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From Distant Admirers to Library Lovers– and beyond

A typology of public library engagement in America

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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Introduction

The digital era has brought profound challenges and opportunities to countless institutions and industries, from universities to newspapers to the music industry, in ways both large and small. Institutions that were previously identified with printed material—and its attendant properties of being expensive, scarce, and obscure—are now considering how to take on new roles as purveyors of information, connections, and entertainment, using the latest formats and technologies.

The impact of digital technologies on public libraries is particularly interesting because libraries serve so many people (about half of all Americans ages 16 and older used a public library in some form in the past year, as of September 2013) and correspondingly try to meet a wide variety of needs.¹ This is also what makes the task of public libraries—as well as governments, news organizations, religious groups, schools, and any other institution that is trying to reach a wide swath of the American public—so challenging: They are trying to respond to new technologies while maintaining older strategies of knowledge dissemination.

In recent years, public libraries have continued to add new technologies and formats to their holdings, with the goal of providing patrons resources in whatever form they prefer. Many libraries have also expanded into community centers, serving as unique gathering places in their towns and cities. Today, they offer many events and services, and are experimenting with providing the next generation of “expensive and scarce” resources, [from 3-D printers to recording studios](#).

Work by the Pew Research Center has shown that print books are still central to [Americans’ library use](#), just as they remain central in Americans’ overall reading habits. In fact, though more Americans than ever are reading e-books ([28% of adults ages 18 and older](#), as of January 2014), few have abandoned print entirely; just 4% of readers read e-books exclusively. Still, many Americans say they would be interested in exploring [a range of technological services at public libraries](#), from personalized reading recommendations and online “Ask a Librarian” services to media kiosks and mobile apps.

Libraries loom large in the public imagination, and are generally viewed very positively: 90% of Americans ages 16 and older say that the closing of their local public library would have an impact on their community. This means that many people have a stake in the future of libraries, and as the digital age advances, there is much discussion about where they are headed. To help with that conversation, Pew Research has spent three years charting the present role libraries play in

¹ All references to libraries in this report relate to public libraries in the United States.

Americans' lives and communities, in the hopes that this will set the foundation for discussions of what libraries should be in the future. The first stage of our research studied the growing role of e-books, including [their impact on Americans' reading habits](#) and [Americans' library habits](#). Our second stage explored [the full universe of library services](#), as well as what library services Americans most value and what they might want from libraries in the future. This typology completes our third and final stage of research, which explores [public libraries' roles](#) in people's lives and in American culture writ large—how they are perceived, how they are valued, how people rely on them, and so forth.² All of this research and the underlying data sets are available [on our website](#).

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals:

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The full archive of our research about Americans' use of public libraries is available at <http://libraries.pewinternet.org>.

² For more information, see our libraries research timeline: <http://libraries.pewinternet.org/about/research-timeline/>

About Pew Research Center

Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It does not take policy positions. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis and other empirical social science research. The center studies U.S. politics and policy views; media and journalism; internet and technology; religion and public life; Hispanic trends; global attitudes and U.S. social and demographic trends. All of the center's reports are available at www.pewresearch.org. Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts.

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Summary of Findings

The focus of this report is the creation of a new typology of Americans' engagement with public libraries, which sheds light on broader issues around the relationship between technology, libraries, and information resources in the United States. It serves as a capstone to the three years of research the Pew Research Center has produced on the topic of public libraries' changing role in Americans' lives and communities.

Briefly put, a typology is a statistical analysis that clusters individuals into groups based on certain attributes; in this case, those are people's usage of, views toward, and access to libraries. While Pew Research has reported [in extensive detail](#) on the ways different groups use public libraries—including insights about differences by gender, race/ethnicity, age, income and community type—this typology enriches that picture considerably by moving beyond familiar groups and fitting demographics into contexts that matter to the library community.³ By creating groups based on their connection to libraries rather than their gender, age, or socio-economic attributes, this report allows portraiture that is especially relevant to library patrons, library staff members, and the people whose funding decisions impact the future of public libraries in the United States.

Among the broad themes and major findings in this report:

- **Public library users and proponents are not a niche group:** 30% of Americans ages 16 and older are highly engaged with public libraries, and an additional 39% fall into medium engagement categories.
- **Americans' library habits do not exist in a vacuum:** Americans' connection—or lack of connection—with public libraries is part of their broader information and social landscape. As a rule, people who have extensive economic, social, technological, and cultural resources are also more likely to use and value libraries as part of those networks. Many of those who are less engaged with public libraries tend to have lower levels of technology use, fewer ties to their neighbors, lower feelings of personal efficacy, and less engagement with other cultural activities.
- **Life stage and special circumstances are linked to increased library use and higher engagement with information:** Deeper connections with public libraries are often associated with key life moments such as having a child, seeking a job, being a student, and going through a situation in which research and data can help inform a decision. Similarly, quieter times of life, such as retirement, or less momentous periods,

³ For a more traditional analysis of Americans' library use and views, see our companion report, "How Americans Value Public Libraries in Their Communities": <http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/12/11/libraries-in-communities/>

such as when people's jobs are stable, might prompt less frequent information searches and library visits.

The spectrum of public library engagement in America

This report describes nine groups of Americans that reflect different patterns of public library engagement. Respondents were sorted into groups based on a cluster analysis of factors such as: the importance of public libraries in their lives; how they use libraries; and how they view the role of libraries in communities. (For more information about how the typology was created, see the overview in [About This Typology](#); further details are available in the [Methods](#) section at the end of the report.) For each group, we describe not only their library habits and views, but also their larger information and technology habits and to what extent various demographic groups are represented.

