



a project of the  
**PewResearchCenter**

# Libraries in Communities

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Presented to: ALA Midwinter

January 26, 2014



“Tell the truth, and trust the people”

-- Joseph N. Pew, Jr.

<http://bit.ly/dUvWe3>

<http://bit.ly/100qMub>

BILL & MELINDA  
GATES *foundation*



“The internet ... offers immense possibilities for encounter and solidarity. This is something truly good, **a gift from God.**”

-- Pope Francis , January 23, 2014



**the ONION<sup>®</sup>**

# 1 In 3 Twentysomethings Have Faked Calls

AMERICAN VOICES • Opinion • ISSUE 47•33 • Aug 18, 2011

 1.8K  153  2

According to a new survey from the Pew Research Center, 30 percent of cell phones users aged 18 to 29 have feigned calls in the past month to avoid certain social situations. What do *you* think?

“What I really hate is when they try to fool you by pretending their hand is a phone.”

*Ian O’Brien –  
Export Manager*

“Yeah, I’ll admit it’s a pretty convenient dodge. The only downside is getting socked with hefty fees when I go over my pretend minutes.”

*Mickey Taylor –  
Belt Picker*

“Wow! Really? That’s... Sorry, I’ve got to take this.”  
Regan Hill –  
Unemployed

# My 5 points about libraries in communities

1. Libraries are deeply appreciated, especially for their community role and impact
2. The overall number of library users is shifting
3. Libraries have a mandate to intervene in community life
4. Libraries are cross pressured from patrons about what to do heading into the future
5. New insights into patrons (and non-patrons) will help you figure things out

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# Libraries are deeply appreciated



91% say libraries are  
important to their  
communities

76% say libraries are  
important to them and  
their families

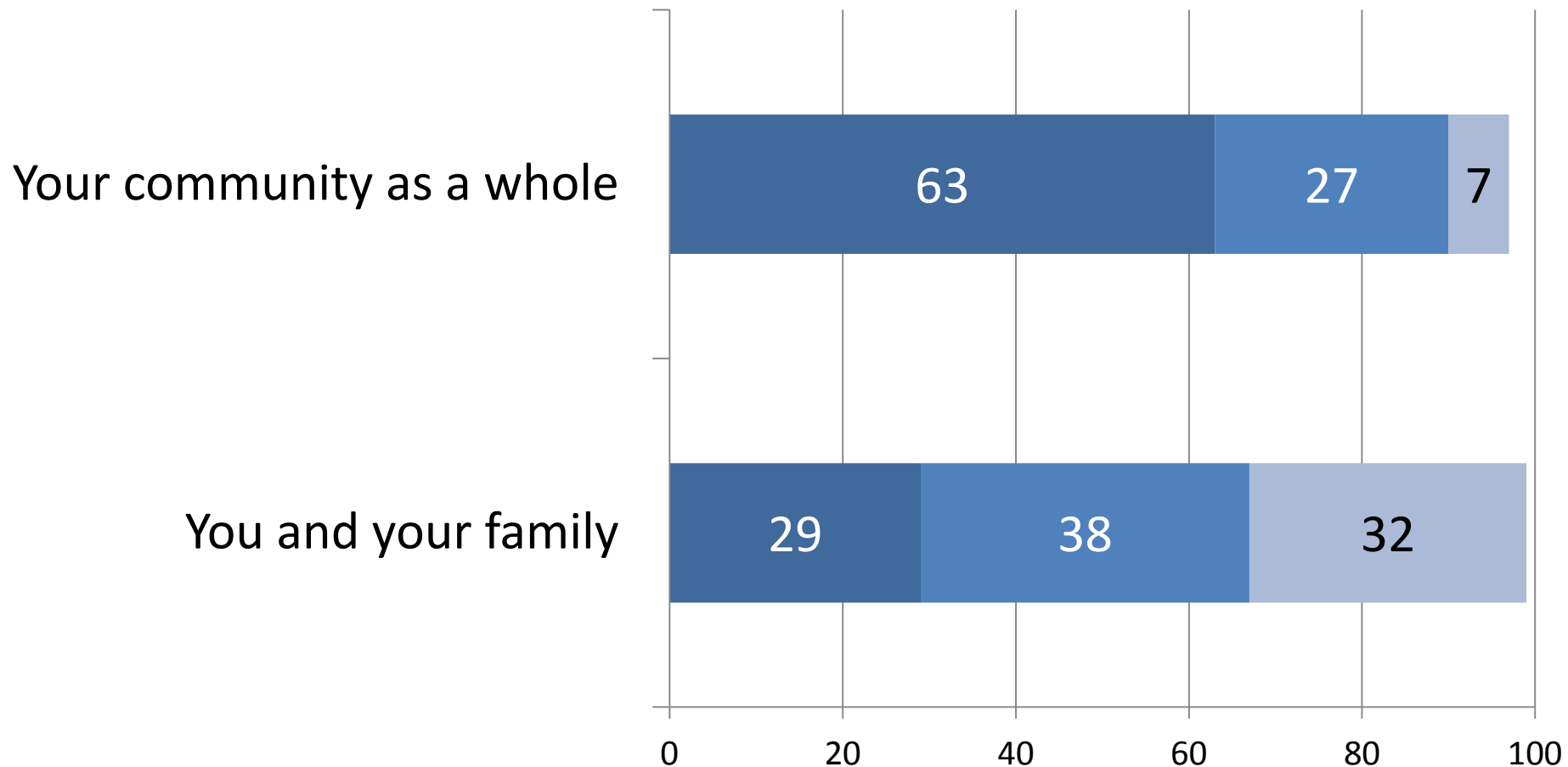
Robert Dawson photography - Library Road Trip

