Colorado Public Libraries Respond Positively to Changing Information Needs

FAST FACTS
RECENT STATISTICS FROM THE LIBRARY RESEARCH SERVICE
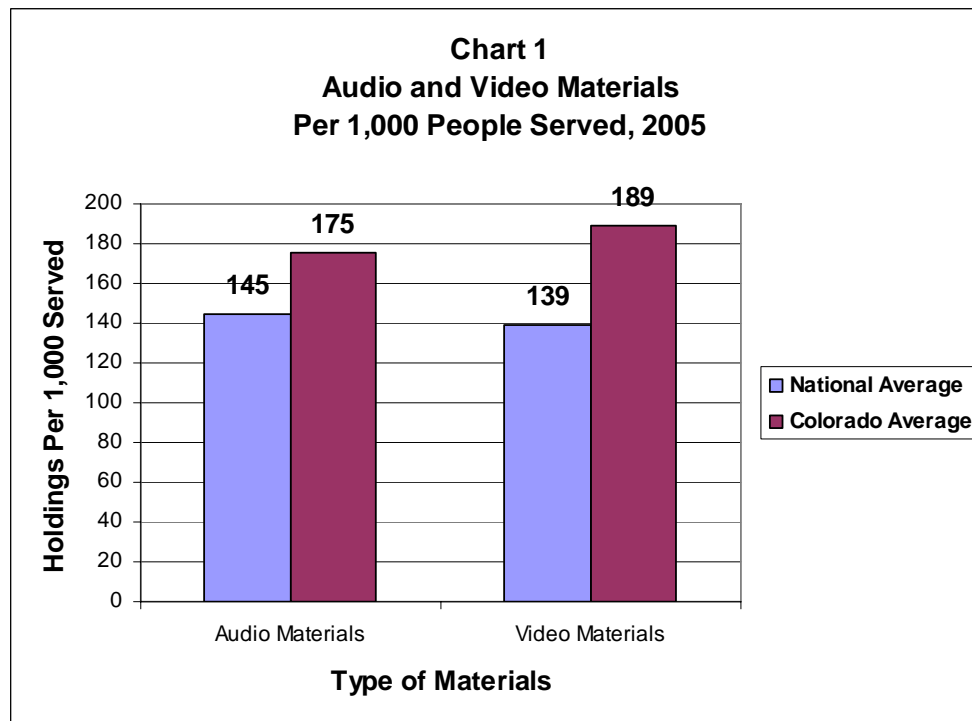
Libraries have responded effectively to many changes over the years. Recently, changes related to new technologies and media have come to the forefront. As library users seek access to a greater variety of materials, as well as to computers and the Internet, the question arises as to whether these needs begin to supersede traditional library services like reference, circulation, and programming.
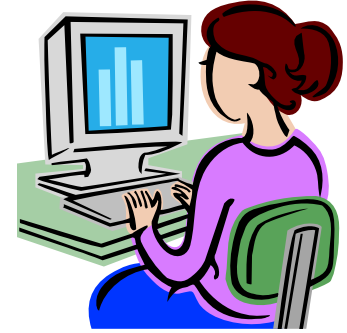
However, data from a recent National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report suggest a more optimistic fate for Colorado libraries, one in which new technologies and traditional library services co-exist and thrive. In fact, the report suggests a positive relationship between new media and technology and library use in general.

Released in November 2007, the *2005 NCES Public Libraries in the United States* survey report shows that Colorado libraries have positively responded to changing information needs.[1] For example, public libraries in Colorado collected audio-visual materials at a rate significantly higher than the national average; in 2005 they held 21 percent more audio materials per 1,000 people served, and 36 percent more video materials per 1,000 than the average U.S. library (see Chart 1).

Chart 1
Audio and Video Materials
Per 1,000 People Served, 2005

Type of Materials	National Average	Colorado Average
Audio Materials	145	175
Video Materials	139	189

Holdings Per 1,000 Served

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Colorado public libraries have also increased their commitment to alternative media without significantly sacrificing their obligation to print materials. Current print serial subscriptions in Colorado were 4 percent higher than the national average, while other print materials were lower by 9 percent.

Similarly, in 2005 public libraries in Colorado also recognized the value of the Internet as a resource for public use. They provided 4 percent more Internet terminals per library than the national average. There is still room for growth, however. Colorado's average is above the national average for number of Internet terminals per library, but the state ranks just 20th among the states on this statistic.

Possibly because of this significant investment in technology and media, Colorado libraries have also maintained a very high level of traditional services. In 2005, the state was within the top ten states for library visits, reference transactions, and circulation numbers per capita (see Chart 2). It was the state with the 6th highest number of circulation transactions, providing 53 percent more transactions per capita than the national average. The average number of library visits per capita in Colorado was 30 percent higher than the national average, while the average number of reference transactions per capita was 19 percent higher than the national average.

Chart 2
Traditional Library Services Used Per Capita, 2005

FAST FACTS RECENT STATISTICS FROM THE LIBRARY RESEARCH SERVICE
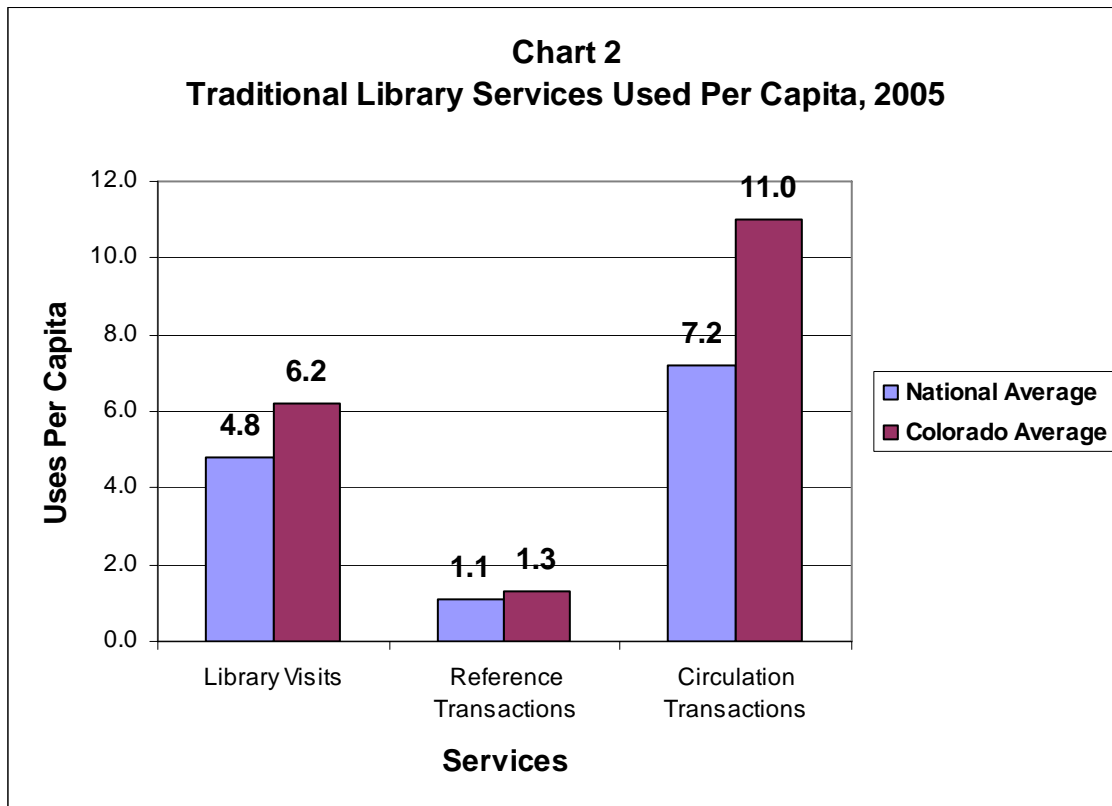
Similarly, the average rate of attendance at children's programs per library in Colorado greatly exceeded the national average rate of attendance. Colorado's public libraries attracted an average of 4,929 attendees or 49 percent more attendees to their children's programs than the average public library in the nation (at 3,301 attendees). Circulation of children's materials in Colorado public libraries was also slightly higher than the national average at 36 percent of total circulation (versus 35%). While some may argue that investment in alternative media and Internet terminals indicates a shift in focus from children's services to adult needs, these numbers support the idea that service to Colorado's children has remained strong.

If the 2005 NCES Public Libraries survey report is any indication, Colorado public libraries are responsive to the changing needs of their patrons. They have been able to meet new desires for technology and media while excelling at the provision of traditional library services, including those to children. As Douglas County Library Director James LaRue stated in a recent Libnet listserv discussion regarding changing technology and the relevance of libraries in our communities, "We know, for a fact... that our investment in public Internet access *increases*, not *decreases* public visits to the library. We also know that reference use (provided by reference librarians) *increases*."[2] LaRue added, "In any library that reaches out to its community, the story is of greater and greater demand, not less."[2]

> **Library Services & the Internet**
>
> For more information about the relationship between the Internet and other library services see: *Access to Internet Goes Hand in Hand with Other Public Library Services and May Attract Library Visitors* (Fast Facts No. 240, June 16, 2006).

Compared to national averages, Colorado libraries are more effective at reaching out to their communities, as is reflected in the number of library visits, reference transactions, and circulating materials. The adoption of new media and technology does not necessarily mean a decrease in the use of public libraries' traditional or familiar services. In fact, this shift appears to have inspired increased use, a fact that holds much promise during these days of steady change.

Sources:

[1]National Center for Education Statistics. (2007). *Public libraries in the United States: Fiscal year 2005.* Retrieved December 12, 2007 from http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2008301

[2]LaRue, J. (2007, December 1). *Re: the Kindle.* Message posted to Colorado's Libnet listserv.

Fast Facts – Recent Statistics from the Library Research Service
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LibraryJobline.org - The First Year

In January 2008 the Colorado State Library Jobline celebrated its first anniversary at its new home, www.LibraryJobline.org. The new Library Jobline, unlike the original website, is database driven and gathers detailed information about job postings. This new interface allows both employers and job seekers to customize their use of the site. In addition, it allows for the compilation of data about job vacancies, including number of postings, library type, educational requirements, and reason for the position vacancy. This report examines some of this data based on the 552 jobs posted to Library Jobline in 2007.

> **Features of LibraryJobline.org**
>
> - Customizable email & RSS notification of new jobs
> - Searchable job postings (current and archives)
> - Map of job locations
> - *Hot Jobs* – list of the most viewed posts

Jobs by Type of Library

Of all library types, public libraries posted the most job openings on Library Jobline with nearly two out of three listings (61%). This is not particularly surprising, given that public libraries employ more staff than any other library type[1]. Academic libraries were a distant second with fewer than one in five of the jobs posted (17%), followed by special (9%), school (8%), and institutional (5%) libraries. Seven postings indicated more than one library type. (See Chart 1.)

Chart 1
Library Jobline, 2007
Percentage of Jobs Posted by Library Type
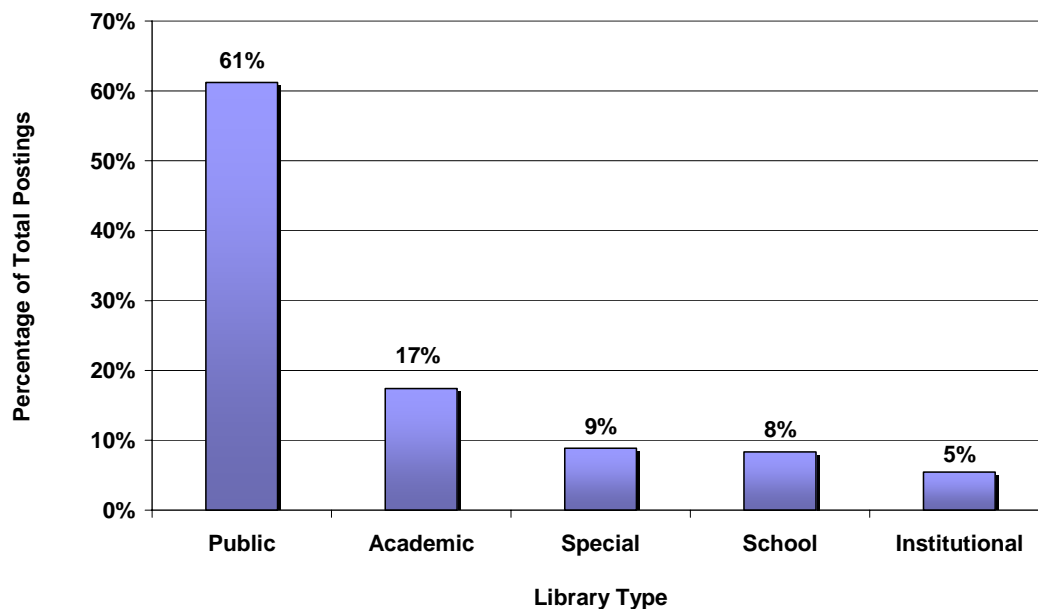
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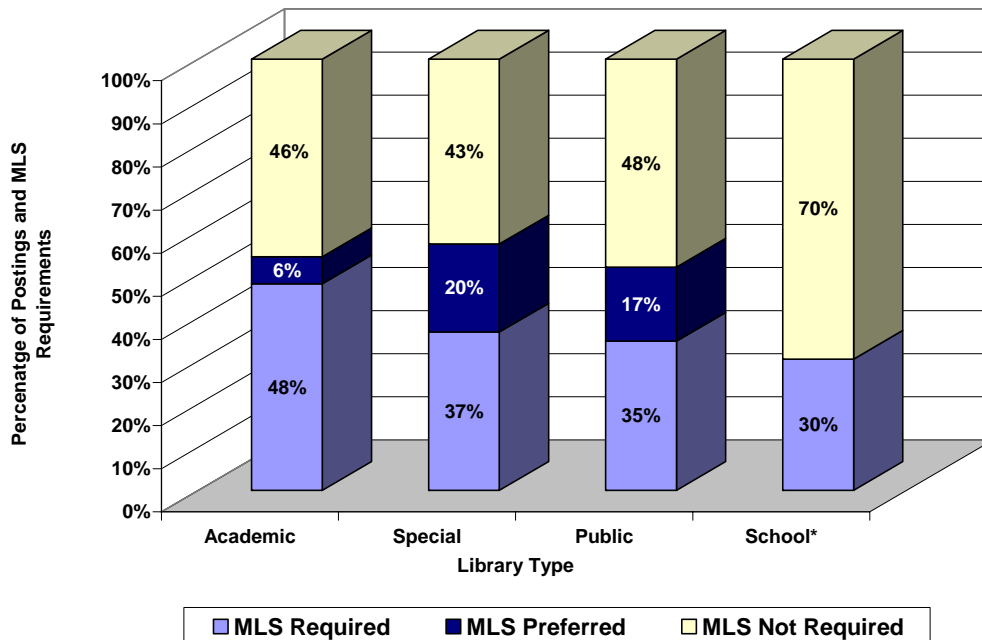**FAST FACTS** RECENT STATISTICS FROM THE LIBRARY RESEARCH SERVICE

Postings from school libraries comprised a smaller percentage (8%) on the jobline than public, academic, or special libraries, in spite of being the second largest employer of library staff. This relatively low proportion can be attributed to school library postings being more likely to include multiple positions in one listing and school districts' tendency to post job vacancies internally or on school job websites (e.g., TeachinColorado.org). Nevertheless, school library positions are some of the most searched on the jobline. *As of this writing*, the most viewed job post in 2008 was for a Teacher-Librarian position at Denver Public Schools[2].

