

# THE STATE OF AMERICA'S LIBRARIES



A Report from the American Library Association



Release Date: April 2007

**ALA American Library Association**

# The State of America's Libraries

---

## Executive summary

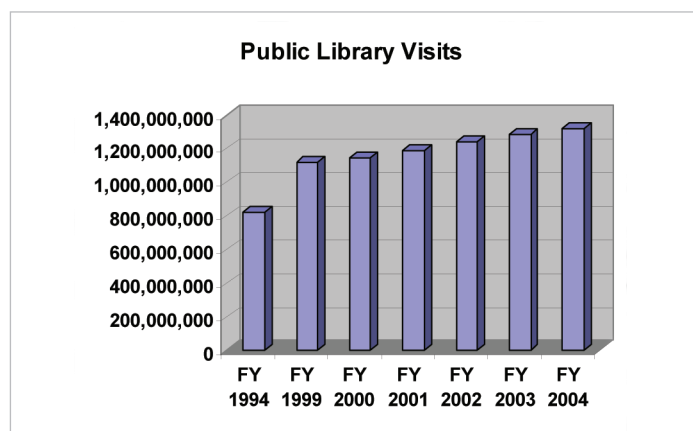
In this report on the State of America's Libraries in 2006, the American Library Association found that:

- Public, school and university libraries are flourishing, both in traditional ways and in the still-exploding universe of the Internet. Library use is up nationwide among all types of library users, continuing a decade-long trend. Almost 1.8 billion visitors checked out more than 2 billion items last year at everything from one-room rural outposts to spectacular facilities such as Seattle's new Central Library, which attracts thousands of patrons — and tourists — daily.
- Investment in e-books at academic and research libraries rose an astonishing 68 percent from 2002 to 2004, the most recent year for which federal data are available.
- Public libraries remain on the forefront in delivering new programs to their customers while still providing the “nuts-and-bolts” services that people need to lead full lives — for example, the tools to conduct a job search, write a résumé or learn new work skills. Even with the rapid growth of all of these services, people are going to their public library to check out or read books in record numbers.
- The public expressed its continuing strong support for public libraries in 2006 in positive votes on library funding referenda and other local ballot measures.
- Despite a growing body of research that links school libraries and student achievement, school library media centers were hard hit by funding cuts in the past year.

Meanwhile, the library community continued its work in defending the First Amendment rights of library users against secret government surveillance, including the USA PATRIOT Act. Librarians also continued their efforts to oppose censorship challenges that would restrict the free flow of information and ideas to both adults and children.

Finally, the library community — from the ALA and its corporate and philanthropic partners to individual librarians to the children and teens who use school library media centers nationwide — won widespread acclaim for their work in helping colleagues and fellow citizens in the Gulf Coast region begin their long recovery from the devastation wrought by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

In short, 2006 was another full year for America's librarians and libraries. This report presents only the highlights of the activities of a profession that has time and again shown itself to have its communities' interests at heart — and the courage to act on its convictions.



## Library use grows among adults, kids and academics

Public library use continues to grow. The most recent comprehensive federal data available show that the number of visits per year to U.S. public libraries increased 61 percent in the period 1994-2004. Public library visits were up about 3 percent in 2004 from the previous year. Circulation increased 28 percent over the decade and was up 2.3 percent in 2004 from 2003, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Circulation of children's materials in U.S. public libraries increased 44 percent from 1994 to 2004, and attendance in children's programs increased 42 percent. In school libraries, the number of people served increased more than 5 percent from 1999-2000 to 2003-2004, despite huge reductions in professional and other staff, according to NCES data.

Despite the continued (and well-publicized) growth in the number and variety of online resources for research and learning on-site, use of nation's academic libraries and their collections grew from 880,188,296 library visits in 2002 to more than a billion (1,007,174,740) in 2004, according to the NCES — an increase of more than 14 percent. Circulation was up 6 percent, to more than 200 million items.

While all materials collected by academic libraries increased, the number of e-books in these libraries jumped more than 68 percent from 2002 to 2004.

### Materials collected in academic libraries

Material type	2002	2004	change
Print	954,182,359	982,589,877	+ 3.0%
Audio/video	88,196,516	91,894,281	+ 4.2%
Serial subscriptions	9,855,958	12,763,537	+ 29.5%
e-books	19,499,199	32,775,291	+ 68.1%

---

An Association of College and Research Libraries membership survey released in May 2006 highlights top concerns, including an increased emphasis on digitizing collections, preserving digital archives and improving methods of data storage and retrieval; development of a skill set that will continue to evolve in response to the needs and expectations of the changing populations (student and faculty) served; increased demand for faster and greater access to services; more debates in higher education about intellectual property; and increased demand for technology-related services that will require additional funding.

