Century Libraries](#) (PDF),” published by the American Library Association’s Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP).

The importance of these questions served as a major impetus for the American Library Association’s Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) to create the Program on America’s Libraries for the 21st Century in 2008. Library experts and leaders are now exploring all aspects of the future of American libraries and developing recommendations for the library community and its stakeholders.

The brief, one of several the OITP has published on the revolution in information technology and its implications for the future of libraries, presents a summary of the literature devoted to the future of public, academic, school and other libraries in the face of the technological revolution. It discusses how technology is changing the fundamental forms of information; how these new forms are changing the way people find, access, and use information; and the changes in core library missions and services that will result from these new behaviors.

The brief discusses how the technological revolution might:

- Change libraries’ need for physical space (as a home for collections, a community center an online virtual destination, or some combination of these).
- Alter the basic notions of what a book, or a journal, or a database —.looks like.
- Change library professionals’ ideas on how to organize, store and distribute information.
- Affect school (and other) librarians’ support for information literacy in physical and digital environments.
- Significantly alter the way library users find, absorb, even “read” information because of advanced metadata tagging, advanced search algorithms and networked books.

“The implementation of technological advances is accomplished most effectively by determining user needs,” Hendrix says. “Once these needs have been identified, librarians and administrators

can design the flexible spaces, the innovative programs and the adaptable services that will provide information in a manner appropriate for individual users.”

Hendrix concludes: “By embracing the possibilities of the 21st century, librarians can ensure the relevance and value of the services they and their institutions provide. Yet even as the nature of the library and the work of the librarian change, the librarian will continue to play an essential role in the provision of those services. The nature of the landscape may shift, but the need for a navigator will remain.”

## **IMLS project addresses need for 21st Century learning**

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) organized a national campaign in 2010-2011 aimed at helping libraries, museums and civic leaders assess and meet the learning needs of their communities and contribute to a shared vision for 21st century learning.

“Making the Learning Connection” is helping libraries and museums envision and define their roles as institutions of learning in the 21st century and enhancing understanding among policymakers and other stakeholders about the integral roles libraries and museums play in creating an engaged citizenry and competitive workforce. Representatives from local public, academic and school libraries and museums are participating in a series of forums, each of which ends with a set of action steps designed to encourage collaboration among libraries, museums and community stakeholders.

Marsha L. Semmel, then acting director of the IMLS, defined 21st century skills as including “fluency in information, media and technology skills, the ability to analyze information and the ability to think critically about that information that is bombarding us from so many media sources every day.”

Semmel continued: “Really this is a national and international conversation that has arisen with the rise of the global economy, with the enabling of a whole new set of technologies that allow people to be connected in different ways, the need to understand non-routine, non-repetitive work and the need to be able to do that work. . . . Libraries and museums have always been about education and learning. They have always provided important collections, powerful experiences and sources of knowledge and information. So libraries and museums have been evolving and changing to meet changing learning needs. They’ve been evolving from places that simply present knowledge and information to places that share knowledge and engage their communities and work with their communities to co-create experiences.”

The campaign is part of the IMLS’s continuing initiative to engage libraries, museums, and community stakeholders and policymakers in meeting the educational, economic, civic, and cultural needs of communities. The campaign builds on the release of an IMLS publication, “[Museums, Libraries and 21st Century Skills](#) (PDF),” which provides an online self-assessment for libraries and museums to encourage a strategic approach to 21st century learning and a report for library and museum practitioners and policymakers.

## **E-book use accelerates at academic and public libraries . . .**

Almost all (94 percent) academic libraries offer e-books, as do more than two-thirds (72 percent) of public libraries, according to a survey conducted in August 2010 by *Library Journal* and *School Library Journal*, and one-third (33 percent) of school libraries offer them

A few highlights from the survey:

- Twelve percent of academic libraries circulate preloaded e-reading devices, while 26 percent are considering it. (Kindle topped the device chart at 81 percent, followed by Sony at 34 percent, iPad at 28 percent and Nook at 22 percent.)
- Six percent of school libraries circulate preloaded e-reading devices, while 36 percent are considering it. (The Sony Reader led the way at 64 percent, Kindle followed at 47 percent, Nook at 15 percent and iPad at 4 percent.)
- Five percent of public libraries circulate preloaded e-reading devices, while 24 percent are considering it. Kindle was the leader here.
- Among academic libraries, social sciences was the discipline most likely to offer e-books (83 percent), followed by science at 82 percent, technology (80 percent), humanities (77 percent), medicine (69 percent) and law (51 percent).
- In school libraries, children's fiction topped the e-book charts at 51 percent, followed by reference (42 percent), children's nonfiction (39 percent), children's picture books (34 percent) and young adult nonfiction (24 percent) and fiction (23 percent).
- And in public libraries, adult nonfiction led the way (86 percent), with adult fiction at 84 percent, bestsellers at 76 percent, young adult fiction at 69 percent and children's fiction at 56 percent. Young adult nonfiction, children's nonfiction, reference and children's picture books "scored" less than 50 percent.

[Highlights from the "eBook Survey" are available](#) at No Shelf Required blog.

## **. . . but a big publisher steps on the brake**

In early March, HarperCollins, publisher of authors such as Anne Rice, Sarah Palin and Michael Crichton, announced that it will not allow any one copy of its e-books to be checked out from a library more than 26 times. After that, the license on the e-book will expire and libraries will have to decide whether to buy a new one, raising the possibility that e-books that are not repurchased would be available at the library for only about a year.

Many librarians fear that other publishers could adopt a similar model. They argue that the restrictions place an additional burden on financially strapped public libraries.

"This strikes at the heart of what we do," said Mary Dempsey, Chicago Public Library commissioner, who described electronic media as the new virtual library. "With limited financial resources affecting all libraries across America, people are asking, 'Why would you do this?'"

HarperCollins, the nation's second-largest publisher (behind Random House), takes another view.

“We have serious concerns that our previous e-book policy, selling e-books to libraries in perpetuity, if left unchanged, would undermine the emerging e-book eco-system, hurt the growing e-book channel, place additional pressure on physical bookstores, and in the end lead to a decrease in book sales and royalties paid to authors,” the company said in a statement.

For most libraries, e-books are only a small percentage of circulated items but represent the fastest-growing segment. The Chicago Public Library, for example, doubled its circulation of e-books, from 17,000 in 2009 to more than 36,000 in 2010.

Most e-books, like their hard-copy cousins, are loaned for three weeks, after which they become unavailable on the reading device and must be downloaded again. Librarians say the procedure should remain the same for e-books and printed books.

“When we purchase a print copy, we get to keep it for as long as we want,” said Audra Caplan, president of the Public Library Association. “It may eventually wear out or not circulate, but that’s our choice.”