Jobs by MLS Degree Requirements

A master's degree was required at varying levels among different library types. Public, school, and special libraries required an ALA-accredited MLS degree for about one-third of the jobs they posted. Academic libraries required the degree most frequently, with nearly half of positions posted indicating the degree was required. However, special and public libraries were much more likely to *prefer* an MLS degree than were academic libraries. For all three of these library types, more than half of the jobs posted either required or preferred a master's degree. (See Chart 2.)

When listing jobs, school libraries were given the option of "MLS required," but not the option of "preferred education" because of the unique educational and licensing requirements for *endorsed* "school librarian" and "teacher-librarian" positions. These positions require a Colorado Department of Education school library endorsement, which includes a teacher license as well as a library science education[3].

Chart 2
Library Jobline, 2007
Percentage of Postings by ALA-MLS Requirement and Library Type

Percenatge of Postings and MLS Requirements

Academic	Special	Public	School*
MLS Not Required 46%	43%	48%	70%
MLS Preferred 6%	20%	17%	
MLS Required 48%	37%	35%	30%

Library Type

☐ MLS Required   ■ MLS Preferred   ☐ MLS Not Required

* Note: For school libraries, those requiring an MLS, NCATE, or equivalent are represented. School libraries were not given the option for "preferred" education.

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Reason for Vacancies

Employers posting to Library Jobline were asked the reason for the job vacancy. Of those who responded to this query, nearly half said the opening was created by a resignation (46%). Far fewer indicated they were trying to fill openings created by promotions (17%) or due to retirements (12%). A surprising and heartening 1 in 4 jobs listed were new positions (25%). Such a high rate of new openings suggests a continued demand for librarians in the Internet age. (See Chart 3.)

Chart 3
Library Jobline, 2007
Percentage of Postings by Reason for Vacancies
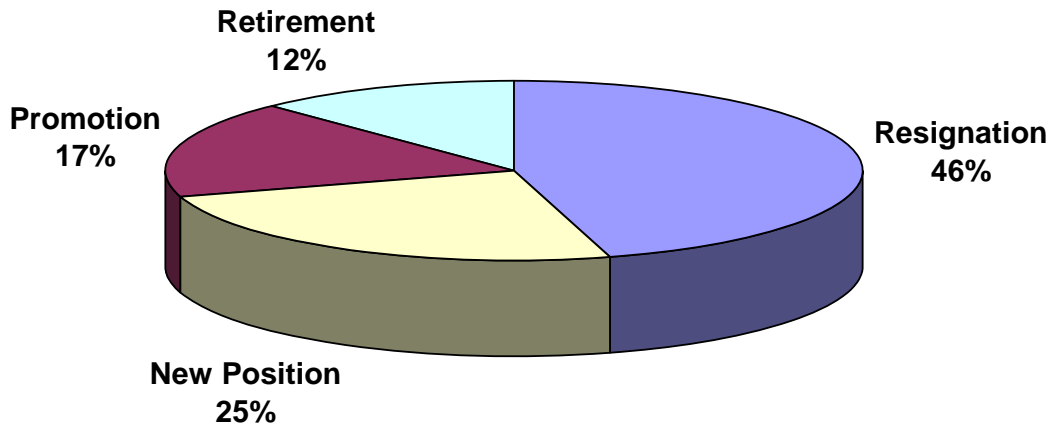
New Jobs and Spanish-language Skills

Spanish-language skills were important in new positions posted on Library Jobline. A third of new jobs indicated a preference for such abilities (33%). This contrasts with a preference for Spanish skills in 1 out of 5 vacancies for *existing* jobs (20%). Given the changing demographics of Colorado, this increased demand to serve the Spanish-speaking public makes sense. The U.S. Census Bureau's *2006 American Community Survey* indicates that the number of Spanish-speaking Coloradans age 5 and over jumped from 363,723 in 2000 to 545,112 in 2006, an increase of 50 percent[4].

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Library Workforce Trends

The first year of the new of the Colorado State Library Jobline gives us a brief glimpse into the types of jobs being posted for library staff. Notably, there continue to be new jobs created in the field, a master's degree still seems to be relevant, and the desire for Spanish-speaking employees appears to be desirable in new positions. The real power of the new jobline site, though, lies a few years down the road. As we harvest more information over time we will be able to follow trends in the job market and view a more complete picture of how the library workforce landscape is changing.

For more information on posting a job or viewing current job openings see: www.LibraryJobline.org.

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Sources:

[1]Library Research Service. *Big Facts about Colorado Libraries.* http://www.lrs.org/documents/bigfacts.pdf.

[2]Library Jobline. *Hot Jobs.* http://www.libraryjobline.org/stats/hotposts.php.

[3]Colorado Department of Education. *Guidelines for Library Endorsement, Professional Education Path.* http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/download/pdf/Flowchart.pdf.

[4]U.S. Census Bureau. *2000 Census Summary: Table PCT11: Language Spoken At Home By Ability To Speak English For The Population 5 Years And Over.* http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTTable?_bm=y&-context=dt&-ds_name=DEC_2000_SF3_U&-CONTEXT=dt&-mt_name=DEC_2000_SF3_U_PCT011&-tree_id=4001&-redoLog=true&-all_geo_types=N&-geo_id=04000US08&-search_results=01000US&-format=&-_lang=en & *American Community Survey: Table C16001: Language Spoken At Home For The Population 5 Years And Over - Universe: Population 5 Years And Over.* http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTTable?_bm=y&-context=dt&-ds_name=ACS_2006_EST_G00_&-CONTEXT=dt&-mt_name=ACS_2006_EST_G2000_C16001&-tree_id=306&-geo_id=04000US08&-search_results=01000US&-format=&-_lang=en.

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Colorado Public Libraries Help Children Get Ready to Read

FAST FACTS
RECENT STATISTICS FROM THE LIBRARY RESEARCH SERVICE

Inspired by concerns about young children's school readiness, the Colorado State Library (CSL), has provided early literacy (pre-reading) program-development support to public libraries statewide since 2004. This support has included staff skills-training workshops, (based on the PLA/ALSC program *Every Child Ready to Read @ your library® [ECRR]*),[i] grant funds, research reports, coalition building, and use of an e-list that helps practitioners share best practices and seek guidance from one another.[ii]

> **Six Pre-Reading Skills**
>
> *During ECRR-based storytime programs and adult workshops, library personnel model activities that help children develop these skills:*
>
> - Print motivation
> - Vocabulary
> - Print awareness
> - Letter knowledge
> - Phonological awareness
> - Narrative skills

EVERY
CHILD
READY
TO READ
@ your library

Bolstered by these endeavors, numerous library jurisdictions around the state, both large and small, have expanded the depth and scope of their programming for children age birth to six. Such programming includes ECRR-based literacy-enhanced storytimes (for children and their adult caregivers)[iii] and adult-only ECRR workshops that provide early literacy research data and hands-on skill-building activities adults can use with children. One goal of both programming types is to help adult caregivers understand the roles they can play in the development of children's reading readiness.

Among the outgrowths of CSL's initiative thus far, a task force called Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy (CLEL) came to fruition in January 2008; it now serves as an advisory group to CSL. Comprised of self-selected active early literacy providers from public libraries across the state, CLEL aims to strengthen children's literacy through a combination of library services and community advocacy. The CLEL Steering Committee currently includes children's services, training, and outreach staff from 13 different Colorado library jurisdictions.

This report provides baseline early literacy programming data from these 13 library jurisdictions. The data was collected by CSL from February through May of 2008 from people who provide early literacy services on behalf of these libraries. The numbers represent best estimates based on current and previous years' activities as reported by those library personnel. The data itself is divided into two different tables based on programming location—in house or off-premises (outreach).

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Baseline Findings

ECRR-based literacy-enhanced programming is offered in communities of varying sizes around the state. Using 2007 figures, the 13 public library jurisdictions surveyed for this report range from "medium small," Alamosa/Southern Peaks Public Library (8,490), to the state's largest, Denver Public Library (580,223). For 11 of these 13 library jurisdictions, in-house literacy-enhanced storytimes are the most prevalent of these types of programs.

In-House Programming

Table 1 looks at the numbers of programs and attendance figures per year for activities held on the library premises. It should be noted that some libraries host programs for community partners such as child care groups or clients of social service agencies inside their libraries as well as off-premises.

> *For this report, literacy-enhanced storytimes are defined as having these five components*:
> - Literacy theme for the storytime, using at least one of the six pre-reading skills.
> - Parents and/or caregivers invited to attend.
> - Storytime leader models and communicates about early literacy skills.
> - Selection of appropriate books/activities to promote use of a skill.
> - Sharing of skill-oriented information by leader either verbally or with handout material.

TABLE 1
Literacy-Enhanced Storytimes
& *Every Child Ready to Read @ your library*®-based Adult Workshops

Annual In-House Programs[1]

Library Jurisdiction	Population Served[2]	Literacy Enhanced Storytimes			Adult-only Workshops	
		Number of Programs	Attendance: Children	Attendance: Adults	Number of Programs	Attendance
Alamosa/Southern Peaks Public Library	8,490	208	2,860	1,560		
Arapahoe Library District	205,965	1,620	18,000	13,500	4	40
Basalt Regional Library District	11,158	156	832	572		
Denver Public Library	580,223	913	17,347	7,304		
Douglas County Libraries	265,470	3,536	73,840	44,200		
Estes Valley Public Library District	12,239	228	3,937	1,052		
Fort Collins Public Library	165,972	699	7,235	3,900	10	150
High Plains Library District (Weld Cty)	215,128	1,508	30,056	15,028		
Lafayette Public Library	24,317	160	4,160	2,400		
Mesa County Public Library District	135,468	212	4,082	2,120	14	280
Pikes Peak Library District	527,600	2,080	45,760	15,236	5	50
Westminster Public Library	106,765	260	3,640	2,600		

[1]Estimates based on scheduled 2007-08 programming
[2]Legal service area population for 2007

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In-House Literacy-Enhanced Storytime Programs:
Nearly all of the libraries, 12 of the 13 jurisdictions, offer this type of programming. Session numbers per year range from 156 at Basalt Regional Library District to 3,536 at Douglas County Libraries. Child visits range from 832 (Basalt) to 73,840 (Douglas) per year. Adult visits per year range from 572 (Basalt) to 44,200 (Douglas).

In-House Adult-Only ECRR Workshops: Just under a third of the 13 libraries offer these workshops for a general parent/caregiver audience. Where offered, the frequency of these programs ranges from 4 (Arapahoe Library District) to 14 (Mesa County Public Library District) times per year. Estimated adult visits per year range from 40 (Arapahoe) to 280 (Mesa). Mesa provides their 14 workshops as part of a community partnership that serves teen moms.

Beyond the programming statistics shown in this table, several libraries provide special in-house adult ECRR workshops for specific constituencies including library volunteers and members of community groups not necessarily representative of a parent/caregiver audience (e.g. students seeking academic credit). While such programs serve to benefit children and adults in these communities, statistics for these specialized-audience in-house adult ECRR workshops are not covered here.

Off-Premises Programming
Table 2 looks at programs and attendance figures per year for activities provided by libraries at offsite venues (outreach). In some cases, these numbers represent outreach programming led by closely supervised library-trained volunteers. Off-premises programs frequently reach adults and children who might not otherwise avail themselves of public library services. Often, these are geared toward specific groups at specific locales such as a prison or a child care facility.

> *"Very, very useful. Clarifies what we, as parents, should emphasize to increase our children's love of books."*
>
> Adult ECRR workshop participant
> Arapahoe Library District

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TABLE 2
Literacy-Enhanced Storytimes
& *Every Child Ready to Read @ your library®-based* Adult Workshops
Annual Off-Premises Programs[1]

Library Jurisdiction	Population Served[2]	Literacy Enhanced Storytimes			Adult-only Workshops	
		Number of Programs	Attendance: Children	Attendance: Adults	Number of Programs	Attendance
Alamosa/Southern Peaks Public Library	8,490	52	780	260		
Arapahoe Library District	205,965	12	240	48	12	120
Denver Public Library	580,223	3,390	57,630	6,780	18	354
Douglas County Libraries	265,470	1,040	18,200	3,120	1	100
Estes Valley Public Library District	12,239	99	1,444	120		
Fort Collins Public Library	165,972	104	2,600	1,300	4	54
Jefferson County Public Library	534,691	681	13,620	1,362	22	220
Lafayette Public Library	24,317	100	960	130	5	112
Pikes Peak Library District	527,600	260	6,500	780	5	50

[1]Estimates based on scheduled 2007-08 programming
[2]Legal service area population for 2007

Off-Premises (Outreach) Literacy-Enhanced Storytime Programs: Nine of the 13 jurisdictions offer this programming. Where available, annual session numbers range from 12 (Arapahoe Library District) to 3,390 (Denver Public Library). Child visits range from 240 (Arapahoe) to 57,630 (Denver) per year. Adult visits per year range from 48 (Arapahoe) to 6,780 (Denver). Frequently, off-premises storytime programs are held in childcare environments where the ratio of children to adults tends to be higher than comparable statistics for in-house programming.