<http://www.robertdawson.com/pages/1/Public%20Library%3a%20An%20American%20Commons/Public%20Library%3a%20An%20American%20Commons>



If your local public library CLOSED, would that have a MAJOR impact, MINOR impact or NO IMPACT on ...

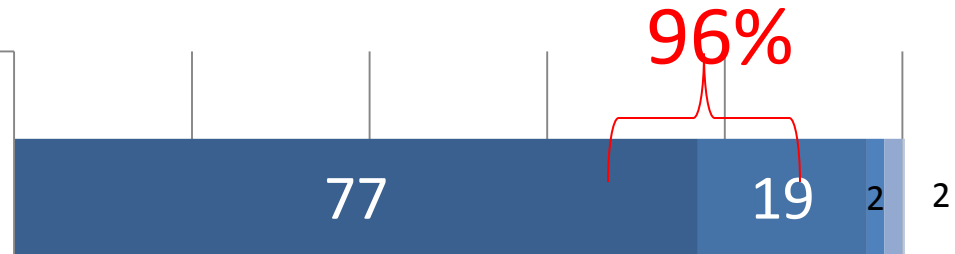
■ major impact ■ minor impact ■ no impact



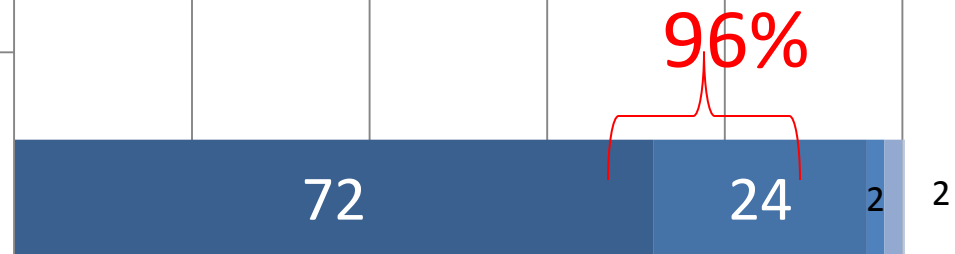
Agree / disagree questions

■ Strongly agree ■ somewhat agree ■ Somewhat Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree ■ don't know

