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SCHOOL OF INFORMATION  
AND LIBRARY SCIENCE

# Taxpayer Return-on-Investment (ROI) in Pennsylvania Public Libraries



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**September, 2006**

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# INTRODUCTION

Pennsylvania Public Libraries are used extensively by citizens, tourists and organizations such as schools, universities and colleges, businesses, hospitals and other non-profit institutions. While an important use of public libraries is for recreation or entertainment through library collections, services and programs, the majority of citizen use involves:

- addressing personal or family information needs such as dealing with health issues; solving problems; learning about culture, religion or genealogy; and keeping up with current events.
- formal educational use by students and teachers at all levels;
- lifelong informal learning by pre-school children and adults such as retirees and others interested in their continued learning; and
- supporting work or job-related information needs such as research and legal, finance, and marketing activities, etc.

Organization libraries cooperate fully with public libraries and benefit substantially through such cooperation.

To serve the essential information needs of citizens and organizations, Pennsylvania public libraries and their branches provide a complete range of materials, services, programs and facilities, all of which are extensively used. The public libraries have enhanced their capabilities through Internet access to the World Wide Web from internal user workstations, and remote visitor access through PA Power Library and other remote access services. These new capabilities are extensively used and highly valued by public library users for the many purposes mentioned above.

Pennsylvania public libraries are used extensively because the information and services they provide are found to be trustworthy, the best source available to users, and convenient or easy to use. Furthermore, users rate information from library resources or services as high in quality, trustworthiness, currency, and completeness. As a result of using this information, users save time and money. They also indicate that they found answers to most of their questions and that the information led to favorable outcomes. Pennsylvania public libraries serve their citizens directly and through other libraries, and they clearly do this very well.

All Pennsylvania citizens and taxpayers, users or not, benefit from public libraries through their valuable contribution to education, the economy, tourism, quality of life, and so on. Users pay for public libraries through their taxes, but even more so through the time and money they expend in going to the library and using the services. They would not expend these resources if the information obtained were not valuable to them. However, if there were no public libraries, citizens and organizational users would be faced with a much higher cost in terms of both time and money to obtain the needed information from alternative sources. Not only is there an economic return-on-investment to citizens and organization users, the surrounding communities receive an economic return in ripple effects from salaries and wages paid to staff, library purchases made, and a halo effect from spending in the nearby community by visitors during their trips to the public libraries.

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## Background of the Study

In August 2005, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Office of Commonwealth Libraries issued a Request for Application entitled “Taxpayer Return on Investment in Pennsylvania Public Libraries”. The Request for Applications specified that: “The study will determine the economic benefit of public libraries for Pennsylvanians and to what extent citizens feel the public library contributes to their overall economic well-being.” A contract was awarded in December 2005 to the School of Information and Library Science (SILS), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The findings of this study highlight both economic and other benefits achieved through use of public libraries.

The project involves four integrated surveys and the use of a statewide economic input-output model (REMI). Annual Pennsylvania Library Statistics provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Office of Commonwealth Libraries are also used. The four surveys<sup>1</sup> are as follows:

- a state-wide household telephone survey of adults 18 and over. This Random Digit Dial survey resulted in 1,128 complete or partial interviews,
- an in-library survey of 2,614 visitors in a sample of 19 representative public libraries and their branches,
- a survey of 226 school, university and college, business and non-profit organization librarians, and
- a follow-up survey of 112 public libraries.

The first two surveys were designed to obtain information concerning public library use, reasons for use, outcomes of use and data used to determine the value of public library services. The third survey established the extent to which other types of libraries use public library services and also provided data contributing to the value of public libraries. The fourth survey of public libraries obtained information not provided elsewhere that is used in the REMI economic input-output model. These surveys were all conducted in Spring 2006.

This report provides overall study results concerning the extent of in-library and remote use through the Internet, characteristics of those who use Pennsylvania public libraries, what services are used, factors that affect use, and the purposes for which the public libraries are used. Estimates are also provided for what public library users currently pay to use the public libraries in terms of their time and money (e.g., for travel and parking). Of particular importance are the consequences of not having public libraries on users and local communities. This economic contingent valuation is also presented. The REMI economic results are also presented. All estimates and valuations cover one year.

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<sup>1</sup> The four surveys were conducted and processed by University of Pittsburgh, University Center for Social and Urban Research in cooperation with UNC, SILS.



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# SUMMARY

## What Users Pay for Public Library Information and Services

Visitors pay to use public libraries in their time to go to and from libraries and the time they spend in them. They travel to libraries in many ways such as walking or biking, driving, or taking public transportation or taxis. Some of these modes of transportation cost money for fares and parking fees. Placing an economic value on visitors' time and adding in the other costs incurred suggests that visitors pay about \$574 million for library information and services. They also pay an additional \$109 million in their time using the Internet remotely to access library information and services. They would not expend this time and money if they did not consider library information and services to be worth at least \$683 million to them.

## Contingent Valuation of Pennsylvania Public Libraries

One economic method for estimating taxpayer return on investment in public libraries is contingent valuation. Contingent valuation is a common tool used to evaluate non-priced goods and services by examining the economic implications of not having them. This study focuses on the cost to use alternative sources of information and services currently provided by public libraries (should users choose to use them) and the economic loss to communities if public libraries no longer existed.

If there were no public libraries in Pennsylvania, current users would be affected in various ways. To determine how they would be affected, we asked in-person and remote access visitors what they would do to obtain the information they derived from their last library use. Some said they would not bother to do anything. Some said they needed the information, but did not know where else to go to obtain it. Others said they would use another source such as a store, another person, or academic library, etc. We then asked the latter users what sources they would use to get the information and their estimate of the time and money to use the alternative source. The total estimated cost to use alternative sources is found to be \$1,647 million. This compares with \$683 million that public library users currently spend in their time and money to use public libraries.

- **Thus, it would cost public library users \$964 million more to obtain needed or desired information if there were no public libraries (i.e., net benefit).**

Some information obtained from the public library saves users time and money such as in performing work, making household repairs, or purchasing a product at a lower price.

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When such information is needed, but users do not know where else to go, they would lose the savings provided by such information.

- **Library users would lose \$84 million by not knowing where to go to obtain needed information.**

In addition to extensive additional costs to users, if there were no public libraries the local economy would lose as well. Library staff wages and salaries would be lost to the economy, and in-state library purchases of publications and other goods and services would also be lost.

- **Library wages and salaries lost to the economy amount to \$180 million.**
- **Library in-state purchases lost to the economy amount to \$68 million.**

The public libraries host gift shops, vending machines, copying machines, and other services that are operated by non-library vendors and others. The revenue of these services would also be lost to the local communities.

- **The extent of this loss to the economy is \$1 million.**

Library visitors often use local shops, restaurants, and other services before or after their trip to the library. Some revenue to these services (i.e., a “halo” effect) would be lost if there were no public libraries. Based on a study in the U.K., about 23 percent of the total revenue is likely to be lost to the local communities.

- **The lost “halo” effect is estimated to be \$80 million.**

If there were no public libraries in Pennsylvania, the total economic loss to users and the local economy is estimated to be \$1,377 million. Pennsylvania taxpayers contribute \$249 million to public libraries through local, state and federal taxes.

- **Thus, the Pennsylvania taxpayer return on investment (ROI) in public library is 5.5 to 1 (\$1,377÷\$249 million).<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup> The cost to users is based on a dollar value of their time. The literature on how to derive this value varies a great deal. Some say that the median income of users could be the basis. Using this approach the ROI would be 5.8 to 1. We chose to refine the value of people’s time by the different purposes of use: personal, work-related, teaching, student use, and so on, which yielded the 5.5 to 1 ROI.

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## REMI Estimate of Return on Investment

The existence of Pennsylvania public libraries causes an economic ripple effect that increases Gross Regional Product (GRP) in the Commonwealth. An economic input-output model (REMI) provides a means of estimating the impact of public libraries on other economic sectors over time. This model extends economic analysis beyond actual users of the libraries to a set of direct, indirect, and induced effects of the libraries.

Results of the REMI analysis indicate that the GRP increases by \$3.79 per dollar of public funding for public libraries. The public libraries yield a net impact of \$3.14 of GRP per dollar of public funding.

## Use of Pennsylvania Public Libraries

A total of 474 public libraries served a population of nearly 12 million Pennsylvanians in 2006. Of 9.1 million adults, 4.7 million (51.6%) are found to have visited a public library in the previous 12 months and 1.2 million (13.2%) adults indicated that they connected to the library remotely.

All told there are estimated to be 40.8 million in-person visits, represented by the following types of visitors:

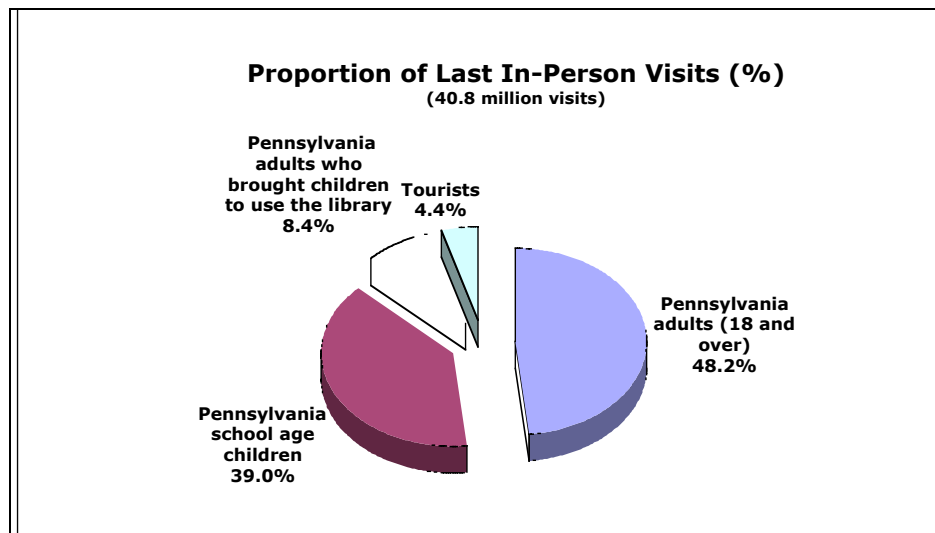
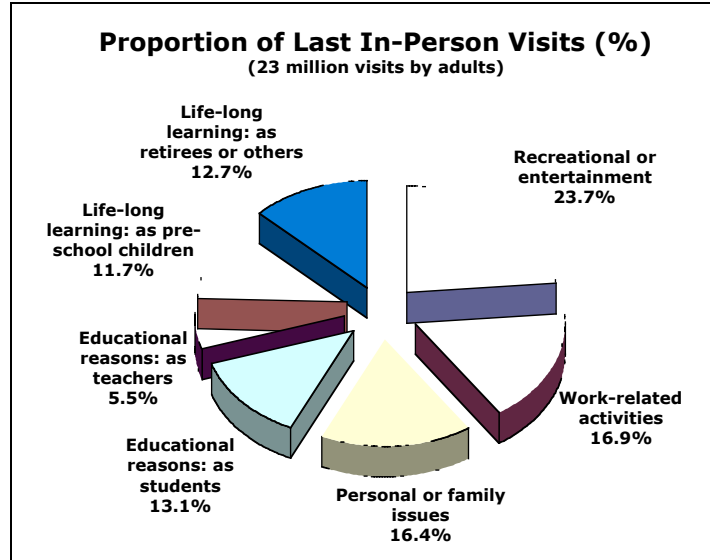


Figure 1: Type of In-Person Visitors

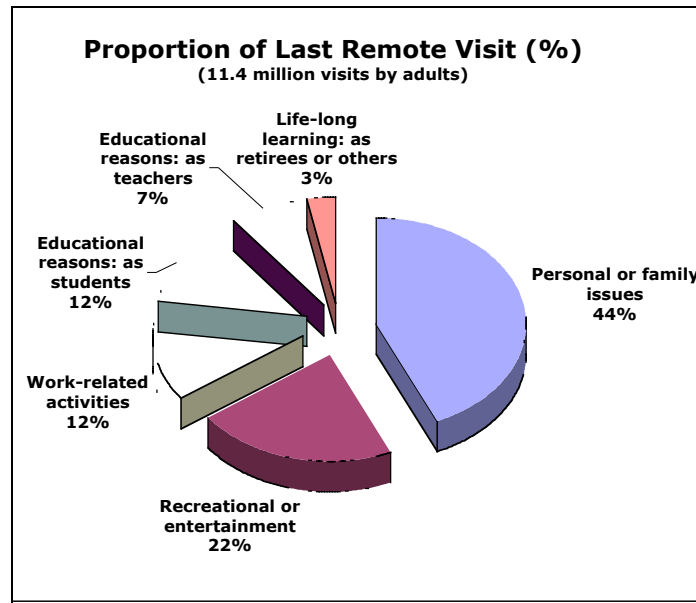
The public libraries are visited by adults for many purposes such as recreation or entertainment, to deal with personal or family issues, educational reasons, work-related activities, or life-long learning. The proportion (%) of all in-person visits that are for each purpose are as follows:



**Figure 2: Purpose of Last In-Person Visit by Adults**

By summing all life-long learning visits, teacher visits and student visits, we find that approximately 43% of all visits to the public library were education-related.

Adults are estimated to connect to public libraries through the Internet about 11.4 million times, or 22 percent of all visits (i.e., in-person and remote). The proportion (%) of all remote visits that are for each purpose are as follows:



**Figure 3: Purpose of Last Remote Visit by Adults**

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**Recreation or entertainment** is achieved through reading, viewing or listening using library materials or participating in programs. This leads to encouraging further reading, viewing, listening; learning something new; and broadening one's perspective on life; among other favorable outcomes

The five top **personal or family needs** addressed by public library visits are: to help with a health or wellness problem, to keep up with the news or current events, to help with a hobby or fixing something, for information on culture or religion, and to learn more about personal finances. Uses of library information for personal or family purposes result in favorable outcomes, usually answering all questions and leading to other useful sources.

**Teachers** use the libraries largely for continued learning, to keep up with the literature, to prepare for a class or lecture, and to prepare a paper. Some use the public library for home schooling. Most adult **students** are attending a university or college. They and other students use the public libraries to keep up with the literature, as a place to study, and to get information for a specific assignment. A few students are involved in virtual or distance education programs, with support provided through the public library services.

**Workplace or job-related needs** (other than teaching) addressed through visits to the public library largely include: research, gathering information about a person or organization, searching for marketing or sales information, finance or tax issues, and legal issues. The use is said to improve work, increase productivity, speed up work, and lead to other favorable outcomes.

Public libraries are also used for **life-long learning** by pre-school children, retirees, and others. Pre-school children are brought to public libraries to read, check out books, attend a children's program, and other activities. Retirees and others also indicate they continue learning through public library services or through virtual or distance education.

Generally, adult visitors choose public library resources or services to obtain needed information because they are convenient to use, they do not cost much in time or money, they are considered the best source of information, and their information can be trusted. Visitors highly rate trustworthiness, timeliness or currency, quality and completeness of information provided by public libraries.