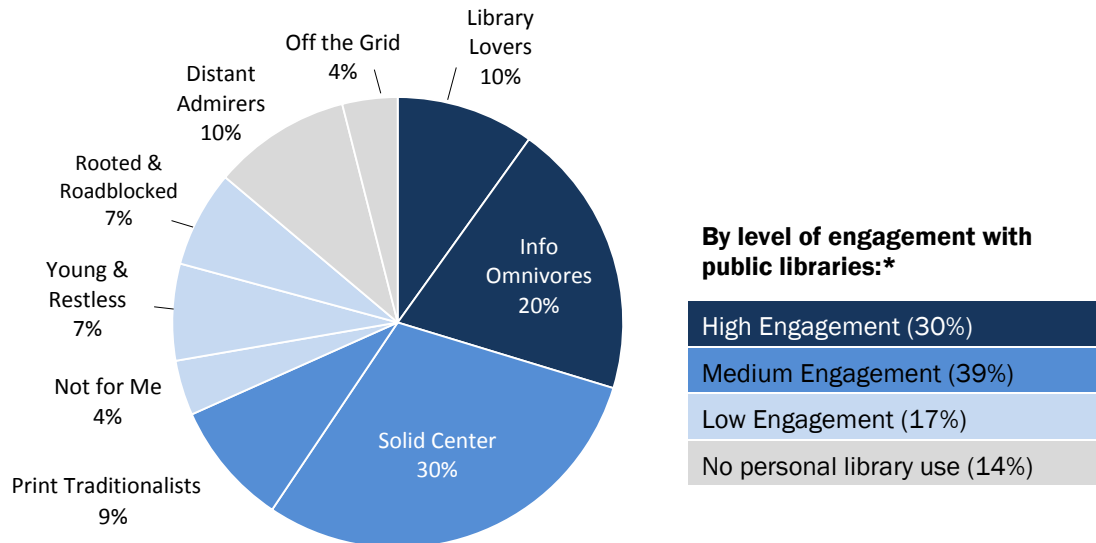
The typology examines four broad levels of library engagement. These levels are further broken into a total of nine individual groups:

1. **High engagement:**
 - Library Lovers
 - Information Omnivores
2. **Medium engagement:**
 - Solid Center
 - Print Traditionalists
3. **Low engagement:**
 - Not for Me
 - Young and Restless
 - Rooted and Roadblocked
4. **Non-engagement** (have never personally used a public library):
 - Distant Admirers
 - Off the Grid

The high, medium, and low engagement groups include Americans who have *ever* used a public library at some point in their lives, while the non-engagement groups include Americans who have *never* personally used a public library (either in person or online).

Typology snapshot: Groups by level of engagement with public libraries

Each group as a percentage of the general U.S. population (Americans ages 16+)



* percentages in the chart may not add up to the percentages in the legend due to rounding.

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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The members of the two high engagement groups, **Library Lovers** and **Information Omnivores**, include people who value and utilize public libraries most heavily—those who say that libraries play a major role in their own lives and in the lives of their families, who think libraries improve their communities, who are avid readers and think libraries play an essential role in encouraging literacy and a love of reading. Members of these high engagement groups also tend to be active in other parts of their communities. They tend to know their neighbors, they are more likely to visit museums and attend sporting events, and they are more likely to socialize with families and friends.

On the other hand, those who are less engaged with public libraries are often less engaged in their communities overall. Particularly for the low engagement groups **Not for Me** and **Rooted and Roadblocked**, along with the non-engagement groups **Distant Admirers** and **Off the Grid**, lower rates of library use and lack of familiarity with libraries seem to coincide with lower patterns of social and civic engagement in other areas of their lives. Members of low and non-engagement groups are often less likely to participate in similar community activities, such as visiting museums

or patronizing bookstores, and more likely to report having difficulty using technology; they also tend to be less comfortable navigating various types of information, such as finding material about government services and benefits.

Public library engagement typology: Group overviews

Level of engagement with public libraries	Group name	% of U.S. population ages 16+	Major characteristics
High engagement ~80% used a public library in the past year	Library Lovers	10%	Members of this group report frequent personal use of public libraries, along with high levels of household library use. This group includes many parents, students, and job seekers; members tend to be younger, with higher levels of education.
	Information Omnivores	20%	This group has the highest rates of technology use, as well as the highest levels of education, employment, and household income. They have high levels of personal and household library use, but their visits to library are less frequent than Library Lovers.
Medium engagement ~50% used a public library in the past year	Solid Center	30%	Centered in smaller towns, this group is similar to the general U.S. population in most measures. About half have used a public library in the past year; most view libraries positively.
	Print Traditionalists	9%	This group contains the highest proportion of rural, Southern, or white respondents. It is similar to Solid Center in many measures, except that its members tend to live farther away from libraries. They also have positive views about libraries' roles in communities.
Low engagement ~30% used a public library in the past year	Not For Me	4%	This group is distinguished from other low engagement groups by its members' strikingly negative views of libraries. In particular, they are far <i>less</i> likely than most other groups to say public libraries are important to their communities.
	Young & Restless	7%	This is a relatively young group, and few of its members have lived in their neighborhoods for very long. Their most striking feature is that only 15% know where the nearest public library is located.
	Rooted & Roadblocked	7%	This group generally views public libraries positively, but many face hurdles in their lives that may prevent them from engaging with libraries. They tend to be older, and many are living with disability or have experienced a recent illness in their family.
None Have never personally used a public library	Distant Admirers	10%	Though members of this group have never personally used a public library, they view libraries quite positively—perhaps because many say other family members use them. Many also say that various library services are important to them and their families. They tend to be older and are often living in lower-income households.
	Off the Grid	4%	Members of this group tend to be disengaged from their communities and social life in many ways. Many live in rural areas, and just 56% use the internet. Most have very low household incomes, as well as low levels of education—only one in ten has graduated from college.