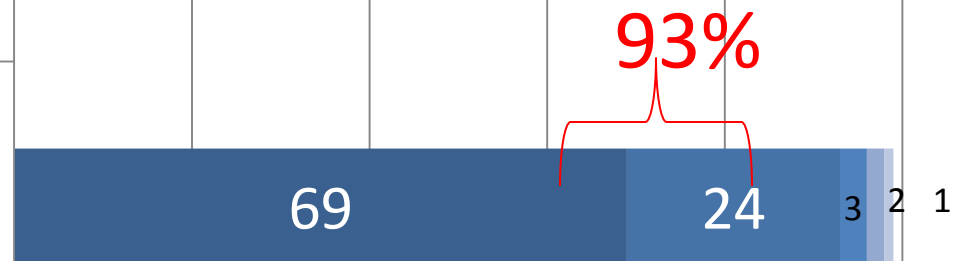
Public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading.



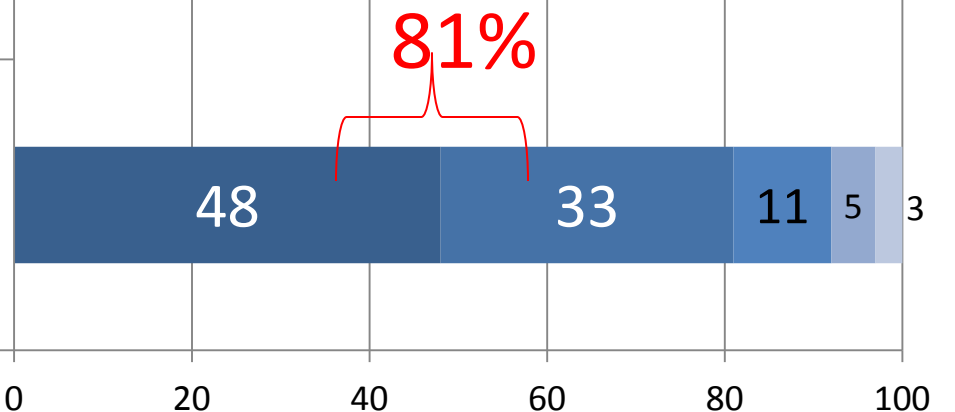
Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.



Having a public library improves the quality of life in a community.



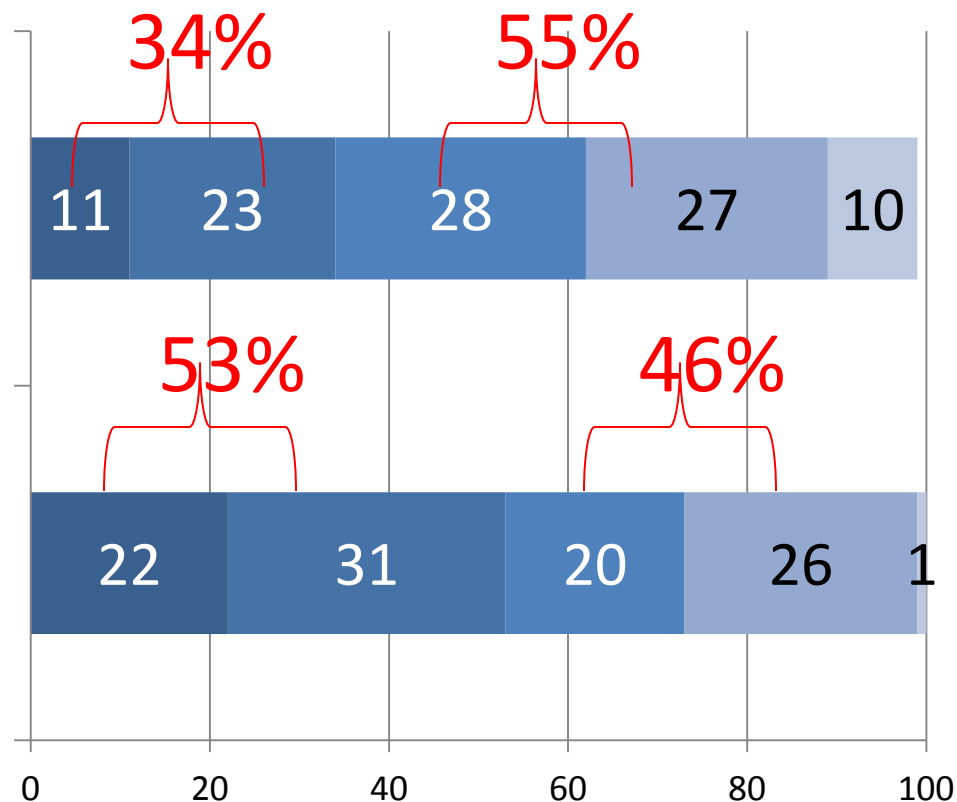
Public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.