Off-Premises Adult-Only ECRR-based Workshops: Seven of the 13 jurisdictions offer these workshops for a general parent/caregiver audience. Where available, the frequency of program offerings ranges from 1 (Douglas County Libraries) to 22 (Jefferson County Public Library) per year. Estimated adult visits per year range from 50 (Pikes Peak Library District) to 354 (Denver Public Library).

> *"My son notices letters in the environment all the time now and points out the letters in the words he sees."*
>
> Storytime-attending parent
> Douglas County Libraries

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RECENT STATISTICS FROM THE LIBRARY RESEARCH SERVICE

Conclusion

The Colorado State Library collected these statistics to provide baseline knowledge about public library-based in-house and off-premises programming—both for children and for their adult caregivers—focused on children's reading readiness. The data from these 13 library jurisdictions who have staff members serving on the CLEL Steering Committee provides us with a useful overview for understanding several common types of early literacy programming currently underway—as well as the frequency of and attendance at those activities.

In Colorado, such early literacy program offerings are not limited to these 13 libraries; other public libraries around the state enthusiastically provide these kinds of programs, too. Future collection of statistics will enable CSL and CLEL to better understand the availability and impact of early literacy activities. Through training, advocacy, and ongoing support, Colorado's libraries are working collaboratively to foster and promote early literacy to benefit residents in all areas of the state.

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[i] Every Child Ready to Read @ your Library® is a joint program of the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Services to Children, divisions of the American Library Association. Every Child Ready to Read® @ your library® is a registered trademark and is used with permission. Program information can be accessed at: http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/ecrr/ecrrhomepage.cfm

[ii] See Library Research Service publications: Fast Facts #237, #239 and *A Closer Look: Early Literacy Programs and Practices at Colorado Public Libraries*. Accessible at: http://LRS.org

[iii] See Ghoting, S. & Martin-Diaz, P. (2005). *Early Literacy Storytimes @ your library: Partnering With Caregivers for Success.* Chicago: American Library Association.

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School Library Cohort, 2005-07: Trends to Watch

For the past three years, a cohort of 408 school libraries has consistently responded to the annual Colorado School Library Survey. Their responses give a glimpse into some of the trends in school libraries: students' use of school libraries is moving towards group visits as opposed to individual visits, collections are changing to reflect a greater reliance on technology even though circulation numbers continue to increase, and finally, use of interlibrary loan is increasing at a substantial rate. An analysis of these trends has been culled from the responses of the cohort and raises some interesting issues for reflection.

Usage

Since 2005, individual student visits to school libraries in the cohort have *decreased* by 7 percent (see Table 1). At the same time, group visits have *increased* by 8 percent. This suggests that the way students use library resources may be changing. For example, students may visit school libraries with classes or in groups more often to work on school projects. Even though individual visits have decreased, circulation has increased by 7 percent. Students are still checking materials out from school libraries, whether they visit the library in groups or alone.

Table 1
School Library Cohort, 2005-2007
Student Visits and Circulation

Type of Visit or Transaction	2005	2007	Percent Change
Individual Visits	165,827	154,283	-7%
Group Visits	7,904	8,526	+8%
Circulation Transactions	187,797	200,452	+7%

Another interesting trend is the rise in use of interlibrary loan (ILL) services among this cohort of Colorado school libraries. Since 2005, the number of ILL materials both borrowed and loaned has increased substantially (see Chart 1). Total ILL activity has increased by 19 percent among these libraries.

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The State Wide Interlibrary Loan Fast Track service, or SWIFT, began in 2000 and provides web-based ILL requesting and tracking services to libraries in Colorado free of charge. According to Lori Smith, SWIFT Coordinator for the Colorado State Library, the majority of items requested by school media specialists via ILL are for teachers. This suggests that, in addition to using the school library resources, teachers are using ILL to supplement their curriculum materials and meet their information needs. At the same time, the user-friendly and free SWIFT system makes inter-institution borrowing easier than ever before. It seems, then, that the increase in ILL use is probably due to a combination of factors, including a need for additional library materials and the convenience of the SWIFT ILL system.

Chart 1
School Library Cohort, 2005-2007
Interlibrary Loan Activity
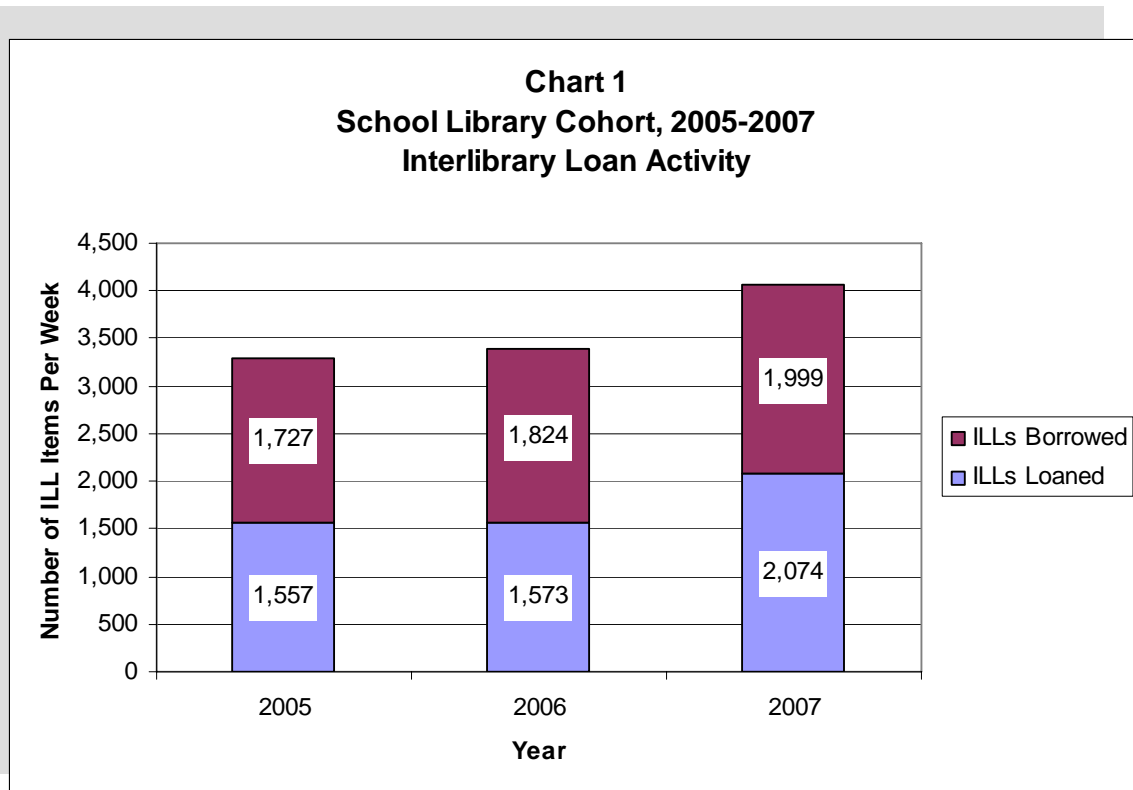
Collections

While visitation patterns are changing among students, so are the components of school library collections in the cohort. From 2005 to 2007, book collections decreased by approximately 1 percent, or by over 25,000 volumes (see Table 2). The only types of physical materials that have increased are video and audio, which rose by 1 and 2 percent respectively.

While the changes to books, videos, and audio materials are slight, periodical subscriptions changed significantly, decreasing by 9 percent since 2005. This change is probably related to the increased emphasis on technology in the library and classroom, most notably the addition of online reference materials and databases.

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RECENT STATISTICS FROM THE LIBRARY RESEARCH SERVICE

Table 2
School Library Cohort, 2005-2007
Physical Collections

Type of Material	Number of Materials		Percent Change
	2005	2007	
Books	3,875,680	3,850,333	-1%
Video Materials	110,032	111,014	+1%
Audio Materials	30,861	31,541	+2%
Print Subscriptions	6,524	5,949	-9%

While it may be somewhat puzzling that physical (versus electronic) resources are staying the same or decreasing while circulation is increasing, this trend would seem to support the idea that while collections are smaller, they are more relevant to Colorado's students. To some extent, it could simply reflect appropriate weeding policies and practices.

Student access to technology in these school libraries, as might be expected, increased substantially during the period studied with the number of computers increasing by 28 percent (see Chart 2). This isn't a surprise, given the shift towards electronic collections and increased information sharing occurring in libraries of all types, including those in schools.

Chart 2
School Library Cohort, 2005-2007
Number of Computers in the Library

FAST FACTS
RECENT STATISTICS FROM THE LIBRARY RESEARCH SERVICE
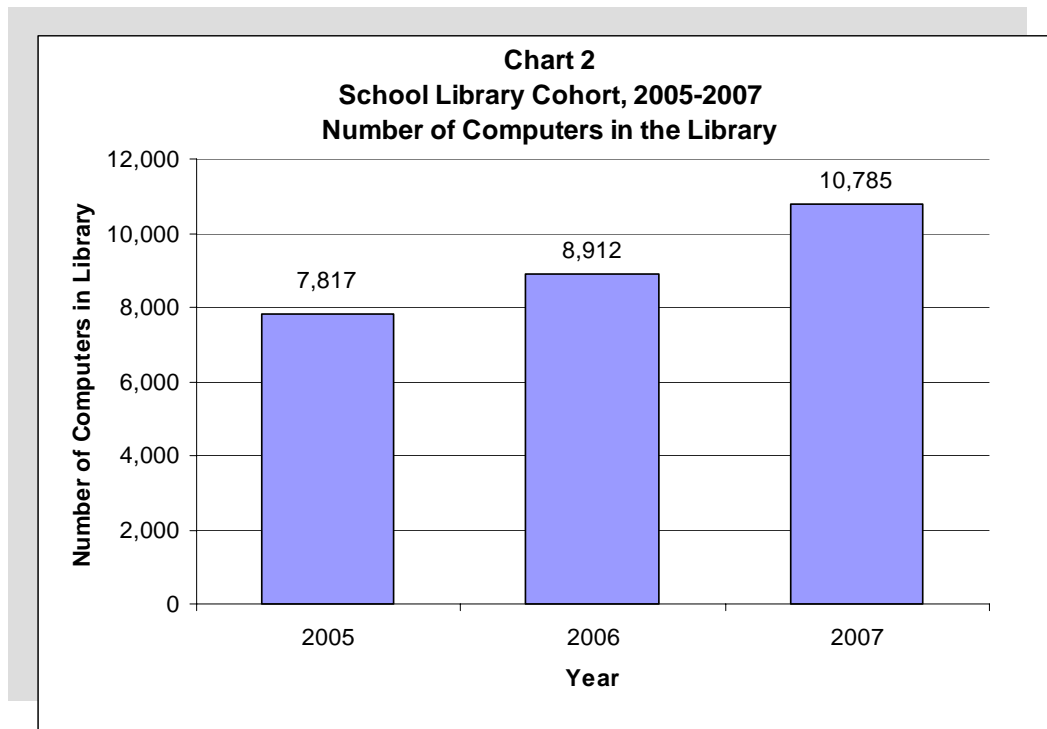
Conclusion

If the libraries in the cohort are any measure, school libraries have adapted to shifts in technology and changing student needs. This analysis of responding school libraries' data allows for a few simple conclusions: Colorado's students continue to visit the library, especially in groups; they continue to check out library materials, despite (or perhaps because of) an increased emphasis on technology; and ILL usage is increasing, especially among teachers. In any case, it is clear that school libraries continue to grow and change as they strive to match their collections and services with their users.

Sources:

Colorado School Library Survey Statistics, 2005-2007 (accessed May 21, 2008)
http://www.lrs.org/school_stats.php

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# Colorado Library Districts Show Greater Increases in Use & Financial Support than Other Public Library Types

In 2002, the finances of the state's public libraries were negatively affected by state and local budget cuts. A 2003 Fast Facts from LRS showed that library districts weathered these fiscal cuts better than non-district public libraries. The average local revenue of libraries which were not part of a library district decreased from the previous year. On the other hand, public libraries which were part of a library district actually saw an increase in their average per capita funding.

There have been four years of data collection between the dramatic fiscal changes of 2002 and today. How have library districts faired between 2002 and 2006? Have they continued to show strong financial stability? How do they compare to their non-district counterparts?
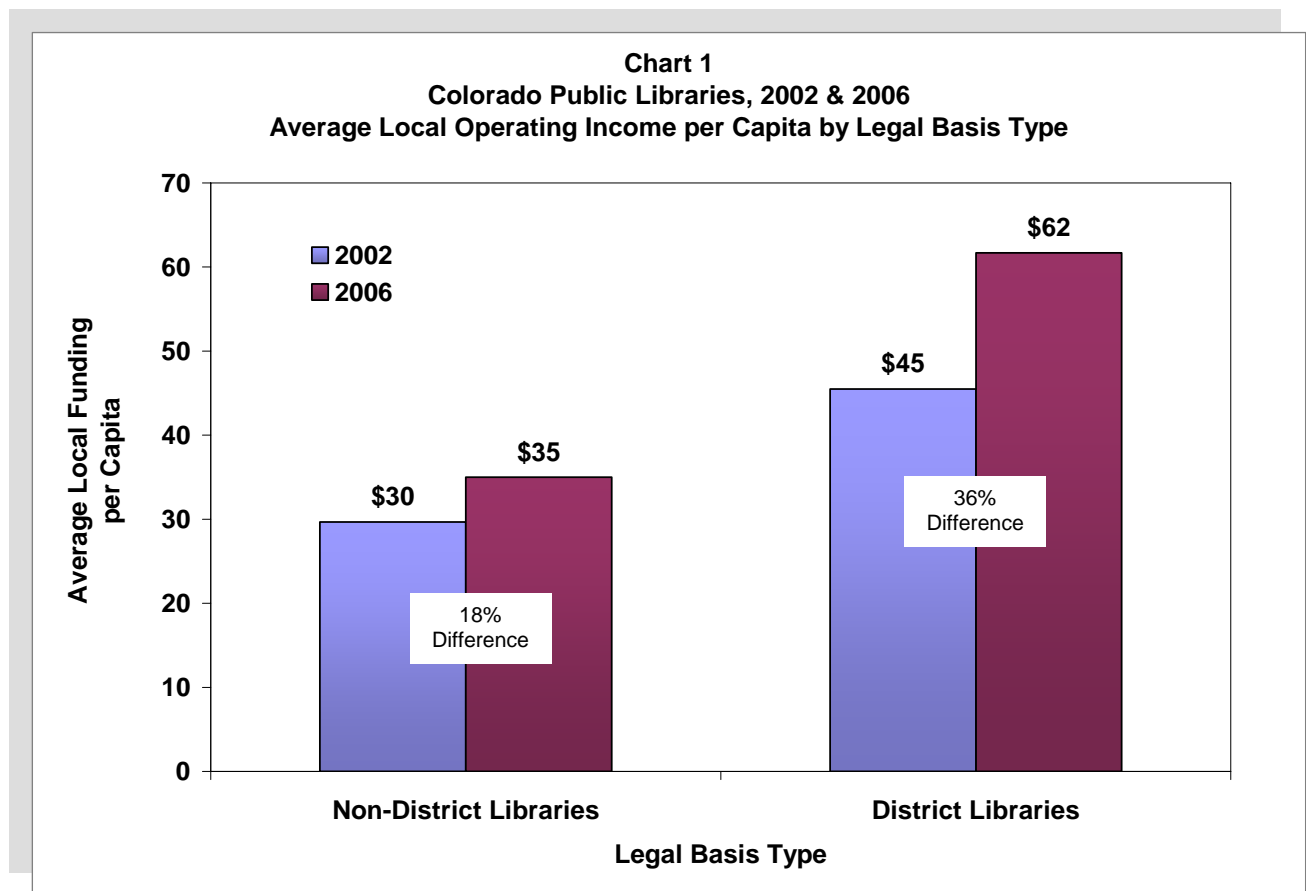
Chart 1
Colorado Public Libraries, 2002 & 2006
Average Local Operating Income per Capita by Legal Basis Type

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(sidebar) FAST FACTS — RECENT STATISTICS FROM THE LIBRARY RESEARCH SERVICE

An examination of the change in percentage of average local operating income per capita between 2002 and 2006 reveals that both library districts and non-district libraries have increased their local income (see Chart 1). However, the percentage change for library districts is double that of non-district libraries. This is not too surprising given the stable, dedicated funding library districts tend to enjoy.

