



NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

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ARIZONANS GIVE HIGH MARKS TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Arizonans hold a very positive view of the quality and importance of the state's public libraries, according to a telephone survey conducted earlier this year on behalf of the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records. Sixty-eight percent of Arizonans rate the state's public libraries as "very good" or "good." Seventy-five percent of Arizonans say they visited a public library in 2006. The highest-rated characteristics of Arizona public libraries are librarian knowledge, online access to library catalogs and databases, and library safety.

The telephone survey was conducted by the Social Research Laboratory at Northern Arizona University between December 27, 2006 and January 9, 2007 with 1,202 randomly-selected Arizona adults. Survey results are valid at a +/- 2.8 percent margin of error, at a 95 percent confidence level. The complete survey report is available at the Social Research Laboratory website (www.socialresearchlab.com).

POSITIVE VIEW OF LIBRARIES

Thirty-eight percent of Arizonans surveyed rate the state's public libraries as "very good," while 30 percent call them "good." Only five percent say they are "poor" or "very poor." Arizonans recognize the importance of and need for quality public libraries. Ninety-eight percent agree "public libraries are needed because they provide free information" and 94 percent

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believe “public libraries are essential for maintaining a productive community.” Eighty-nine percent say “libraries are an important, quiet oasis from busy lives,” and ninety percent think “public libraries are important as vital, dynamic community centers.”

VALUED CHARACTERISTICS OF LIBRARIES

Arizonans who use public libraries were asked to rate various characteristics of the library they use the most on a scale of one (“very poor”) to five (“very good”). The highest average ratings were awarded to librarian knowledge (4.52), library safety (4.50), building maintenance (4.45), and online access to library catalogs and databases (4.43).

Using the same scale, survey respondents judged the importance of various library services. The highest ratings go to “keeping library services free” (4.70), “friendly, knowledgeable librarians” (4.65) and “having information and books organized for easy self-service” (4.64). The most important library collections are reference materials (4.66), government forms (4.50), and computers and online services (4.43). The most important library services are children’s programs (4.67), providing a safe place for teenagers to meet and study (4.64) and adult literacy programs (4.52).

ARIZONA LIBRARIES GO HIGH-TECH

Arizonans consider access to library computers, databases and online services to be important parts of their public library experience. Although online library visitation lags behind in-person library visitation, one-third of Arizonans (35%) have accessed a public library website. Among website visitors, 65 percent used online databases during their last visit, and 60 percent accessed the library catalog. Other popular online activities include finding library hours (54%) and contact information (46%), and renewing books (38%). Eighty percent of Arizonans report having computer and Internet access on a daily basis, meaning that the potential for use of Arizona public library online resources is great.

ABOUT THE ARIZONA STATE LIBRARY

The Arizona State Library Archives and Public Records serves the information needs of Arizonans through six divisions: Braille and Talking Books Library; History and Archives; Law and Research Library; Library Development Division; State Capitol Museum; and Records

Management. Through its divisions, the agency provides access to unique historical and contemporary resources including in-depth research and reference services in the subject areas of law, government, genealogy, and Arizoniana. For more information, visit www.lib.az.us.