*College Students Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, released by OCLC in 2006, found that of all users, college students have the highest rate of library use and broadest use of library resources, both physical and electronic.

## **Reasons for using the library vary by age, race**

A national poll about public-library use in America conducted in early 2007 turned up some surprising contrasts between Millennials and Baby Boomers. The poll, conducted on behalf of ALA's Campaign for America's Libraries, was limited to people 18 years old and older.

Sixty-eight percent of respondents 18 to 24 years old visited a library last year, compared with only 48 percent of those 55 years and older. Those ages 35 to 44 are the most likely to be library users; the poll indicated that 74 percent of them visited a library last year.

While all age groups agreed that the primary reason they go to a library is to check out or read books, their other library activities diverged. Forty-four percent of people under age 35 used library computers, compared with 22 percent of those 55 and older. On the flip side, 22 percent of those 55 and older went to the library for cultural programs or exhibits, compared with 11 percent of people under 35 years old.

There also were distinct differences among people who identified as white, black or Hispanic. While 63 percent of whites and 64 percent of blacks visited their public libraries, less than a majority of Hispanics (49 percent) did so. Checking out or reading books and education led all other reasons for visiting the library for all three groups, but blacks (50 percent) and Hispanics (42 percent) also used the library to conduct a job search, write a résumé or learn new work skills, compared with 15 percent of whites. Blacks (58 percent) and Hispanics (54 percent) also were far more likely to use library computers than were whites (28 percent).

People responded that the most compelling draw to bring more public-library visits would be "more free classes and programs for people my age," followed by the library being open more hours. While this was true for all age groups, people under 35 years also supported library cafés, more computer and online resources and wireless Internet access. Proximity to home or office was more important for people 55 years and older.

The results are based on a survey of a nationwide cross-section of 1,003 adults conducted Jan. 19-22, 2007.

## Public libraries provide vital Internet access

Virtually all (99 percent) U.S. public libraries now provide free public computer access to the Internet, compared to 25 percent 10 years ago, according to a national study released in September. Most librarians report that this means Internet access for people who otherwise would not have it. This is the first time that impact has been quantified on a national scale.

“Libraries do an incredible job of connecting people with technology,” says Florida State University Professor John Bertot, author of the report, *Public Libraries and the Internet 2006*, which was conducted by FSU and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the American Library Association. For example, the Wired for Youth program of the Austin (Texas) Public Library provides computers, Internet access and support for youth ages 8-17 from disadvantaged communities and teaches them how to use technology as a way of preparing for their future.

The FSU study also indicates that more people are relying on library computers to find government services that are becoming less available locally and more available on line. In Florida, for example, regional offices where families can apply for food stamps have been phased out, so people must use the Internet to complete the application. Local libraries usually provide the needed Internet access, plus instruction in computer skills and completing forms.



However, “demand for this service is significantly outpacing libraries’ capacity to make necessary upgrades, purchases and repairs,” Bertot says. Almost half of U.S. public libraries report no increase or a drop in program funding for 2006. With inflation, increased personnel and benefits costs and a greater demand for technology enhancements, flat funding in many cases amounts to budget cuts that directly affect the quality of library services.

Only 21 percent of public library branches say they have enough computer workstations. Nearly half report that their connection speeds cannot always meet user demands. Rural public libraries are particularly vulnerable, as they tend to have fewer computers and lower connection speeds.

Still, the public expressed strong support for improving public libraries in 2006. Among the notable victories were those in Texas, where Austin voters approved a \$90 million referendum, Houston residents backed a \$37 million bond package for library replacement and renovation projects and — by an 82 percent margin — Dallas voters passed Proposition 4, which provided \$46.2 million for maintenance, construction, and renovation of the city’s library system.

**“I spend most of my time each weekday at the library. . . . Now that I’m a senior in high school, I am constantly online at the library researching colleges, scholarships, and even signing up for tests like the ACT.”**

— Appolonia Tovar, 17, who relies on the Daniel Ruiz Branch of the Austin (Texas) Public Library for Internet access.

In Fort Collins, Colo., residents voted about 2-1 to create a library-taxing district expected to raise some \$5.8 million. In Oregon, 55 percent of Washington County residents who voted approved a four-year, \$29.5 million library levy, a particularly sweet victory since voters had defeated similar proposals twice since 2002.

## Public libraries are a good investment

Measurement of benefit-to-cost ratios, cost-effectiveness, impact and return on investment is not usually applied to the not-for-profit sector, in part because of the difficulty in quantifying benefits from non-priced goods and services that can differ from use to use and user to user — or from library to library, whose mix of service offerings may vary.

But a comprehensive scientific study conducted in Florida demonstrates conclusively that public funds spent on the state's public libraries are a good financial investment that pays real and measurable dividends not just for library users but also for the people of Florida as a whole.