In summary, the taxpayers in Pennsylvania contribute \$249 million in tax dollars to public libraries. In return Pennsylvania residents visit public libraries nearly 39 million times (and extend the courtesy to 1.8 million tourists) and they use public libraries 11.4 million times through remote Internet access. The libraries are used extensively for educational, personal and family, and work-related needs, in addition to recreational and entertainment purposes. The quality of life benefits of public library information and services are extensively documented by this study. Users believe that public libraries are particularly trustworthy and provide high quality and timely information to satisfy their widely varied information needs. Not only do users benefit through excellent services, they gain economically by not having to expend the time and monetary resources to locate and consume alternative, more expensive sources of information. Pennsylvania

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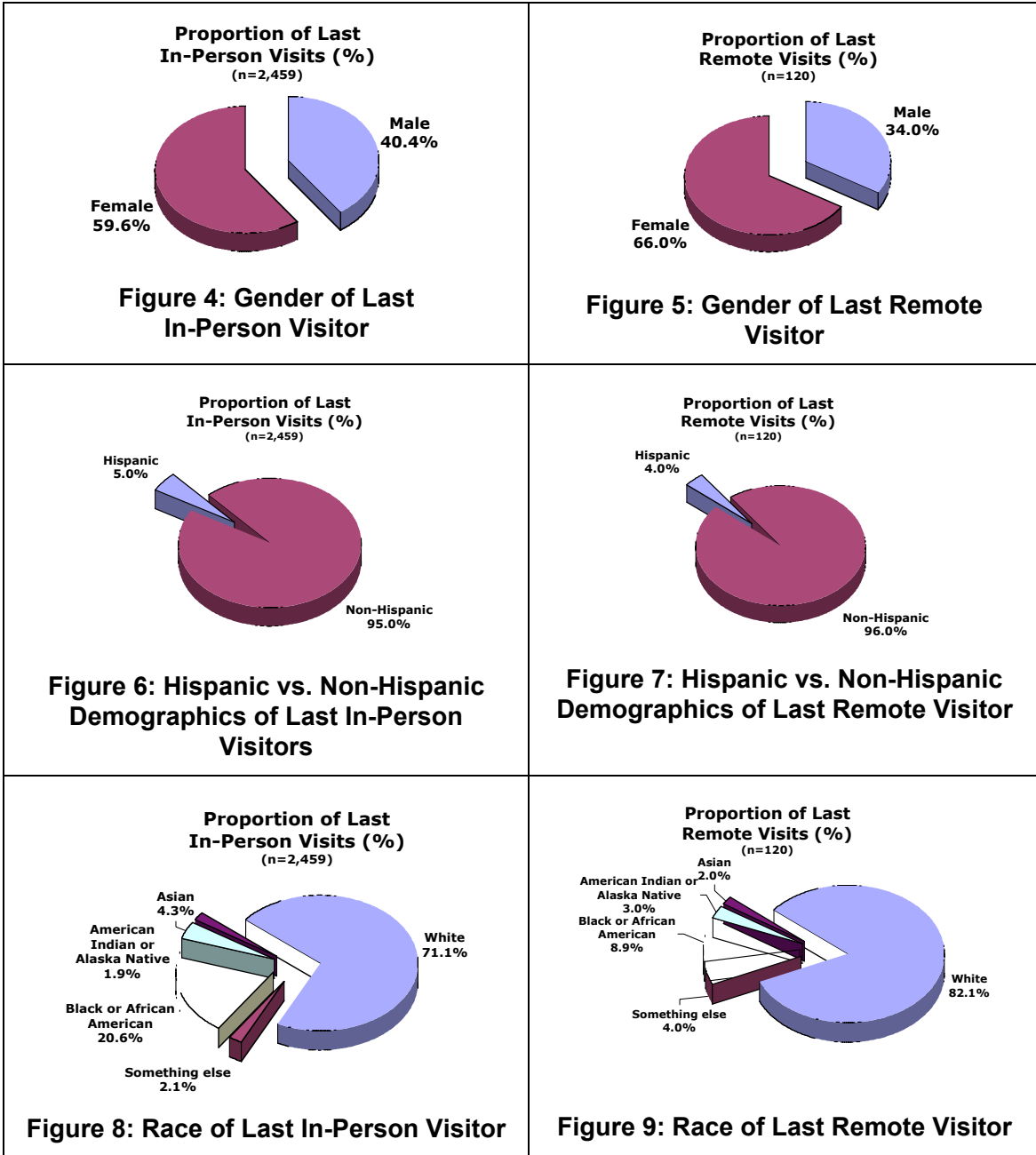
communities also benefit through the economic contribution of library salaries and wages, purchases of goods and services made in-state, and the 'halo' effect of spending by visitors during their visits.

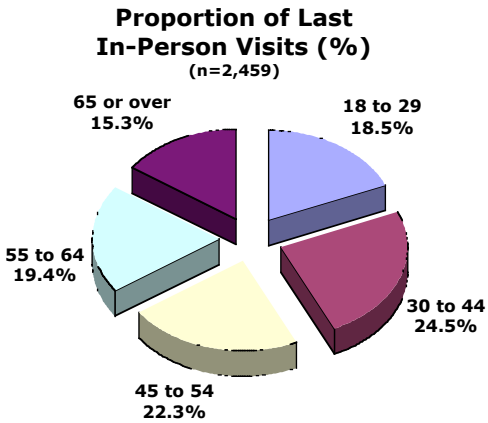
**Pennsylvania taxpayers can be confident that their direct and indirect return on their investment in public libraries is extensive at about 5.5 to 1.**

# DETAILED RESULTS

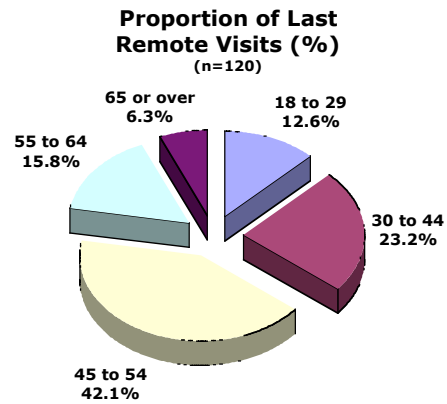
## User Demographics

Visits to public libraries are made by the many visitors, who display the following characteristics:

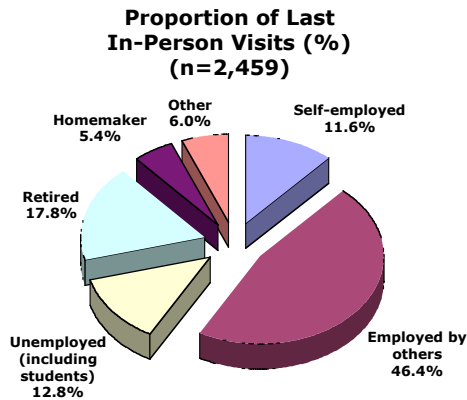




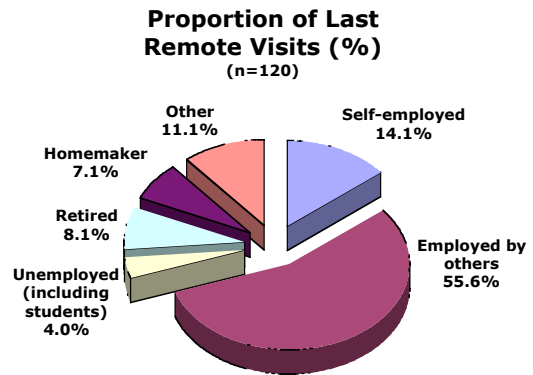
**Figure 10: Age of Last In-Person Visitor**



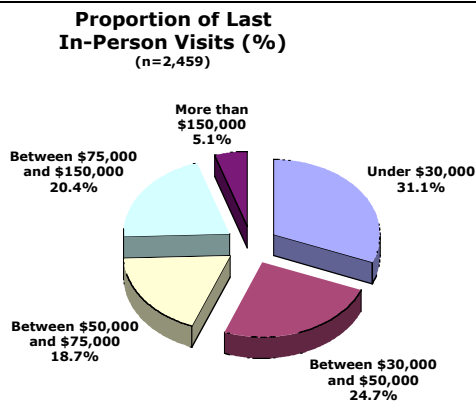
**Figure 11: Age of Last Remote Visitor**



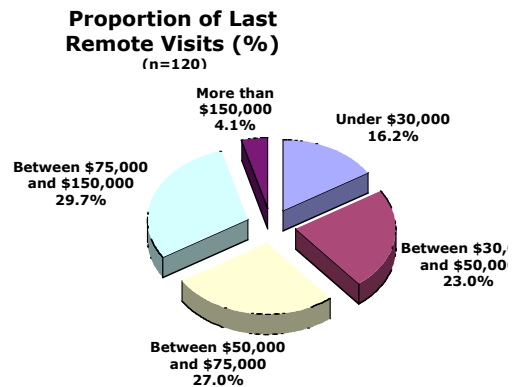
**Figure 12: Employment Status of Last In-Person Visitor**



**Figure 13: Employment Status of Last Remote Visitor**



**Figure 14: Household Income of Last In-Person Visitor**



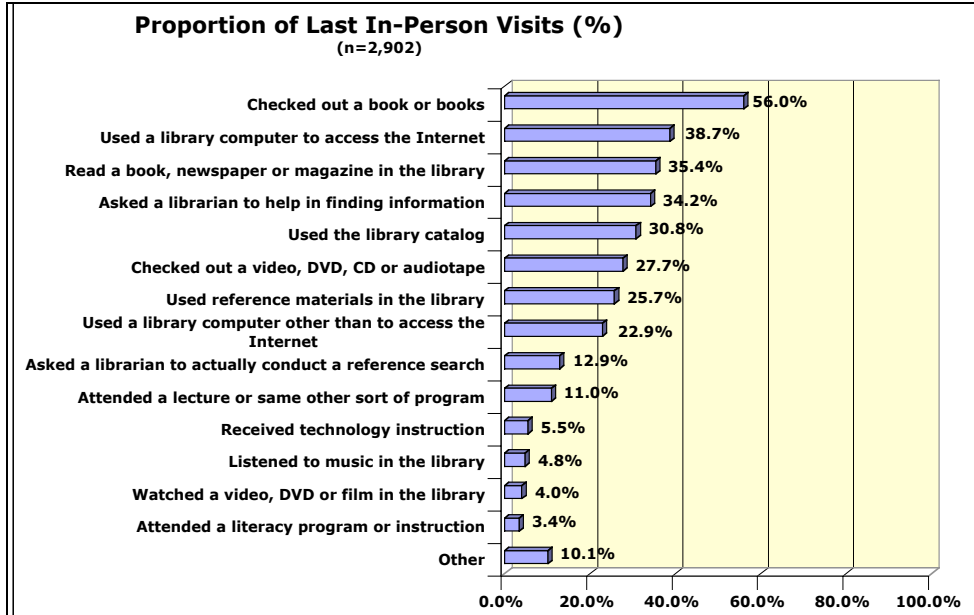
**Figure 15: Household Income of Last Remote Visitor**



## Description of Public Library Visits

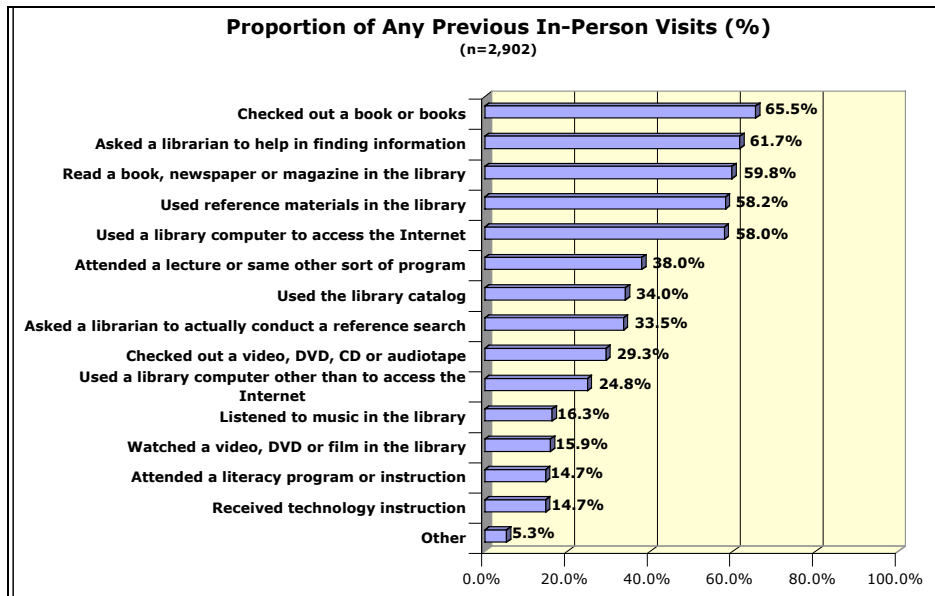
### In-person Public Library Services Used

Pennsylvania adults visit public libraries in-person about 23.0 million times to use the following services:



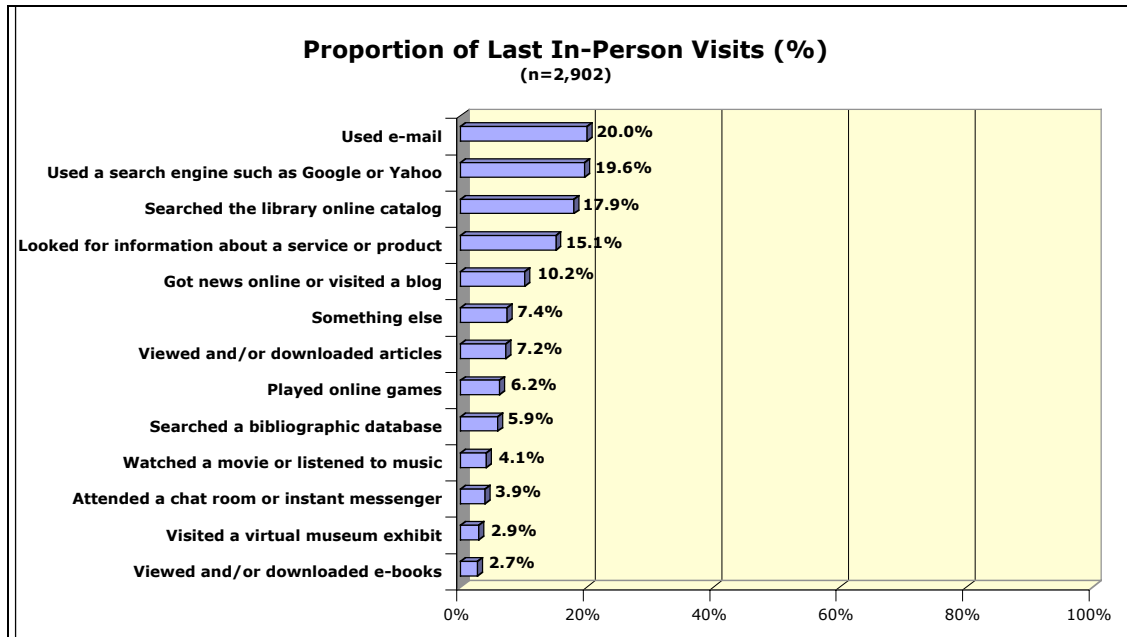
**Figure 16: Services Used During Last In-Person Visit**

Below is the proportion of times that services are ever used:

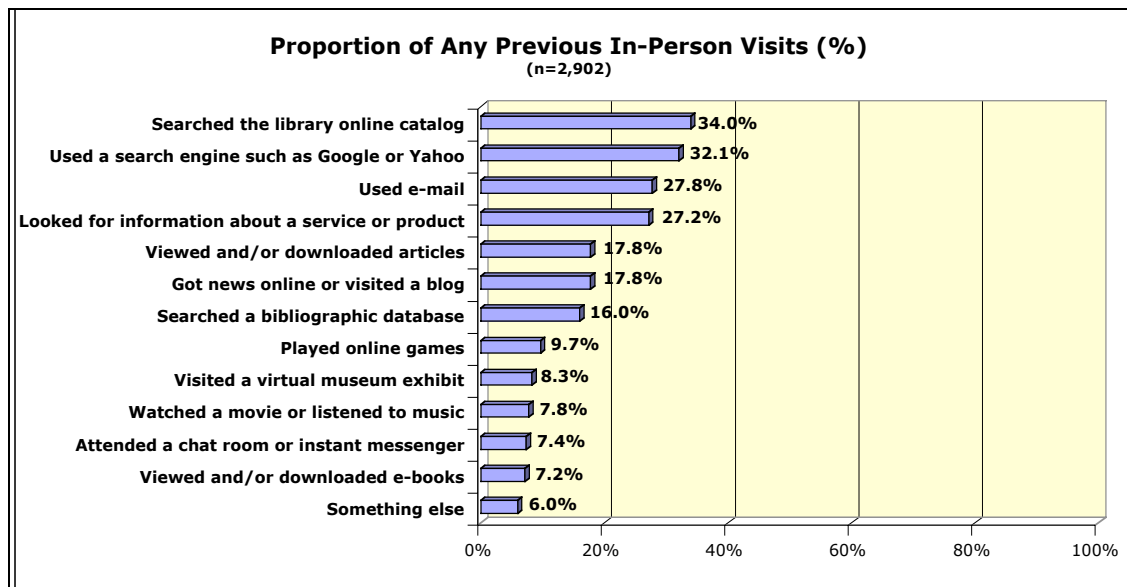


**Figure 17: Services Used During Any Previous In-Person Visit**

Adult accessed the Internet 8.9 million times from a library computer workstation for the following purposes:

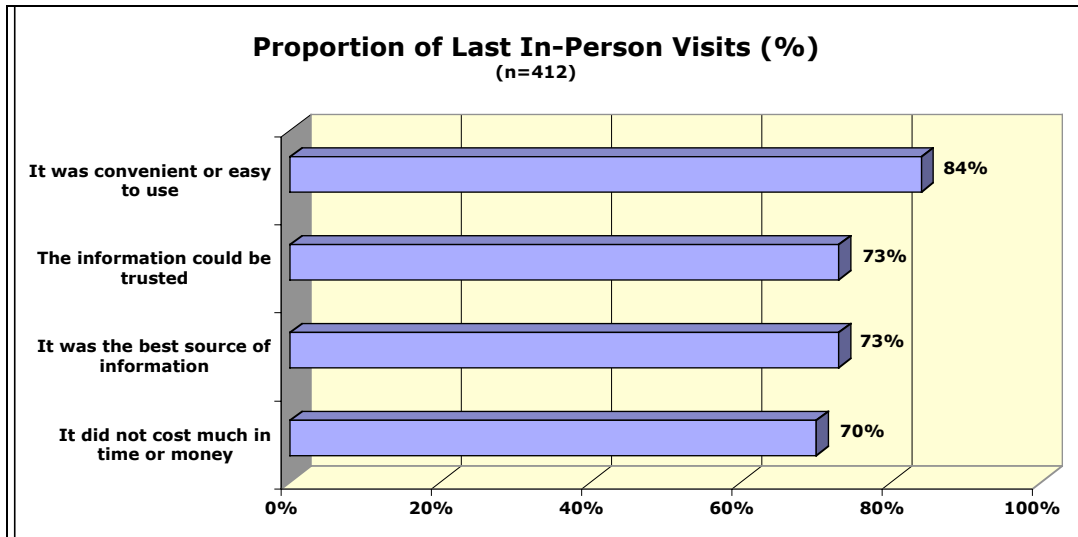


**Figure 18: In-Person Access to the Internet During Last In-Person Visit**



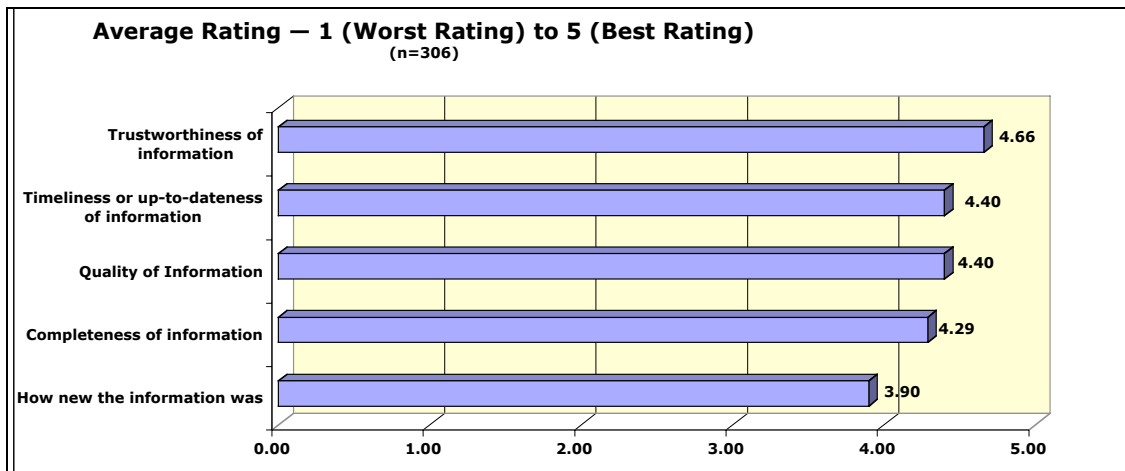
**Figure 19: In-Person Access to the Internet During Any Previous In-Person Visit**

## Reasons for In-Person Visits



**Figure 20: Reasons Public Libraries Are Used During In-Person Visit**

In-person visitors rated the attributes or characteristics of information provided to them during their in-person visits. Ratings were from the worst rating – 1 – to the best rating they could give – 5. The results of their ratings are as follows:

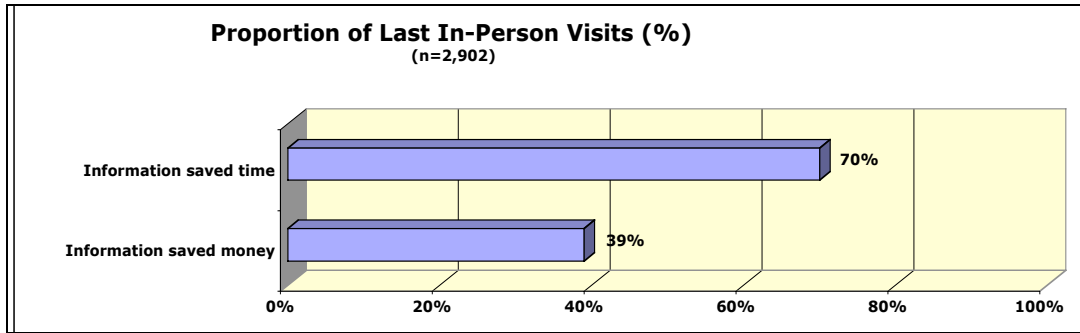


**Figure 21: Ratings of Attributes of Information Obtained During In-Person Visit**

## Outcomes from In-Person Visits

In-person visitors were asked how important the library information was in meeting their needs. Importance was rated from – 1 – not at all important to 5 – absolutely essential. In-person visitors rated importance 4.23 on average and in 50 percent of the visits, the information was said to be absolutely essential.

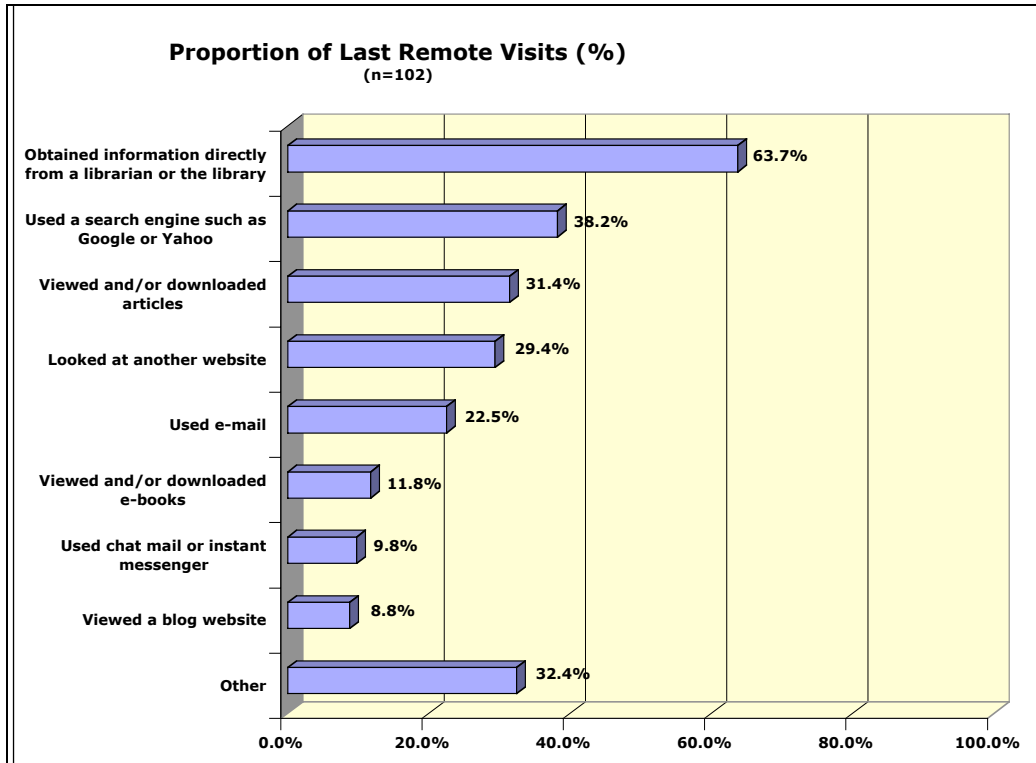
The information sometimes saved in-person visitor time in performing a task or saved money by allowing them to purchase a product or service less expensively. This was observed in the following in-person visits:



**Figure 22: Time and/or Money Saved from Information Obtained During In-Person Visits**

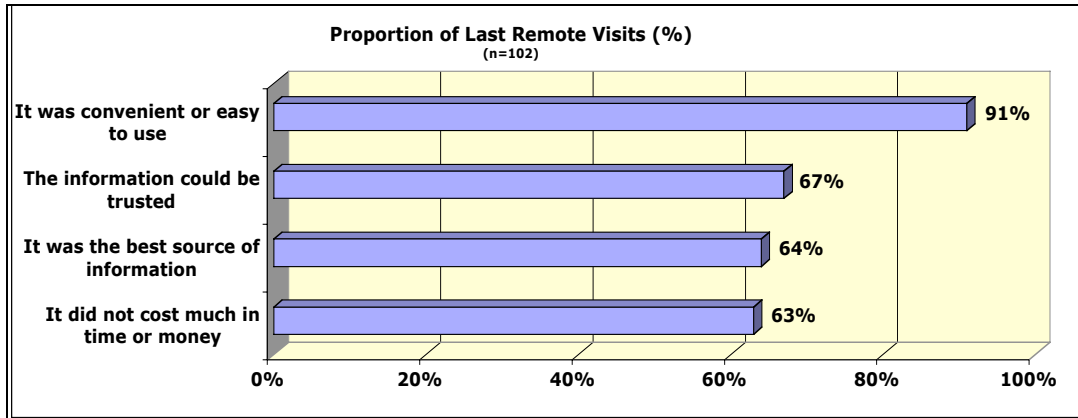
## Remote Public Library Services Used

Pennsylvania adults visited public libraries remotely about 11.4 million times. These visits involved the following services:



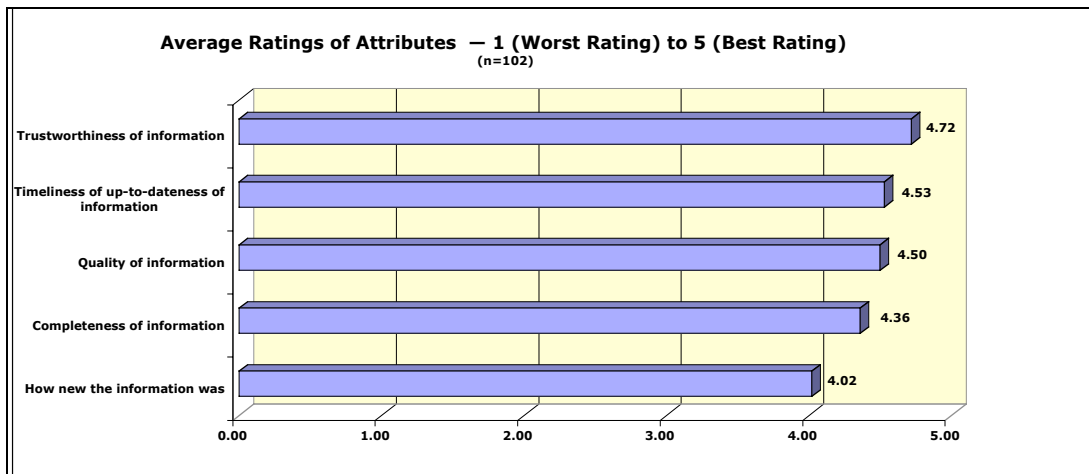
**Figure 23: Services Used During Last Remote Visit**

## Reasons for Remote Visits



**Figure 24: Reasons Public Libraries Are Used for Remote Visit**

Remote visitors rated the attributes or characteristics of information provided them in their remote visits. Ratings were from the worst rating – 1 – to the best rating they could give – 5. The results of their ratings are as follows:



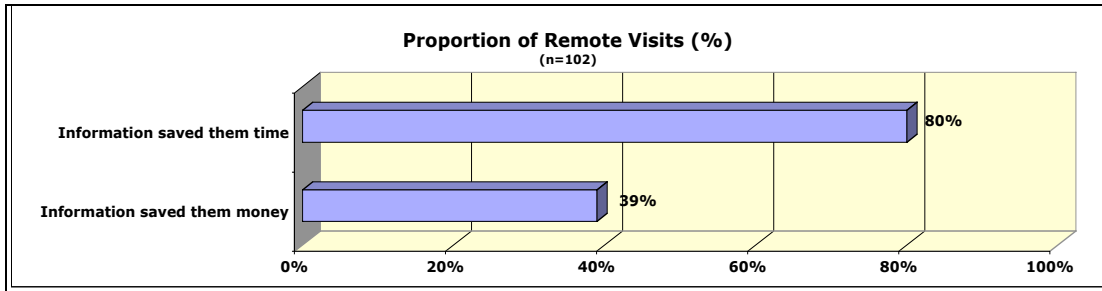
**Figure 25: Ratings of Attributes of Information Obtained During Remote Visit**

## Outcomes from Remote Visits

Remote visitors were asked how important the library information was in meeting their needs. Importance was rated from – 1 – not at all important to 5 – absolutely essential. Remote visitors rated importance 4.24 on average and in 53 percent of the visits, the information was said to be absolutely essential.

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The information sometimes saved remote visitor time in performing a task or saved money by allowing them to purchase a product or service less expensively. This was observed in the following remote visits:



**Figure 26: Time and Money Saved from Information Obtained During Last Remote Visit**

## Public Libraries Are Used for Recreation and Entertainment

A total of 11.9 million in-person visits to public libraries are for recreational or entertainment reading, viewing, listening or program participation, and an additional 3.4 million visits are made remotely through the Internet for these purposes. These visits help visitors learn something new, broaden their perspective in life and inspired them.

### Services Used for Recreation and Entertainment

For many in-person visits to the library for recreational and entertainment purposes, the visitors had something particular in mind (44%). The five most prevalent in-person uses of the public libraries for recreation or entertainment are as follows:

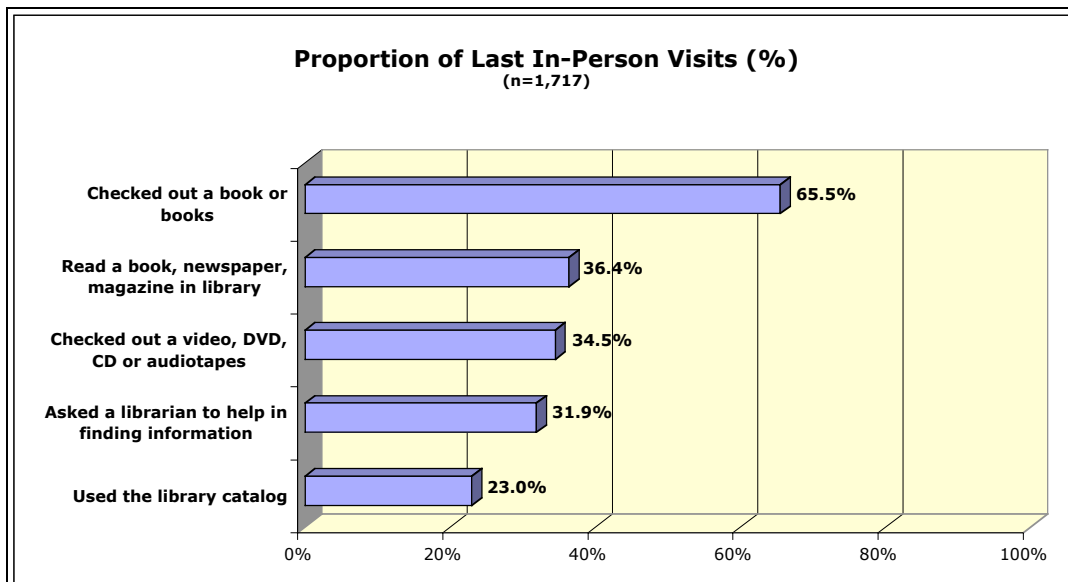


Figure 27: Five Most Prevalent Uses of the Public Library for Recreational and Entertainment Purposes During Last In-Person Visit

## Outcomes From Using Public Libraries

The overall quality of the library experience was rated on a scale of one to five (with one being the worst and five being the best). This resulted in an average rating of 4.06 for in-person and remote visits.