## **Technology briefs: Librarians (and others) learn to embrace the Cloud**

Discussion among librarians has shifted from whether to embrace the Cloud to how best to use it, and its importance is evident from the fact that the ALA's Library and Information Technology Association made the Cloud — the metaphor for IT infrastructures that exist in a remote location and often give users increased capacity and less need for updates and maintenance — the theme of its annual forum last year. In his keynote address at the LITA forum, Roy Tennant, senior program officer at OCLC, described cloud computing as a “huge paradigm shift” and, by way of illustration, created a website as he spoke using cloud-based tools (Drupal and Amazon Web Services). Tennant said much computing power is now available “on demand, like electricity” and highlighted some of the benefits of that to information professionals: outsourced infrastructure, greater flexibility, reduced barriers to innovation and lower start-up investments.

***Teen Tech Week*** — Who is the tech expert in your family? Many an adult would answer, “My child” — or, perhaps, “My grandchild.” The question and its answers are of intense interest at public and school libraries nationwide, which responded by hosting technological workshops and events to help teens become safe and ethical users of social networks and technology. The programs were part of [Teen Tech Week](#), March 6-12, an initiative sponsored by the Young Adult Library Services Association, the fastest-growing division of the ALA. The theme for Teen Tech Week 2011 was Mix and Mash @ your library, which focused on encouraging teens to use library resources to express their creativity by developing their own unique online content — and safely sharing it by using online collaborative tools.

***Individualizing technology*** — Libraries are leveraging technology to create highly individualized experiences for an ever-growing scope of users, which Bipin Patel, chief

information officer at ProQuest, calls “cracking the code of mass customization.” Jared Oates, SirsiDynix’s director of product strategy, [told \*American Libraries\*](#) that his company is looking at ways to be “local all over the world,” and Talin Bingham, SirsiDynix chief technology officer, said he imagines a time far in the future when neural network technology would produce relevant information to would-be searchers before they even begin searching. The unanswered question: How far?

***Adapt to survive!*** — The fragile national economy led some in the library community to warn that lack of money could derail the rapid adjustments necessary to remain relevant. “Libraries have adapted in the past, but we may not have the resources to adapt quickly enough to survive in the [future], especially if the public goes elsewhere for the services we are accustomed to providing,” John J. Callahan III, of Palm Beach County (Fla.) Library, [told \*Library Journal\*](#). “For example, DVD circulation can be as much as 35 to 40 percent of current circulation. What happens when video is only downloadable? How will libraries fit into that model?”

***Expanding high-speed Internet*** — In an effort to expand broadband access and create jobs, the federal government awarded \$765 million in grants and loans to 66 projects as part of a larger effort to stimulate the economy by expanding high-speed Internet to neglected communities. The awards, made in mid-2010 and distributed through the departments of Commerce and Agriculture, went to libraries, colleges, Internet service providers, communication companies and counties. “This is going to have an enormous impact on the country,” said Gary Bachula, vice president for external relations at Internet 2, a networking consortium that includes U.S. universities, corporations, government agencies, laboratories and international partner organizations. “We think that these technologies are capable of literally transforming the way health care is delivered, transforming the way education is delivered, completely changing the nature of how a community uses their library to be plugged into the world.” High-speed Internet, he said, will give rural communities more tools for education and better access to health care. All of that has an effect on moving the economy forward.”

***A national digital public library?*** — The [Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University announced](#) Dec. 13, 2010, that it would host a research and planning initiative for a Digital Public Library of America. With funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the center will convene a diverse group of stakeholders in a planning program Mar. 1 to define the scope, architecture, costs and administration for the proposed repository. Planning activities were guided by a steering committee of library and foundation leaders that brought together representatives of the educational community, public and research libraries, cultural organizations, private industry and state and local governments, plus publishers and authors, in a series of meetings and workshops to examine strategies for improving public access to comprehensive online resources.

***Report on digitization*** — Prospects for funding for digitization in the United States are much better than prospects elsewhere, according to a [report released in December 2010 by Primary Research Group](#), with about 29 percent of U.S. survey participants considering the outlook for digitization funding good or excellent, while only 6 percent of those from other countries shared this optimism. The report is based on data costs, equipment use, staffing, cataloging, marketing, licensing revenue and other facets of digitization projects from almost 100 libraries and

museums in the United States, Canada, Europe and Australia and presents data separately for digitizers of photographs, film and video, music and audio, text and re-digitization of existing digital media. Data are also broken out by budget size, type of institution and other factors and are presented separately for various kinds of libraries and museums. Another key finding: 15 percent of the respondents used the servers of a third-party service for digital content storage; this was most popular in the United States, where one-sixth of respondents used a third-party service.

## Social Networking

**Table 1: How libraries that have implemented Web 2.0 tools use them**

Use of Web 2.0 tools	2010	2009	Change
Promoting general library services	82.5%	77.7%	6.2%
Marketing specific adult programs and/or services	70.0%	60.3%	16.1%
Marketing specific children's and/or youth services programs	63.0%	56.8%	11.0%
Providing quick updates to users	65.6%	56.8%	15.5%
Reaching a new audience of potential users	50.6%	48.7%	3.9%

**Source:** Social Media, Libraries, and Web 2.0: How American Libraries are Using New Tools for Public Relations and to Attract New Users — Third Survey November 2010.

### Libraries making good use of social media and Web 2.0 applications

U.S. libraries of all types continue to make increasing use of social media and Web 2.0 applications and tools to connect with library users and to market programs and services, according to a [report published in November 2010 by the South Carolina State Library](#).

However, the report, based on a survey of more than 900 library administrators/managers, librarians and other staff, does indicate that while many libraries are using social media “voraciously,” a few are not using them at all.

An overwhelming majority of respondents (92.2 percent) called Web 2.0 tools important for marketing and promoting library services, while only 7.8 percent said they did not. Social networks (78.6 percent of 676 respondents) and blogs (51.9 percent) remained the two most popular, with many libraries also continuing to use photo-sharing tools (40.2 percent) and online video (29.1 percent). Virtual worlds continue to be reported as the least used.

In short, there was general, if not complete, consensus that technology is developing rapidly and that libraries and librarians who are slow to adapt put themselves at risk. (A Google search for “social networking libraries” returned 14.8 *million* responses.)

As Cindy Romaine, president of the Special Libraries Association, said in a post on her "[Future Ready 365](#)" blog: "The consumer electronics industry . . . is moving very, very fast — and will eat our lunch if we are not moving at least at its pace of change. To keep up, we need to adopt a strategy of being flexible, adaptable and resilient. In short, we need to be Future Ready!"

In a separate study, Facebook emerged as the runaway winner when respondents were asked to choose from a list of 25 Web 2.0 and social media tools their library uses. The top three:

- Facebook, at 84.3 percent (Facebook had "scored" 74.7 percent in predecessor surveys conducted in March and November 2009). Said one respondent: "We're getting a lot of feedback via Twitter and Facebook — patrons asking questions about services, ref questions, etc. We're having fun connecting with our community."
- Twitter, 49.2 percent, up from third place in 2009. A respondent comment: "Twitter is a great tool for reminding the media about an event. They already have the press release, so when I send a tweet the day of, they are reminded to come cover the story. We have received coverage many times because of this."
- Blogging tools, 42.4 percent. Comment: "The blog is especially useful when we want a soft introduction of a new product or service. It reaches a few, which allows us to ramp up/work out bugs without being inundated."