*Taxpayer Return on Investment in Florida Public Libraries* spells out the result of this study, which was conducted for the State Library and Archives of Florida in 2003-2004 by researchers from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Pittsburgh and Florida State University. The study used a variety of data collection and analysis methods, including Florida public libraries' annual data reports to the State Library, a statewide household telephone survey of adults, in-library surveys of adults, a follow-up survey of the libraries, surveys of organizations (e.g., businesses, schools, colleges and hospitals) and an input-output econometric model (REMI).

### Some key findings from study in Florida:

- \$6.54 - amount Florida's public libraries return to the state and its residents for every \$1.00 invested from all sources.
- \$9.08 - increase in gross regional product for every dollar of public support spent on Florida's public libraries.
- \$12.66 - increase total state wages for every dollar of public support spent on Florida's public libraries.

The researchers used a conservative approach to estimating returns, and they note that the results therefore represent minimum rather than maximum benefits.

Public libraries allow users to share knowledge and services at a cost to them as citizens (e.g., the taxes they pay, their transportation costs, cost of time spent); however, all Florida taxpayers benefit from the public libraries through their considerable contribution to education, the economy, tourism, retirement, quality of life and so on. The study used several approaches to considering returns on public library availability and use and found that all showed returns exceeding investment.

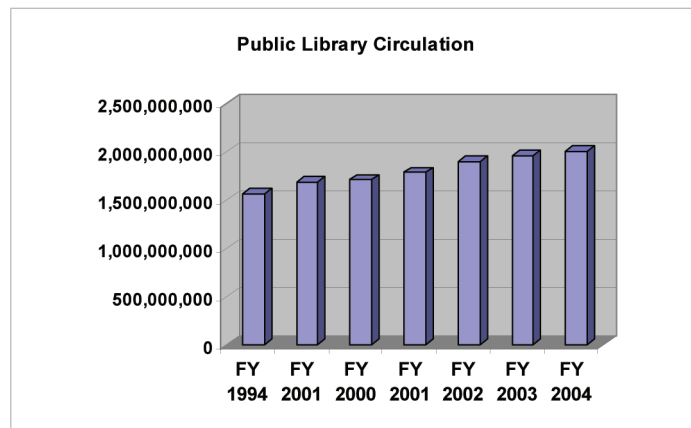
The researchers calculated a number of benefit-to-cost ratios and found them all "impressive." For example, for every \$6,448 in public funds spent on Florida's public libraries, one job is created. In addition, every dollar of public support spent on Florida's public libraries produced an increase of \$9.08 in gross regional

product and an increase of \$12.66 in total state wages.

A similar study showed that nine public library systems in southwestern Ohio create an annual economic impact of nearly four times the amount invested in their operations.

### **...And public and academic libraries expand virtual services**

Academic libraries explored new virtual ways of providing services using technologies such as blogs, wikis, avatars, YouTube, Facebook, etc. A number of academic libraries are setting up services on Information Island in the Second Life virtual reality. The Alliance Library System, one of nine multitype library systems in Illinois, located in East Peoria, Illinois, received a \$40,000 National Library of Medicine/ Greater Midwest Region to provide consumer health information services in Second Life.



### **Libraries boost economic development**

Public libraries also build a community's capacity for economic activity and resiliency. The shift in the role of public libraries — from passive, recreational-reading and research institutions to active economic development agents — is documented in a study, *Making Cities Stronger: Public Library Contributions to Local Economic Development*, commissioned by the Urban Libraries Council, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and released in January 2007.

In this era of economic transformation, the business of public libraries is being recast, the study said, and libraries today address such pressing urban issues as literacy, workforce training, small-business vitality and quality of community life. Public access to digital information and technology is a draw for libraries. Their open structure, combined with the power of new digital collections, technology and media, position them to help communities make the transition from manufacturing and service economies to high-tech and information economies.

---

Four specific ways in which public libraries contribute to community economic development:

- As the correlation between investments in early literacy and long-term economic success is documented, public libraries are expanding beyond their traditional services and engaging in high-impact strategies with community partners. These services are the first step in building the educated workforce that ensures local competitiveness in the knowledge economy.
- With an array of public computers, Internet access and media products, public libraries are a first point of entry for many new technology users.
- When libraries work with local and state agencies to provide business development services, market entry costs for small businesses are reduced and new jobs are created.
- Libraries are frequented local destinations. Urban Institute researchers repeatedly found that public libraries are highly regarded and are seen as contributing to stability, safety and quality of life in neighborhoods; they can attract tremendous foot traffic, provide long-term tenancy and complement neighboring retail and cultural destinations.

Academic and research libraries also support the development of strong economies. In *The Rise of the Creative Class*, economist Richard Florida maintains that communities with academic institutions employ and attract educated professionals, which correlates with a higher level of economic health.