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans 16 & older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Group portraits

High engagement groups

Library Lovers (10% of the population)

- **Overview:** Library Lovers have strikingly positive views of public libraries compared with other groups, and with the U.S. population as a whole; they use libraries and library websites more than any other group, and believe libraries are essential at the personal as well as the community level.
- **Who they are:** Demographically, this group's members are disproportionately younger than the general population. A relatively large proportion of this group are women (62%), and this group has the highest proportion of parents (40%) of any group. They tend to have higher levels of education and somewhat higher household incomes than many other groups, but a notable share of them are in economically challenging circumstances: 23% have recently lost their jobs or seen a significant loss of income; 25% are currently looking for a job; 17% are students. Politically, they are more likely to be liberal and Democratic than the general population.
- **Lifestyle:** This group includes many heavy book readers (66% read a book daily). Though they are heavy library users and generally prefer to borrow books instead of purchasing them, they also have the highest proportion of regular bookstore visitors (57%) than any other group. More than other groups, they like to learn new things and enjoy tracking down information. They are also active socially and engaged with community events, and rate their communities highly. They are also heavy internet users, and are particularly engaged with mobile: 72% go online via mobile devices.
- **Relationship with libraries:** They are the leading group in use of and affection for libraries: 87% visited the library in the last 12 months, most of them visiting weekly. And 75% say that the local library closed it would have a major impact on them personally, significantly more than any other group.

Information Omnivores (20% of the population)

- **Overview:** Information Omnivores are more likely to seek and use information than other groups, are more likely to have and use technology; at the same time, they are strong users of public libraries, and think libraries have a vital role in their communities. However, they are not quite as active in their library use as Library Lovers, or nearly as likely to say the loss of the local library would have a major impact on them and their family.
- **Who they are:** Information Omnivores are the highest ranking group in socio-economic terms: 35% live in households earning \$75,000 or more, and they have one of the highest employment rates and are relatively well educated. Like Library Lovers, this group includes

relatively high proportions of women (57%) and parents (40%). With a median age of 40, they are a bit younger than the U.S. population as a whole. It is also one of the more urban groups. Politically they are more likely to be Democratic and liberal compared with the general U.S. population.

- **Lifestyle:** As a group, Information Omnivores are the most intense users of technology: among internet users, 90% go online every day, and 81% use social media. Almost half (46%) have a tablet computer, the highest proportion of any group, and 68% own a smartphone. They rank just below Library Lovers in their consumption of books—they read an average of 17 books in the previous 12 months—and are more likely to buy their books than borrow them.
- **Relationship with libraries:** They appreciate public libraries a lot, especially as community resource: 85% strongly agree that libraries are important because they promote literacy, and 78% strongly agree that libraries improve the quality of life in their communities. Information Omnivores use libraries more than any other group except Library Lovers, though they use the library less often than that group and would not take the loss of their library at such a profound personal level. However, 77% say the loss of the library would be a major blow to their community.

Medium engagement groups

Solid Center (30% of the population)

- **Overview:** The Solid Center is the largest group in our typology, and its members generally track with the general U.S. population—in their demographic proportions, in their technology use, in their patronage of libraries, and in their approach to information, and their views about the importance and role of libraries. They mostly view libraries positively, but a third (32%) report their library use has declined in the past five years.
- **Who they are:** Compared with national benchmarks, this group includes a slightly higher proportion of men (51%) than the general U.S. population; its median age is 47. Its members are more likely than some other groups to live in small towns and cities, and half have lived in their communities for longer than 10 years. Those in the Solid Center are significantly less likely than high engagement groups to include parents with minor children living at home (28%).
- **Lifestyle:** They rank high among the groups in appreciating their communities: 84% would describe their communities as “good” or “excellent.” In their attendance of various community activities, those in the Solid Center are not quite as involved as the high engagement groups, but they are fairly active: 34% got to sporting events regularly, 28% regularly go to bookstores, 27% regularly go to concerts, plays, or dance performances, and

26% regularly go to museums or art galleries. They read books at the same frequency as the U.S. populations.

- **Relationship with libraries:** Some 58% have library cards, and 43% visited the library in the past 12 months; their visits are not as frequent as high engagement groups, with most saying they visit the library monthly or less often. They are one of the least likely groups to use library websites: only 5% used a library website in the past year, and only 26% have ever used one. Most members of the Solid Center rate libraries highly as community resources: 67% say that libraries improve the quality of life in a community and 61% say their library's closing would have a major impact on their community.

Print Traditionalists (9% of the population)

- **Overview:** Members of this group read an average of 13 books in the past 12 months, and tend to value the traditional services libraries perform. They are also in one of the higher ranking groups in expressing appreciation for the role of libraries in communities. They are notable for the distance most of them would need to travel to visit a library—only one in ten (11%) say the nearest public library is five miles away or less.
- **Who they are:** The Print Traditionalist group has the highest proportions of rural (61%), white (75%), and Southern (50%) respondents. They also have a higher proportion of women (57%) than the general population. Print Traditionalists are less likely than some other groups to have graduated college, as about half of adults in this groups ended their education with a high school diploma. Their median age is 46, and their political views lean conservative.
- **Lifestyle:** Print Traditionalists are more likely to have lived in their neighborhoods longer than many other groups, and are especially likely to say they know the names of all or most of their neighbors; they also tend to have positive feelings about where they live, and are generally quite social: 81% say they socialize with friends or family every day or almost every day. They have access to technology at roughly the same rates as the general population, but they use technology less than other higher engagement groups.
- **Relationship with libraries:** Print Traditionalists stand out in their positive views about the role of libraries in communities: 80% say libraries are important because they promote literacy; 75% say libraries play an important role because they give everyone a chance to succeed; and 73% say libraries improve the quality of life in the community. They also have one of the highest proportion of members reporting that if the local library closed it would have a major impact on the community. Some 48% say they visited the library in the last 12 months, and most say their own library use has not changed in the past five years.