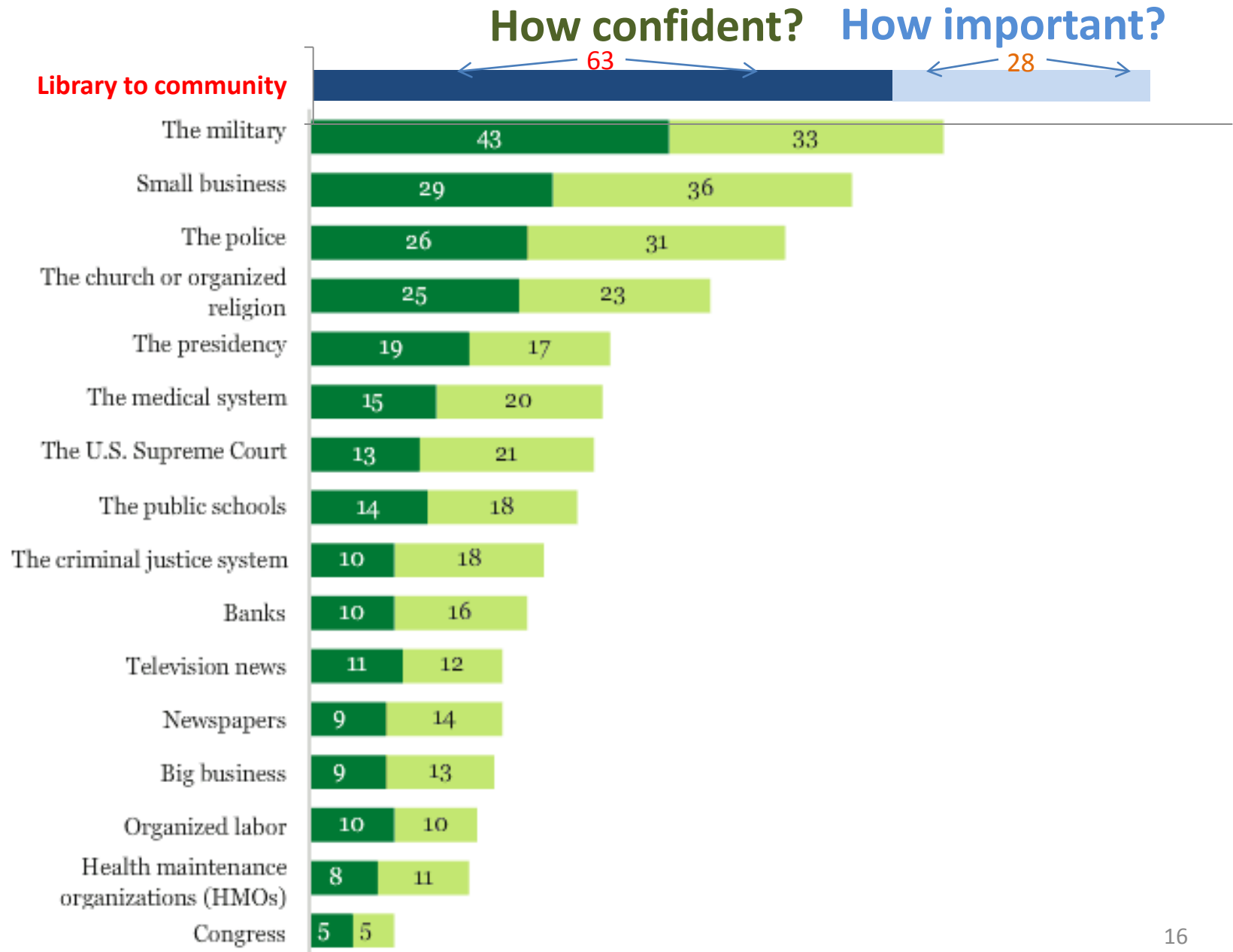
■ Strongly agree ■ somewhat agree ■ Somewhat Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree ■ don't know