There are several ways the library information or services are helpful in meeting the recreation or entertainment needs of users, as shown in the next chart.

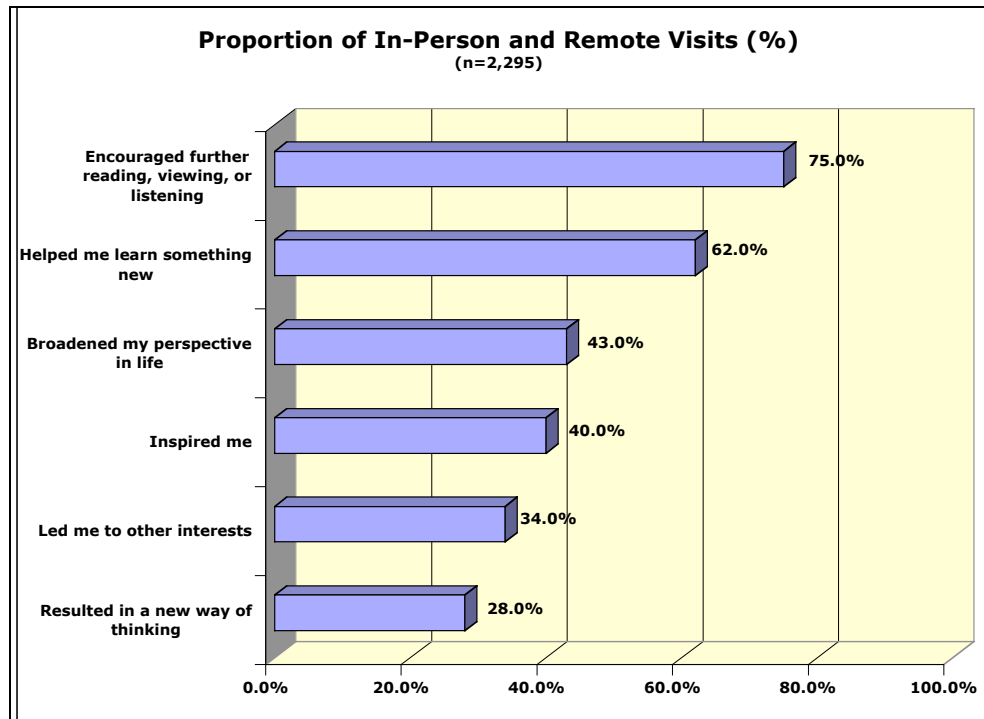


Figure 28: Outcomes of Public Library Information and Services in Meeting Recreational or Entertainment Needs

## Contingent Valuation of Recreational or Entertainment Use

The visitors who use public libraries for recreation or entertainment spend about \$126 million in their time and money visiting in-person and another \$20 million visiting remotely. They would not be willing to spend \$146 million this way if the recreation and entertainment activities are not at least this valuable to them.

If there were no public libraries:

- Visitors would save \$146 million in their time and money by not visiting in-person or remotely.
- However, it would cost these visitors \$354 million to obtain the needed information from alternative sources.

Therefore, having a public library provides the following net value to this group of visitors:

- \$208 million (i.e., \$354 million less \$146 million).



## Public Libraries Help Address Personal or Family Information Needs

Visitors to public libraries in Pennsylvania use them extensively to address personal or family information needs such as with health or wellness problems, helping with a hobby or how to fix something, or learning more about personal finances. A total of 6.0 million in-person visits and 4.9 million remote visits are made to Pennsylvania public libraries to address personal or family information needs. Visitors often consider their public library the best source for information to meet their needs, because it provides the most trustworthy information among other potential sources. Using the information usually answered all of their questions and led them to a favorable outcome.

### Type of Personal or Family Information Needs

There are many personal or family information needs addressed by public library visits. The proportion of visits in which such needs are addressed is shown below:

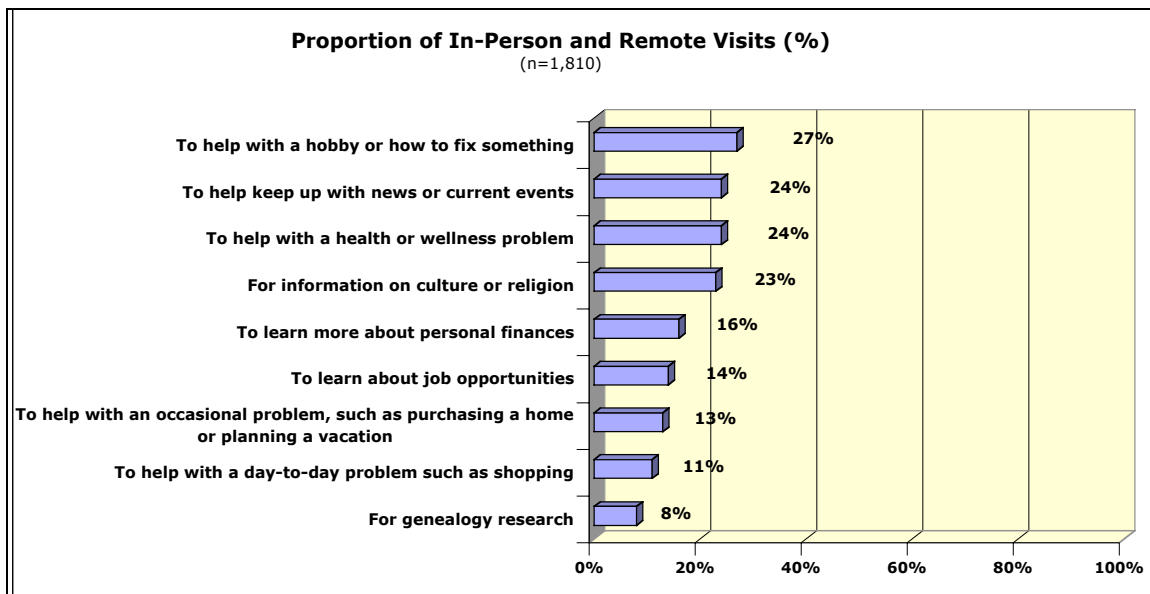


Figure 29: Type of Personal or Family Needs Addressed During Visits

## Services Used to Address Personal or Family Information Needs

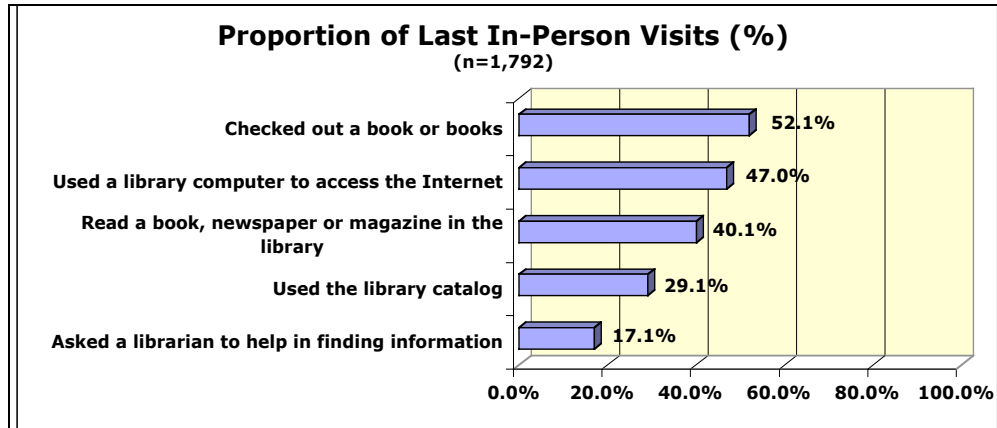


Figure 30: Top Five Services Used During In-Person Visits to Meet Personal or Family Needs

## Reasons Public Libraries Are Used to Meet Personal or Family Information Needs

Those seeking personal or family information gave several reasons for choosing public libraries to obtain needed information as follows:

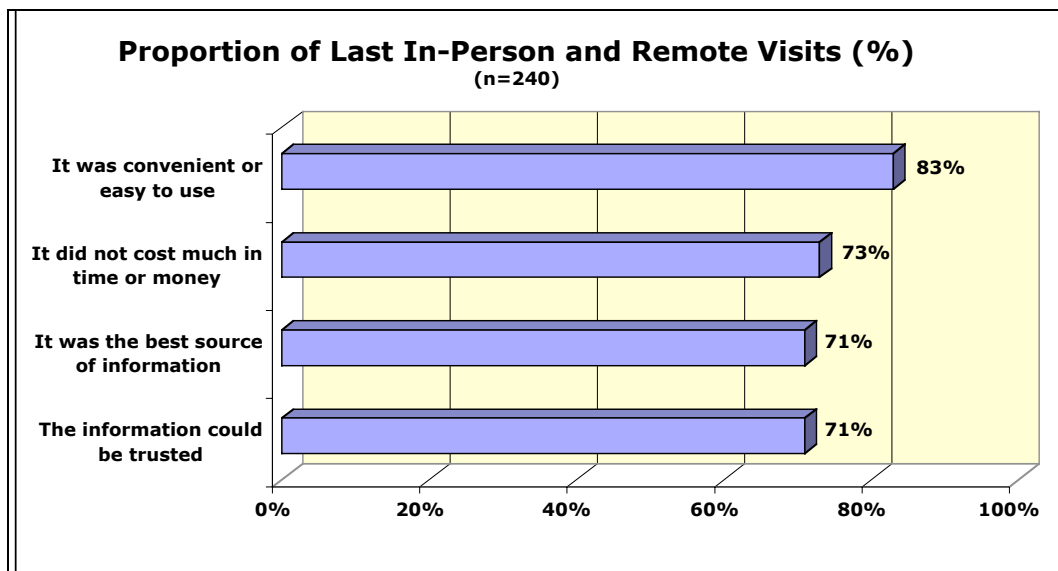


Figure 31: Reasons Public Libraries Are Used During In-Person or Remote Visits

Users rated the attributes or characteristics of information provided to them by the public libraries. Ratings were from the worst rating-1 to the best rating they can give-5. Results of these average ratings are as follows for personal or family information needs:

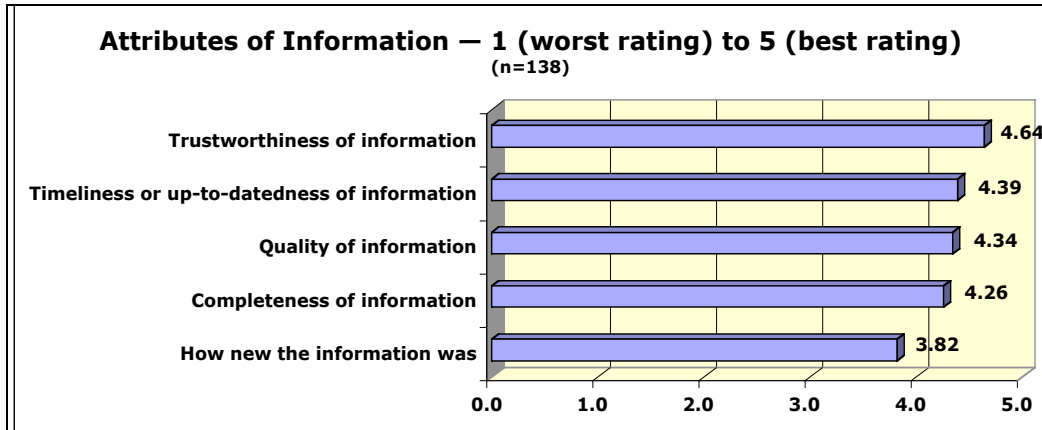


Figure 32: Ratings of Attributes of Information Obtained During In-Person and Remote Visits to Meet Personal or Family Needs

## Outcomes From Using Public Libraries for Personal or Family Information Needs

Visitors who use their library to meet the personal or family information needs above were asked how important the library information was in meeting these needs. Importance was rated from 1-not at all important to 5-absolutely essential. In-person and remote visitors rated importance 4.16 on average, and in 46 percent of the visits the information was said to be absolutely essential.

Visitors described several ways that the library information was important, as shown below:

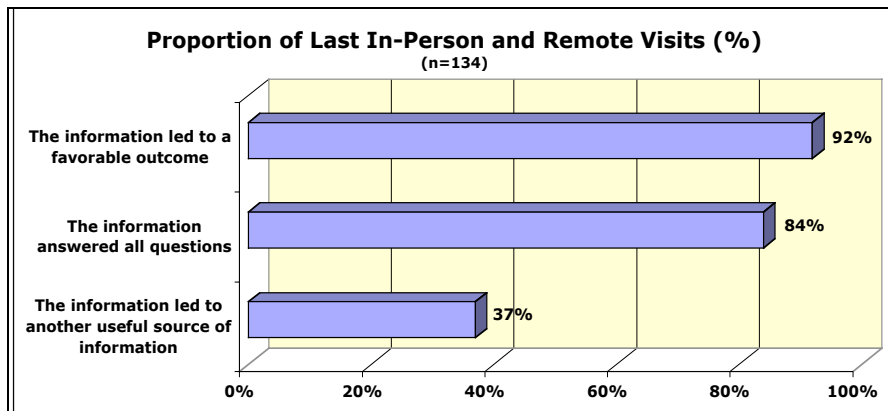
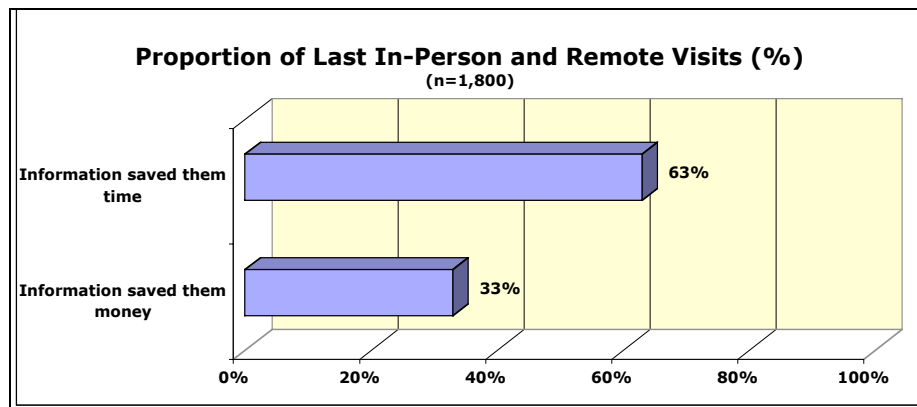


Figure 33: Outcomes From In-Person and Remote Visits to Meet Personal or Family Needs

The information sometimes saves time in performing a task or saves money in purchasing a product or service less expensively.



**Figure 34: Time and/or Money Saved from Information Obtained During In-Person or Remote Visits**

## Contingent Valuation of Personal or Family-related Use

Users “pay” to use information provided by public libraries in their time to travel to the libraries, time spent in the libraries and costs to drive, park, take public transportation, etc. The amount paid for in-person use is \$82 million and an additional \$28 million in their time to use library services and information remotely through the Internet.