One respondent observed, however, that social media and Web 2.0 tools "are only as effective as the user" and noted that since a library often cannot support a full-time position in this area, the work is often distributed among several staff, which reduces its overall impact.

Still, the study's author, Curtis E. Rogers, said that "we cannot ignore the ever-increasing use of these tools to connect with library users." He notes that 8 percent of American adults who use the Internet are Twitter users, according to a survey from the Pew Internet & American Life Project. From October 2009 to October 2010, he says, Facebook increased its unique visitor total almost 22 percent, from about 109.7 million to 133.5 million.

And many will be surprised to learn that older adults are leading the increase. Overall use of social networking use by online adults went from 35 percent in 2008 to 61 percent in 2010, but Pew Research Center data indicate that the rate of online social networking soared among "older boomers" (9 percent to 43 percent) and the "GI Generation" (4 percent to 16 percent).

However, respondents did say that people less than 35 years old were the most likely overall to be influenced by social media. "More of our students are tweeting and using social media," one respondent said. "The younger ones view email as antiquated, so we message them more and more on Facebook."

### **"Putting sociotechnical changes in context is what librarians do best."**

"Librarians know better than anyone how new genres of media reconfigure public life," danah boyd, blogger, social networking researcher at Microsoft Research New England and fellow at Harvard University's Berkman Center for Internet and Society, said in an interview in *School*

*Library Journal*. “This is why so many librarians have been part of movements to increase literacy and democratic participation.

“This new [social networking] genre is radically reconfiguring public life and information dissemination, as well as sociality. . . . All of a sudden, media is not just something to consume, but to interact with as part of identity presentation and communication. We’re seeing a cultural iteration. . . . All that happens online is an extension of what was happening before, inflected in new ways.”

“Librarians are trying to help young people understand the world around them,” Boyd continued. “If they recognize the ways in which new social media [extend] old practices, they can help provide guidance in a meaningful way. . . . Understanding the relationship between new media and old media is critical. Putting sociotechnical changes in context is what librarians do best.”

## **Where should a librarian go with questions? The answer should be obvious . .**

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*American Libraries* now partners on a blog with the ALA Library to deliver answers to frequently asked questions. ALA Library staff blog on “[Ask the ALA Librarian](#),” offering another way to stay on top of library-related issues that are on people’s minds.

“We’ve had great response to the weekly ‘Ask the ALA Librarian’ feature in *AL Direct*,” said ALA Librarian Karen Muller.

The ALA Library is both the in-house special library for ALA staff and the “librarian’s library.” The library’s staff answers more than 500 questions a month about the ALA — its activities, history, positions and policies — and about librarianship in general. The questions come from all over the world, from members, publishers, authors, students and others, Muller said.

**Table 2: Percentage of American adults in each group who own each device.**

	<b>Millennials (ages 18-34)</b>	<b>Gen X (35-46)</b>	<b>Younger Boomers (47-56)</b>	<b>Older Boomers (57-65)</b>	<b>Silent Gen. (66-74)</b>	<b>G.I. Gen. (75+)</b>	<b>All adults (18+)</b>
Cell phone	95	92	86	84	68	48	85
Desktop computer	57	69	65	64	48	28	59
Laptop computer	70	61	49	43	30	10	52
iPod/MP3 player	74	56	42	26	16	3	47
Game console	63	63	38	19	8	3	42
E-book reader	5	5	7	3	6	2	5
Tablet (e.g., iPad)	5	5	4	3	1	1	4
None of the above	1	3	8	8	20	43	9

**Source:** Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, Aug. 9-Sept. 13, 2010 Tracking Survey. N=3,001 adults 18+; interviews conducted in English (2,804) and Spanish (197). Posted on Stephen's Lighthouse, "Pew: Generations and their Gadgets," <http://stephenslighthouse.com/2011/02/07/pew-generations-and-their-gadgets/>

## A plethora of devices, in use by all generations

Many devices have become popular across the full spectrum of generations, with a majority now owning cell phones, laptops and desktop computers, according to the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, Aug. 9-Sept. 13, 2010 Tracking Survey as [described on Stephen'sLighthouse.com](#). "Younger adults are leading the way in increased mobility, preferring laptops to desktops and using their cell phones for a variety of functions, including Internet, email, music, games, and video," blogger Stephen Abram says.

Among the key findings of the Pew project:

- Cell phones are the most popular device among American adults. About 85 percent of adults own one, and 90 percent of all adults — including almost two-thirds of those age 75 and older — live in a household with at least one working cell phone.
- Millennials are the only group that is more likely to own a laptop computer or netbook than a desktop: 70 percent own a laptop, compared with 57 percent who own a desktop.
- Almost half of all adults own an iPod or other MP3 player, but these are still most popular with Millennials — 74 percent of adults ages 18-34 own an MP3 player, compared with only 56 percent of the next oldest generation, Gen X (ages 35-46).
- Overall, 5 percent of adults own an e-book reader, and 4 percent own an iPad or other tablet computer.

In fact, mobile computing is "having a profound effect on the way users find, access, and process information," writes Jennifer C. Hendrix in "Checking Out the Future: Perspectives from the Library Community on Information Technology and 21st-Century Libraries." "Indeed, many experts insist that in the future, all personal computing will be mobile." Hendrix says that phones, media players and computers may before long merge into smartphones and other portable devices that will free the information seeker completely from wired sources." The implications of people becoming "digital nomads" are engaging sociologists, anthropologists, architects . . . and librarians, who are considering what this means for libraries of the future (or, the present).

For as *American Libraries* noted in its [top stories roundup for 2010](#), many public and academic libraries have already been busy creating applications that deliver their programs, collections and services to the mobile user. Cases in point:

- [Oregon State University Library](#) has two versions of its website, one for smartphone users and another for Web-enabled cell phones with a smaller screen.
- [Miami University Libraries](#) (Ohio) offer a mobile Web app built in Drupal that gives users access to the catalog, selected databases, social media content and library staff via text, IM, voice and email.
- North Carolina State University Libraries Special Collections has an app called [WolfWalk](#) (, that guides students to 90 different historical spots on campus through a GPS system and supplies images and information on each.

- The [Orange County \(Fla.\) Library System Shake It! app](#) provides suggestions for library books or movies when patrons physically give their phones a shake.
- Gale has launched [AccessMyLibrary apps](#) that allow mobile users to search the Gale databases.

Some academic libraries are also beginning to make use of QR codes, which are matrix barcodes readable by smartphones with a camera; the QR codes can link the user to audio or video enhancements of library exhibits, orientation tours, signage and video tutorials.