### **Librarians win praise for hurricane relief efforts**

Librarians had an opportunity to show their true colors in 2006 as never before, but it was an opportunity no one would have wished for.

Some 17,000 members of the profession and library supporters ventured to New Orleans in June for the ALA's 2006 Annual Conference, the first major convention to be held there following the devastation wrought by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita the previous autumn. The fact that the association decided — within weeks after the storms and under extreme time pressure — to stick with its plan to meet in the Big Easy boosted local morale and provided an estimated \$20-million economic shot in the arm for the flood-soaked city.

The ALA also established the Hurricane Katrina Library Relief Fund, which raised more than a half-million dollars in donations; the funds were distributed to libraries through relief efforts of ALA chapters in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. The ALA Chapter Relations Office set up an Adopt a Library Program that matched more than 300 libraries nationwide with libraries in the region that needed support; and the ALA Washington Office pushed for federal support to help the libraries rebuild.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation donated \$12.2 million for bookmobiles and temporary mini-branches, and the Bush–Clinton Katrina Fund, established by former Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, contributed \$5 million toward the reconstruction of eight libraries in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi.



Residents who had fled New Orleans used libraries nationwide to connect with loved ones and obtain emergency information and assistance.

Finally, during the convention itself, about 1,000 attendees volunteered for two days of “roll-up-your-sleeves” work at more than 20 library locations. One standout project was the “extreme makeover” of the Children’s Resource Center, a historic Carnegie library branch of the New Orleans Public Library; Highsmith Inc., Bretford Inc., Milliken Floor Covering and many other vendors contributed furnishings and technical expertise. School libraries, supported by a grant of almost \$1 million from retailer Dollar General, played a significant role in rebuilding in communities. And a branch restored by *Library Journal* reopened during the convention.

The extensive media coverage — from local papers to *USA Today*, National Public Radio and *Money* magazine — that resulted let the world know that librarians put their money where their social conscience is. During the conference itself, the story was covered on national television broadcasts such as CNN Sunday, NBC Nightly News and MSNBC news, which meant that more than 14 million viewers saw reports of library rebuilding efforts on hundreds of local TV stations. In addition, more than 350 newspaper articles and radio broadcasts covered ALA efforts to help the Gulf Coast recover. As the *New York Times* wrote: “The nation’s librarians proved themselves an intrepid lot this week, venturing into this limping city where other conventioners have feared to tread.”

By August, 62 percent of the libraries in metropolitan New Orleans that were open before Katrina had opened their doors once again, according to the Brookings Institution’s Katrina Index. This contrasted sharply with other elements of the city’s infrastructure; the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center reported in February 2007 that 56 percent of the city’s public schools and 69 percent of its child care centers remained closed, and that only 17 percent of the city’s buses were running. Nevertheless, more than 20 public libraries in Louisiana were still closed early in 2007, and many public, school and academic libraries in Mississippi and Louisiana continued to operate out of trailers and other temporary facilities.

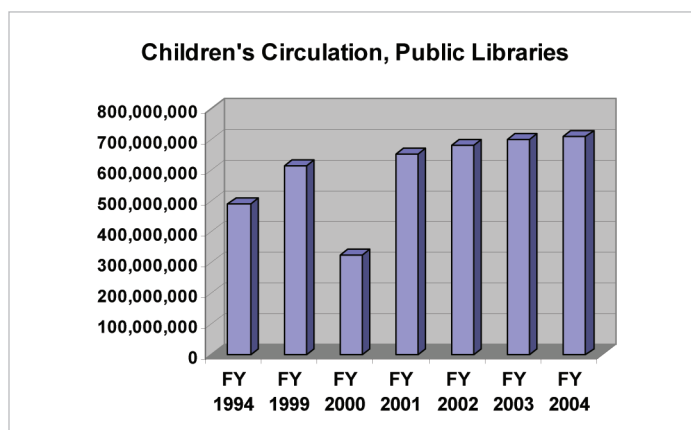
The ALA’s efforts on behalf of Gulf Coast libraries are ongoing.

## **Funding problems persist for school library media centers**

Despite a growing body of research that links school libraries and student achievement, many school library media centers continued to face funding shortages in 2006, leading to elimination of trained school library media specialists, shortened hours, inadequate materials and even closures of school library media centers. This area of the funding landscape was littered with ominous reports.

California’s funding for school libraries, which had been dropping for years, became practically nonexistent. In the 1999-2000 school year, the state paid \$29.16 per student to supply libraries; that dropped to just 41 cents per student in 2005-2006, said Kathy Shirley, of the Escondido Union School District. In Evansville,

Ind., Bosse High School librarian Paula Boenigk said she had only \$2,000 to spend on books in 2006-2007, of which \$1,300 went to replace or repair materials that were old or lost; that left \$700 for new materials. In Norton, Mass., a \$2.67 million tax measure failed; libraries at four schools will be closed and three library assistants eliminated.