If there were no public libraries:

- Visitors would save \$110 million in their time and money in not visiting in-person or remotely.
- However, it would cost visitors \$259 million to obtain needed information from alternative sources.
- Visitors would lose \$12 million in information that saved them time (e.g., to fix something faster) or money (e.g., saving on a hotel bill) when they don't know where to obtain the needed information.

Therefore, having a public library provides the following net value to this group of visitors:

- \$161 million (i.e., \$259 million plus \$12 million less \$110 million).

## Public Libraries Serve Formal Education in Many Ways

Students use public libraries as a place to study and work on homework assignments or to do research. Teachers use libraries to prepare for a class, seek information or to enhance their professional careers. Some students and teachers are involved with home schooling. In addition, school libraries and academic libraries also use public libraries to complement their collections and services.

In-person visits to public libraries include students in K through 12 grades, as well as adult students in universities and colleges and other types of formal education. About 15.9 million visits are by school age children and an additional 6.6 million visits are by adults (18 and over) who are involved in formal education. Since school age children were not surveyed there is little detail concerning their specific use of public library services.

## Adult Students Frequently Use Public Libraries

Adults (18 and over) visit public libraries in-person about 6.6 million times annually for student-related needs in addition to other purposes. They also visited public libraries about 2.1 million times remotely for student information needs.

## Level of Student Education

As might be expected, adult student visitors are mostly university and college students:

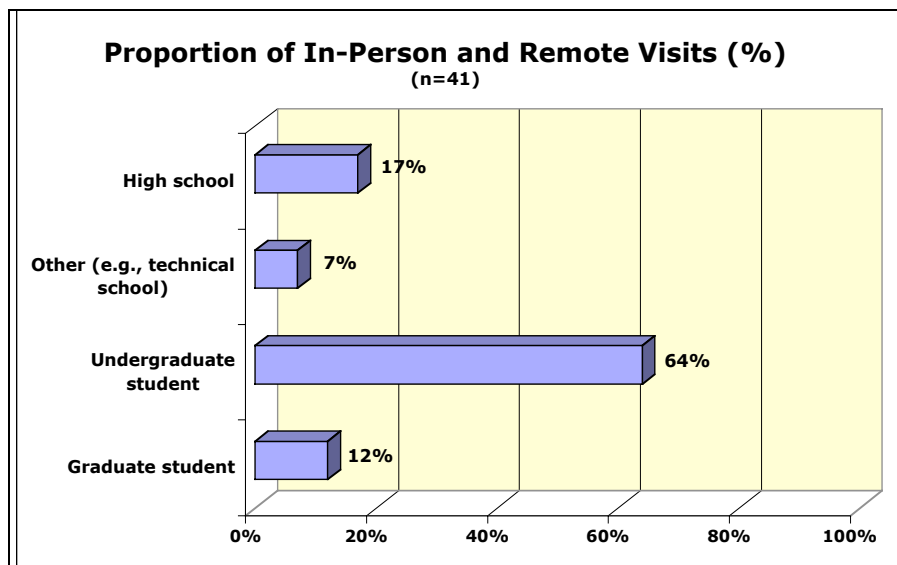


Figure 35: Current Education Level of Adult Student Visitors

## Type of Adult Student Use

In-person and remote student visitors use the library as a place for study (69% of their visits), to get information for a specific class assignment (42% of visits), and/or to research a topic of interest (45% of visits). Some students (10%) indicated that they were enrolled in a virtual or distance education program.

## Public Library Services Used by Adult Students

The top five services used by adult students are as follows:

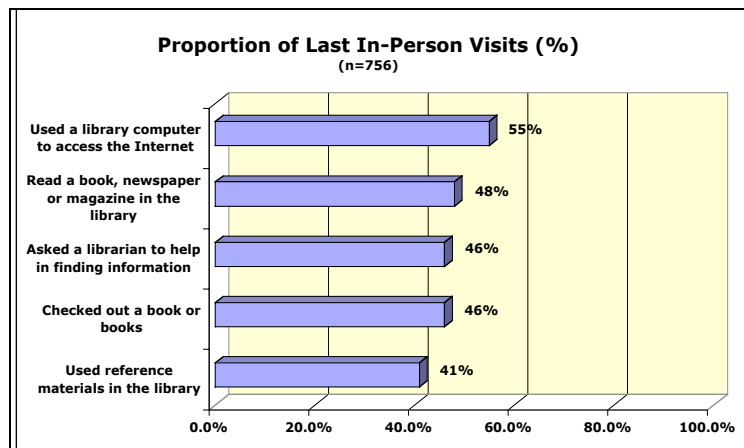


Figure 36: Top Five Services Used During in-Person Visits by Adult Students

## Reasons Public Libraries Are Used by Adult Students

Adult students reported the following reasons for using the public libraries:

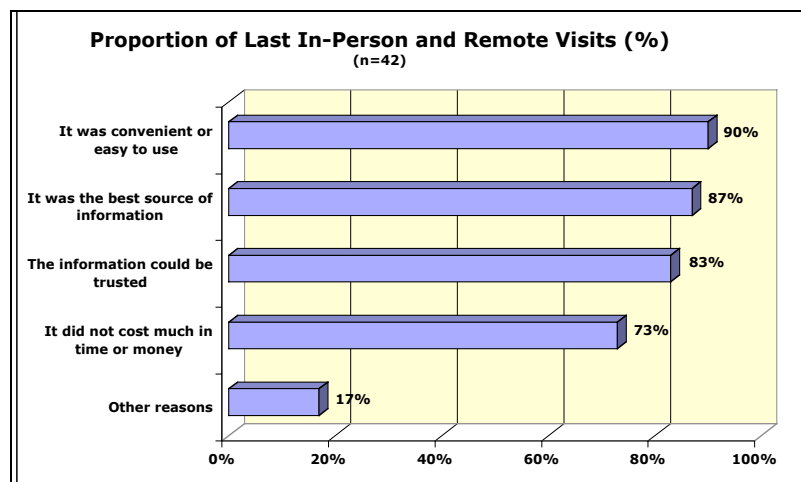
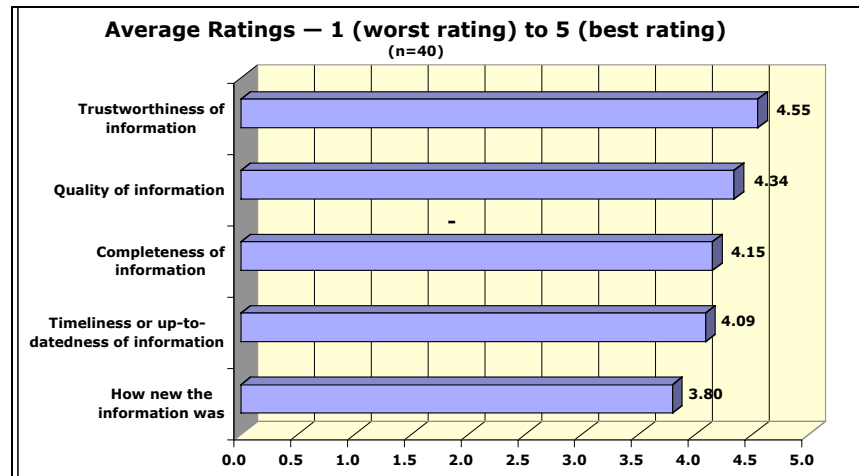


Figure 37: Reasons Public Libraries are Used During In-Person or Remote Visits by Adult Students

Students rated attributes or characteristics of information provided to them by public libraries from – 1 – being the worst rating to – 5 – as the best rating. Average ratings are as follows:



**Figure 38: Ratings of Attributes of Information Obtained During In-Person or Remote Visits by Adult Students**

### Outcomes from Adult Students Use of Public Libraries

Visitors who use their library to meet their student information needs were asked to rate the importance of library information in meeting these needs. Importance was rated from 1 – not at all important to 5 – absolutely essential. In-person and remote visitors rated importance 4.38 on average and the information was rated as being absolutely essential in meeting their need for 58 percent of the visits.

The information sometimes saves students time in finishing homework, or money in purchasing materials for a classroom project. The students reported that the information saved them time in 61 percent of visits and money was saved in 60 percent of the visits.

### Contingent Valuation of Adult Student Use

If there were no public libraries:

- Adult student visitors would save \$28 million in their time and money in not visiting in-person or remotely.
- However, it would cost student visitors \$69 million to obtain needed information from alternative sources.
- Adult student visitors would lose \$3 million in information that saved them time (e.g., to finish an assignment faster) or money (e.g., saving on class materials) when they don't know where to obtain the needed information.

Therefore, having a public library provides the following net value to adult student library visitors:

- \$44 million (i.e., \$69 million plus \$3 million minus \$28 million).

## Teachers Rely on Public Libraries

Teachers visit public libraries in-person about 2.7 million times annually and 1.3 million times remotely. They use public libraries for preparing for class or a lecture, and for other teaching purposes. They also use the libraries for professional-related reasons as well as keeping current with the literature.

## Level of Teaching

Visits involve teachers at all levels as shown below:

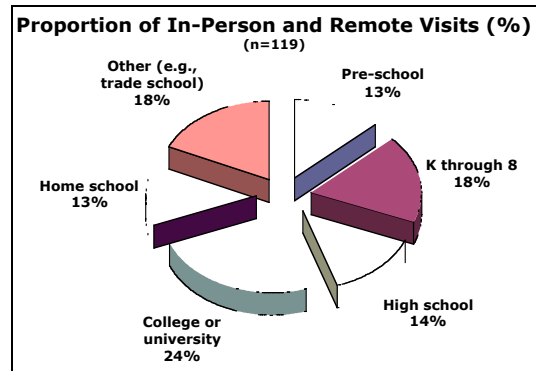


Figure 39: Teaching Level of Teacher Visitors

## Type of Teacher Information Needs

Visits by teachers involve both teaching-related activities and professional purposes as follows:

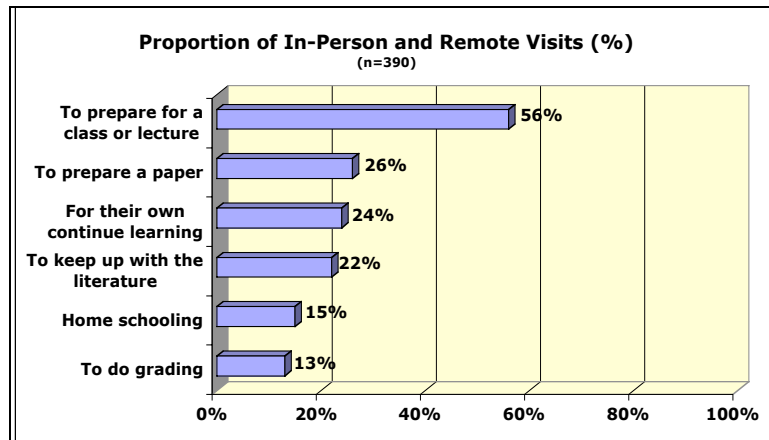


Figure 40: Type of Teacher Needs Addressed During Visits

About 13 percent of visits are by teachers engaged as students in distance or virtual education.



## Public Library Services Are Used by Teachers

The top five in-library services used by teachers are as follows:

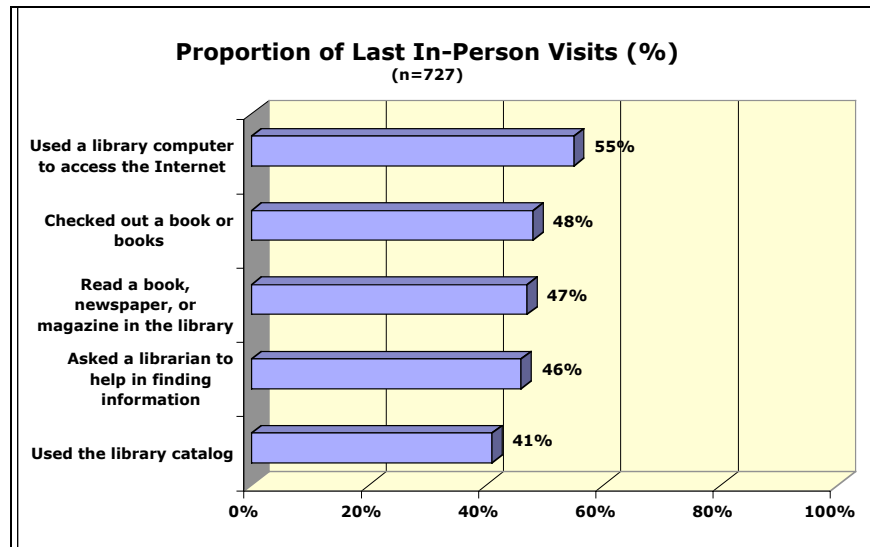


Figure 41: Top Five Services Used During In-Person Visits by Teachers

## Reasons Public Libraries Are Used by Teachers

Reasons teachers gave for their last visit are as follows:

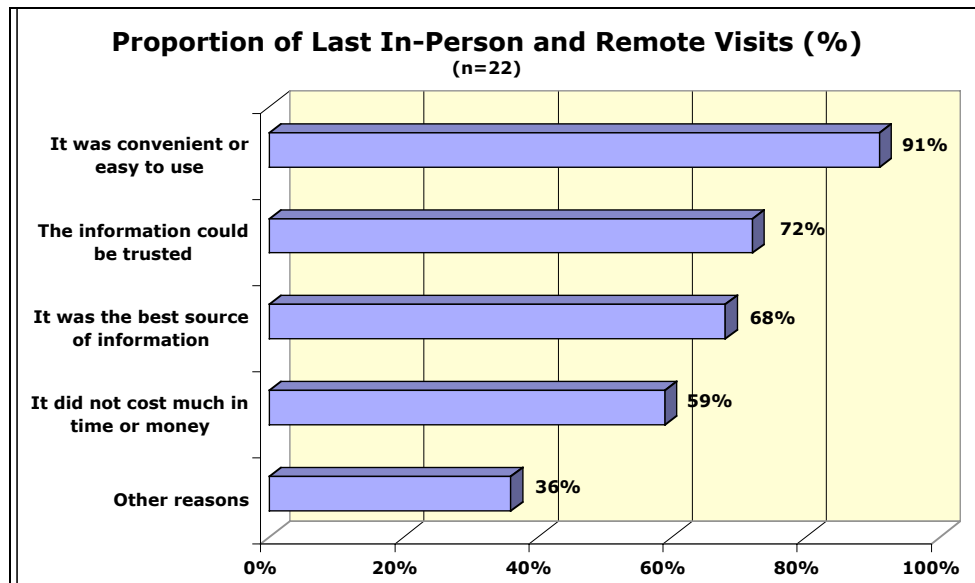
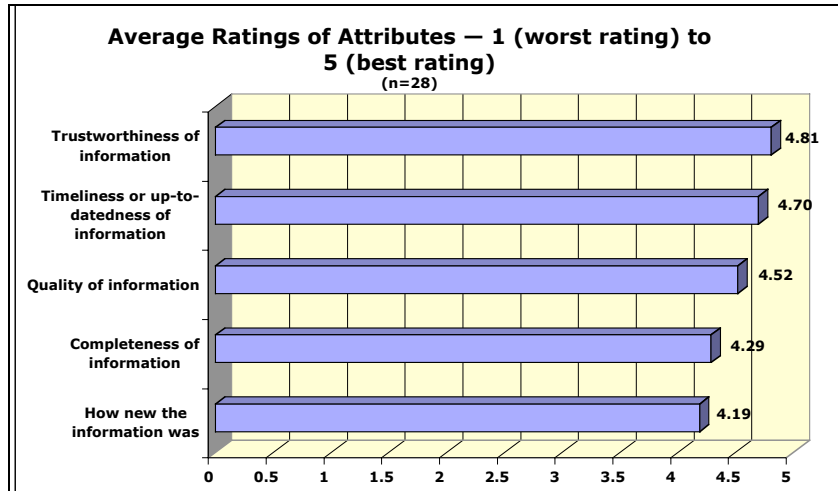