Public libraries have NOT done a good job keeping up with new technologies.

People do NOT need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own.



# Libraries stack up well vs. others



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# Trendspotting – 2012-2013

- 5 point drop in number who went to library or bookmobile – 53% to 48%
  - Biggest drops: women, blacks, ages 18-29, households \$30K-\$50K, parents of minors
- 5 point increase in number of users of library websites – 25% to 30%
  - Biggest increases: blacks, Hispanics, 16-29 year olds, those with some college (but not degree)

# Library users

		% who have visited a library or bookmobile in person <u>in the past 12 months</u>
All Americans ages 16+		48%
a	Men	45%
b	Women	50%
Age		
a	16-17	59% <sup>bcd</sup>
b	18-29	48% <sup>e</sup>
c	30-49	52% <sup>de</sup>
d	50-64	46% <sup>e</sup>
e	65+	39%
Education attainment		
a	No high school diploma	34%
b	High school grad	39% <sup>a</sup>
c	Some College	51%
d	College +	58%
Parent of minor		
a	Parent	55%
b	Non-parent	44%



# Who uses library websites

		% who have ever used a library website <u>in the past 12 months</u>
<b>All Americans ages 16+</b>		<b>30%</b>
a	Men	26%
b	Women	<b>34%</b>
<b>Age</b>		
a	16-17	35% <sup>de</sup>
b	18-29	36% <sup>de</sup>
c	30-49	35% <sup>de</sup>
d	50-64	28% <sup>e</sup>
e	65+	<b>17%</b>
<b>Education attainment</b>		
a	No high school diploma	10%
b	High school grad	20% <sup>a</sup>
c	Some College	<b>34%</b>
d	College +	<b>45%</b>
<b>Parent of minor</b>		
a	Parent	<b>37%</b>
b	Non-parent	27%

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Coordinate more closely with local schools in providing resources to kids