In Wisconsin, students had access to 70 fewer school library media specialists in the 2006-2007 school year than in the previous year, according to the Wisconsin Educational Media Association. In 2005-2006, 199 of Wisconsin's 426 districts (47 percent) employed only one certified school library media specialist, and the number of districts in the state with only one certified librarian continues to increase due to tighter budgets and staffing cuts. In Milwaukee, 44 certified librarians served 157 schools, according to a June report from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. And in Monroe, the Monroe School District planned to eliminate four of the district's five librarian positions; this follows the fall 2005 layoffs of all library support staff and would leave a single librarian to serve a district that has about 2,700 students and 390 staff.

A survey conducted in the fall by the American Association of School Librarians predicts that the top concerns for school library media specialists in the future will include having the financial resources to maintain the existing program and to support emerging technologies; having the appropriate staff to meet current demands; having adequate time to plan with teachers; and being viewed by the district as an equal partner in curriculum design and development.

The ALA maintains that school library media centers are the heart and hub of schools. Studies have shown that school library media centers staffed with library media specialist's play a crucial role in increasing literacy for students and in boosting student achievement. Currently, there is a lack of information about funding of school libraries, but the ALA is working to collect reliable data on the status of this key educational resource.

Often the cuts in school libraries are being linked to the key requirements of the No Child Left Behind legislation.

---

## **Federal support for libraries: good news, bad news**

At the ALA's Annual Conference in New Orleans, First Lady Laura Bush announced \$20,869,145 in librarian recruitment and education grants from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The grants are designed to help offset a shortage of school library media specialists, library school faculty and librarians working in under served communities, as well as a looming shortage of library directors and other senior librarians, many of whom are expected to retire in the next 20 years.

In 2003, with a shortage of professional librarians on the horizon, the First Lady had called on the IMLS to help recruit "a new generation of librarians" through a special funding initiative. Since then, the Librarians for the 21st Century program has funded 1,537 master's degree students, 119 doctoral students, 660 pre-professional students and 378 continuing education students.

Mrs. Bush has also been actively involved in restoring storm-damaged school libraries through the Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative of the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries. In late November, the foundation announced \$1 million in grants through the initiative to 20 schools in Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida and Texas. These grants were in addition to the grants to 20 other schools in Louisiana and Mississippi earlier in the year and brought the total grants awarded to more than \$2 million in the first eight months of the initiative.

Also at the federal level, the 50th anniversary of President Eisenhower's signature on the Library Services Act of 1956 saw the allocation of \$210.6 million for library programs, an increase of 2.3 percent from fiscal 2005; and President Bush also proposed increases for fiscal 2007 and fiscal 2008 under what is now known as the Library Services and Technology Act of 1996.

However, President Bush's proposed 2007 budget also cut \$2 million from the \$2.5 million fund for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's network of libraries, and the EPA began closing regional libraries without waiting on Congressional action. Initially blaming it on the budget cut but then calling it part of a plan to grant "broader access to a larger audience" by digitizing library materials and putting them on its Website, the EPA shut library doors in Chicago, Dallas and Kansas City, and five other libraries reduced access or closed.

Attendees at several ALA Midwinter Meeting sessions in January 2007 sounded off to EPA officials. One EPA official responded, "We are very interested in your input." At the request of several members of Congress, the Government Accountability Office began an examination of the closings, and ALA President Leslie Burger was invited to testify about the EPA actions at a February hearing of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

Finally, the so-called 65 percent solution became less of a problem in 2006. First Class Education, which in 2005 began a campaign to mandate that 65 percent of every school district budget in the nation be spent on classroom instruction, made some concessions to the library community but still opposes rewriting the

---

30-year-old NCES definition of classroom instruction to include librarians, who are grouped with food, transportation and other non-instructional staff. Colorado voters rejected two separate ballot measures that would have required school districts to funnel a minimum of 65 percent of their budgets directly into classrooms.

In 10 other states, 65 percent solution measures were rejected or died for lack of legislative action or lack of funding; measures were withdrawn from consideration in three other states for various reasons. By early 2007, the 65 percent solution had been approved in only three states: Georgia and Kansas, by legislative action, and Texas, by executive order.

### **Public and academic librarian salaries rise . . .**

The mean salary of librarians in public and academic libraries in 2006 rose 4.6 percent (\$2,480) from 2005. Salaries ranged from \$22,000 to \$253,500, with a median of \$50,976.

The finding is reported in the 2006 edition of the *ALA-APA Salary Survey: Librarian — Public and Academic*, which includes data from more than 1,000 public and academic libraries and shows aggregated data from more than 10,000 individual salaries at the state and regional levels. Positions included are directors/deans, associate/assistant directors, department heads, managers of support staff, librarians who do not supervise, and beginning librarians.