Figure 42: Reasons Public Libraries Are Used During In-Person or Remote Visits by Teachers

Teachers rated the attributes or characteristics of information provided to them by the public libraries. The rating scale ranged from – 1 – being the worst rating to – 5 – being the best rating. Average ratings by teachers are as follows:

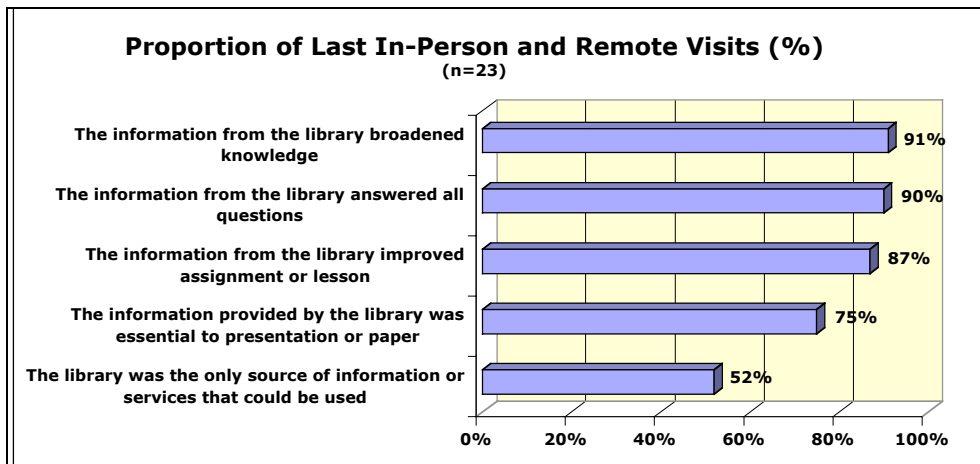


**Figure 43: Ratings of Attributes of Information Obtained During In-Person or Remote Visits by Teachers**

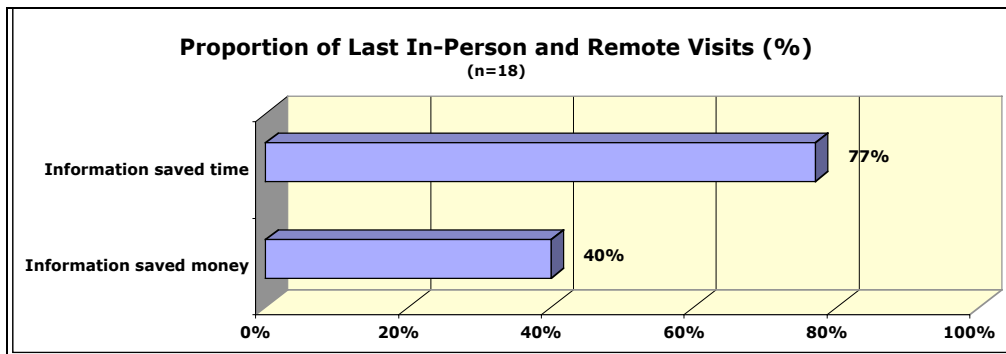
### Outcomes from Teachers Use of Public Libraries

Teachers who use the library to meet their information needs were asked how important the library information was in meeting these needs. Importance was rated from – 1 – not at all important to – 5 – absolutely essential. In-person and remote visitors rated importance 4.35 on average and the information was rated as being absolutely essential in meeting their need for 59 percent of the visits.

Ways that the information was important to teachers are as follows:



**Figure 44: Outcomes from In-Person and Remote Visits by Teachers**



**Figure 45: Time and/or Money Saved from Information Obtained During In-Person or Remote Visits by Teachers**

### Contingent Valuation from Teacher Use

If there were no public libraries:

- Teachers would save \$72 million in their time and money in not visiting in-person or remotely.
- However, it would cost teachers \$168 million to obtain needed information from alternative sources.
- Teachers would lose \$8 million in information that saved them time (e.g., to finish a publication faster) or money (e.g., saving on travel to a conference) when they don't know where to obtain the needed information.

Therefore, having a public library provides the following net value to teachers:

- \$104 million (i.e., \$171 million plus \$8 million less \$72 million).

## School Library Use of Public Library Services

There are about 3,700 public and private schools in Pennsylvania. A survey of 85 school libraries revealed that 87 percent of them (74) use public libraries extensively for a variety of services. All school libraries currently use public libraries a total of about 350,000 times a year.

### Services Used by School Libraries

The principal services used by the school libraries that use public libraries are as follows:

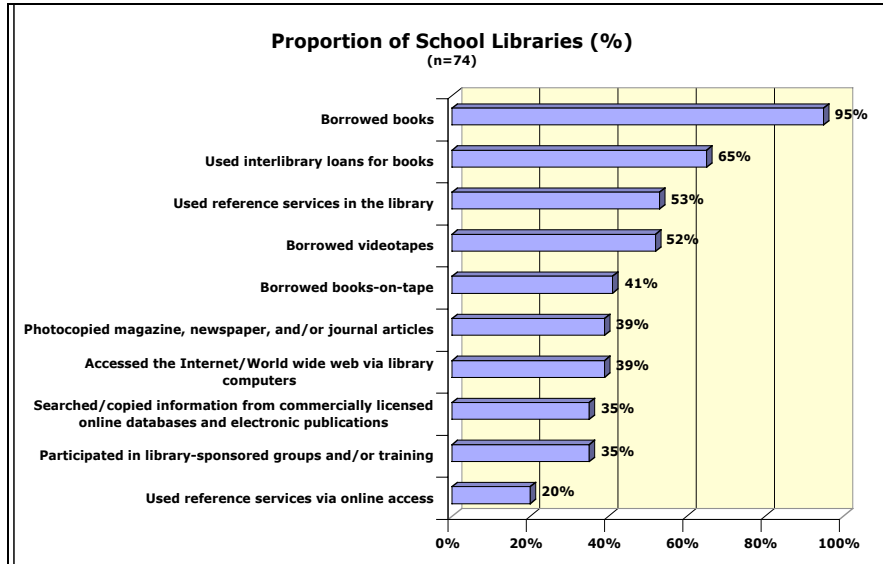


Figure 46: Public Library Services Used by School Libraries

Schools also occasionally use public library meeting room facilities. They obtain about 240,000 documents from public libraries, including government documents.

### Reasons School Libraries Use Public Libraries

There are several reasons why school libraries use public libraries rather than another source as described in the following chart:

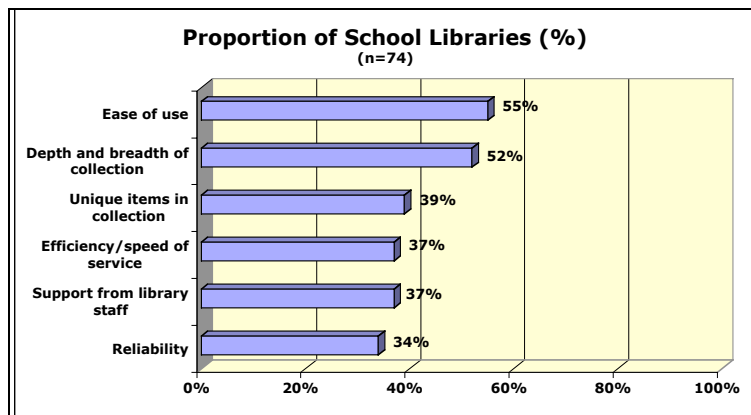


Figure 47: Reasons School Libraries Use Public Libraries

## Outcomes From School Libraries Using Public Libraries

School librarians were asked how much additional time their library staff would need to spend searching for and obtaining documents and using alternative sources to retain current service levels if there were no public libraries. A total of 74 librarians responded to this question and 21 percent said that service levels would not be affected if the public library were not there. However, across all respondents, school library staff time would have to increase by 31 percent to maintain current levels.

## Contingent Valuation from Public Library Use

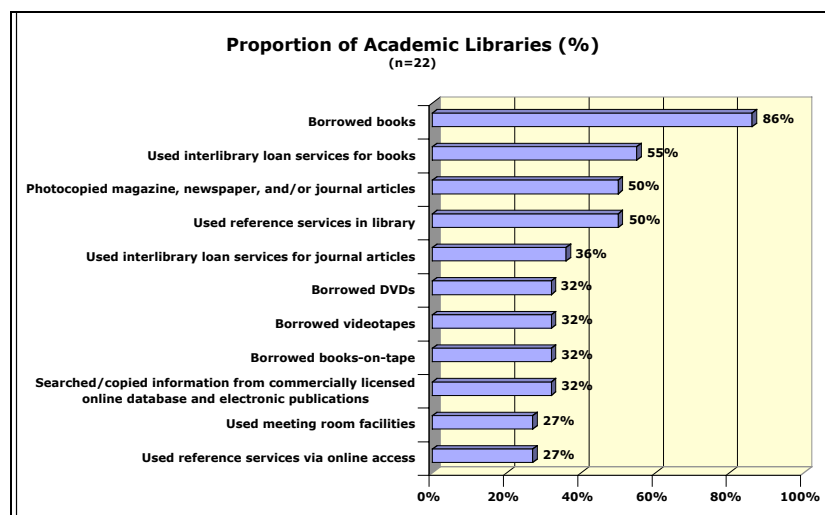
If there were no public libraries, school libraries would have to spend an additional total of \$3.3 million annually in staff time and money to rely on alternative sources. They currently spend about 152,000 hours in staff time in using public library services.

## Academic Library Use of Public Library Services

There are 206 academic libraries in Pennsylvania, of which 29 responded fully to the organization survey. Of these, 76 percent (n=22) indicated that they currently use public library services. All academic libraries are estimated to use public libraries a total of 12,000 times a year.

## Services Used by Academic Libraries

The principal services used by academic libraries are as follows:



**Figure 48: Public Library Services Used by Academic Libraries**

Academic libraries obtain about 11,000 documents from public libraries, including government documents.

## Reasons Academic Libraries Use Public Libraries

Reasons why academic libraries use public libraries rather than another source are reported as follows:

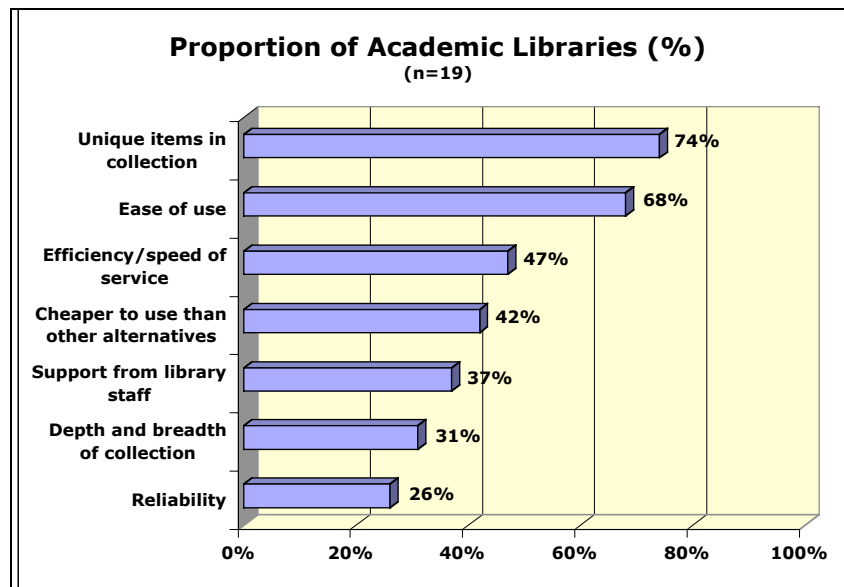


Figure 49: Reasons Academic Libraries Use Public Libraries

## Outcomes from Academic Libraries Using Public Libraries

When asked how much the universities' and colleges' and their libraries' research activities would be affected if they did not have access to public libraries, the libraries responded as follows:

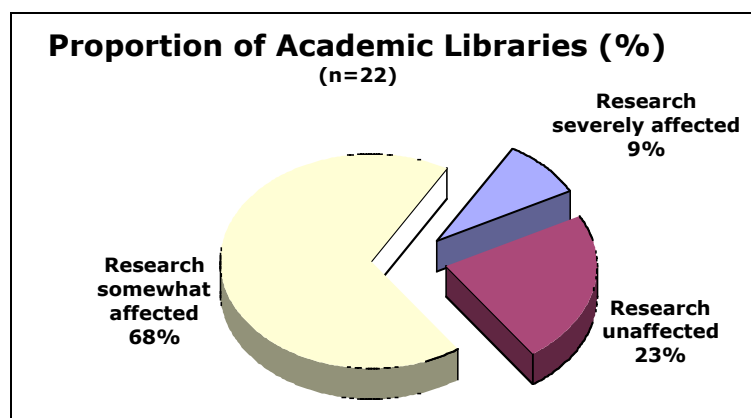


Figure 50: Academic Librarians Assessment of Research Outcomes If They Did Not Have Access to Public Libraries

Five of 22 responding academic libraries (23%) indicated that, if they could not use the local public libraries, there would be no change in time of library staff. However, considering all academic libraries (206 libraries), the average additional time of library staff would be about 12 percent. This additional time would be spent searching for and obtaining documents and using alternative sources to retain current service levels.

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### **Contingent Valuation of Academic Use of Public Libraries**

If there were no public libraries, academic libraries would be required to spend an additional \$1.0 million annually in staff time and money to use alternative sources. They currently spend about 10,000 hours in staff time using public library services.

## Public Libraries are Essential to Pennsylvania Organizations

Businesses, government agencies, hospitals and many other types of organizations, large and small, rely heavily on public libraries in Pennsylvania. These organizations are helped in many ways. Their employees directly use public libraries for work-related purposes. A total of 8.5 million personal visits to Pennsylvania public libraries are for work or job-related purposes. In addition, there are about 2.9 million uses of public libraries through remote Internet access for these purposes. Organizations large enough to have libraries often utilize public library services through their libraries. As shown below public libraries have a significant positive impact on the activities of organizations and their economic well-being.

Individuals from organizations use public libraries for research and to support legal, marketing, and financial matters. They use public libraries because they are believed to be trustworthy, convenient or ease to use, and the best source of information. Use of public libraries is said to improve their work and increase productivity. Furthermore, about 475 business, government agency, hospital and other organization libraries use public libraries about 38,500 times a year to borrow books and other materials, search from online databases licensed by the public libraries, and other reference services. These organization libraries respect the uniqueness of public library collections, support from their staff, and the efficiency and reliability of services.