## Library Construction and Renovation

### Libraries becoming ever more green (and saving money, too)

Environmental sustainability continued to gain the attention of librarians throughout 2010, beginning in January at the ALA Midwinter Meeting, where former U.S. Vice President Al Gore delivered the [Arthur Curley Memorial Lecture](#). In 2010, eight of the 85 submissions to [American Libraries' annual Library Design Showcase](#) were certified under the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) program developed by the U.S. Green Building Council; in 2001, only eight buildings — of any type — had been LEED-certified. Another 11 libraries were actively seeking certification.

LEED certification may be the gold standard, but even “harvesting sunlight” can save energy (and money) and can brighten up a library in a way that fluorescent lighting cannot. Still, using a computer in the sun’s bright glare can be a challenge, so sunlight must be controlled to be desirable. Many new library buildings have mechanisms in place to do just that. One example among many: Crandall Public Library in Glens Falls, N.Y., makes extensive use of “daylight harvesting.” In this building, designed by Ann Beha Architects, a roof monitor glazed with polycarbonate panels diffuses natural light, while sensors respond to the brightness and dim artificial lighting accordingly.

Even landscaping can have an impact on the greenness of a construction project by reducing pollution and promoting biodiversity.

### Spaces and places designed to attract children

Libraries continue to draw patrons of all ages. Adults find services and meeting spaces at their libraries that are available nowhere else in their community. And to attract children and turn them into lifelong readers and library users, libraries are building spaces as creative and playful as their youngest patrons. The expansion of Brentwood (Tenn.) Public Library, for example, increased the size of the children’s library considerably. Styled by

Earl Swensson Associates as a park, the theming includes trees, nature murals, woodland animals and a fantasyland of books. An animated owl in one of the trees greets visitors, and a flat screen adjacent to the story room tells the story of the area's Native Americans.

Other examples of “kids’ stuff” include the new Lochwood Branch of Dallas Public Library, with its open and appealing children’s area, highlighted by furnishings whose colors pop; the new \$14.7 million Sayville (N.Y.) Library, whose children’s room includes a Tree of Knowledge in the center of the stacks, a “beach” space and alphabet blocks leading to the toddler section; and the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh–Allegheny’s children’s room, with furnishings — including playful red elephants — scaled back to be just the right size for kids.

Finally, while many people still want nothing more than the comfort and quiet dignity of a traditional style when they go to the library, almost all libraries are placing increased emphasis on access to technology, particularly as the economic recovery drags on and millions of Americans rely on public libraries for their first and often only choice for Internet access. (See the “Public Library” and “Library Technology” sections of this report.)

## Other success stories from 2010

Here are a few other examples of creativity and resourcefulness shown by new or renovated libraries in 2010:

- **Bridging the digital divide** — Houston Public Library’s new Morris Frank Library is a \$2.31 million, 10,409-square-foot branch designed with a futuristic theme. Designed by m Architects, Morris Frank is the third of four HPL Express libraries, which focus on offering services electronically to help bridge the digital divide and which can be opened and operated for less than the cost of a traditional library.
- **New library in San Diego** — Construction of a new \$185 million main library in downtown San Diego, was begun despite concerns that the project could leave taxpayers on the hook should private donors fail to raise enough money to pay for it. The City Council voted in June to move forward with the construction under the promise that a fundraising campaign will be able to collect the additional \$32.5 million needed to finish the job. If donors don’t emerge, the city would have to either use taxpayer money to fill the gap or leave the library’s interior unfinished. The full building will be almost 500,000 square feet, including two levels of parking, an auditorium and a coffee bar.
- **Yes, Virginia . . .** : Despite the continued economic downturn, three significant construction projects in Virginia continued as originally proposed: A new downtown building for Norfolk Public Library, a new city library for Petersburg (expected to cost 25 percent less than expected because of lower construction costs) and a new Appomattox Regional Library System branch in Prince George County.
- **In Brooklyn, a \$3,250,000 grant** — Brooklyn Public Library announced in May that it had received a \$3,250,000 grant from the Leon Levy Foundation — the largest ever to the library — to establish an information commons at its Central Library. The commons — often a feature in academic libraries but not in public libraries — will feature a wireless training

center, seven private study rooms, seating for 60 laptop computer users, 25 PCs and a help desk for reference service and on-demand training.

- **A health sciences commons** — Some 5,200 square feet of space at the Ische Library at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans were renovated into a 24/7 Library Commons. Custom-routed screens, in the form of abstracted medical imagery like fat cells, neurons or heart muscle, define spaces in the Commons without isolating them.
- **Richardsonian Gothic style** — In Massachusetts, the Townsend Public Library was designed by Johnson Roberts Associates in Richardsonian Gothic style, with a central barrel-vaulted reading room that reflects the large entry arch, lit by clerestory windows and articulated by wooden ribs that lead patrons into the space.
- **Circulation, yes; circulation desk, no** — The new Darien (Conn.) Library has no circulation desk. Centrally located RFID (radio-frequency identification) terminals allow patrons to self-check books, and an automated material handling system sorts books from the self-return kiosks.
- **Also . . .** In June, the Milwaukee (Wis.) Public Library completed a 30,000-square-foot green roof on its Downtown Central Library; and library programs and practices nationwide reflected growing interest in the environment, from Middle Country Public Library's Nature Explorium in Centereach, N.Y., to Teton County (Wyo.) Library's Zero Waste Guide, Dubuque (Iowa) Public Library's environment-themed magic show in November, and the Go Green @ your Illinois Library initiative, launched in October by the Illinois Library Association to develop a group of librarians committed to environmental awareness.

## **Outreach and Diversity**

### **Profession expands efforts to make its ranks more accessible to minorities**

The library profession continues its active efforts to make its ranks more accessible to members of ethnic and racial minority groups and to strengthen its outreach efforts to these underserved populations.

The American Library Association's [Spectrum Scholarship Program](#), for example, awarded 75 scholarships in 2010 to members of underrepresented groups to help them pursue master's degrees. The Spectrum program also provides access to a network of library professionals, ALA support in finding a position in the field and free admission to national and local professional development events.

Spectrum's professional development and leadership components draw together advocacy efforts across many library organizations, providing a model and mechanisms by which they can diversify their membership and involve proven new leaders with diverse perspectives in their programs and initiatives. Eighty-five percent of Spectrum graduates are working full time in a library or information setting; they include the library director for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the manager of rare books and special collections for the Princeton University Library, the director of diversity programs at the Association of Research Libraries and the librarian in a Bureau of Indian Affairs school on the Navajo Reservation in New Mexico.

The Spectrum program has received significant support in the past several years from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), an independent federal grant-making agency, which has allowed it to double the number of scholarships since 2006. In addition, a new IMLS grant will provide for recruitment efforts to ethnically diverse high school and college undergraduate students, in order to expose them to the rewarding career opportunities within libraries.