The study was a joint project of American Library Association-Allied Professional Association and the ALA Office for Research and Statistics.

### **. . . But so does the cost of journals**

Rapidly rising journal subscription prices have severely eroded the ability of libraries, universities, and scholars to purchase the publications necessary for research and education. While the CPI increased 73% between 1986-2004, research libraries expenditures for serials increased 273%. As long valued publications are produced in electronic formats, along with print versions, libraries frequently purchase the same information in multiple formats. This can severely impact their budgets.

The rising cost of academic journals and databases has forced colleges and universities nationwide to cut and forgo subscriptions or to find more money by dipping into budgets for books, audiovisual materials and microfilm. Journal costs at the University of Louisville, for example, rose from \$5.4 million in 2000-01 to \$7.2 million in 2004-05, the latest year for which data are available. During the same period, the university spent less on new books: \$1.2 million in 2004-05 compared with \$2.2 million in 2000-01, according to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

## ALA news: articulating librarians' needs

During her presidential year, 2006–2007 ALA President Leslie Burger focused her activities on helping libraries transform their communities by better articulating librarians' needs and their positions on key issues. Key elements of her vision are:

- All libraries should have the funding they need.
- Librarians and library workers should be paid what they're worth.
- Libraries should be the center of life in their communities/schools/campuses.
- Libraries should be partners in education and economic development.
- Libraries should be “spaces where people of all colors and all ethnicities come together to learn, explore and celebrate what it means to be part of a community and our democracy.”

Burger, director of the Princeton (N.J.) Public Library, set an agenda of guiding the ALA's work in recreating libraries of all types; holding a “transformation summit” to provide practical tips for how everyone can revolutionize their libraries, regardless of budget constraints; publishing a transformation toolkit; establishing a “librarians without libraries” volunteer program to match people who have talents and skills with libraries that can use them; extending the ALA's national advocacy effort through a Web-based initiative (<http://ilovelibraries.org>); and creating a pool of emerging leaders who can act on all these initiatives.

Francine Fialkoff, editor-in-chief of *Library Journal*, commented that Burger's agenda is “not merely a statement of purpose [but] a tool for national and local action” (Jan. 15, 2007)

**Direct to your email box** — *American Libraries* (AL), the ALA's news and feature magazine, opened 2006 by launching *American Libraries Direct*, an online weekly newsletter emailed free to 48,000 library professionals who are members of the ALA. The e-newsletter links readers quickly to breaking news stories from AL, news from the ALA and all its units, U.S. and world updates relating to libraries and information about awards, coming events and action alerts.

**Many voices, one event** — More than 1,000 attendees gathered in Dallas in October for the Joint Conference of Librarians of Color, a historic first co-sponsored by the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, the American Indian Library Association, the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association, the Chinese American Librarians Association, and REFORMA (the National Association to Provide Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking); all are ALA affiliates and work with its Office for Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS). “I hope we don't make this conference the last and make sure that diversity is part of everything that we do,” said Carla Hayden, ALA past president. Conference proceeds were divided equally among the five groups for their scholarship endowments.

**Outreach to rural and tribal libraries** — The library community intensified its outreach to rural and native American tribal libraries in 2006. OLOS estimates that 80 percent of U.S. libraries are rural — i.e., serve communities of 50,000 or less and are not connected with an urban center. The ALA provides on-

line and hard-copy resources on how to garner local financial, political and volunteer support for library policies, services and programs, and OLOS delivers trainings and works with developing networks around the country, reaching out to and collaborating with these groups so their voices can be heard and their needs addressed.

## Scholarships awarded to 69 prospective minority librarians

The year 2006 was a banner year in the Spectrum Scholarship Program, the ALA's diversity and recruitment effort designed to address the issue of under-representation of ethnic librarians within the profession.

Since its inception in 1997, the Spectrum program has supported 415 students with scholarships worth more than \$2.5 million. Spectrum has also served as a model for ways to bring attention to larger diversity issues, and many library schools and professional associations have built on Spectrum's efforts by providing matching funds and development opportunities for scholars.

In June, the ALA awarded 69 Spectrum scholarships, creating the largest "cohort" or class to date.

In 2004, the Institute of Museum and Library Services awarded the Spectrum program a three-year "New Voices, New Visions" grant of \$928,142. These funds enabled Spectrum to award an additional 35 and 41 scholarships in 2005 and 2006, respectively, and the ALA anticipates that 2007, the final year of the IMLS grant, will see a new record high number of Spectrum scholarships.

Also in 2006, the University of Pittsburgh's School of Information Science announced that it will partner with the ALA on the Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship Program, to be funded through a second IMLS grant. In all, 10 participating doctoral programs will award 10 fellowship packages that include full tuition and a yearly stipend.