## Direct Use by Workers to Meet Work or Job-Related Needs

### Where the Visitors Work

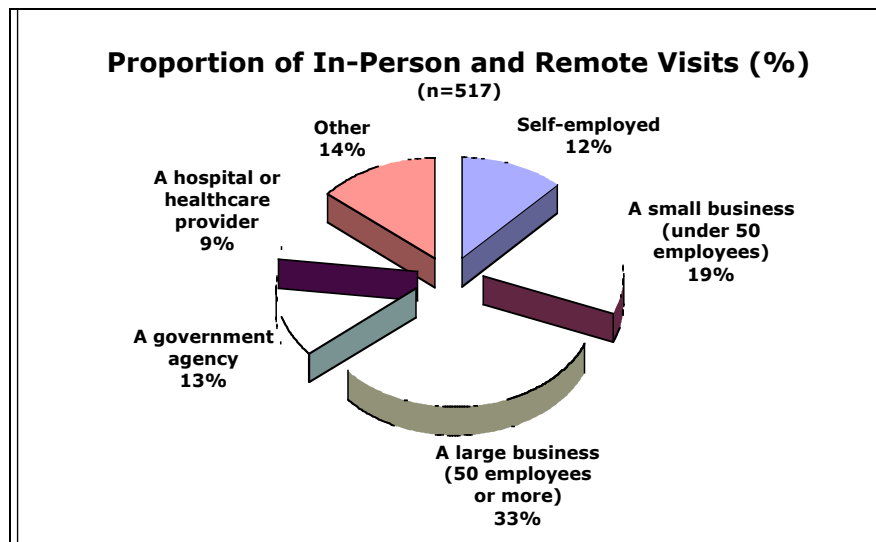


Figure 51: Where Worker Visitors Are Employed



## Type of Work or Job-related Information Needs

Workers tend to visit public libraries in-person or remotely for many reasons, often for multiple reasons during a single visit. The most reported reason is to obtain information needed for research. The proportion (%) of worker visits related to various needs is given are shown below:

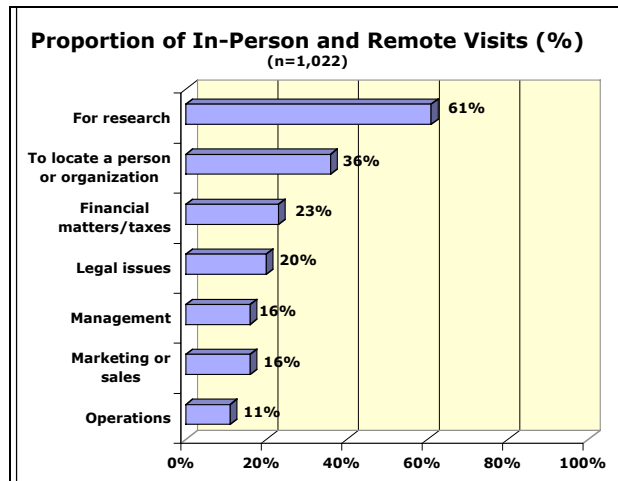


Figure 52: Type of Work or Job-Related Information Needs Addressed During the Last Visit

## Services Used to Address Work or Job-related Information Needs

The top five most used services for visitors who use the library for work or job-related purposes are as follows:

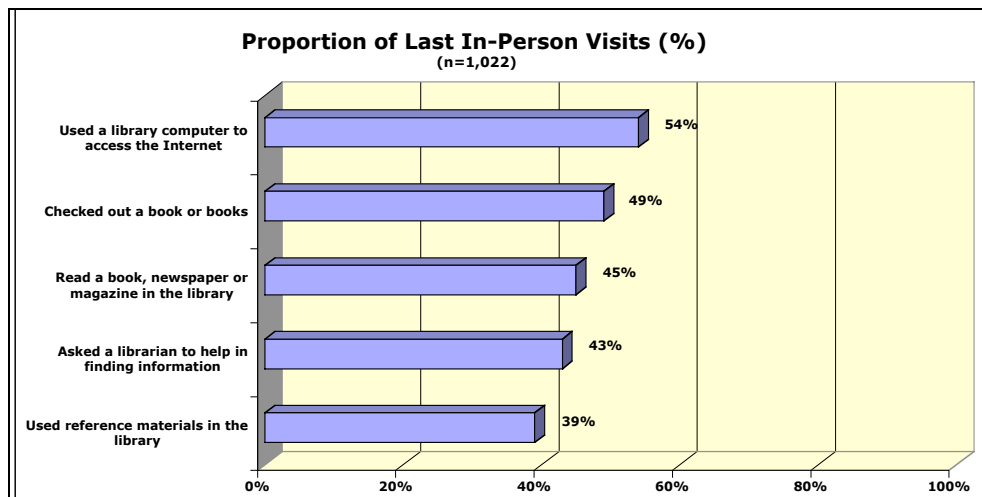
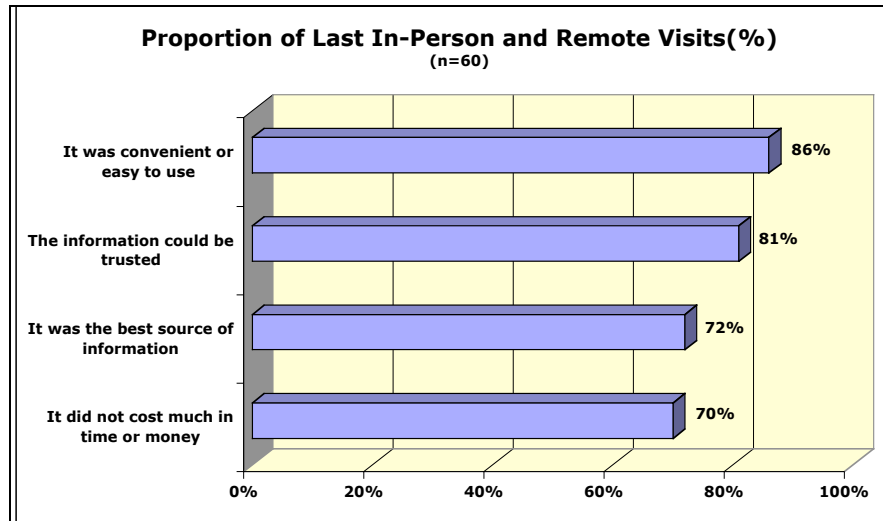


Figure 53: Top Five Library Services Used by Visitors During the Last Work or Job-Related In-Person Visit

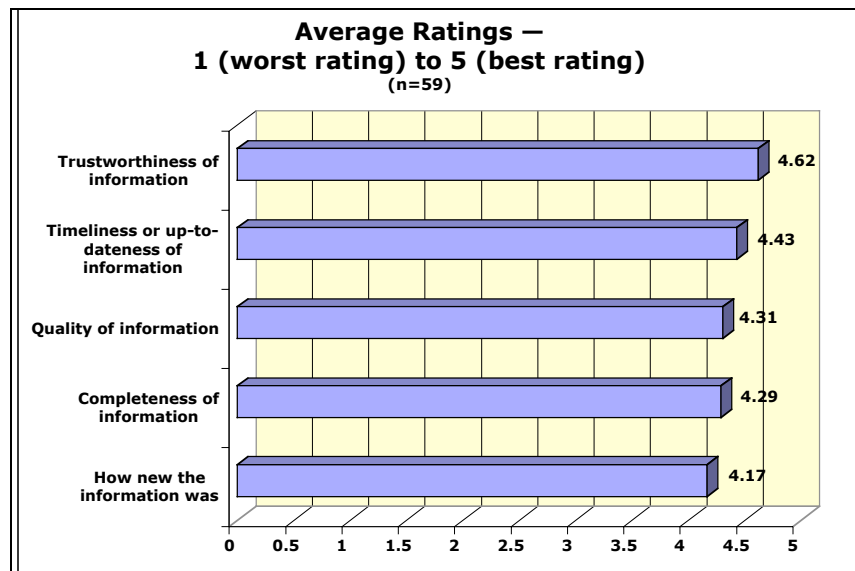
## Reasons Public Libraries Are Used to Meet Work or Job-related Information Needs

Users of public libraries for work or job-related purposes said they chose to use a public library's resources or services because:



**Figure 54: Reasons Public Libraries Are Used During the Last In-Person or Remote Visit by Workers**

Workers rated the attributes or characteristics of information provided to them in their in-person visits. Ratings were from the worst rating – 1 – to the best rating they could give – 5. The results of their ratings are as follows:



**Figure 55: Ratings of Attributes of Information Obtained During the Last In-Person or Remote Visit by Workers**

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## Outcomes From Using Public Libraries for Work or Job-related Information Needs

Visitors who use their library to meet their work or job-related information needs were asked to rate the importance of library information in meeting these needs. Importance was rated from 1 – not at all important to 5 – absolutely essential. In-person and remote visitors rated importance 4.21 on average and the information was rated as being absolutely essential in meeting their need for 48 percent of the visits.

The users of public library provided information for work or job-related reasons report several favorable outcomes from their use.

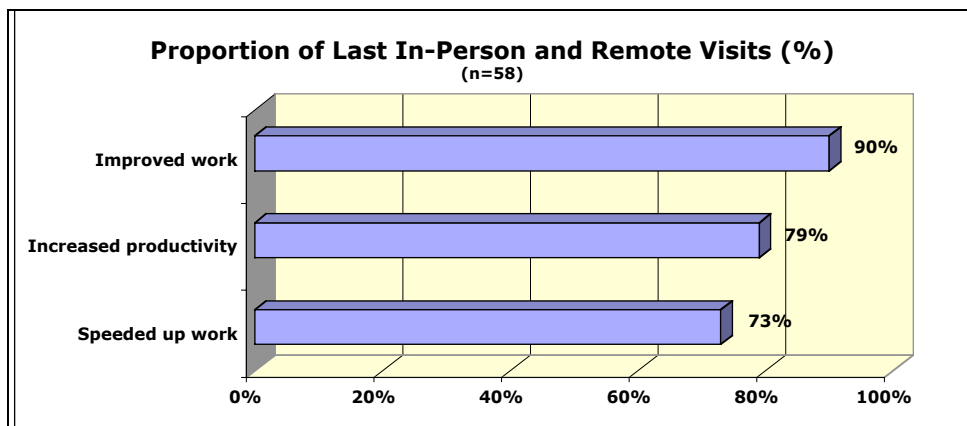


Figure 56: Outcomes from the Last In-Person and Remote Visit by Workers

These users also report that the information provided by public libraries helps save them time in performing a task and/or money in purchasing a product or service.

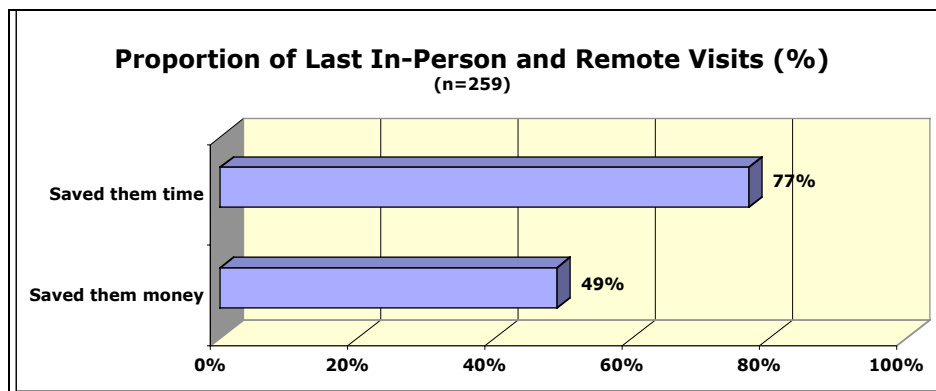


Figure 57: Time and/or Money Saved from Information Obtained During the Last In-Person or Remote Visit by Workers

## Contingent Valuation of Work or Job-related Use

Workers who use information provided by public libraries for work or job-related reasons annually pay about \$207 million in their time and money to travel to and from public libraries (which includes the time spent in the library) and \$27 million to visit public libraries remotely via the Internet. They would not expend this \$234 million in time and money to use the public library to obtain information for their work if it were not of great value to them.

If there were no public libraries:

- Worker or job-related visitors would save \$234 million in their time and money in not visiting in-person or remotely.
- However, it would cost visitors \$571 million to obtain needed information from alternative sources.
- Worker or job-related visitors would lose \$30 million in information that saved them time (e.g., to perform research faster) or money (e.g., saving on purchasing a computer) when they don't know where to obtain the needed information.

Therefore, having a public library provides the following net value to work or job-related visitors:

- \$367 million (i.e., \$571 million plus \$30 million less \$234 million).

## Use by other Types of Organizational Libraries

A total of 669 libraries were identified that serve businesses, government agencies, hospitals and other organizations in Pennsylvania. A total of 111 of these libraries responded to an organization survey of which 71.2 percent (79) indicated that their library staff use the services of the local public library for business and/or professional purposes. The 669 special libraries are estimated to use public libraries about 38,500 times a year.

## Services Used by Organization Libraries

The organizations that use public libraries use them primarily for these reasons:

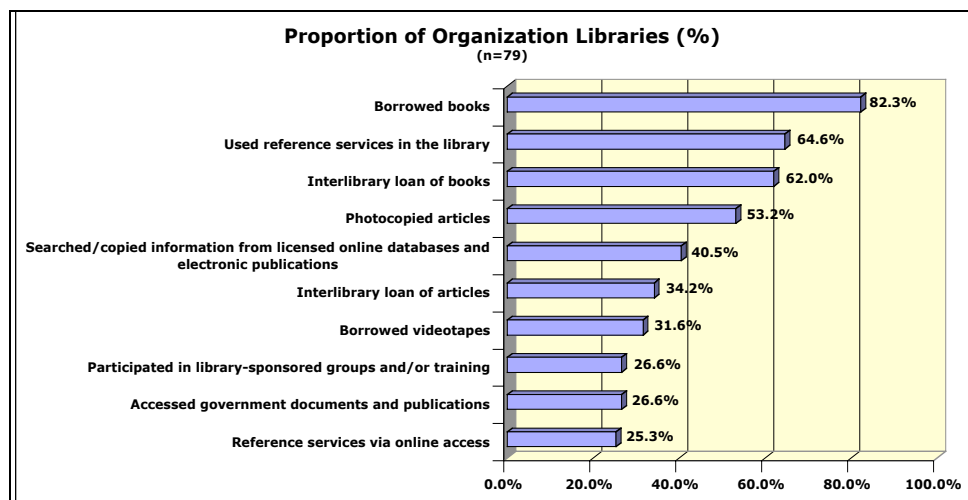


Figure 58: Public Library Services Used by Organization Libraries

Other services included using meeting room facilities and borrowing books on tape, DVDs and CD-ROMs. They annually obtain about 63,400 documents from their local public library, including government documents.

### Reasons Organization Libraries Use Public Libraries

There are several prominent reasons why organizations use public libraries rather than some other source.

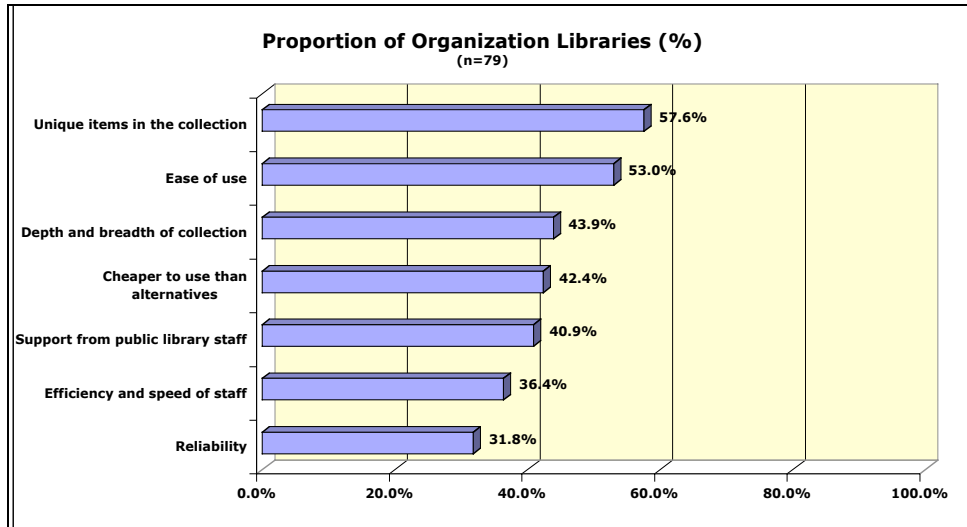


Figure 59: Reasons Organization Libraries Use Public Libraries

### Outcomes from Non-education Organization Libraries Using Public Libraries

Organization librarians were asked how much additional time library staff would be needed to search for and obtain documents and use alternative sources to retain current service levels, if they could not use the local public library. Of the 79 sampled libraries that use public libraries, 24 percent indicated there would be no change, but the average change for the 79 libraries is a 26 percent increase. The libraries were also asked how much their organization's research would be affected if they did not have access to public library services, with the following results (n=79):

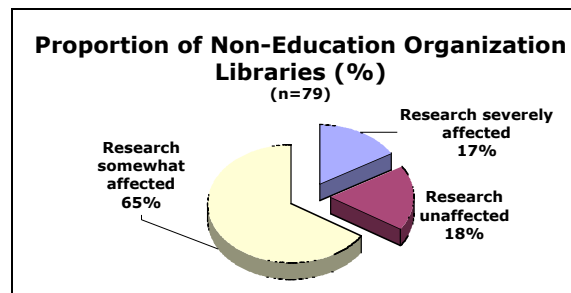


Figure 60: Organization Librarian Assessment of Research Outcomes If They Did Not Have Access to Public Libraries

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### **Contingent Valuation of Non-education Organization Use of Public Libraries**

The additional costs in staff time and money that the organization libraries might incur per year, if they were unable to use the public library, are about \$500,000. The library staffs of these organizations spend about 17,700 hours using public library services for business and/or professional purposes.