Low engagement groups

Not For Me (4% of the population)

- **Overview:** As a low engagement group, Not for Me is made up of respondents who have used public libraries at some point in their lives, though few have done so recently. Their portrait suggests a level of alienation—34% believe people like them can have no impact in making their communities better—and are somewhat less engaged socially and from other community activities: 45% do not regularly do any of the community activities we asked about, such as attending sports events, museums, or going to bookstores. Finally, they have strikingly less positive about role of libraries in communities, even when compared with other low engagement groups, and more than half (57%) say they know “not much” or “nothing at all” about the library services in their area.
- **Who they are:** The Not for Me group includes a somewhat higher proportion of men (56%), and its respondents are more likely to live in small town or rural areas. Its members are more likely to have lower levels of educational attainment, with just 18% having graduated from college. Members of this group are also somewhat less likely to be married (41%), and are a little less likely to be parents (26%) than the general population. Just 39% are employed full-time, and almost a quarter (23%) are retired.
- **Lifestyle:** Few in this group are heavy book readers: 31% read did not read any books last year, and as a group they read a median of 3 books in that time. They also have somewhat lower levels of internet adoption and use, and are more likely than other groups to report having difficulty getting information about such things as politics and current events, community activities, health information, and career opportunities
- **Relationship with libraries:** Some 40% have library cards, similar to other low engagement groups; 31% visited the library in the past year, and just 12% used a library website. Relative to other groups, they are more likely to say they find libraries hard to navigate and are less likely to say they rely on individual library services. Fully 64% say library closings would have *no* impact on them or their family, and just 20% strongly agree that having a public library improves the quality of life in a community. Finally, 70% say that people do not need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own.

Young and Restless (7% of the population)

- **Overview:** Though relatively small, this group contains a higher proportion of young people than most other groups, most of them relatively new to their communities. This may be why only 15% of its members say they even know where the local library is, fewer than any other group in the typology. Only a third have a library card or visited a library in

the past year, though unlike the Not for Me group, most Young and Restless respondents have positive views of libraries overall.

- **Who they are:** We call them “restless” because many are new to their communities: A third of them have lived in their communities less than a year. Their median age is 33, making them the youngest group overall, and 53% are male. They include a high proportion of urban dwellers, and are more often found in the South than members of the U.S. population as a whole. Many of them live in lower-income households—37% live in households earning less than \$30,000; a relatively large share are students, or are looking for jobs. It is a much more racially diverse group than most of the others, and a somewhat higher proportion of its respondents identify as liberal compared with the national rate.
- **Lifestyle:** This is a group heavily involved with technology, especially mobile devices: 82% access the internet with a mobile device such as a smartphone or tablet and 68% own smartphones. (However, they are more likely than several other groups to say that there is a lot of useful, important information that is *not* available on the internet.) Fully 86% of the internet users among them use social networking sites and 27% use Twitter, higher rates than most other groups. When it comes to reading, they are fairly typical: Young and Restless members read an average of 11 books in the past 12 months, and a median of 5.
- **Relationship with libraries:** The Young and Restless one of the most likely groups to say their library use has decreased in the past five years (36% say that), and just 11% know all or most of the services their library offers (compared with 23% of general population). At the same time, their views about the importance of libraries are generally positive: 71% agree that libraries promote literacy, and 61% agree libraries improve the quality of life in a community.

Rooted and Roadblocked (7% of the population)

- **Overview:** This group’s name derives from the fact that they are longtime residents of their communities, but may face many potential hurdles in their lives: 35% are retired, 27% are living with a disability, and 34% have experienced a major illness (either their own or that of a loved one) within the past year. It is the oldest group, with a median age of 58. Like other low engagement groups, they have used libraries at some point in their lives, but only a third went in last 12 months. Still, among the low engagement groups, they are the most likely to say that the closing of the local library would have a major impact on the community (61% say that).
- **Who they are:** Rooted and Roadblocked is the oldest group in the typology, with a large share of retirees and a small share of parents with minor children. It also includes a higher proportion of white (69%) when compared with other low or non-engagement groups.

Adults in this group are somewhat less likely to have completed higher levels of education, with 21% having graduated from college (compared with the national benchmark of 27%).

- **Lifestyle:** The Rooted and Roadblocked are longtime residents of their communities, but less engaged with certain community activities—about half (52%) don't regularly take part in *any* of the community activities we asked about. They have lower proportions of internet users (74%), home broadband adopters (58%), smartphone owners (40%), and social media users. They were also less likely to feel comfortable with technology-related tasks we asked about, and some 28% did not read a book in the past 12 months.
- **Relationship with libraries:** This group stands apart from the Not for Me group in its relatively positive views about the role of libraries in communities: 78% agree that libraries are important because they promote literacy and reading; 75% say libraries improve the quality of life in a community; and 72% say libraries give everyone a chance to succeed. Finally, though only 36% have a library card and just 33% visited a library in person in the past year, some 54% say library closing would affect them and their families in some way.

Non-engagement groups

Distant Admirers (10% of the population)

- **Overview:** Distant Admirers account for the majority of those who have never used a library. Despite their lack of personal library use, many say others in their house use libraries, and quite a few indicate that they indirectly rely on various library services. They have very high opinions about importance and role of libraries in communities, in sharp contrast to the other non-user group. As a group, they are relatively older and more likely to live in lower-income households.
- **Who they are:** In addition to having the largest share of Hispanics (27%) of any group, Distant Admirers include a somewhat higher proportion of men (56%) than the general population. They are also more likely to have relatively lower levels of education (62% did not attend college) and household income (42% live in households earning less than \$30,000 a year).
- **Lifestyle:** They are less likely than some of the other groups to know many neighbors, and when it comes to engagement with cultural and other community activities, they participate at rates that are considerably below the national benchmark—48% say they do not regularly do any of the community activities we asked about. Their technology profile is notably below the national benchmark, and few are not heavy book readers. They are much less likely than most other groups to read the news regularly, to feel they can find information on key subjects, and to say they like to learn new things.
- **Relationship with libraries:** Despite their lack of personal use of libraries, this group is notable for its generally positive views about libraries. This might stem from the fact that

40% of Distant Admirers report that someone else in their household is a library user. Two-thirds of them (68%) say libraries are important because they promote literacy and reading; 66% say public libraries play an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed; 64% say libraries improve the quality of life in a community. Finally, 55% say the loss of the local library would be a blow to the community.