So, do these libraries with increased inputs—in the form of funding—also have increased outputs? In other words, if library districts have increased their funding more than non-district libraries, have they also increased the utilization of their resources and materials more than the other library types?

An examination of library visits per capita, circulation per capita, and program attendance per 1,000 served was performed for 2002 and 2006 to determine if patron usage had changed during this time (see Chart 2).

Chart 2
Colorado Public Libraries, 2002 & 2006
Percentage Increase in Averages for Selected Outputs

Output	Non-Districts	Districts
Circulation per Capita	4%	14%
Library Visits per Capita	19%	31%
Program Attendance per 1,000	9%	43%

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Between library districts and non-district libraries, the most dramatic difference in percent change comparisons was for program attendance. Library districts had an increase of 43 percent in average program attendance per 1,000 served between 2002 and 2006, while non-districts had only a 9 percent change.

Both library district and non-districts saw growth in the average number of library visits per capita in 2006 compared to 2002. Library districts had a 31 percent increase in visits compared to 19 percent for non-district libraries.

Although the percent change in average circulation was not as dramatic as library visits, both library types witnessed an increase in their circulation per capita. The percentage change between 2002 and 2006 for circulation in library districts was nearly four times higher than that of non-district libraries (14% vs 4%).

Library districts and non-district libraries have been able to rebound from the 2002 budget cuts with financial and community strength. Both library types have seen increases in their local funding and in their outcome measures. However, library districts have seen a greater increase in their funding which may be attributed to their autonomous nature. This stable funding has allowed library districts to increase their outputs as well. Library districts are not only more supported financially than their non-district peers, the populations they serve are entering their doors more often and utilizing their services more frequently.

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Sources:

Lietzau, Zeth (2003) *Fast Facts: Colorado Library Districts Thrive While Other Library Types Face Big Cuts* Library Research Service Colorado State Library. http://www.lrs.org/documents/fastfacts/193_nonfunding.pdf

Colorado Public Library Annual Report: 2001, 2002, & 2006. Library Research Service – Colorado State Library. http://www.LRS.org/pub_stats.php.

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Computer Users at JCPL are More Likely to be Very Active Patrons
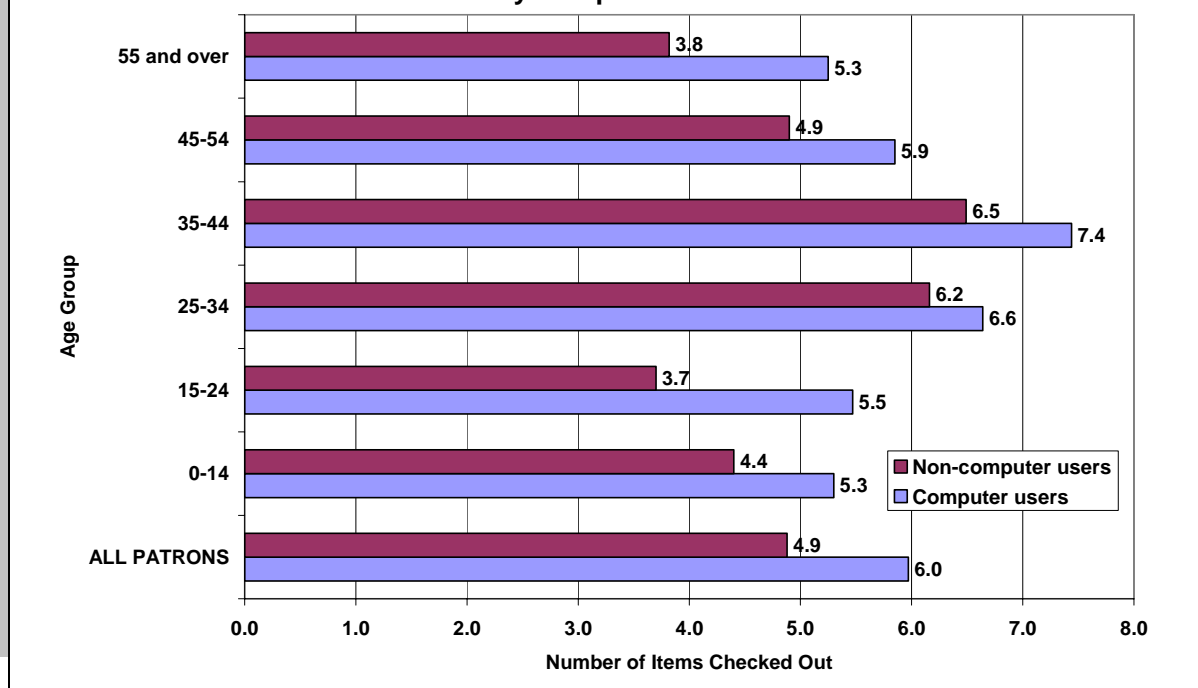
Access to the Internet is one of the key services provided by today's public libraries, as evidenced by the lines of patrons that often form to sign up for public access computers. What do all of those patrons do when they're not online? In Jefferson County it seems that they're using other library resources.

Items Checked out by Active Borrowers

Based on a snapshot of computer and circulation usage data collected during a randomly selected week in April 2007, Jefferson County Public Library (JCPL) patrons who signed into the library's Internet and software computers checked out more books, on average, than patrons who did not use the library's computers. Among "active borrowers"[1], patrons who used library computers had an average of 6.0 items checked out to their library cards at the time of the snapshot. For non-computer users, the average of items checked out was 4.9 per patron. Thus, circulation for library computer users was over 22% higher than circulation for patrons who did not use the library's computers.

Chart 1: Average Number of Items Checked Out by Active Patrons, by Computer Use

Age Group	Non-computer users	Computer users
55 and over	3.8	5.3
45-54	4.9	5.9
35-44	6.5	7.4
25-34	6.2	6.6
15-24	3.7	5.5
0-14	4.4	5.3
ALL PATRONS	4.9	6.0

Number of Items Checked Out

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1 For this study, an active borrower is defined as one whose circulation record was updated in the two months previous to this study. A patron record is updated if the patron checks out, renews, returns, or places or cancels a hold on an item.

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This trend of library computer users checking out more materials was apparent among all age groups, and was most pronounced with patrons between 15- and 24-years-old (see Chart 1). Circulation for this group was more than 48% higher for library computer users than for their peers who did not use the computers.

The increased use of both materials and computers is not lost on the library's administration. "Day to day, we've noticed increases in patrons using our computers as well as increases in our circulation counts. It's really great to see that these uses are linked and not totally independent of each other," says Marcellus Turner, Executive Director of Jefferson County Public Library.

Computer Use by Age
In public libraries throughout the nation, emphasis is placed on making the library a welcoming place for teenagers and young adults. At JCPL, the same age group (15-24) proved to be the most likely active borrowers to use the library's computers, as over 10% of active cardholders in this age range had used a library computer at least once during the week of the study (See Chart 2). Seemingly, information-savvy young adults are making the most of the opportunities JCPL is providing.
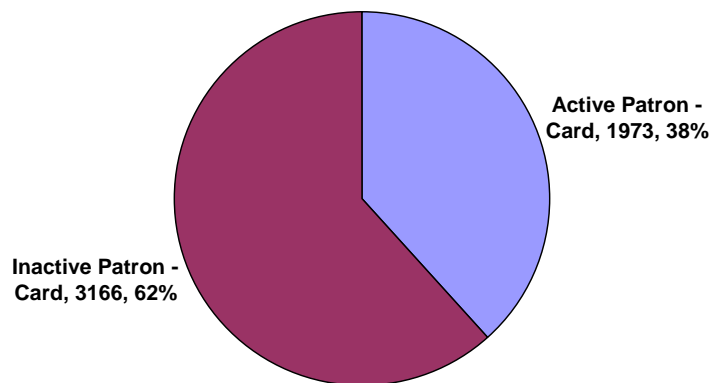
Chart 2: Percentage of Active Card Holders Who Used Computers during Weeklong Study Period

Age Group	Percent
0-14	5.4%
15-24	10.5%
25-34	6.5%
35-44	4.8%
45-54	4.6%
55 and over	3.2%
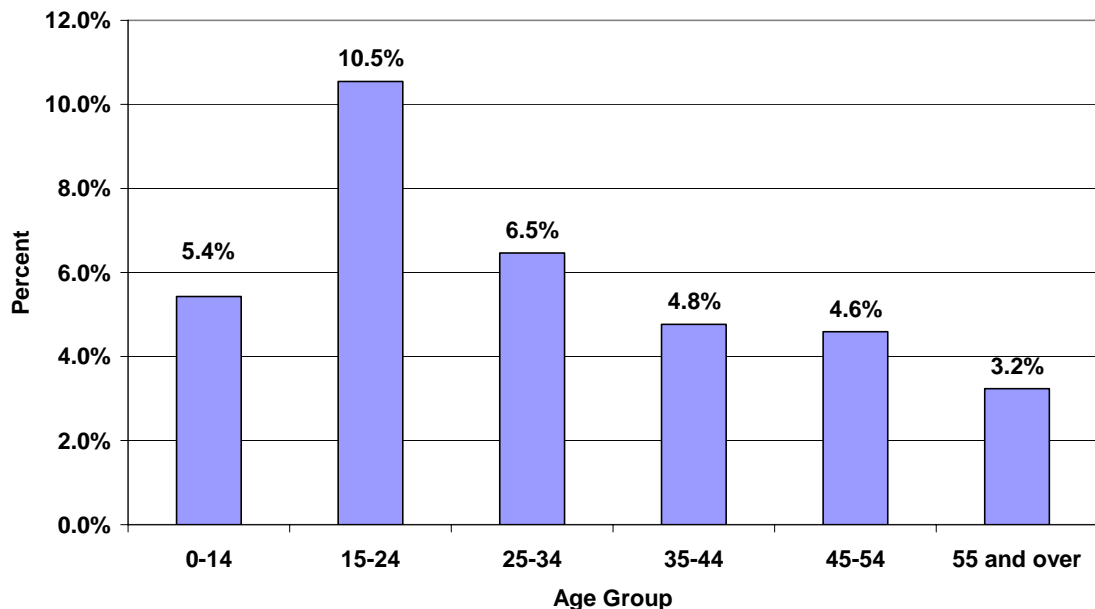
Computer Use with Respect to Other Library Use

There has been much discussion in the library profession revolving around whether library computers are drawing in users who then use other library resources. Of the library patrons who logged in to Jefferson County Public Library's computers during the week of this study, a majority of them (62%) were **not** active borrowers (see Chart 3). This means that nearly two-thirds of the patrons using JCPL's computers had not otherwise accessed their library account in the previous two months. It is quite probable that many of these patrons used other library resources during the previous two months – there are many things that can be done in the library that do not require checking out materials. For instance, patrons can perform genealogical research, use government documents, ask reference questions, or attend programs without accessing their circulation records. The nature of this study, based on available data, meant that such non-circulation activities were not tracked. It is not known whether these patrons did any of the above, but it is known that they used the library's computers and did not have any circulation activity. For this group it would seem that a primary reason to visit the library was to access the Internet or use other software. For them, the library is providing this increasingly valuable service and helping to minimize the digital divide.
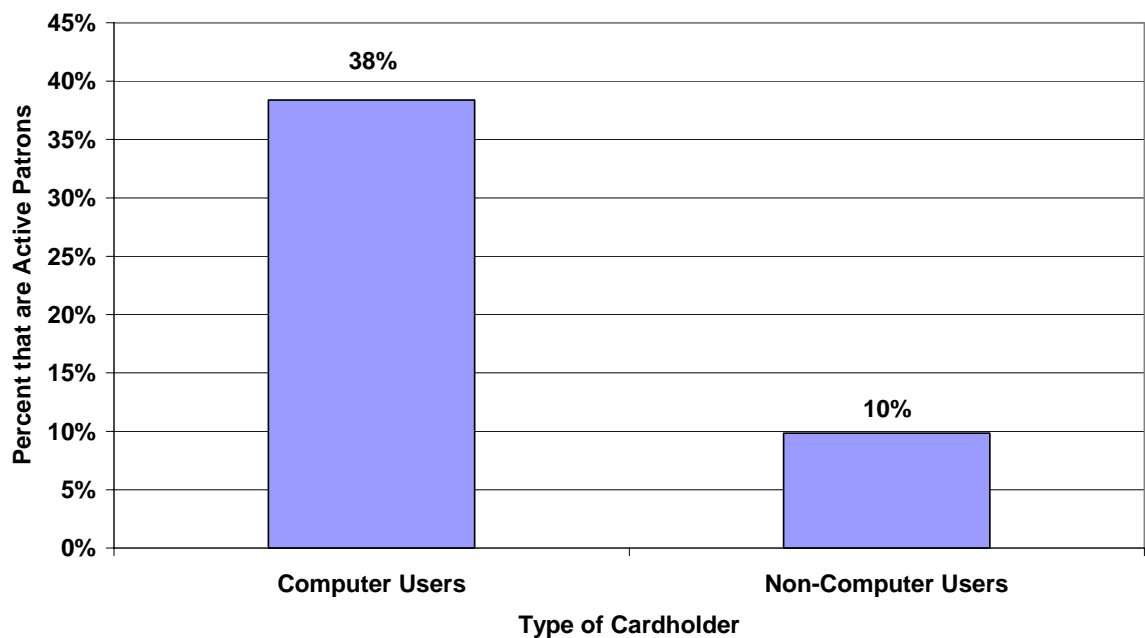
Chart 3: Number of Computer Users, by Patron Type

Active Patron - Card, 1973, 38%

Inactive Patron - Card, 3166, 62%

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At first glance, it may seem striking that only 38% of computer users are active borrowers. Barely a third of the patrons clicking away are taking traditional library materials home with them. However, this is actually a quite positive number. Only 10% of JCPL cardholders who did not use the library computers during the study week were deemed "active" for the purpose of this study. Those who used the library's computers during the study were over three times more likely to have an active card than those not using the computers. This suggests that people are coming in for the computers, and taking advantage of other resources as well (see Chart 4).