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## Public Libraries Are Used for Informal Education and Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning takes place during formal education and in continued learning as part of one's work or career. Lifelong learning also involves pre-school children and adults and retirees who are not currently in the workforce (and school children and adults in the workplace as well). In this study, a distinction is made between formal education (which involves teachers and students) and lifelong learning which includes all the other ways people use a library for learning over the course of their lives. About 5.9 million in-person visits are made by adults who brought a child or children to a public library for a children's program, to read or check out a book for a child, or some other child-related purpose. Retirees and others have visited public libraries 6.4 million times in-person and 2.7 million times remotely for their continued learning.

## Public Library Use by Adults Accompanying Children

### Demographics of Adults Accompanying Children to Public Libraries

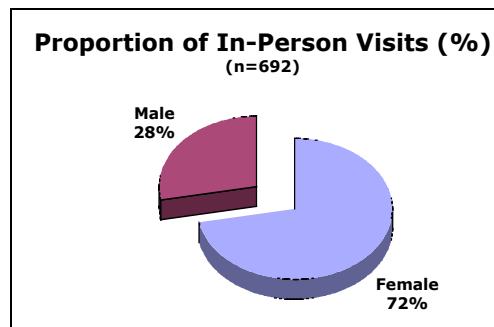


Figure 61: Gender of Adults Accompanying Children to Public Libraries

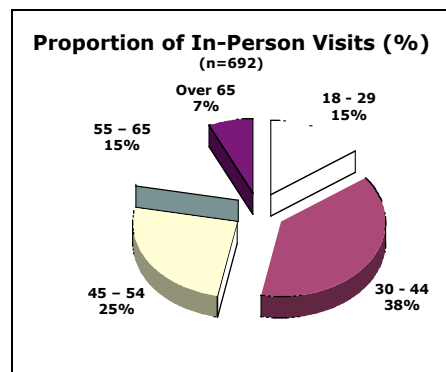


Figure 62: Age of Adults Accompanying Children to Public Libraries

About 13 percent of adults accompanying children to the public library are homemakers and 11 percent retired.

## Why Adults Bring Children to Public Libraries

Children were brought to public libraries for the following reasons:

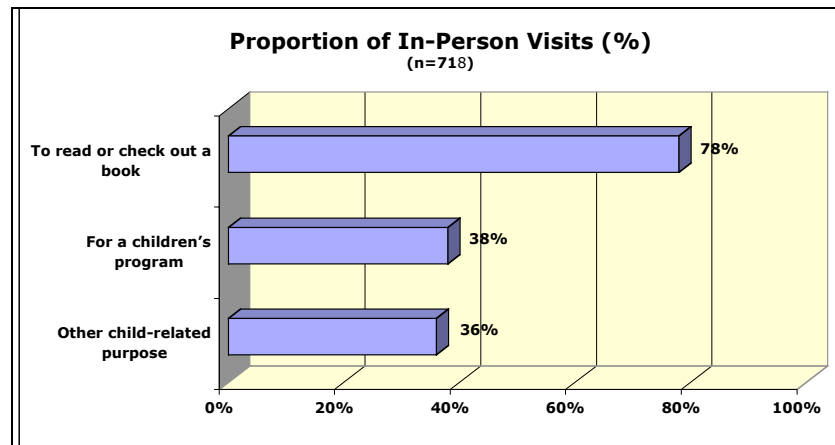


Figure 63: Reasons Children Were Brought to the Library

## Services Used by Adults Accompanying Children

Adults who accompany children to the public library indicate that they used the following principal services:

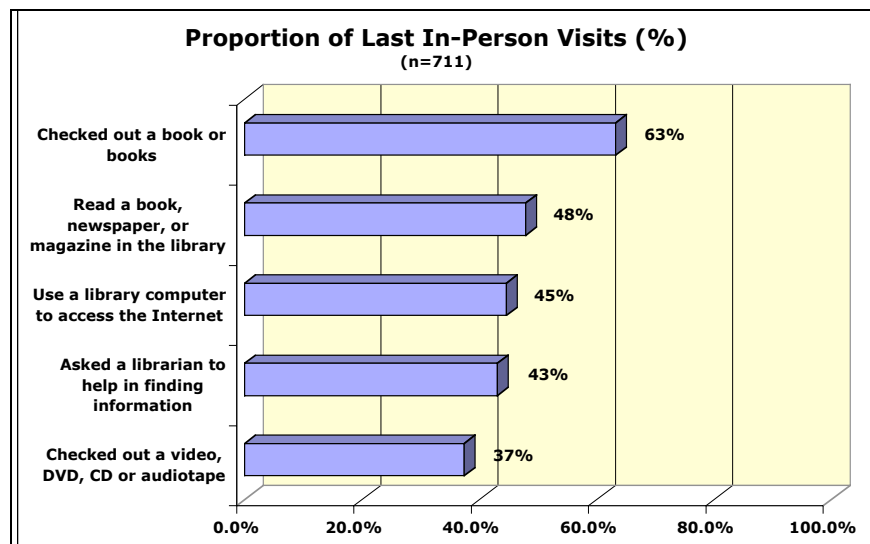


Figure 64: Top Five Services Used During the Last In-Person Visit by Adults Accompanying Children



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## Contingent Valuation for Adults Who Accompany Children

Adults who bring children to public libraries spend about \$17 million in their time and money in visiting the libraries. If there were no libraries, it would cost them about \$43 million to use alternative sources of services. Thus, the net benefit of the library services for such lifelong learning is \$26 million.

## Adult Lifelong Learning Use of Public Libraries

### Demographics of Adult Continued Lifelong Learners

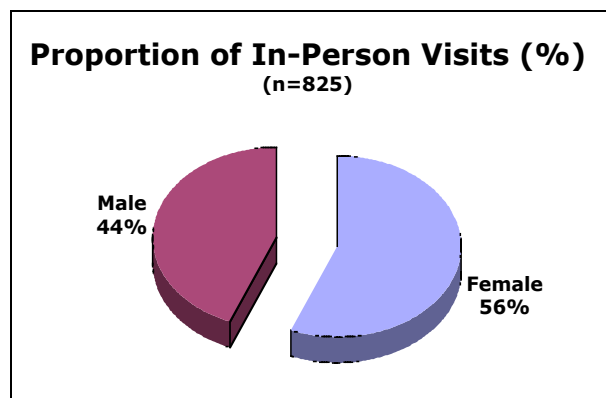


Figure 65: Gender of Adult Lifelong Learners

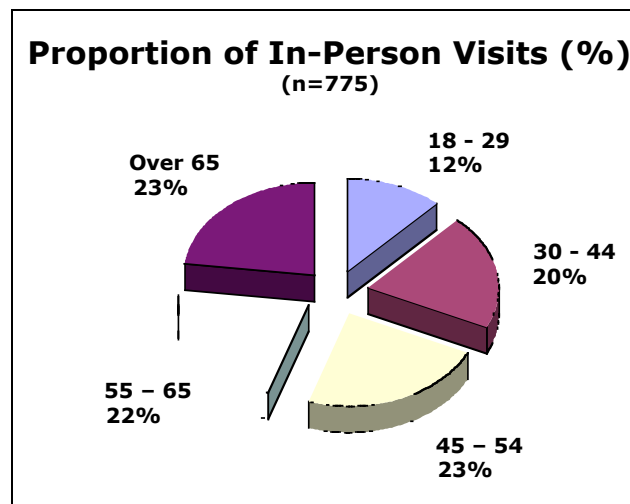


Figure 66: Age of Lifelong Learners

About 13 percent of adult lifelong learners are homemakers and 16 percent retirees.

## Why Adults Use Public Libraries for Continued Lifelong Learning

Retirees and other adults use public libraries for the following continued lifelong learning purposes:

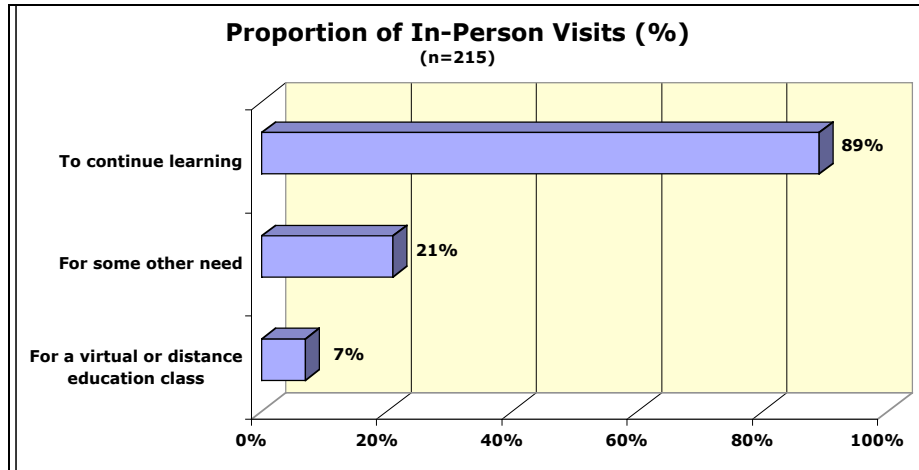


Figure 67: Reasons Lifelong Learners Visited the Public Library

## Services Used by Lifelong Learners

Five top services used for adult lifelong learning are as follows:

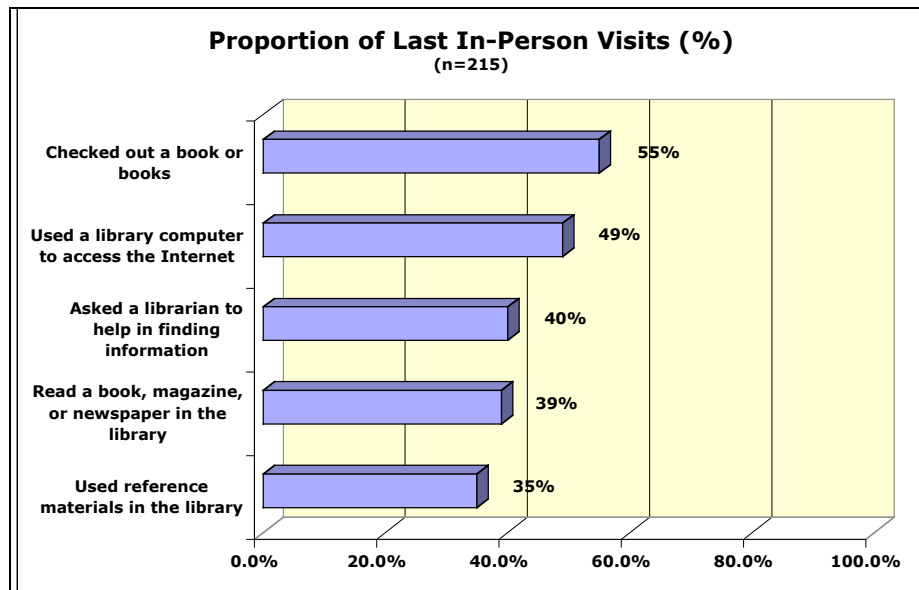
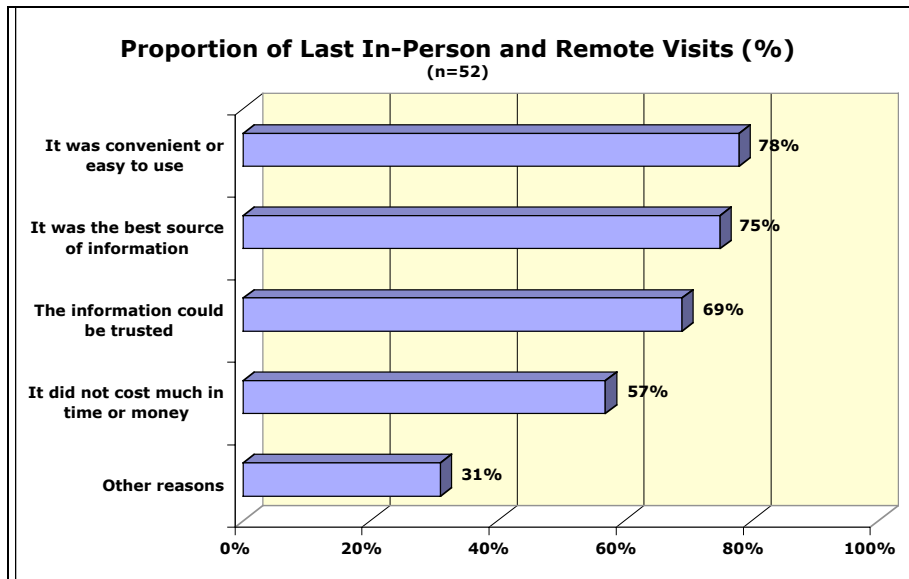


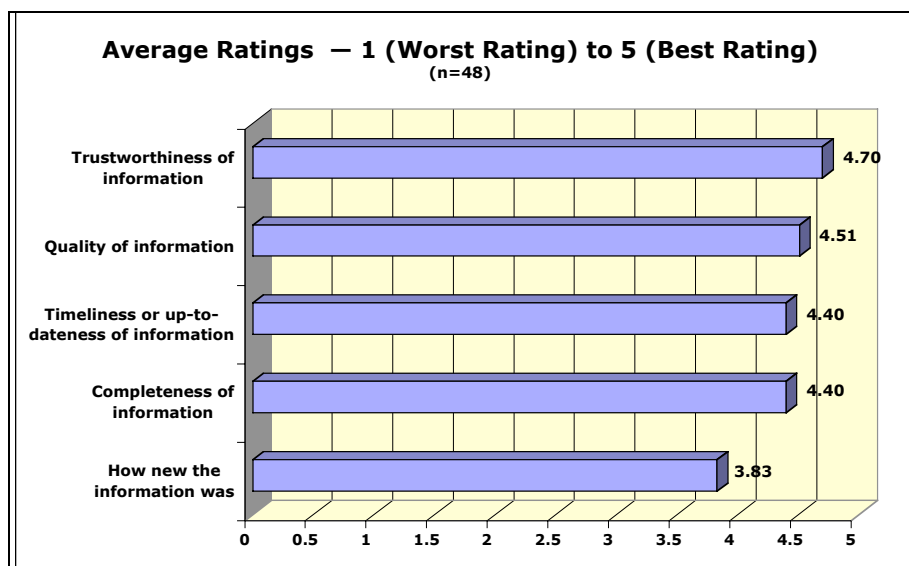
Figure 68: Top Five Services Used During In-Person Visits to Meet Adult Lifelong Learning Needs

## Reasons for Lifelong Learning Visits by Adults



**Figure 69: Reasons Public Libraries are Used During In-Person or Remote Visits**

Lifelong learners were asked how important the library information was in meeting their needs. Importance was rated from – 1 – not at all important to 5 – absolutely essential. The information sometimes saved lifelong learners time in performing a task or saved money by allowing them to purchase a product or service less expensively. The following Figure demonstrates the results:



**Figure 70: Ratings of Attributes of Information Obtained During the Last In-Person or Remote Visit by Lifelong Learners**

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## **Contingent Valuation of Adult Lifelong Learning**

Adults currently spend about \$62 million in time and money visiting public libraries in-person for lifelong learning, and \$13 million visiting remotely.

If there were no public libraries:

- Lifelong learning visitors would save \$75 million in their time and money by not visiting in-person or remotely.
- However, it would cost these visitors \$181 million to obtain the needed information from alternative sources.
- Visitors would lose \$9 million in information that saved them time or money when they didn't know where to go to obtain it.

Therefore, having a public library provides the following net value to lifelong learners:

- \$115 million (i.e., \$181 million plus \$9 million less \$75 million).