Off the Grid (4% of the population)

- **Overview:** Their name comes from the fact that they are disconnected in many ways—not only from libraries, but also from their neighbors and communities, from technology, and from information sources. Many do not regularly read books or stay current with the news, and their technology profile is the lowest among the groups. Their feelings about libraries are likewise distant: Just 28% say their library’s closing would have a major impact on their community, and another one in four (25%) say it would have no impact at all.
- **Who they are:** This group includes higher proportions of men (57%), older respondents (the median age 52), and Hispanic respondents (19%), and many tend to live in lower-income households and have lower levels of education—34% never completed high school. The vast majority of members of this group live in small towns (38%) and rural areas (45%), far more than most other groups.
- **Lifestyle:** Those in the Off the Grid group are longtime residents of their communities, but 38% say they don’t know the names of anyone who lives close by. They also engage in certain community activities at low levels, and just 59% say they socialize with family and friends daily (well below the national benchmark of 78%). Only 56% use the internet, and just 33% have smartphones. Half read no books in the previous 12 months, and just a quarter (25%) say they read books daily.
- **Relationship with libraries:** Like Distant Admirers, none of the members of this group have used a public library in their lives; unlike Distant Admirers, they have the least positive views about libraries. For instance, less than half (45%) strongly agree that public libraries play an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed by providing access to materials and resources, a view that is otherwise shared by 72% of the general population.

General patterns in Americans' engagement with public libraries

Some general trends extend through these findings, as documented in our earlier reports such as [How Americans Value Public Libraries in Their Communities](#):

- **Socioeconomic status:** Broadly speaking, [adults with higher levels of education and household income are more likely to use public libraries](#) than those with lower household incomes and lower levels of education. However, among those who have used a library in the past year, [adults living in lower-income households are more likely to say various library services are very important to them and their families](#) than those living in higher-income households.
- **Parenthood:** [Parents of minor children, compared with non-parents, are significantly more likely to use libraries](#) and value libraries' role in their lives.
- **Ties to learning acquisition:** Students, job seekers, and those without home internet, are especially likely to [value particular library services](#).

These patterns are particularly prominent in the high engagement categories, which contain many of these (often overlapping) groups. In this way, high and medium engagement groups are often more alike than different. In contrast, the low and non-engagement groups tend to be more distinct in the circumstances surrounding their lack of library engagement. For instance, looking only at low engagement groups (which include people who have used a library at some point in their lives but not recently), there are:

- **Not for Me:** Respondents who tend to dislike public libraries and are more likely to see them as irrelevant to modern life;
- **Young and Restless:** Young people who generally feel positively about public libraries, but are relatively new to their neighborhoods and are unlikely to know where their local library is located;
- **Rooted and Roadblocked:** Older adults who generally think libraries are good for their community, but may have obstacles in their lives, view libraries as somewhat difficult to use, or otherwise think that libraries are not personally relevant to them at this point in their lives.

Broader trends in Americans' information habits

Though the main focus of this report is to describe the typology, there are a number of interesting thematic threads that emerge through that analysis:⁴

Americans' library habits do not exist in a vacuum: People's connection—or lack of connection—with public libraries is part of their broader information and social landscape. As a rule, people who have extensive economic, social, technological, and cultural resources are also more likely to use and value libraries as part of those networks. Many of those who are less engaged with public libraries tend to have lower levels of technology use, fewer ties to their neighbors, lower feelings of personal efficacy, and less engagement with other cultural activities.

Most Americans do not feel overwhelmed by information today. Some 18% of Americans say they feel overloaded by information—a drop in those feeling this way from 27% who said information overload was a problem to them in 2006. Those who feel overloaded are actually less likely to use the internet or smartphones, and are most represented in groups with lower levels of library engagement (such as Off the Grid, Distant Admirers, and Not For Me).

Life stage and special circumstances are linked to increased library use and higher engagement with information: Deeper connections with public libraries are often associated with key life moments such as having a child, seeking a job, being a student, and going through a situation in which research and data can help inform a decision. Similarly, quieter times of life, such as retirement, or less momentous periods, such as when people's jobs are stable, might prompt less frequent information searches and library visits.

Acquiring information is often a social process in which trusted helpers matter: There are indications in the survey that people often feel they need their social networks and reliable experts to help them navigate some information-intensive activities. Even those in the most self-reliant groups, such as Library Lovers and Information Omnivores, say they would probably ask for help when they file their taxes, if they ever decided to start a business, or apply for government benefits. And the vast majority of those in lower engagement groups say they would likely ask for help if they wanted to master a new technology gadget or start using a new social media platform.

Technology use is not so much a substitute for “offline” activities as it is an enhancement tool: One of the persistent questions about the impact of digital technology is

⁴ See also our companion report, “How Americans Value Public Libraries in Their Communities.” <http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/12/11/libraries-in-communities/>

whether it pulls people away from traditional institutions and activities. In the case of library users, there is a strong tie between technology and library use. For instance, the technology-rich profiles of Information Omnivores might suggest that their gadgets could provide all the media and data they could possibly need—yet they still patronize libraries at high levels. Conversely, people with less technology in their lives, such as the Not For Me and Rooted and Roadblocked groups, are also less likely to use libraries. This suggests that technology is an “add on” for users that helps them leverage the way they acquire information.

Libraries score high ease of access and use—even among those who are not frequent users: Fully 91% of Americans ages 16 and older say they know where the closest library is, and 72% live within 5 miles of a library branch. Asked how easy it would be for them to use libraries if they wanted, 93% of Americans ages 16 and older say libraries would be easy for them to visit in person, including 74% of those in the Off the Grid group. Further, 82% of all Americans say library websites would be easy for them to use.

There are people who have never visited a library who still have positive views of public libraries and their roles in their communities: Members of the group we identify as “Distant Admirers” have never personally used a library, but nevertheless tend to have strongly positive opinions about how valuable libraries are to communities—particularly for libraries’ role in encouraging literacy and for providing resources that might otherwise be hard to obtain. Many Distant Admirers say that someone else in their household does use the library, and therefore may use library resources indirectly.

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About this Report and Survey

This report is part of [a larger research effort](#) by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project that is exploring the role libraries play in people's lives and in their communities. The research is underwritten by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

This report contains findings from a nationally representative survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older fielded July 18-September 30, 2013. It was conducted in English and Spanish on landline and cell phones. The margin of error for the full sample is plus or minus 1.4 percentage points. Unlike standard Pew Research surveys of adults 18 and older, this report also contains data on Americans ages 16-17. However, any analyses of behaviors based on education level or household income level exclude this younger age group and are based solely on adults ages 18 and older, which is also noted throughout the report.