Chart 4: Percentage of Cardholders Who Are Active Patrons, by Computer Use

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In our digital age, public access computers are an integral part of a strong public library, and, by extension, serve the community at large. Jefferson County Public Library is easing the digital divide by providing Internet access to thousands of patrons each week, and many of these patrons are doing more in the library than just surfing the web. According to Turner, "Circulation of materials is a standard bearer of traditional library services but for many of our users, computer access is their main reason for visiting. This sometimes makes us wonder which came first, the chicken or the egg. At least now, we are a bit closer to knowing."

About Jefferson County Public Library

Jefferson County Public Library consists of ten libraries that serve the 534,000 residents of Jefferson County, Colorado. Jefferson County is a large suburban county, extending from the western edge of Denver into the Rocky Mountain Foothills.
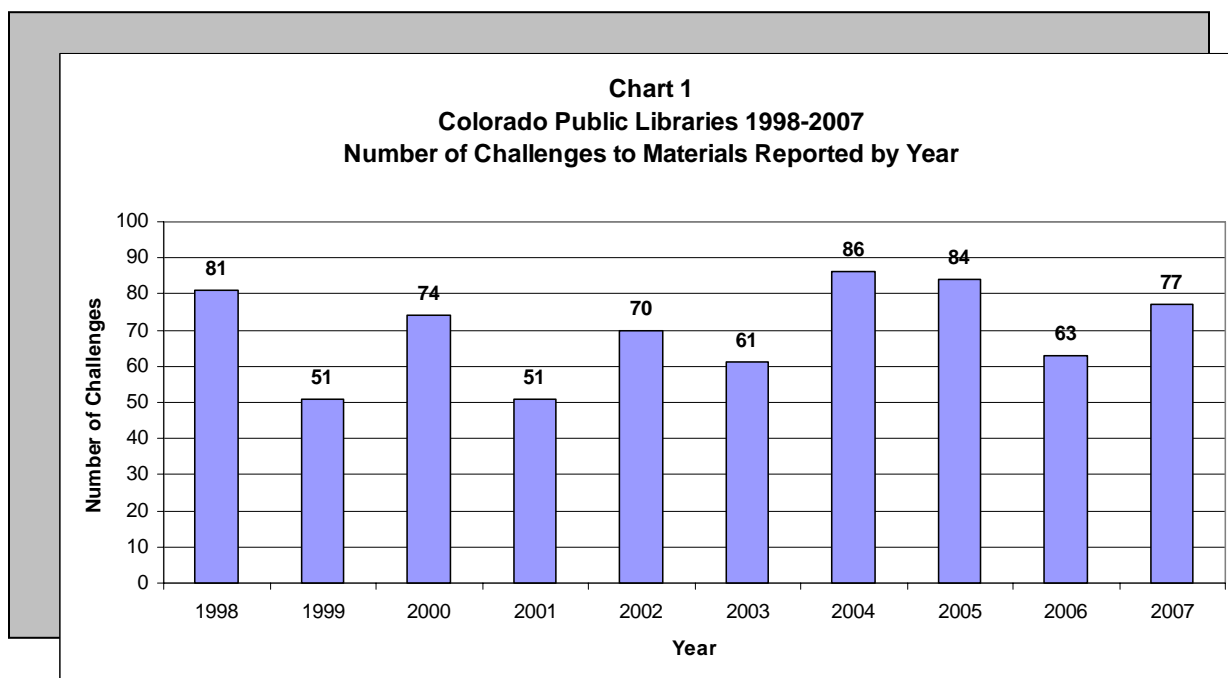
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Challenged Materials in Colorado Public Libraries, 2007

Each year the Library Research Service (LRS) collects data for the Colorado Public Library Annual Report as required by law. Part of the data collected is whether any formal challenges were made to materials in public libraries. The American Library Association defines a challenge as "an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group."

In 2007, 16 of the 115 public libraries in Colorado reported challenges to materials and the Internet on their annual survey. There were 78 separate challenges to books, audio books, library events, Internet sites, periodicals, videos, and displays.

While the number of challenges in 2007 is higher than the previous year, it is not as high as the number of reported challenges in 2004 and 2005, which numbered 86 and 84 respectively. Over the past 10 years Colorado's public libraries have averaged 70 challenges to materials annually (see Chart 1).

Chart 1
Colorado Public Libraries 1998-2007
Number of Challenges to Materials Reported by Year

Year	Number of Challenges
1998	81
1999	51
2000	74
2001	51
2002	70
2003	61
2004	86
2005	84
2006	63
2007	77

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The LRS sent a follow-up survey to the libraries that reported challenges last year and all but one library responded with more detailed information. Libraries are asked the title, author, format of the challenged item, the reason given for the challenge, the action taken by the library, and the date of the publication or, in the case of an Internet-related challenge, the date the challenge was initiated. LRS shares this information with the American Library Association to contribute to a comprehensive picture of library challenges nationwide.

Formats Challenged
As has been the pattern over the past several years, the most challenged format in 2007 at public libraries was books, which comprised more than half (55%) of the total number of challenges. Videos made up over one-fifth of the challenges (22%). Only 6 percent of the challenged items were library activities or periodicals. Other materials comprised less than 6 percent of all challenges (see Chart 2).
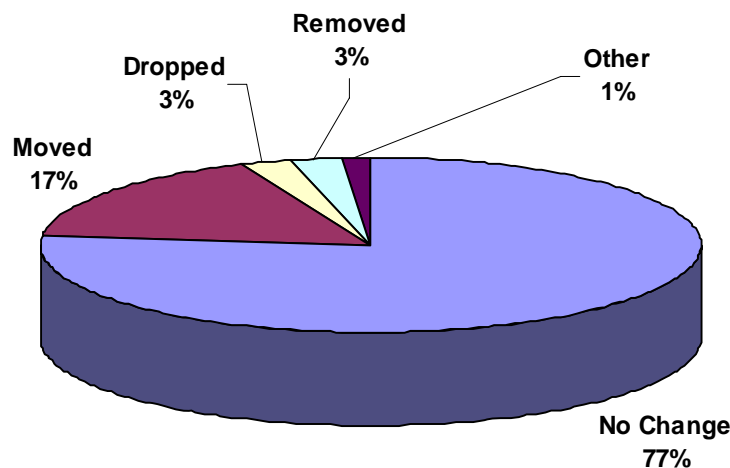

Chart 2
Colorado Public Libraries, 2007
Formats of Materials Challenged

Internet 3%
Audio 5%
Other 3%
Periodicals 6%
Books 55%
Activities 6%
Videos 22%
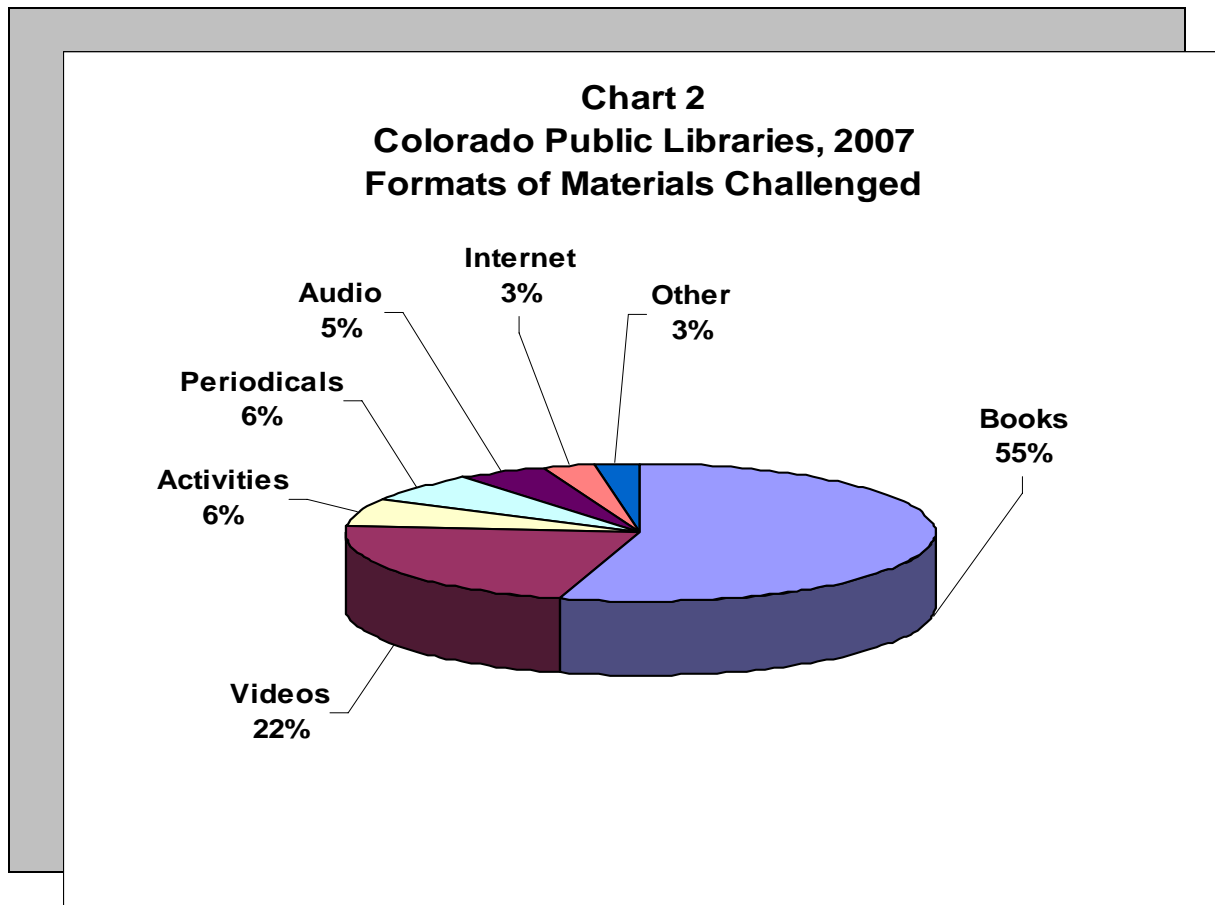
Only two titles were challenged more than once – the book "King & King" by Linda de Haan and the film "Brokeback Mountain." Each received two challenges.

In 2007 there were only two reported challenges to Internet content or access policies, both at the same library. This differs greatly from 2006, when there were 16 computer challenges reported. Denver Public Library (DPL) was one library that saw a drop in Internet challenges, going from six such challenges in 2006 to none in 2007. When asked about this disparity, Jo Sarling, Director of Collections and Technology Services at DPL, responded that her library took a proactive approach to such challenges. "We began to study ways that we could respond to those challenges," she said. "I think that the people who were initiating complaints last year are aware that we're working on solutions."

Actions Taken
The majority of the challenges (77%), resulted in no change being made in the location or availability of the item (see Chart 3). Thirteen items (17%) were moved to another part of the library or to another branch. Two of the challenges were dropped (3%) and 2 items were removed from circulation (3%). One challenge that involved an Internet access issue resulted in modification of the Internet filter.

Chart 3
Colorado Public Libraries, 2007
Challenges to Materials by Type of Action Taken

Removed
3%

Dropped
3%

Other
1%

Moved
17%

No Change
77%

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Audience/Age Group
The follow-up survey asks respondents to select one or more audience/age groups for the material being challenged. In 2007 libraries answered that more than half (53%) of all challenges were to adult materials (see Chart 4). A quarter of challenges (25%) were for children's materials and one-fifth of challenges were for young adult (21%) materials.