Offer free early literacy programs to help young children prepare for school



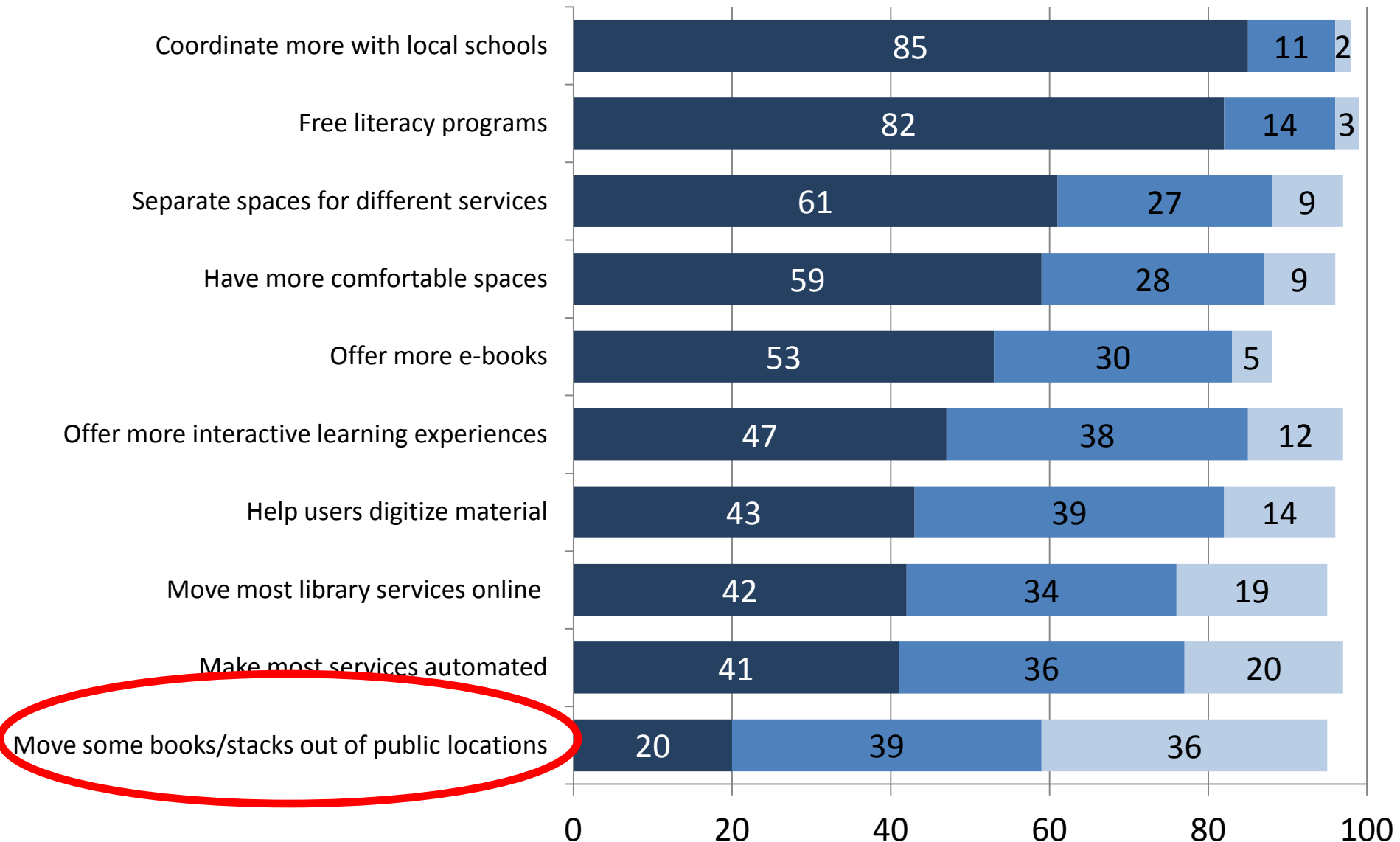
■ Should definitely do    ■ Maybe do    ■ Definitely NOT do

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# 2013 slide

■ Should definitely do    ■ Should maybe do    ■ Should definitely not do



Move some print books and stacks out of public locations to **free up more space** for things such as tech centers, reading rooms, meetings rooms, and cultural events

■ Should definitely do   ■ Should maybe do   ■ Should definitely not do

20%

39%

36%

Less active library users, men, Af-Amer, Latinos, teens, less education, lower income HH, no computer

18-29 yr olds, smartphone owners, know less about libraries, whites

Internet users, more active / knowledgeable patrons, whites, those over 50, higher income HH, full time workers, parents of tweens, computer owners, heavier book readers (including e-book readers)