Disclaimer from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

This report is based on research funded in part by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions contained within are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

About this typology

What is a typology?

Briefly put, a typology is a statistical analysis that clusters groups based on certain attributes. In this case, the typology was built around people's use of libraries, their views about libraries and library services, and their access to libraries.

Why use a typology instead of more familiar demographics?

Pew Research has reported in extensive detail how different demographic groups use libraries, library web sites, and a broad array of library services. That work can be found in our [archives](#) and contains numerous insights about gender differences, racial and ethnic differences, age differences, differences by community type (urban, suburban, rural), and socio-economic differences.

This typology enriches that picture considerably by moving beyond familiar groups by fitting demographics into contexts that matter to the library community. It is also useful to anyone interested in sweeping technology changes in America—how people get, use, share, and think about information and a key institution that offers information at no charge. Not all Hispanics or

men or rich people or high school dropouts or suburbanites act and think the same way. By creating groups based on their connection to libraries rather than their gender, race/ethnicity, or socio-economic attributes, this report allows portraiture that is especially relevant to the public library community.

This work also differs from a typical survey report by the Pew Research Center in that it focuses on analyses of groups, rather than individual respondents. Thus, we do not devote much space to elaborating the national findings on issues such as how many patrons used different library services, or how many books Americans read. Those who care about that can find the information in earlier reports such as [our recent report on Americans' reading habits](#). We focus instead on how their book reading fits them into different kinds of groups that explore their library use and attitudes.

About this typology

This typology is built around the current state of libraries in America: their importance to people's lives, how they are viewed, and the role they play in their communities. Because this is based on survey data of individual Americans' experiences and opinions, not all of the work libraries do will be visible. Yet this report contains important information about the relationship people have to public libraries at a time when reading and information habits are adapting to new technologies and economic realities, and when libraries' strong (though often subtle) place in American culture is the subject of much discussion.

The first thing to know is that the groups in this typology are defined by their engagement with libraries, *not* demographic characteristics such as gender, age group, race/ethnicity, or household income. We often discuss their demographics and other characteristics as a way to describe who is in these groups and what these groups look like—but characteristics such as age or income do not determine which group someone is placed in. For instance, the “Young and Restless” group does include a higher proportion of young people than the population as a whole (who are more likely to be new to their neighborhoods—the “restless” part of the name), the group does not represent all young people, or even all young “restless” respondents. Rather, low engagement library users who *do* value libraries but do *not* know where their local library is (two of the defining traits of the Young and Restless group) are simply more likely to be young than other low engagement groups.

In addition to demographic information, we also report other information about these groups' habits and attitudes. For instance, we asked about how active they are in attending various gatherings and institutions, from sporting events to museums and art galleries. We also asked several questions about their basic information practices and views: Do they read books, enjoy

following the news, or feel comfortable using newer technologies? Would they need help filing their taxes, or learning about relevant government benefits and services? Though their responses to these questions did not inform the typology, they can help provide context for these groups' lives in their communities beyond libraries.

The second thing to understand about this typology is that it is not exclusively a typology of library users—it's a typology of Americans' attitudes, perceptions, and priorities relating to public libraries, in addition to the basic contours of their library use. The following chart shows which factors were used in creating the analysis; for more information about the exact questions that each component was based on, please see the methods section (see [Creating the typology](#)) at the end of this report.

Factors for those who have ever used a public library:	Factors for those who have <u>not</u> ever used a public library:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Importance of public library to community as a whole ▪ Personal/Household library use ▪ Personal experiences using library and services (knowledge & ease of use) ▪ Intensity of library use ▪ Familiarity with closest library location ▪ Proximity to public library ▪ Negative perceptions of/experiences with public libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Importance of public libraries broadly ▪ Importance of library to me/my community ▪ Ease of access to library ▪ Declining value of libraries ▪ Proximity to public library ▪ Someone else in household uses library

Another thing readers may notice is that the groups outlined in this report are not always strongly delineated. In fact, the groups with the highest levels of public library engagement tend to look very similar, and may be best understood as existing along a gradient of library use and values. The lower engagement groups, by contrast, are often both smaller and more distinct.

Finally, while this typology contains many national-level insights that may be of interest to the public library community, it cannot answer individual libraries' questions about how to allocate their resources, or who their patrons are—nor is it meant to replace the hard work libraries already do to identify needs in their communities, or librarians' deep knowledge about the patrons they serve. Our hope is that this data might lay the foundation for a national conversation by illuminating the habits and attitudes of these groups in a way that lets individual readers understand the larger role libraries play, beyond those readers' individual experiences.

High Engagement

About three in ten Americans ages 16 and older are “highly engaged” with public libraries. Those in this bracket sort into two basic groups: Library Lovers, who represent the 10% of Americans with the highest levels of library engagement; and Information Omnivores, who represent an additional 20% of Americans.

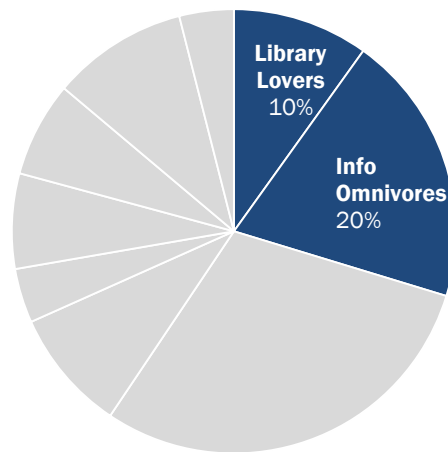
As a whole, the high engagement groups are defined by their high rates of library usage and their extremely positive views about libraries’ roles in their communities. The vast majority visited a public library or used a public library website in the past year—far higher rates than the general population. They also appreciate what libraries do for their communities, and value a range of library services from book lending to children’s programs.⁵

The groups’ interactions with libraries fit into a broader array of involvement in their communities. They are active in their localities, taking advantage of a range of cultural and recreational activities. They feel they have the capacity to effect change for the better in their communities. In addition, they are heavy book readers and news consumers, and feel self-sufficient in pursuing the information they need. And contrary to the idea that the internet is replacing the need for libraries in people’s lives, these high engagement groups also report some of the highest rates of technology use in our sample.