## New public libraries are still in demand

Construction and renovation of public libraries continued apace in 2005-2006.

- The new Jacksonville (Fla.) Public Library replaces a 1965 facility and includes 6,500-square foot teen area on the ground floor and a 25-foot owl sculpture by artist Larry Kirkland. The new building cost \$102 million.
- The Grande Bibliothèque du Québec serves both the city of Montreal and the entire province of Québec; it includes an assortment of public areas such as a conference center, bookstore, café and auditorium and cost \$70.9 million Canadian (\$61.6 million US).
- New York Public Library's five-story Bronx Library Center is tailored to the needs of the diverse community it serves and includes a Latino and Puerto Rican Cultural Center. The 78,000-square foot facility cost \$50 million.



- A \$27 million joint project of the Public Library of Charlotte (N.C.) and Mecklenburg County and the Children’s Theatre of Charlotte, *ImaginOn: The Joe and Joan Martin Center* integrates classrooms, children’s and teen library spaces, and two theaters.
- Located in the heart of downtown, Fayetteville (Ark.) Public Library’s new Blair Library is designed to complement the historic feel of the town square two blocks away. The interior of the \$23.3 million facility offers a traditional feel, with high ceilings, generous reading areas, and solid wood accents.

## **Internet notes: Social networks meet DOPA**

By 2006, more intrepid libraries were making MySpace their space in the hopes of attracting young users by bringing service to young people where they “live.”

MySpace and other social networking sites such as Facebook, Friendster and LiveJournal are, generally speaking, online “spaces” where people connect with others who share similar interests. People use them to share thoughts and ideas and to meet others, form communities, organize or make themselves heard. (Social networking tools also have business and educational applications and, because they facilitate collaboration among users, are the basic ingredients of Web 2.0.)

In July, the U.S. House of Representatives, taking note of several high-profile media stories about child predators who sometimes lurk at such online hangouts, overwhelmingly (410–15) approved the Deleting Online Predators Act. The bill, known as DOPA, would “require recipients of universal service support for schools and libraries to protect minors from commercial social networking Websites and chat rooms” by prohibiting users younger than 18 from visiting interactive sites on campus unless the session is for “educational use” or, in a public-library setting, with express parental approval or supervision.

DOPA died in the 2006 session of the Senate, but that chamber is again considering a law that jeopardizes E-rate funding for public libraries that do not limit minors’ use of social networking sites. Meanwhile, legislators in Illinois, Georgia and North Carolina have drafted DOPA-like bills that would restrict access by children and teens to social networking sites.

Most librarians feel that DOPA, as written in the House in 2006, leads to a false sense of security while over-blocking constitutionally protected material. The ALA opposes the bill because it is overly broad and would unintentionally block access to many valuable Websites; because interactive Web applications are being used for many legitimate purposes by businesses, schools, political organizations, religious institutions and libraries, and young people must learn how to use them effectively and safely; because “there’s no substitute for education when discussing safe use of the Internet,” and DOPA would actually block certain sites that librarians and teachers can use to teach young people about how best to use social networking sites and how to report and avoid unsafe situations; because DOPA offers a sweeping solution to problems that are best handled at the local level; and because DOPA would restrict access to technology in the communities that need public access the most.

---

ALA opposition to DOPA or similar legislation is led by the Young Adult Library Services Association, the Office for Intellectual Freedom and the Washington Office.

**Making better use of E-rate discounts** — The nation’s public libraries continued their efforts in 2006 to make full use of the federal E-rate funding program, which provides millions of dollars in telecommunications discounts for public libraries each year. The Universal Service Fund for Schools and Libraries Program, as it is formally known, helps public libraries and schools pay for telecommunications service, Internet access and related costs. Public libraries traditionally garner less than 5 percent of the \$2.25 billion available annually, due in part to restrictions imposed by the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the complexity of the application process.

Supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the ALA’s Office for Information Technology Policy has begun an effort to increase public-library participation in the E-rate program. The first activity in this project was a training session for state library E-rate coordinators, held in November, which attracted representatives from 44 states and the District of Columbia . . . nearly half of who were new to the E-rate program.

**A two-tiered Internet?** — As part of their mission, libraries offer users unhindered access to a diversity of Internet content that is free from commercial bias. But after the FCC in 2005 repealed its long-standing principles of “network neutrality” — which permit everyone to view or post lawful content, offer equal access at an equal price and allow users to choose their preferred connections — telecom and cable companies have been scrambling to create a two-tiered Internet in which content providers would pay a higher price for faster, unrestricted connections. In 2006, the ALA Council passed a resolution affirming the right of all users to “equal and equitable Internet access,” even as Rep. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) and Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) unsuccessfully tried to pass legislation guaranteeing net neutrality.