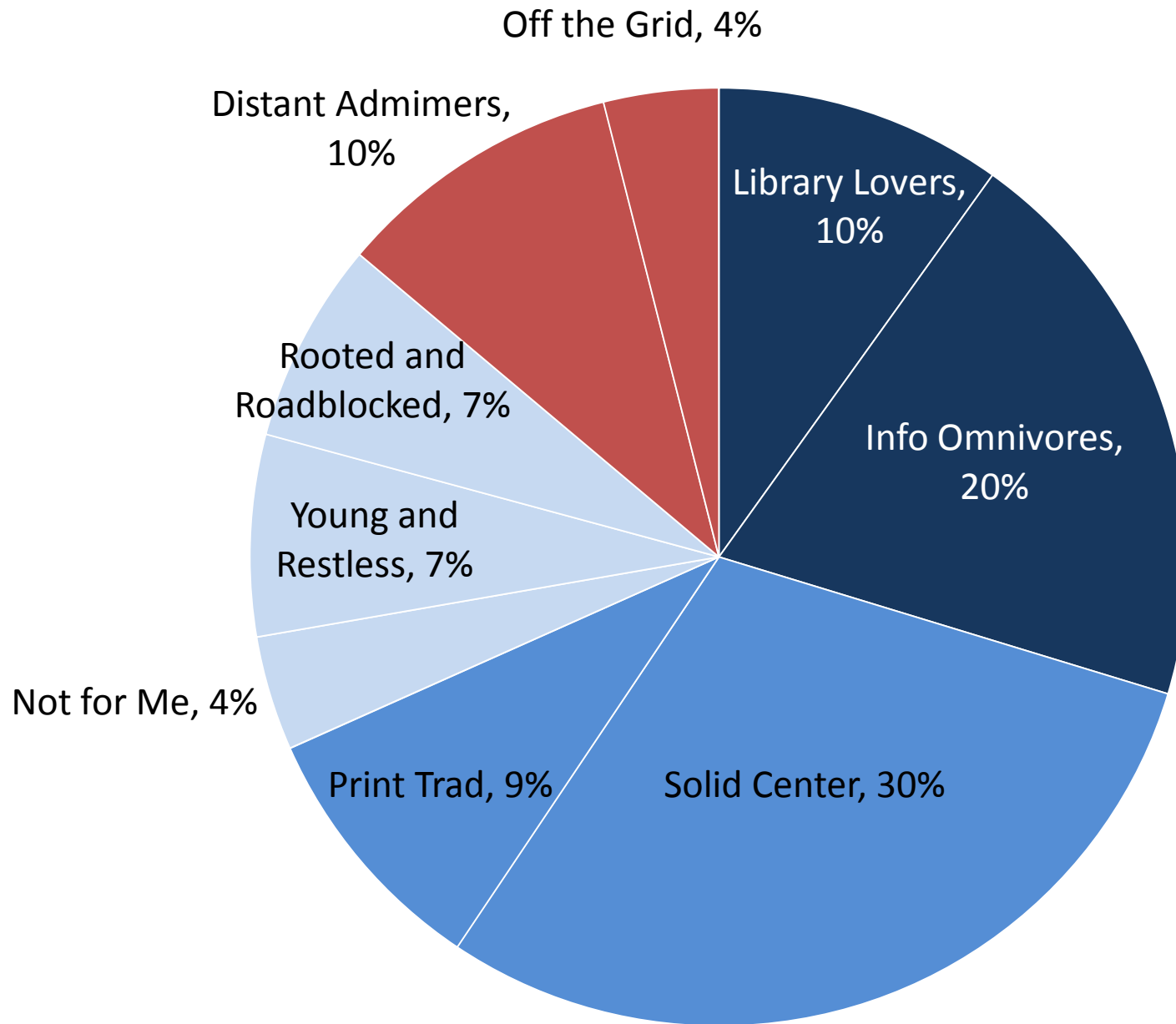
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# Structure of special survey

- 6,224 ages 16 and older; July 18-September 30, 2013
- Importance of library in community (and to patrons personally)
- Personal/household library use (overall)– and intensity of use)
- Personal experiences using libraries and services – level of knowledge about libraries
- Familiarity with closest library – and proximity
- Negative perceptions of libraries
- Technology inventory and use
- Information “profile” – enthusiasm (or overload) and tasks





Tier 1: High Engagement  
30% of population

# 1 – Library Lovers – 10% of pop.

- **Overview:** Everything about you is great
- **Who they are:** women/mothers, upscale but with economic stressors, little more liberal
- **Lifestyle:** Book readers and borrowers, community engaged and social engaged
- **Relationship with libraries:** Leading group in attitudes – affection and need ... would take the loss of their library as a personal loss

## 2 – Info Omnivores – 20% of pop

- **Overview:** Big users, younger, more upscale, aren't as dependent on library or as affection about them
- **Who they are:** women/mothers, most upscale, suburban (not much rural)
- **Lifestyle:** Highest tech use, full time workers, big readers but not as much as Library Lovers
- **Relationship with libraries:** Like libraries a lot, especially as community resource, but use library less often and would not take the loss of their library at such a profound personal level