Demographically, these two groups—Library Lovers and Information Omnivores—are quite similar. Both groups are dominated by women, are relatively well educated, and contain a high proportion of college graduates and graduate-degree holders. High engagement users also tend to be younger, and are more likely to be in life stages where libraries can play a big role; they contain a disproportionate number of parents, students, and young people looking for jobs.

High engagement groups

The two high engagement groups, Library Lovers and Information Omnivores, make up 30% of the U.S. population (ages 16 and older)



Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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⁵ Note on charts: “All Americans” represents all Americans ages 16 and older, and is included for reference; members of each group are also represented in the “All Americans” data.

Yet while the groups share many similarities, they are not identical. One of the main differences between the two high engagement groups is simply the intensity of their library use. For instance, though most visited a library in the past year, the frequency of their visits is very different:

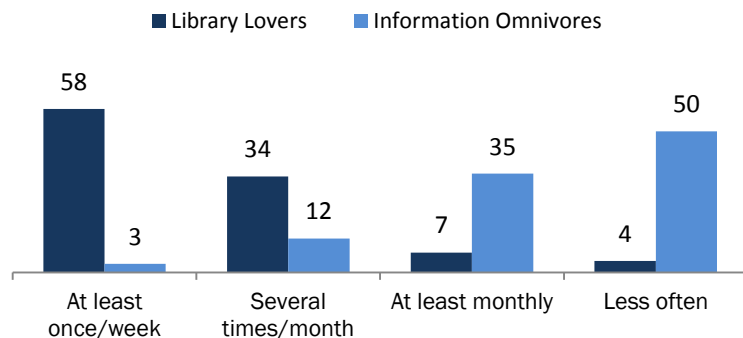
- Among the 87% of Library Lovers who visited the library in the last 12 months, 58% go to the library every week—and all visit at least once a month.
- Among the 81% of Information Omnivores who visited the library in the last 12 months, just 3% go to the library every week, while 12% go several times a month and 35% visit about once a month.

These differences extend to their use of libraries' websites: Among the 83% of Library Lovers who visited a library website in the past year, 98% visit the library website at least monthly; among the 79% of Information Omnivores who visited a library website in the past year, only 23% visit monthly.

Library Lovers are also far more likely to say that their personal library use has increased over the past five years (53%), while most Information Omnivores (62%) say that their library use has stayed about the same.

Library Lovers visit public libraries more frequently than Information Omnivores

Among Americans in each group who visited a public library in person in the past year, the % who visited with the following frequencies



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Other than their library habits, the differences between Library Lovers and Information Omnivores revolve around their economic circumstances, their technology ecology, and the personal value they derive from libraries.

For instance, Information Omnivores are more likely than Library Lovers to live in higher-income households, to be employed in full time jobs, and to have higher rates of technology adoption. In fact, Information Omnivores are particularly striking for their mobile connectivity, their ownership of smartphones and tablet computers, and their use of social networking sites. Meanwhile, Library Lovers are more likely to have economic stressors in their lives: A quarter of them are looking for jobs. A third live in households earning less than \$30,000. Not surprisingly,

Library Lovers are much more likely than Information Omnivores to borrow the books they read and say that library services are important to them and their families.

Along these lines, Library Lovers are considerably more likely to feel personal stake in the future of libraries. Both groups believe libraries are important for communities, but Library Lovers are much more likely than Information Omnivores to say the closing of their local library would have a major impact on them.

Library Lovers

Overview

Library Lovers are the heaviest public library users, as well as libraries' greatest supporters. They represent about 10% of the overall U.S. population.

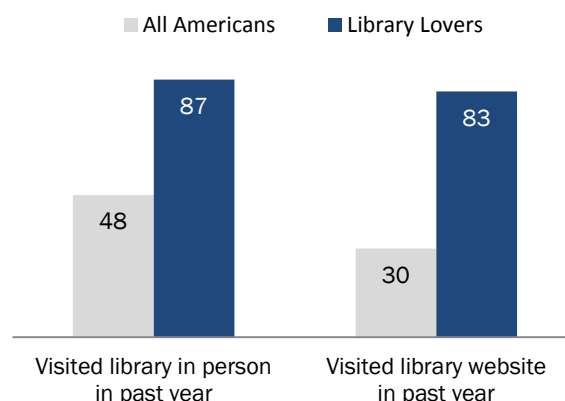
Library Lovers are frequent users of library services, and are most likely to be knowledgeable about what libraries are doing and the resources they provide. Some 87% have used a library in the past year, and 83% have used a library website in that time; almost all of them use the library at least monthly. The closing of their local library would devastate them personally: 75% say it would have a *major* impact on them and their families if the library vanished.

Beyond their library use, they enjoy reading, keeping up with the news, and are comfortable navigating many types of media and information. Notably, they are the most prolific readers, especially of books: 66% read a book daily or almost every day, and they read an average of 27 books in the past 12 months. And despite the fact that most generally prefer to borrow books rather than purchasing them, a majority of Library Lovers are frequent patrons of bookstores: 57% say they visit bookstores regularly, more than any other group.

Demographically, this group has the highest share of women (62%) of any group. Library Lovers are especially likely to be well-educated and have very high levels of technology use; most are comfortable finding many types of information on their own, and love to learn new things. However, with a disproportionate number of parents, students, and job seekers, many are also at life stages that predispose them to rely on library resources; for instance, they contain the greatest proportion of parents of minor children (40%), and almost all (96%) of those parents took their children to a library last year. And though they have high levels of education and relatively high levels of household income, Library Lovers are also more likely than some other groups to be non-workers or working in part-time jobs.

Library Lovers' recent public library usage

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Socially, they are deeply networked and embedded in community activities. They know their neighbors, socialize regularly, and are plugged into their neighborhoods and communities as the heaviest patrons of bookstores, museums, cultural events. Politically, they are more likely than some other groups to be liberal and identify as Democrats.