**Google marches on** — Google continued to expand its reach in the information world as the Universities of Texas, California, Wisconsin (Madison) and Virginia and the Universidad Complutense de Madrid joined the original five research libraries participating in its project to digitize books and provide access to their contents through its search engine. In June, the University of California said it might provide the search company with as many as 3,000 books a day for scanning and that materials pulled for scanning would be back on the shelves of their libraries within 15 days. And in August, Google launched a service allowing users of Google Book Search to download complete copies of out-of-copyright books scanned from its library partners’ collections.

## **Concessions won on PATRIOT Act renewal**

The nation’s librarians and other interested parties won some important concessions in 2006 in their battle against renewal of the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001. Of particular concern was Section 215, which infringes on library patron privacy and civil liberties by allowing the FBI to issue a National Security



Letter (NSL) to any person or entity, ordering them to turn over “any tangible things” so long as it specifies that the order is “for an authorized investigation . . . to protect against international terrorism or clandestine intelligence activities.” Those served with Section 215 orders were flatly prohibited from disclosing that fact to anyone else.

After months of negotiations, filibusters and extended deadlines, President Bush signed a PATRIOT Act reauthorization bill into law in March, one day before the latest of several extensions expired. The reauthorized law included more restrictive standards under which the FBI can issue NSLs and gave NSL recipients the right to challenge the gag provision after one year. Also, Section 215 was reauthorized only until Dec. 31, 2009, itself a victory because the government had sought a 10-year renewal.

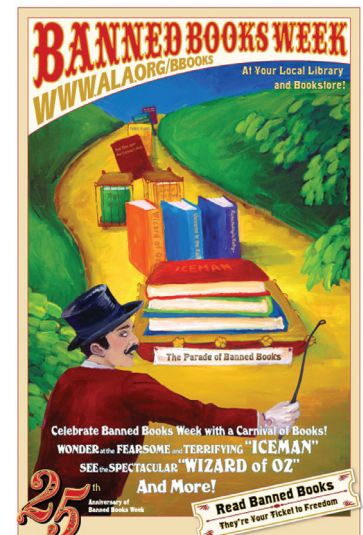
At its 2006 Annual Conference, the ALA celebrated that and a subsequent victory — the lifting later that spring of the 2005 gag order against the Library Connection, Inc., a nonprofit consortium of libraries in Connecticut, and the withdrawal of the only known NSL delivered to a library.

In a program called “Meet John Doe,” four librarians on the Library Connection executive board described their frustration at being targets of an NSL that demanded computer records for one of their member libraries — and at being forbidden to talk about it. The four received a standing ovation.

Among the active players in the PATRIOT Act negotiations was the Campaign for Reader Privacy, which includes the American Booksellers Association, the Association of American Publishers, PEN American Center and the ALA.

## Challenges now arrive by the bushel

Public and school librarians continued in 2006 to respond to challenges concerning the materials on their shelves or in their curricula, with more and more complainants presenting library officials with lists of materials they want removed rather than challenges of single works. Many complainants get these lists from an organization called Parents Against Bad Books in Schools (PABBIS), which generates them and posts them on the Internet. The complainants often also go to the local media to make their demands known; overburdened school boards usually consider a few of the cases but act on requests as a whole. The result for librarians is that while the number of challenges remained flat, the amount of work has increased significantly, according to the ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF).



Banned Books Week marked its 25th anniversary Sept. 23-30 with the tag line, “Read Banned Books. It’s Your Freedom We’re Talking About!” Readings, exhibits, and programs nationwide highlighted this annual celebration of the freedom to read, which gives librarians, teachers, booksellers, and others an opportunity to raise awareness in their communities about the importance of free speech and free expression. Banned

---

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

The OIF has recorded about 10,000 book challenges since 1990. The most challenged books of 2005 were Robie Harris's *It's Perfectly Normal*; *Forever*, by Judy Blume; *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J.D. Salinger; *The Chocolate War*, by Robert Cormier; and *Whale Talk*, by Chris Crutcher. For the five-year period 2001-2005, witchcraft appears to have been a major concern: the Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling topped the most frequently challenged books list.

## Press Contact

Macey Morales  
ALA Manager of Media Relations  
[mmorales@ala.org](mailto:mmorales@ala.org)  
312-280-4393

## Feedback

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
- Association of College and Research Libraries
- Chapter Relations Office
- Office for Government Relations
- Office for Information Technology Policy
- Office for Intellectual Freedom
- Office for Literacy and Outreach Services
- Office of Research and Statistics
- Public Information Office/Campaign for America's Libraries
- Public Library Association
- Washington Office

Please direct any comments regarding this report to Mark Gould, Director, Public Information Office, [mgould@ala.org](mailto:mgould@ala.org).