Tier 2: Medium Engagement  
39% of population

# 3 – Solid Center – 30% of pop

- **Overview:** They are the big middle group – a notch or two down from the most engaged users, but still fans and pretty regular patrons
- **Who they are:** A little more male, and white. Higher median age (47), conservative in politics, somewhat less likely to have gone to grad school. Less likely to have minor children.
- **Lifestyle:** “Average” in most ways. More likely to purchase books.
- **Relationship with libraries:** Less engaged and a bit on the wane: 58% have library cards; 42% visited library in past year; 5% went to website. A third say their library use has declined in past 5 years. Rate libraries highly as community resources, but less so as personal assets. They know a lot about libraries.

## 4 – Print traditionalists – 9% of pop.

- **Overview:** Most rural and Southern group. Like libraries for what they stand for in the community, but personally don't have a lot of contact with libraries. Live relatively far away
- **Who they are:** White; 9 in 10 in small city or rural area, skew female (57%), slightly older (46), conservative politics
- **Lifestyle:** Embedded in their communities; know neighbors. Less likely to be tech users and appreciators
- **Relationship with libraries:** Stand out in their positive views about the role of libraries.

Tier 3: Low Engagement  
18% of population



# 5 – Not for Me – 4% of population

- **Overview:** Have used libraries but have strikingly negative views about role of library in community. Know less about services and more likely to have had bad experience
- **Who they are:** 56% male, average age, rural, more conservative, lower levels of educational attainment
- **Lifestyle:** 31% read no book last year, lower levels of internet use; say they would need help finding information. 59% say no one in household uses library.
- **Relationship with libraries:** 64% say library closing would have no impact on them. More likely to say they know little about library

## 6 – Young and Restless – 7% of pop.

- **Overview:** Urban millennials. Only 15% say they know where the local library is. Only 1/3 have library card or visited in past year.
- **Who they are:** Live in cities; but also more Southern; relatively poor in HH income; 53/47 male skew; median age 33; 26% are students; racially diverse, liberal
- **Lifestyle:** Very high tech use; looking for jobs; newcomers to communities; don't know neighbors; eager information consumers
- **Relationship with libraries:** Most likely to say library use has decreased; not as much attached to current library services; but said library closing would have a major impact on them

## 7 – Rooted and Roadblocked – 7% of pop.

- **Overview:** Used library in their lives, but only 1/3 went in last 12 months. Older group. Better than average feelings about libraries, but also more likely to report bad experiences. Don't feel knowledgeable about them
- **Who they are:** Median age 58, few parents, 35% retired, 28% health condition that makes reading hard; 34% had major health problem last year
- **Lifestyle:** Longtime residents of their communities, but socially disengaged with community activities. Low technology use.
- **Relationship with libraries:** 33% have card; 33% visit in person recently; 45% say library closing would affect them and their families

No personal library use:  
14% of population

## 8 – Distant Admirers – 10% of pop.

- **Overview:** Many say others in their house use libraries and may be indirect beneficiaries; very high opinions about importance and role of libraries in communities
- **Who they are:** 56/44 male; lower levels of education; higher share of blacks and Hispanics; skew a little rural
- **Lifestyle:** Don't know many neighbors; low community activity; pretty high tech use, TV watchers; less likely to read
- **Relationship with libraries:** Generally support a range of library services; would appreciate help with information activities (especially govt benefits; jobs)

## 9 – Off the Grid – 4% of pop.

- **Overview:** Disconnected in many ways: from communities, libraries, tech, info sources. Low levels of tech and reading
- **Who they are:** Skews male, older, racially diverse, rural, lower levels of education and HH income
- **Lifestyle:** Longtime residents but don't know neighbors; low community social engagement; lowest tech use; less interested in learning
- **Relationship with libraries:** Never used library in lives, little household exposure, live farther away and would be difficult to use library website

## Quiz and widget

What kind of library of library user  
are you?