The ALA announced the [Spectrum Presidential Initiative](#) in 2009 as a special campaign to raise \$1 million for the Spectrum Scholarship Program. Through this initiative, ALA aims to meet the critical needs of supporting master's-level scholarships for students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

### **New literacy efforts for adult English-language learners**

Seventy-five public libraries, in large cities and small towns in 24 states, received support to develop innovative and exemplary literacy services for adult English-language learners through the American Dream Starts @ your library® literacy initiative. The libraries are using their grant funds to build innovative literacy services for adult English-language learners and their families

by expanding their print and digital literacy collections, offering instruction in ESL (English as a second language) and citizenship, holding conversation clubs, developing mobile tech labs and reaching out to community partners. Especially notable about the 2010 round was the awarding of grants to support mobile outreach to immigrant communities, especially bookmobile service. More information about the initiative, which is funded by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation and administered by the ALA, is available at [www.olos.ala.org/americanream](http://www.olos.ala.org/americanream) and [www.americandreamtoolkit.org](http://www.americandreamtoolkit.org).

## **ALA initiative puts focus on family literacy**

Also in 2010, ALA President Camila Alire launched the Family Literacy Focus, an initiative to encourage families in ethnically diverse communities to read and learn together. The ALA's five ethnic affiliates received funding to develop innovative, culturally focused family literacy programs emphasizing oral and written traditions and exploring new literacies.

- The American Indian Library Association and the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association combined their resources and created *[Talk Story: Sharing Stories, Sharing Culture](#)*.
- The Black Caucus of the ALA held an author-centered intergenerational literacy program for *Grand Families @ your library*.
- The Chinese American Librarians Association brought generations together through literacy and cultural activities by *Bridging Generations, a Bag at a Time*.
- REFORMA: The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking created *Noche de Cuentos* to support storytelling and oral traditions and to preserve cultures.

By June 2010, 16 public libraries in diverse communities had held 21 family literacy events. These events were attended by 1,117 children, adults, and elders. More information is available at [www.ala.org/familyliteracyfocus](http://www.ala.org/familyliteracyfocus).

## **Bookmobiles carry library services to new corners and communities**

[National Bookmobile Day](#), which saw its first celebration on April 14, 2010, recognizes the contributions of the nation's bookmobiles and the dedicated professionals who make quality bookmobile outreach possible in their communities. Bookmobile use has surged during the economic downturn, paralleling the increased use of fixed libraries and often providing services not just to schools but to targeted groups such as senior citizen homes, pre-school children, adult education centers, drug and alcohol rehabilitation facilities and correctional facilities. The range of materials that bookmobiles circulate has expanded with their more varied destinations. Many bookmobiles have low floors for easy entry, and many also provide Internet access.

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The fourth annual Parade of Bookmobiles, held at the 2010 ALA Annual Conference, featured 12 vehicles from across the country. The parade provides an opportunity to

showcase libraries' ability to reach rural and other communities where access to conventional library facilities is a challenge.

## **First Stonewall book award for literature for children and young adults**

At its Midwinter Meeting in January 2011, the ALA announced the winner of its inaugural [Stonewall Children's and Young Adult Literature Award](#): Nick Burd, for his young-adult novel, "The Vast Fields of Ordinary" (Penguin Group). The award is administered by the ALA's Stonewall Book Awards Committee of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Round Table and is to be awarded annually to English-language works for children or teens that are of exceptional merit and relate to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender experience.

"The demand for quality GLBT books for youth continues to grow as the nation becomes more diverse," ALA President Roberta Stevens said as the award was announced. "According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, an estimated 14 million children have a gay or lesbian parent, and the most current U.S. Census data show that one-third of female-partner households and one-fifth of male-partner households contain children.

"Books for youth regarding the GLBT experience are critical tools in teaching tolerance, acceptance, and the importance of diversity," Stevens said. "Our nation is one of diverse cultures and lifestyles, and it is important for parents, educators and librarians to have access to quality books for youth that represent a spectrum of cultures.

"Not every book will be right for every reader, but the freedom to choose for ourselves from a full variety of possibilities is a hard-won right for every American."

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The ALA's GLBT Round Table celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2010 and received a congratulatory resolution from the U.S. House of Representatives. The Round Table is one of the first professional GLBT organizations in the United States.

## **First Coretta Scott King–Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement**

The Coretta Scott King Book Awards Committee presented the inaugural [Coretta Scott King–Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement](#) to Walter Dean Myers, an acclaimed African-American author of more than 50 novels and non-fiction works for young adults. The annual award will be presented in even years to an African-American author or illustrator for a significant body of published books for children and young adults. In alternate years, the award will honor a practitioner for substantial contributions to youth education using award-winning African-American youth literature. Virginia Hamilton was herself an award-winning author of more than 40 children's books, including "M.C. Higgins, the Great," for which she won the National Book Award in 1974 and the 1975 Newbery Medal.

## Virtual Library of Cherokee Knowledge

With the support of a \$150,000 enhancement grant from the Institute of Library and Museum Services, the Cherokee Nation, based in Tahlequah, Okla., is establishing the Virtual Library of Cherokee Knowledge, which is designed to provide Cherokee citizens and the general public access to a comprehensive digital repository of authentic Cherokee knowledge related to the Nation's history, language, traditions, culture and leaders. The grant will enable the tribe to secure professional consultation services from digital library specialists, historians and museum and library professionals and to obtain the technology, software and equipment necessary for scanning, digitizing and cataloging many of the tribe's most significant documents. The Virtual Library will serve as a source for educational programming to promote cultural literacy among tribal members.

## Other outreach efforts target various audiences

For the second year in a row, Univision Radio, the nation's largest Spanish-language radio broadcaster, aired Spanish-language public service announcements about the value of libraries and librarians. Launched at the September 2008 conference of REFORMA :the National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking, the "*en tu biblioteca*" campaign encourages members of the Latino community to use their local libraries. More about the campaign, which communicates how libraries create opportunities for Latino adults and their children by providing help from librarians and free public access to information, is available at its [Spanish-language website](#).

A new toolkit, "[Keys to Engaging Older Adults @ your library](#)," responds to the concerns of librarians across the country who provide services for the ever-growing older-adult population in their communities. In addition to a print version, the toolkit is available for free download, both in regular and large print formats. The toolkit has been requested by more than 600 libraries to help in the expansion and improvement of library services to older Americans.

In April 2010, ALA Editions published "Public Library Services for the Poor: Doing All We Can," by Leslie Edmonds Holt and Glen E. Holt, which shows how the five key action areas adopted by the ALA Council (diversity, equity of access, education and continuous learning, intellectual freedom and 21st-century literacy) apply to this disadvantaged population. The book, available at the [ALA Store](#), motivates librarians to use creative solutions to meet their needs.

The 13th Annual Diversity Fair, held at the 2010 ALA Annual Conference, showcased 28 participants celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The event, organized by the Office for Literacy and Outreach Services and sponsored by DEMCO, celebrates extraordinary examples of diversity in America's libraries and demonstrates possibilities for other libraries in search of "diversity-in-action" ideas.