Chart 4
Colorado Public Libraries, 2007
Challenges by Audience Type
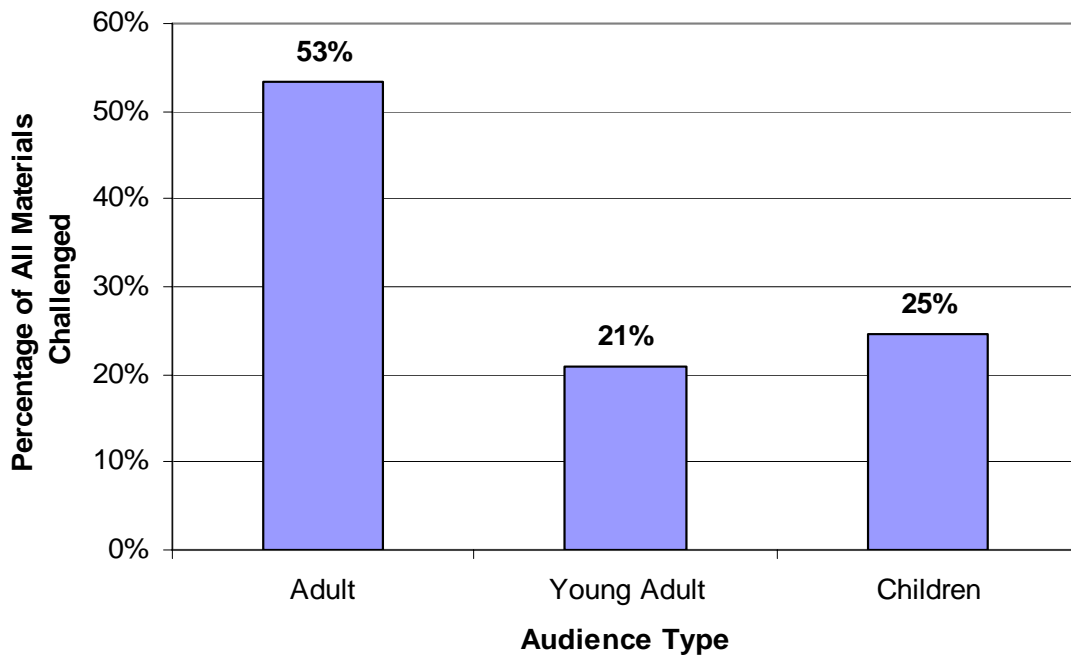
Reasons for Challenges

The most commonly cited reasons for challenges in 2007 were for items that were deemed sexually explicit, unsuited to age group, or containing violence (see Table 1). Respondents could select several reasons for each challenge.

Table 1 Colorado Public Libraries, 2007 Challenges by Reason		
Reason for Challenge	**Frequency of Reason**	**Percent of Items**
Sexually explicit	34	44.2%
Unsuited to age group	26	33.8%
Violence	14	18.2%
Nudity	11	14.3%
Offensive language	9	11.7%
Homosexuality	7	9.1%
Other - explain below	7	9.1%
Religious viewpoint	4	5.2%
Political viewpoint	3	3.9%
Sex education	3	3.9%
Anti-family	2	2.6%
Anti-ethnic	1	1.3%
Drugs	1	1.3%
Insensitivity	1	1.3%
Racism	1	1.3%
Sexism	1	1.3%

More Information About Challenges in Public Libraries

- *Challenges to Materials at Colorado's Public Libraries*: http://www.lrs.org/pub_stats.php.
- Colorado Association of Libraries' Intellectual Freedom Committee: http://cal-webs.org/committees6_2.html
- American Library Association, Office of Intellectual Freedom's *Frequently Challenged Books* page: http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/challengedbanned/frequentlychallengedbooks.cfm.

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Colorado Summer Reading Programs
More Popular Than Ever

Amongst the services public libraries provide for children across the nation and in Colorado (such as storytimes, homework and reference assistance, computer access, and readers advisory services), summer reading programs in particular give young people support and encouragement to read books and engage with public library services during traditional "school vacation" months. When promoted to the public, summer reading programs typically espouse reading for fun and pleasure. Within the library and education communities, ongoing and past research studies also address the impact of summer reading as a means to enhance the development and retention of children's reading skills. This report focuses on statistics about summer reading programs in Colorado libraries. Further, it elucidates the role of the Colorado State Library (CSL) in promoting, implementing, underwriting, and evaluating such programs.
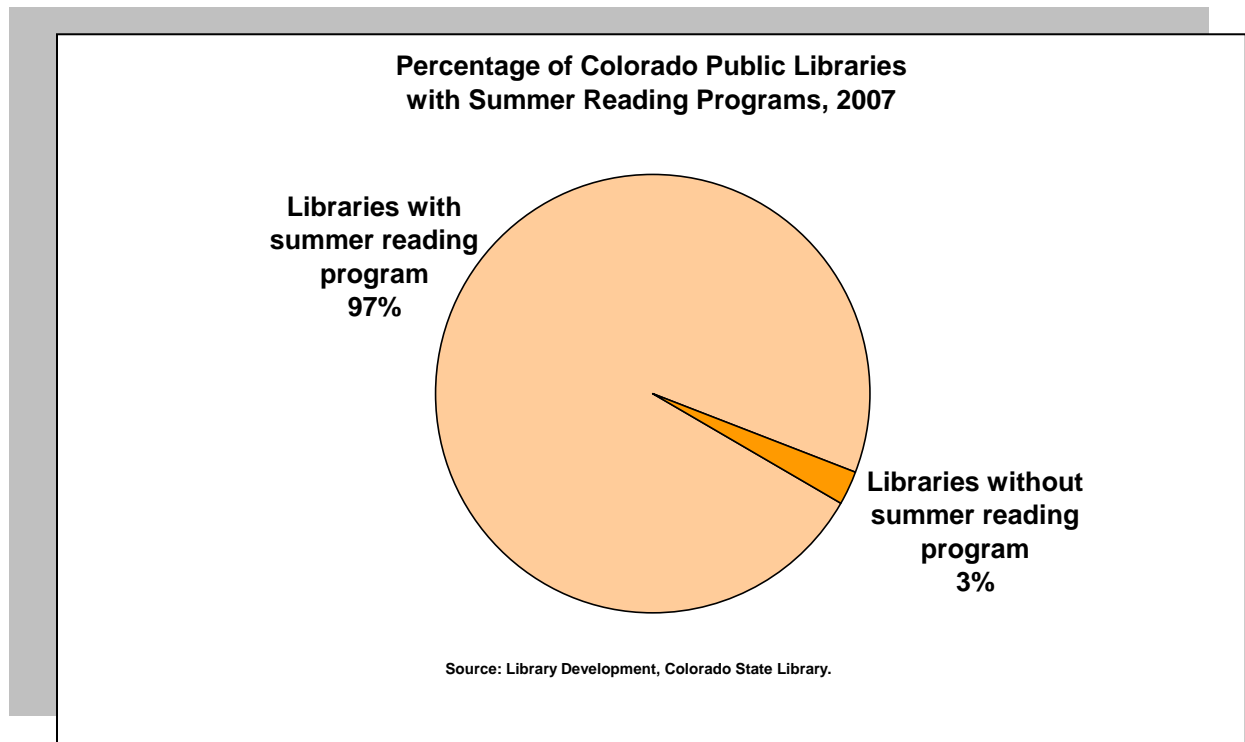
Colorado Public Library Summer Reading Highlights

• For the 10 years from 1998 to 2007, there were a total of 1.5 million participants registered for summer reading programs in Colorado public libraries.
• In the last ten years, Colorado experienced a 77% increase in summer reading registrants.
• In 2007, 97% of the state's public libraries had a summer reading program.
• More than 8 of 10 Colorado public libraries used the 2007 Collaborative Summer Library Program theme and resources.

Prevalence at Libraries

National Center for Education Statistics reports covering research from 1988-1989[i] and 1993-1994[ii] show 95% of America's public libraries offered summer reading programs for children during both those timeframes. Last year (2007) in Colorado, 111 of the state's 115 library jurisdictions (97%) reported implementing summer reading programs for their patrons (see Chart 1).

Chart 1

Percentage of Colorado Public Libraries with Summer Reading Programs, 2007

Libraries with summer reading program 97%

Libraries without summer reading program 3%

Source: Library Development, Colorado State Library.

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Registrants

Since 1999, the Library Research Service has collected information about the number of registrants in summer reading programs at Colorado public libraries. Reported data shows some 125,400 summer reading registrants in 1999 increasing nearly every year to 204,700 in 2007. Using trend analysis to determine a 1998 estimated figure (see Chart 2), the data indicates Colorado experienced a 77% increase in summer reading registrants over the last decade; a significant rise in registrant numbers occurred during the later half of that time span. In total, some 1.5 million participants registered for summer reading programs at Colorado public libraries in the course of the 10 years spanning from 1998 to 2007.

Chart 2

Colorado Public Libraries, 1998-2007:
Number of Registrants in Summer Reading Programs
(in thousands)

Source: Library Research Service, Public Library Annual Report,
1998 data based on trend analysis
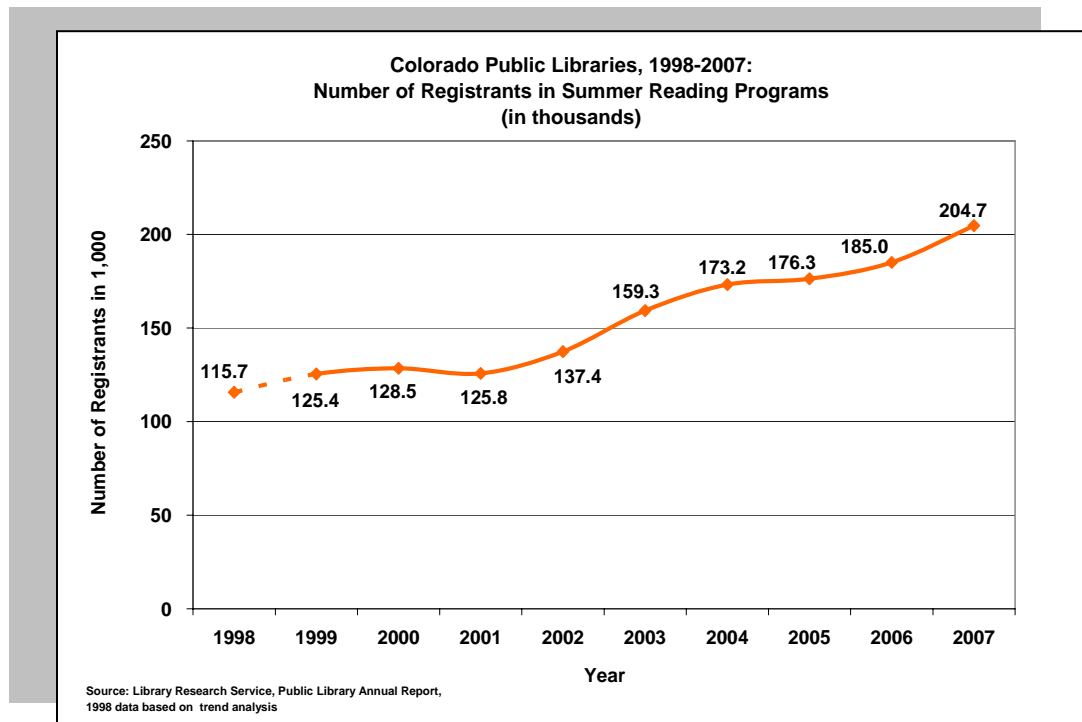
Collaborative Summer Library Program

Most commonly, public libraries around the nation organize their summer reading programs' promotional campaigns, reading lists, story time programs, special events, and reading incentive/giveaway materials around an overarching annual theme. However, the time, costs, and effort associated with successfully developing and implementing such a theme can frequently strain (or exceed) the resources of individual libraries. To address that need, a grassroots consortium, the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP)[iii], took root as a multi-regional initiative within Minnesota in 1987. Today (21 years later), CSLP's members include 46 states—represented by state agencies or associations---and 2 regional library systems. Together, consortium members select annual themes and work with vendors to produce related programmatic, promotional, and incentive materials on behalf of the entire collaborative. The dramatic growth of CSLP is indicative of the value its products and services have to libraries nationwide.

Colorado joined CSLP in 2003 with the Colorado State Library as its member agency. Through a myriad of activities (see below), CSL works to help participating Colorado libraries successfully incorporate the CSLP annual theme. Particularly popular with small and medium-sized libraries, some 80-83% of Colorado's libraries opted to use the CSLP theme during the past three years (see Table 1).

Table 1
Colorado Public Libraries, 2005-2007
Number and Percentage of Libraries Using the CSLP Summer Reading Theme

Year and CSLP Theme	Number of Public Libraries	Libraries Using the CSLP Theme	
		Number	Percentage
2005: Dragons, Dreams, and Daring Deeds	115	92	80.0%
2006: Paws, Claws, Scales and Tales	115	96	83.5%
2007: Get a Clue @ your library	115	95	82.6%

Source: Library Development, Colorado State Library

CSL Summer Reading Support to Libraries

Through its Statewide Summer Reading Program, the Colorado State Library currently works to assist all Colorado libraries with effective summer-reading program implementation. In addition to staff support and its role in CSLP, CSL allocates nearly $30,000 in LSTA funds each year for non-salary summer reading-related expenses, including approximately $10,000 in grants to libraries.

In total, over the past three years (2005-07) CSL support has included:

- 16 summer reading-focused training workshops reaching more than 415 attendees in locales around the state.
- The purchase and statewide dissemination of CSLP theme-oriented manuals and support materials—enough for all of Colorado's 250 public library sites each year.
- 182 grants totaling nearly $29,000 in direct financial support to libraries throughout the state.

As for current CSL summer reading program-related research:

- In 2006, CSL became a partner in a three-year Institute of Museum and Library Services National Leadership Grant research study[iv] entitled: "Do Public Library Summer Reading Programs Impact Student Achievement?" Participating sites in eight states around the nation include Colorado's Pueblo City Schools and the Pueblo City-County Library District.
- Beginning in 2008, CSL will collaborate with the Library Research Service (LRS) in tracking and collecting statistics about the prevalence of young adult (teens) summer reading programs and registration numbers---in addition to LRS's current collection of children's data---for publication in future Public Library Annual Reports.[v]

Conclusion

The data in this report clearly indicates that summer reading programs are attractive both to libraries and to their young patrons. Encouraged by library participation levels and the mutual benefits of collaboration, library agencies, leaders, and organizations virtually nationwide, are cooperating to make such programs affordable to jurisdictions both large and small---and to further assess the benefits of such programming. The Colorado State Library continues to refine and enhance its leadership role in helping all Colorado public libraries and their patrons benefit from summer reading program experiences.

[i] National Center for Education Statistics (1990). Services and Resources for Children in Public Libraries, 1988-89. Accessed online at: http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=90098

[ii] National Center for Education Statistics (1995). Services and Resources for Children and Young Adults in Public Libraries. Accessed online at: http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=95357

[iii] Collaborative Summer Library Program. Further information accessible online at http://cslpreads.org

[iv] Dominican University. Graduate School of Library and Information Science. Institute of Library and Museum Services National Leadership Grant. Do Public Library Summer Reading Programs Impact Student Achievement? Accessed online at: https://jicsweb1.dom.edu/ics/Schools/Graduate_School_of_Library_and_Information_Science/Summer_Reading.jnz

[v] Library Research Service. Colorado Public Library Annual Report data through Fiscal Year 2007 accessible at http://www.lrs.org/pub_stats.php

More School Librarians for Metro Areas, Fewer for Non-Metro

FAST FACTS
RECENT STATISTICS FROM THE LIBRARY RESEARCH SERVICE

Colorado has experienced tremendous population growth over the last several years, and the number of students attending Colorado schools has increased along with the population. On the surface, it appears that the rise in the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) school librarians—as defined by NCES—has kept up with and even surpassed the rise in the student population. However, a closer look reveals that the increase in librarians is primarily benefiting metropolitan-area students.[2]

Figures reported by school districts and collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)[3] indicate that the state's schools saw an overall increase of 10 percent in the number of students from 1999 to 2005. The number of FTE school librarians in schools grew 15 percent in that same time period (see Table 1).