In rural America, only 60 percent of households use broadband Internet service, according to a report released in February by the Department of Commerce. That is 10 percent less than urban households. In Thomasville, Ala. (population 4,422 in 2009), Gina Wilson, director of the public library, noticed that people would pull into the parking lot after hours to try to use the library's wireless signal, so she started leaving it on all night. She even posted a sign on the library door with the password: "guest."

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The [Leroy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund](#), founded in 1970 to help librarians who have been denied employment rights because of their defense of intellectual freedom or because of discrimination, marked its 40th anniversary during the 2010 ALA Annual Conference at a celebratory dinner at the world-famous Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C.

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On the other hand, an era ended for blind listeners in Utah when, after 34 years, the Utah State Library for the Blind and Disabled's radio reading service went off the air in April, a victim of budget reductions. About 100 volunteers contributed, many reading Utah's daily newspapers from cartoons to obituaries, as part of a menu of programs that included "Cooking in the Dark" and old-time radio shows. The library provided blind listeners with a special radio that allowed them to hear the broadcast, which was not accessible by the general public.

## **Washington Scene**

### **In a nail-biter, Congress passes Library Services and Technology Act**

After almost a full year of anxious anticipation on the part of the American Library Association and library grassroots supporters, Congress, in December 2010, passed the Museum and Library Services Act, which includes the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and reauthorizes all of the programs under the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). President Obama signed MLSA into law on Dec.22, 2010.

The LSTA is the only federal program exclusively for libraries.

This down-to-the-wire Congressional accomplishment was a major legislative victory for America's libraries — though it did not come without the diligence of the library community's grassroots network and collaboration among ALA staff and leaders in Congress, primarily library champion U.S. Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI), who authored the Senate bill. However, Congress failed to take the next steps in the federal funding process by year's end: passing the fiscal 2011 budget bills, including funding for the LSTA and the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries Program.

In fact, none of the 12 fiscal 2011 budget bills were passed by the end of the 111th Congress. Instead, faced with the government running out of money and shutting down, Congress passed a continuing resolution until February 2011 under which all federal programs, including the LSTA and Improving Literacy Through School Libraries, will be funded at the fiscal 2010 levels, leaving the duty of passing the fiscal 2011 budget to the 112th Congress.

While the LSTA can fund all types of libraries, it is currently the only annual source of funding in the federal budget for academic and public libraries. The LSTA has several titles supporting unique library programs, the largest of which is a program that provides funds to every state library agency (including the District of Columbia and the U.S. Territories), administered and distributed by the IMLS on a population-based formula. Each state librarian determines how to distribute the LSTA funds based on state needs.

When President Obama released his fiscal 2011 budget request to Congress in February 2010, he asked that the LSTA be funded at the fiscal 2010 level, \$213.5 million. ALA continues its efforts to convince Congress to appropriate \$300 million to the LSTA in both fiscal 2011 and fiscal 2012, a position that won the support of 35 Senators and 22 Representatives during the 111th Congress.

### **Libraries authorized as relocation facilities during disasters and emergencies**

After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI) worked with the ALA Washington Office to secure a change to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) policy that will recognize and fund libraries as temporary relocation facilities during major disasters and emergencies under the FEMA Public Assistance Program.

Section 403 of the decades-old and much-amended legislation known as the Stafford Act authorizes FEMA to provide federal assistance to meet immediate threats to life and property resulting from a major disaster. Section 403 allows for the provision of temporary facilities for schools and other essential community services when it is related to saving lives and protecting and preserving property or public health and safety.

“In times of disaster, libraries strive to ensure the public has access to the resources and services they need, but prior to this policy change libraries were specifically excluded from the list of eligible public facilities,” Emily Sheketoff, executive director of the ALA Washington Office, said. The inclusion of libraries ensures that the public “will continue to find the critical resources they need in times of an emergency at their local library.”

Reed was also enthusiastic about the change.

“This is a common-sense change that I have been calling for since Hurricane Katrina,” he said. “It will help libraries in need relocate so they can keep serving the public in the wake of a flood or other emergency. Libraries are vital information hubs, and in the aftermath of a disaster, libraries take on an even greater community role, providing free and easy access to technology and essential information.”

FEMA’s list of eligible public places now includes facilities for police, fire and emergency services, medical care, education, libraries, utilities and other essential community services.

## **Libraries help overcome challenges to home broadband use, study says**

Libraries and other community organizations fill the gap between low home adoption of broadband use and high community demand and provide a number of other critical services, such as training and support, according to a study carried out by the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) for the Federal Communications Commission.

The FCC commissioned the study to help inform its members’ understanding of barriers to broadband adoption and to shape the National Broadband Plan, which was due to Congress under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The study, “[Broadband Adoption in Low-Income Communities](#),” was formally unveiled in March 2010 at an ALA-hosted event in the Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill. The study draws on some 170 interviews of non-adopters, community access providers and other intermediaries conducted across the US in late 2009 and early 2010.

The study noted that broadband access is increasingly a requirement of socio-economic inclusion, not an outcome of it — and that residents of low-income communities know this. According to the study, support organizations often help users gain the skills that lead to confident, sustainable home broadband adoption. Yet these support organizations are under severe economic pressure to meet community connectivity needs.

The presenters discussed the contexts for understanding barriers to broadband adoption. These vary from price to skill and language differences to the challenges of community-based organizations, such as libraries, in providing broadband access for those without it at home as well as instruction on using the Internet.

The SSRC study found that public libraries are critical anchor institutions that enable social and economic inclusion in many communities due to their role as primary providers of broadband access, training and support for those without broadband at home. It suggests that supporting the mission with core technology funding and specialized staff is an efficient way of mitigating the high costs of digital exclusion.

Presenters at the event included John Horrigan, consumer research director, FCC; Mark Lloyd, associate general counsel and chief diversity officer, FCC; Dharma Dailey and Amelia Bryne, independent researchers, SSRC; and Sheketoff.

## **Libraries gain broadband stimulus funding under Recovery Act**

Hundreds of libraries secured broadband stimulus funding in 2010 under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), passed by Congress in February 2009. The act appropriated \$7.2 billion for broadband to the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS), and the ALA worked hard in 2009 to inform the implementation of the two programs and to guide the association's membership and the library community with their applications for broadband funding.

In September 2010, Commerce Secretary Gary Locke announced 14 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act investments to help bridge the technological divide, create jobs and improve education and public safety in communities across the country. The investments, totaling \$206.8 million in grants, were the final awards in a program to increase broadband Internet access and adoption with the goals of enhancing the quality of life for Americans and laying the groundwork for sustainable economic growth.

“In a globalized 21st century economy, when you don't have regular access to high-speed Internet, you don't have access to all the educational, business and employment opportunities it provides,” Locke said. And Lawrence E. Strickling, assistant secretary for communications and information and administrator of the NTIA, emphasized libraries in the announcement.

“In total, we are investing in 233 strong projects that reach every state,” Strickling said.

“Most are ‘middle mile’ networks that expand high-speed Internet availability to communities and connect key institutions, such as schools, libraries, and hospitals. This focus allows us to get the biggest bang for every grant dollar by addressing communities’ broadband problems while creating jobs and facilitating sustainable economic growth.”

The ARRA allotment to the RUS helped fund investments in 30 states that created jobs by building and enhancing libraries in 129 rural communities nationwide. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack confirmed that his department understands the critical role libraries play in all communities, especially rural areas.

“Libraries are the centerpiece of rural community life, but in many cases they need additional funding to provide rural residents with computer access, modern equipment and new training and educational opportunities,” Vilsack said. “These Recovery Act investments in our nation’s libraries will serve rural America for generations to come.”

## **Tech needs of libraries addressed in National Broadband Plan**

The technology needs of libraries were among the issues addressed in the National Broadband Plan (NBP), which was released in March 2010. The plan recommends that the federal government and state governments develop an institutional framework that will help anchor institutions obtain broadband connectivity, training, applications and services.

The plan encourages the federal government to take steps to enable these and other community institutions to better utilize their connectivity to improve the quality of life of all people. Specifically, the plan recommends that:

- Congress consider providing more public funds to create a Digital Literacy Corps to conduct training and outreach in non-adopting communities.
- Congress, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) make a commitment to increase the capacity of institutions that act as partners in building the digital literacy skills of people within local communities.
- Congress consider providing more public funds to the IMLS to improve connectivity, enhance hardware and train personnel of libraries and other community-based organizations.
- The OMB, in consultation with the IMLS, develop guidelines to ensure that librarians and community-based organizations have the training they need to help patrons use next-generation e-government applications.
- Congress consider funding an Online Digital Literacy Portal.

The release of the plan spurred both legislative and regulatory activity, but legislative action was left to the new Congress, which convened in January.

## **More than 3,000 attend Library Advocacy Day, in person or virtually**

More than 2,000 participants attended the ALA’s Library Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill on June 29, 2010, and 1,053 more participated virtually. Activities included a rally on Capitol Hill,

meetings with advocates' elected officials and a virtual component in which participants emailed and wrote to their representatives in Congress. This event was nearly five times as large as any National Library Legislative Day event held in the past.

## **USA PATRIOT Act extended for three months**

Congress, in early February, gave itself three more months to consider provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act that help track security threats but have drawn fire from the library community and other defenders of privacy rights. [President Obama signed the bill](#) later in the month, before the provisions were to expire on Feb. 28. At issue are two powers established in the 2001 anti-terrorism legislation that allow law enforcement officials to set roving wiretaps to monitor multiple communication devices and to ask a special court for access to “any tangible thing” — including business and library records — that could be relevant to a terrorist threat. A third provision, from a 2004 intelligence act, gives the FBI court-approved rights for surveillance of non-American “lone wolf” suspects not known to be tied to specific terrorist groups.

## **New director at IMLS**

Susan H. Hildreth was sworn in as director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services in January after being confirmed by the Senate in December 2010. Previously, she was the city librarian of the Seattle Public Library; she had also served as California state librarian and deputy director and then city librarian at the San Francisco Public Library.

## **Policy brief explores effect of mobile devices on library services**

[“There’s an App for That! Libraries and Mobile Technology: An Introduction to Public Policy Considerations \(PDF\)”](#), a policy brief released by the ALA’s Office for Information Technology Policy, looks at how the adoption of mobile technology alters the traditional relationships between libraries and their users. Author Timothy Vollmer explores the challenges to reader privacy, issues of access to information in the digital age (including content ownership and licensing), digital rights management, and accessibility.

## **Intellectual Freedom**

### **Book removal sparks controversy and more challenges in Missouri schools**

Despite the efforts of a group of concerned citizens in Stockton, Mo., the Stockton R-1 School Board voted last fall to ban Sherman Alexie’s “The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian” from both the high school curriculum and the library. Complaints leveled against this National

Book Award–winning young-adult novel focused on profanity and sexual content, with the board judging it to be “pervasively vulgar” for some students. The ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) supported the community members who protested the book’s removal — OIF Deputy Director Deborah Caldwell-Stone even traveled to Stockton to attend the September hearing in person — and also partnered with other national free-speech groups to urge the school board to reverse its decision.

The controversy in Stockton also triggered an outbreak of challenges to other books in the region. Shortly after the Stockton decision, several titles were challenged at a school in nearby Republic, Mo., ranging from textbooks to the novels “Speak,” by Laurie Halse Anderson, “Twenty Boy Summer”, by Sarah Ockler and “Slaughterhouse Five,” by Kurt Vonnegut. Anderson and Ockler — along with a community of librarians, teachers and readers — helped mobilize an online protest that developed into the “Speak Loudly” anti-censorship campaign. This outpouring of support led directly into Banned Books Week 2010 and its message, “Think for yourself and let others do the same.”

## **Thousands rally nationwide to celebrate freedom to read**

Libraries and bookstores nationwide battled censorship and celebrated the freedom to read during [Banned Books Week](#), Sept. 25–Oct. 2, 2010, with thousands of people at rallies reading from banned or challenged books and discussing the impact censorship has on civil liberties.

Each year, the American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom receives hundreds of reports on book challenges, which are formal written requests to remove a book from a library or classroom because of an objection to the book’s content. There have been more than 11,000 attempts recorded since the OIF began compiling information on book challenges in 1990.

“Not every book is right for each reader,” said ALA President Roberta Stevens, “but we should have the right to think for ourselves and allow others to do the same.

“The founders of this nation protected freedom of expression based on their conviction that a diversity of views and ideas is necessary for a vital, functioning democracy,” Stevens said. “Danger does not arise from viewpoints other than our own; the danger lies in allowing others to decide for us and our communities which reading materials are appropriate.”

This is the OIF’s Top Ten List of Frequently Challenged Books for 2010:

1. “And Tango Makes Three” — Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson.
2. “The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian” — Sherman Alexie.
3. “Brave New World” — Aldous Huxley.
4. “Crank” — Ellen Hopkins.
5. “The Hunger Games” — Suzanne Collins.
6. “Lush “— Natasha Friend.
7. “What My Mother Doesn’t Know” — Sonya Sones.
8. “Nickel and Dime” — Barbara Ehrenreich.
9. “Revolutionary Voices” — edited by Amy Sonnie.

10. “Twilight” — Stephenie Meyer.

### ***Revolutionary Voices* stilled in New Jersey school and public libraries**

A complaint from a resident of Burlington County, N.J., led to the removal of a critically acclaimed anthology written by young people, for young people, from both the high school and public libraries last summer. “*Revolutionary Voices: A Multicultural Queer Youth Anthology*,” named as one of the best adult books for high school students by *School Library Journal* in 2001, was banned from the Rancocas Valley Regional High School in May and from the Burlington County Library System in July. The complaint came from a local member of Glenn Beck’s 9/12 Project, who called the book “pervasively vulgar, obscene, and inappropriate.” (The removal of this book from both school and public libraries was particularly significant because the book is out of print and usually sells for more than \$50.)