NCES Data and Definitions

Each year the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) collects data for the Common Core of Data (CCD). This collection is conducted by state education agencies and includes data reported by all public schools and districts in the U.S. The data presented here is from the CCD and is used to describe the number of librarians in Colorado's schools and districts.

Accordingly, the definition of a librarian used throughout this Fast Facts is the NCES definition: "A professional staff member or supervisor assigned specific duties and school time for professional library services activities. These include selecting, acquiring, preparing, cataloging, and circulating books and other printed materials; planning the use of the library by students, teachers, and instructional staff; and guiding individuals in the use of library books and material maintained separately or as a part of an instructional materials center."[1]

Note, this definition *does not differentiate* between positions requiring a Colorado Department of Education school librarian endorsement and those not requiring such credentials.

Table 1

Colorado K-12 Public Schools (1999 – 2005) Student Enrollment & Total FTE Librarians					
	1999	**2001**	**2003**	**2005**	**Percent Change**
Number of Students	707,436	741,319	756,319	778,842	10.09%
FTE Librarians	724.4	848.4	840.7	838.30	15.72%

As would be expected, there is a disparity in population increases between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas of Colorado. In metropolitan areas, student population has increased nearly 12 percent. In non-metropolitan areas, the number of students has increased only 1 percent (see Table 2).

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Table 2

	1999	2001	2003	2005	Percent Change
Colorado K-12 Public Schools (1999 – 2005) Student Enrollment Metro vs. Non-Metro					
Metropolitan	592,044	624,681	640,894	662,251	11.86%
Non-Metropolitan	115,392	116,638	115,425	116,592	1.04%

## Districts Without Librarians

Despite this rise in number of students and librarians over this six year period, there was an increase in the number of school districts without any school librarians, rising from 39 such districts in 1999 to 51 in 2005. However, as a group metropolitan districts were not affected by this trend. In fact, the number of districts in metropolitan areas without a school librarian dropped from 8 to 5. Whereas, the number of districts outside of metropolitan areas without a librarian increased by almost 50 percent, from 31 to 46 (see Table 3).

Table 3

	1999	2001	2003	2005
Colorado K-12 Public Schools (1999 – 2005) Number and Percentage of School Districts Without a Librarian				
Number (Percentage in Each Geography)				
Metropolitan	8 (14.8%)	6 (11.1%)	5 (9.3%)	5 (9.3%)
Non-Metropolitan	31 (25.4%)	36 (29.5%)	42 (34.4%)	46 (37.7%)

This can be seen graphically on a map of school districts in Figure 1. The shaded districts are those without school librarians as reported by the school districts in 2005 (see *NCES Data and Definitions*, page 1).

Figure 1: Presence of School Librarian in Colorado School Districts, 2005
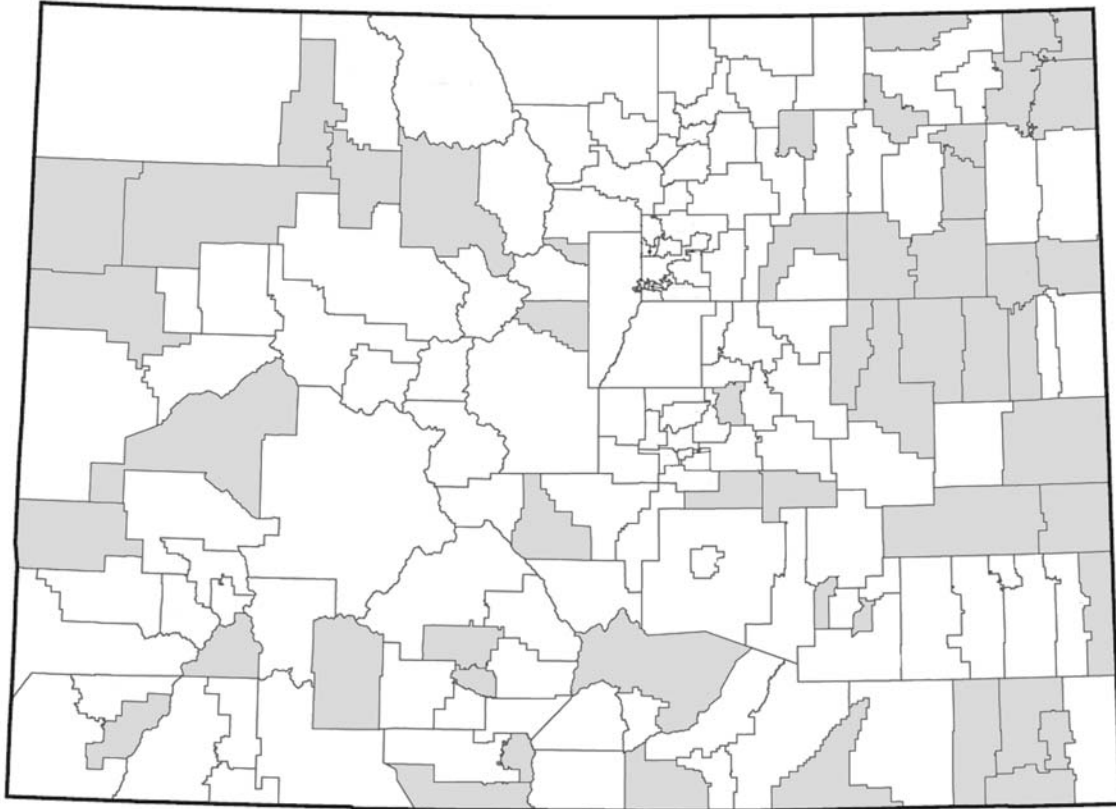
Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Common Core Data (CCD).

This trend is mirrored when we look at the number of FTE librarians per 1,000 students in metropolitan versus non-metropolitan areas. The ratio of librarians per student in metropolitan school districts grew 9 percent between 1999 and 2005. In non-metropolitan areas that number actually fell 11 percent (see Table 4).

Table 4

Colorado K-12 Public School Districts (1999 – 2005) Total FTE Librarians Per 1,000 Students					
	1999	**2001**	**2003**	**2005**	**Percent Change**
Metropolitan	0.97	1.13	1.10	1.06	9.47%
Non-Metropolitan	1.29	1.23	1.20	1.15	-11.11%

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These figures indicate a troubling trend for school libraries in non-metropolitan areas. It appears that gains made in the number of school librarians are only in school districts near large urban areas. As various studies[4] have shown that students at schools with well-developed school library programs fare better on standardized tests, it is important to not take the loss of these library positions for granted.

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1. The National Center for Education Statistics defines a school librarian as "A professional staff member or supervisor assigned specific duties and school time for professional library services activities. These include selecting, acquiring, preparing, cataloging, and circulating books and other printed materials; planning the use of the library by students, teachers, and instructional staff; and guiding individuals in the use of library books and material maintained separately or as a part of an instructional materials center." Source: http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/pdf/psu051agen.pdf

2. The concept of a metropolitan area for this report is derived from the U.S. Census Bureau: "The general concept of a metropolitan or micropolitan statistical area is that of a core area containing a substantial population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration with that core…. Each metropolitan statistical area must have at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more inhabitants." Source: http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/aboutmetro.html
For our purposes, metropolitan area school districts were those that are in Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Denver, Douglas, El Paso, Jefferson, Larimer, Mesa, Pueblo, and Weld Counties.

3. Source: NCES Common Core Data. The Common Core of Data (CCD) survey annually collects data about all public schools, public school districts, and state education agencies in the United States. See: http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/.

4. See "How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards : The Second Colorado Study (2000)" by Keith Curry Lance et al, http://www.lrs.org/impact.php

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The Kids Have It: Children's Use of Public Library Services Continues to Grow

During the decade spanning 1998 and 2007, circulation of public library children's materials and participation in public library programs for children increased significantly both in Colorado and in the United States. While Colorado statistics for these measures grew in fits and starts over the 10-year timeframe, the national numbers show relatively steady growth from one year to the next. This report provides a detailed look at the Colorado and U.S. data, as well as its correlation to the population growth rate of each locale.

Colorado – Circulation of Children's Materials

From 1998 to 2007, the number of circulation transactions for children's materials at Colorado public libraries rose from 13.5 million in 1998 to 19.1 in 2007, an impressive 41 percent increase. Most years showed either an increase or a slight decline. However, in 2002, children's circulation transactions experienced an 11 percent dip and remained below 2001 numbers until 2004.[i] (See Chart 1.)

In total, over the decade, children's circulation transactions at Colorado public libraries totaled some 159.1 million.

Children's Services in Colorado Public Libraries

From 1998 to 2007…
- The number of circulation transactions for children's materials rose 41 percent from 13.5 to 19.1 million.

- Attendance at children's programs increased 53 percent, going from some 810,000 to 1.24 million.

- The number of children's programs showed the highest rate of increase at 58 percent, going from 31,165 to 49,136 programs annually.

- Children's circulation transactions totaled some 159.1 million and children's program attendance totaled 10.2 million.

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Chart 1

Colorado Public Libraries: Children's Services, 1998-2007
Circulation Transactions for Children's Materials
(in millions)
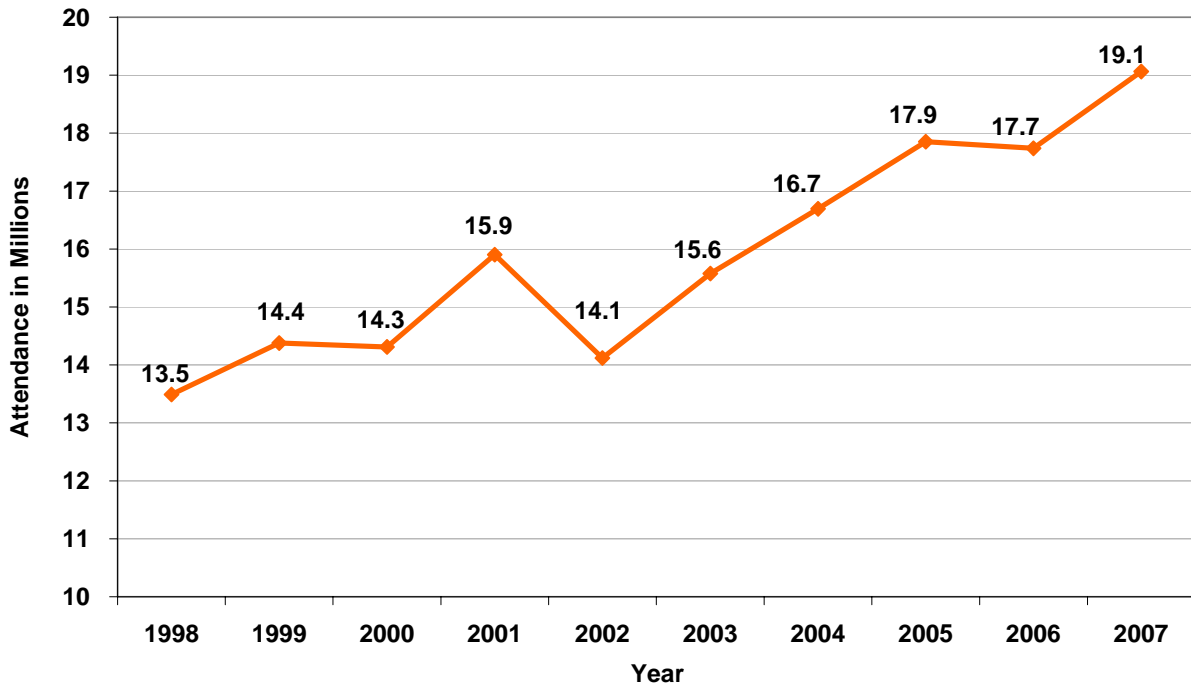
Source: Colorado Public Library Annual Report at LRS.org.

Summer reading continues to be an annual favorite in public libraries. For more about children's summer reading programs, see *Colorado Summer Reading Programs More Popular Than Ever,* (Fast Facts No. 263, September 3, 2008).

Summer Reading highlights include:
- For the 10 years from 1998 to 2007, there were a total of 1.5 million participants registered for summer reading programs in Colorado public libraries.
- In the last ten years, Colorado experienced a 77% increase in summer reading registrants.
- In 2007, 97% of the state's public libraries had a summer reading program.
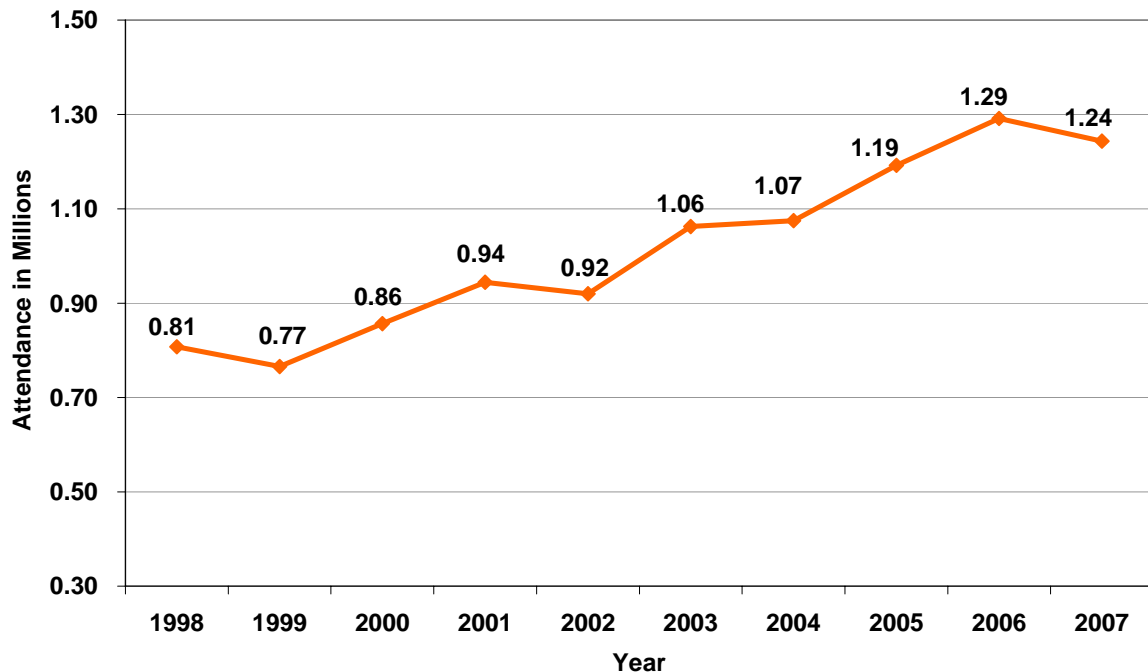
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Colorado – Attendance at Children's Programs

Annual children's program attendance at Colorado public libraries ranged from some 810,000 in 1998 to 1.29 million in 2006. Despite a slight downturn in 2007, these figures showed a healthy increase of 53 percent from 1998 through 2007.   While dips of 5 percent or less occurred in 1999, 2002, and 2007, over the decade, this measure trended mostly upward. (See Chart 2.)