The OIF worked closely with Rancocas Valley school librarian Dee Venuto in opposing the ban, and the controversy inspired local artists to stage a series of theatrical readings from *Revolutionary Voices*, drawing attention to the book’s removal and to the strong community of free-speech advocates who opposed the libraries’ decisions.

Whatever the challenges, freedom-to-read boosters could take heart in the vociferous public disapproval expressed when WikiLeaks’ release of diplomatic cables in late 2010 led the Library of Congress to block the WikiLeaks site for LC staff as well as patrons.

### **Alliance Defense Fund targets library meeting-room policies**

The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF), a Christian-rights legal organization, initiated a letter-writing campaign to libraries and schools around the country that targeted library policies that restrict the use of libraries’ meeting rooms for religious services. The ADF advised recipients that it believes their meeting-room policy is unconstitutional and that it would initiate legal action if the library did not change its policy.

The OIF responded by providing librarians and library trustees with answers to their questions about meeting-room policies and the ADF’s letter, including copies of model meeting-room policies, information about relevant court opinions and advice on reviewing and revising meeting-room policies in light of recommended best practices. (For more on religion and public libraries, see “[Religion in American Libraries: Questions and Answers](#),” a new document by the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee.

### **Libraries celebrate first-ever Choose Privacy Week**

As Americans grappled with privacy issues such as the use of body scanners at airports, hacked databases and involuntary disclosure for users of some online services, the OIF launched [Choose Privacy Week](#), a national education and outreach campaign encouraging libraries to host

conversations on privacy issues in their communities. OIF Director Barbara Jones noted that as people share more of their personal details, privacy becomes more commodity than absolute right. “Facebook, for example, is a great social communication tool, but there are compromises and trade-offs with it,” Jones said. Libraries around the country participated in the inaugural Choose Privacy Week, held May 2-8, 2010, by hosting events, mounting displays, sharing information online, and finding other ways to engage their users. The ALA developed print and online resources — including a video that was viewed online more than 18,000 times — for libraries to introduce and generate dialogue about privacy issues.

## **ACLU and Yale challenge LGBT website filtering in high schools**

The American Civil Liberties Union and Yale Law School’s LGBT Litigation Clinic have teamed up to confront unconstitutional Internet filtering at public high schools nationwide. The groups have launched a campaign called “Don’t Filter Me,” which asks high school students to log on to certain websites with gay, lesbian bisexual, and transgender content to see if those sites are blocked by their schools. The ACLU is asking students to report any censorship of these sites.

## **Library of Congress action on WikiLeaks provokes sharp reaction**

Reaction poured in from all over the world after the Library of Congress confirmed on Dec. 3, 2010, that it was blocking access from all LC computers to the WikiLeaks website in order to prevent unauthorized downloading of classified records. The move was ordered by the Office of Management and Budget and affected other federal government departments as well as the LC. It came after WikiLeaks released classified diplomatic cables in November. Within a week, the [LC posting had garnered more than 150 responses](#), many from commenters self-identifying as librarians. Some quoted the First Amendment or the ALA’s Library Bill of Rights in condemning the website ban. “What next?” chided one commenter. “Will LC pull the Pentagon Papers from the stacks and burn them with all the other banned books in a bonfire in the main reading room?”

The LC action was a hot topic at the ALA’s Midwinter Meeting in January, and the ALA Council passed a resolution that, while not mentioning WikiLeaks, defended the principle of public access to government information. (The ALA’s Intellectual Freedom Committee said the resolution was crafted “to focus on the larger issues of classification, whistleblowing, and access to government information rather than limiting our concerns to one group.”)

## **Officials back off, and “Sicko” wins a screening**

In January, the Enfield (Conn.) Public Library, threatened with loss of library funding from its Town Council and mayor, canceled a screening of Michael Moore’s documentary “Sicko” in the library — but after vigorous debate and strong statements of intellectual freedom principles, notably from the Connecticut Library Association, town officials allowed the film to be shown after all. [ALA President Roberta Stevens said](#) she was delighted at their decision. “Public libraries exist as forums for ideas,” she said. “When people find materials or events they disagree

with or dislike in libraries, they are free to avoid those resources, or to choose others that are more appropriate for themselves and their families. But attempts to restrict access for others threaten the core values that enable us as Americans to live in a free society.”

### **“Quran read-out” a statement to the world**

Responding to threats by the head of a small church in Gainesville, Fla., that he planned to burn copies of the Quran on Sept. 11, 2010, Barbara Jones, director of the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom, and others staged a [“Quran read-out”](#) at ALA headquarters in Chicago. The event was conceived as a protest of the proposed action by the Rev. Terry Jones and ended up as a statement to the world that librarians value reading, learning and tolerance over book-burning, fear, and ignorance. Jones made her statement to about 50 people who showed up for the event, which featured readings from the Quran by *American Libraries* Editor Leonard Kniffel; Gerald Hankerson, of the Council on American-Islamic Relations; and Kiran Ansari, of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago. The Gainesville church leader later burned a copy of the Qur’an which [led to violence in Afghanistan](#).

### **Librarians support prisoners’ right to read**

Being behind bars should not bar one from reading, the ALA asserted in 2010 with the adoption by the ALA Council of [“Prisoners’ Right to Read: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights.”](#) The document asserts the ALA’s support for incarcerated individuals’ right to choose and read a full range of library resources for information, education, recreation and self-improvement and addresses a need for guidance on intellectual freedom in prison libraries. In the past, the U.S. Bureau of Prisons has taken actions such as the Standardized Chapel Library Project, which burdened prisoners’ First Amendment right to receive information and exercise religious freedoms by requiring the removal of library materials that did not fall within a narrowly defined class of approved religious materials.

The “Prisoners’ Right to Read” interpretation is intended to help correctional-facility librarians in their efforts to provide prisoners with the widest possible access to materials. As the document states, “Learning to be free requires access to a wide range of knowledge, and suppression of ideas does not prepare the incarcerated of any age for life in a free society,” the document says. “Even those individuals that a lawful society chooses to imprison permanently deserve access to information, to literature, and to a window on the world.”

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## Feedback and contact information

**The American Library Association's Public Information Office coordinated the preparation of this report with contributions from the following ALA units:**

- American Association of School Librarians
- *American Libraries* magazine, including *AL Direct*
- Association of College & Research Libraries
- Office for Diversity
- Office for Government Relations
- Office for Information Technology Policy
- Office for Intellectual Freedom
- Office for Library Advocacy
- Office for Literacy and Outreach Services
- Office for Research and Statistics
- Public Information Office
- Public Library Association
- Washington Office
- Young Adult Library Services Association

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