During these ten years, children's program attendance at Colorado public libraries totaled some 10.2 million.

Chart 2

Colorado Public Libraries: Children's Services, 1998-2007
Children's Program Attendance
(in millions)

Source: Colorado Public Library Annual Report at LRS.org.

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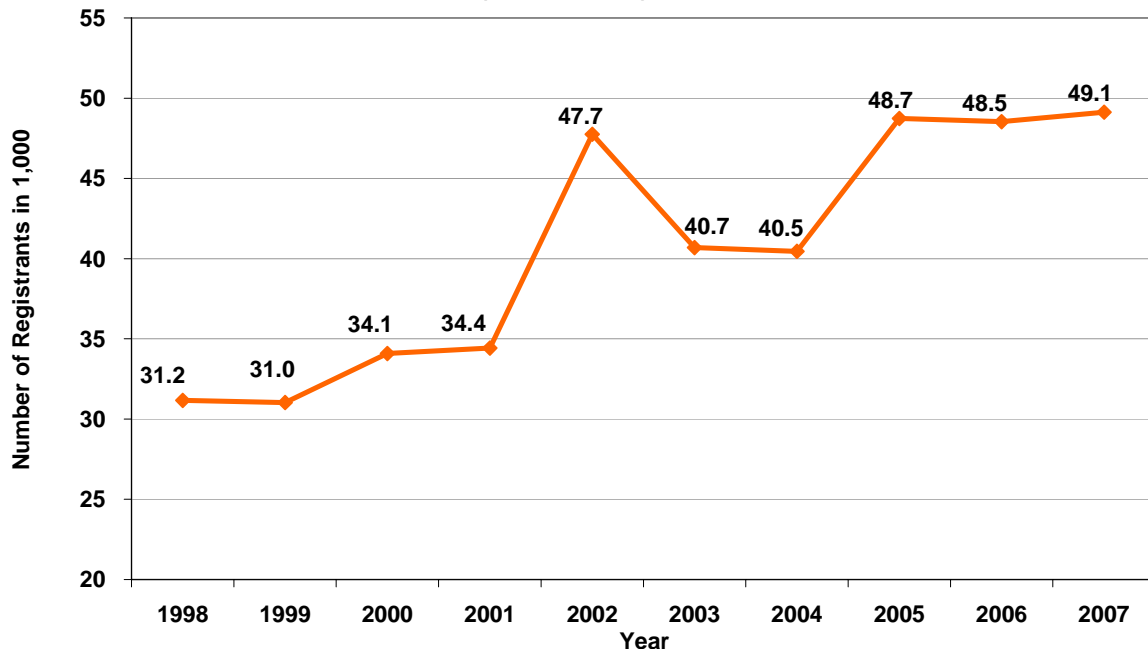
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Colorado – Number of Children's Programs

The number of children's programs offered at Colorado public libraries over the last decade—31,165 programs in 1998 compared to 49,136 programs in 2007—showed the highest rate of increase at 58 percent. Chart 3 also depicts the most dramatic hills and valleys of any year-to-year range in this report. Between 2001 and 2002, program numbers jumped by 39 percent and then declined by 15 percent over the next two years. In 2005 program numbers surpassed the 2002 level and have remained above that mark ever since.

Over the past decade, the number of children's programs offered at Colorado public libraries totaled more than 406,000.

Chart 3

Colorado Public Libraries: Children's Services, 1998-2007
Number of Children's Programs
(in thousands)

Source: Colorado Public Library Annual Report at LRS.org.

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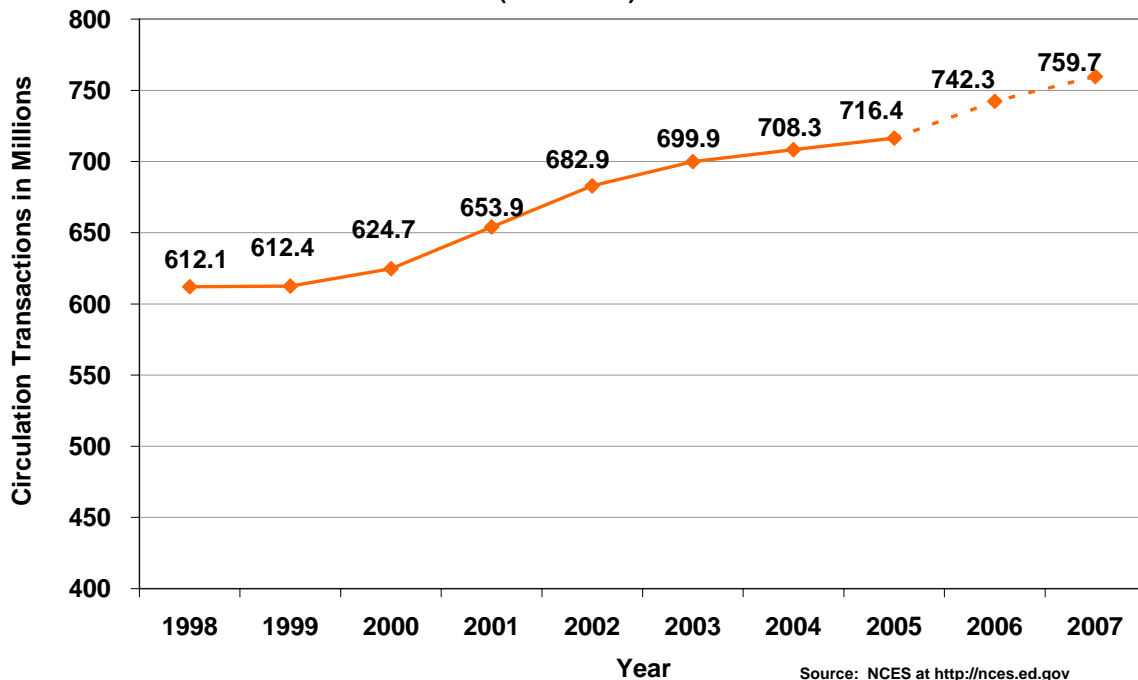RECENT STATISTICS FROM THE LIBRARY RESEARCH SERVICE

National – Circulation of Children's Materials
From 1998 to 2007[ii], the number of circulation transactions for children's materials at all U.S. public libraries rose from 612.1 million in 1998 to an estimated 759.7 million in 2007. Each year's figure since the 1998 baseline shows an increase from the year prior—a relatively steady rise—reflecting an overall increase of 24 percent.[iii] (See Chart 4.)

Children's circulation transactions at U.S. public libraries totaled an estimated 6.8 billion for the ten year period.

Chart 4

U.S. Public Libraries: Children's Services, 1998-2007
Circulation Transactions of Children's Materials
(in millions)

Circulation Transactions in Millions

612.1 612.4 624.7 653.9 682.9 699.9 708.3 716.4 742.3 759.7

1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007

Year

Source: NCES at http://nces.ed.gov
Note: 2006-07 data based on trend analysis

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National – Attendance at Children's Programs

Between 1998 and 2007,[iv] annual children's program attendance at U.S. public libraries grew from approximately 45.9 million to 58.2 million. Using the 1998 data as a baseline, attendance numbers rose steadily—reflecting an overall increase of 27 percent over the decade. (See Chart 5.)

Over these ten years, children's program attendance at U.S. public libraries totaled an estimated 524 million.

Chart 5

U.S. Public Libraries: Children's Services, 1998-2007
Children's Program Attendance
(in millions)
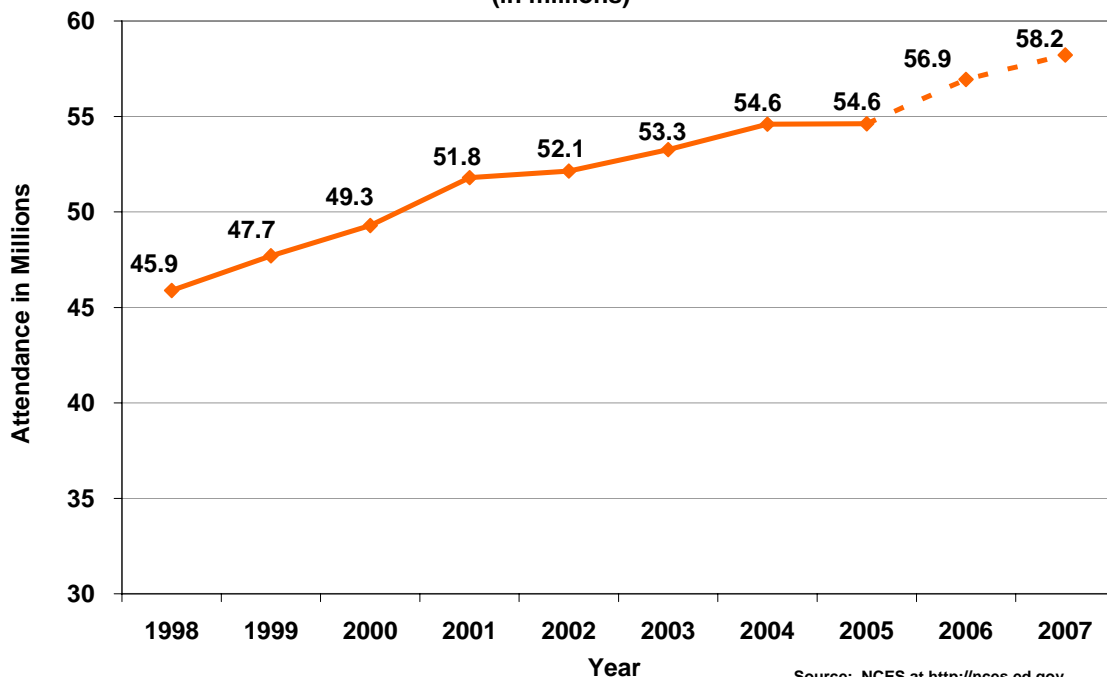
Source: NCES at http://nces.ed.gov
Note: 2006-07 data based on trend analysis

Population Growth as a Factor

According to U.S. Census figures[v], Colorado's population grew 22 percent between 1998 and 2007. Increases in Colorado public library children's circulation, program attendance, and program numbers all exceed the state's gain in population growth. Likewise, on the national level children's circulation and program attendance figures over the decade show greater gains than did the total U.S. population growth of 12 percent for those years.

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How do these rates of increase compare with one another? When correlated through the population-growth lens, the increase in U.S. children's circulation transaction numbers over the decade outpaces that same measure for Colorado; conversely, the increase in Colorado children's program attendance numbers exceeds that of the U.S. as a whole. The number of children's programs cannot be compared because there is no public reporting of the annual national figures.

Conclusion

The use of public library resources and services by children has been on the rise both in Colorado and in the U.S. as a whole over the past 10 years. Clearly, public libraries are collecting materials that children wish to borrow while providing appealing programs. Trends should continue to be monitored in order to understand how children's public library use is faring in a world with ever-increasing ways to access and obtain information.
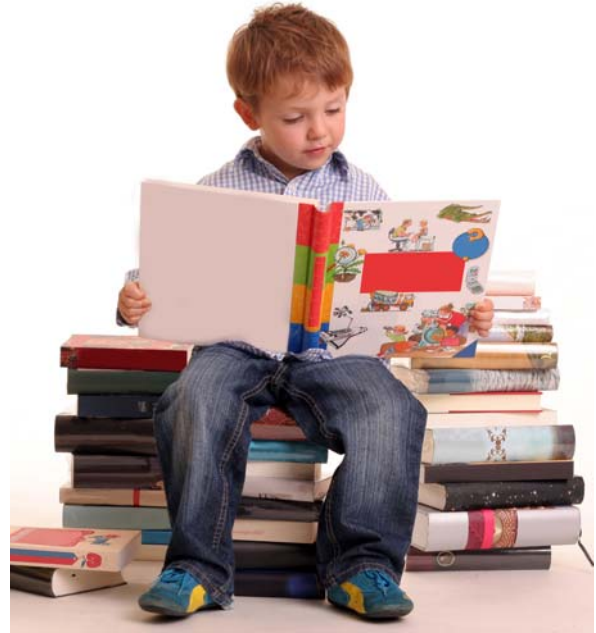
Sources

[i] Colorado public libraries data source: Library Research Service – Statistics and Input-Output Measures for Colorado Public Libraries. 1998 through 2007. Accessible at http://www.lrs.org/pub_stats.php

[ii] 2006 and 2007 national data for children's materials circulation is based on trend analysis.

[iii] U.S. public libraries data source: National Center for Education Statistics – Public Libraries in the United States: Fiscal Year 1998 and additional annual reports through 2007. Accessible at: http://harvester.census.gov/imls/pubs/pls/index.asp

[iv] 2006 and 2007 national data for children's program attendance is based on trend analysis.

[v] U.S. Census population estimates. Accessible at: http://www.census.gov/popest/archives/1990s/ST-99-03.txt
and
http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GCTTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-_box_head_nbr=GCT-T1&-ds_name=PEP_2007_EST&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-format=US-9&-_sse=on

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