As mentioned above, the lives of Library Lovers are full of technology: 95% use the internet; 92% have cell phones and 58% have smart phones; 72% connect with mobile devices. They are also near the top among the groups when it comes to ownership of e-book readers (30%) and tablet computers (39%). However, they also value the resources that libraries provide for others in their community, not just themselves; despite their own high rates of technology use, they think that libraries are just as important today as in the past for finding information.

Jump to:

- [Who they are: Demographics and other traits](#)
- [Technology and information habits](#)
- [Relationship to public libraries](#)

Who they are

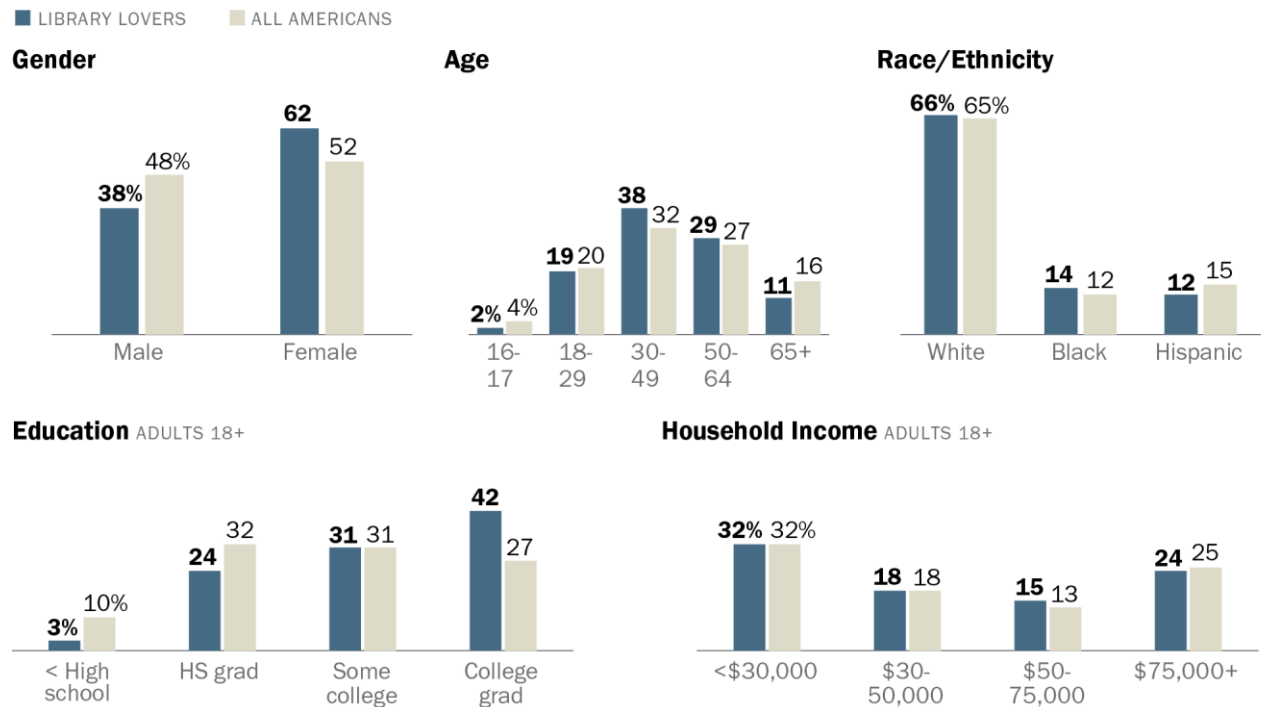
Demographics

As a group, Library Lovers have noticeably higher proportions of women, married adults, and parents with minor children living at home. They are more likely to be well-educated and relatively upscale in household income, but there are signs of economic challenge among them, too:

- **Gender:** Library Lovers are the most heavily female-dominated group: 62% of them are women, and only 38% are men.
- **Age:** Their median age is 44, making this one of the younger groups, but more than a decade older collectively than the Young and Restless group.
- **Income and jobs:** They are a somewhat upscale group in terms of household income: 39% live in households earning more than \$50,000. Still, relatively high proportions of them don't work (21%) or have part-time jobs (17%) and 25% say they are looking for jobs. That is likely related to the fact that 23% of them have lost a job or seen a significant decline in household income in the past 12 months. Some 17% are students and 42% work full time.
- **Education:** 41% have college degrees or graduate degrees, ranking them among the highest group; and another 31% have taken some college courses.
- **Marriage and parenting:** 59% are married or living with a partner, and 40% are parents of minor children—both the highest proportion among any group.

Library Lovers: A demographic portrait

Among Americans ages 16 and older



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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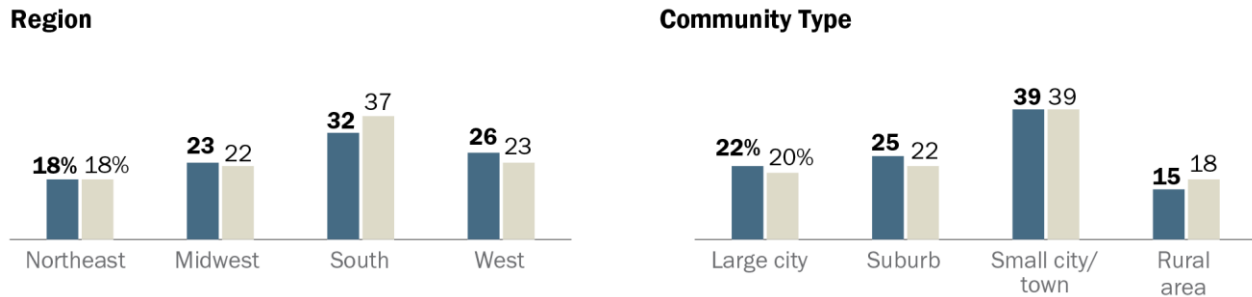
Other lifestyle notes

Library lovers are spread across community types, reflecting the general distribution of the population. There are indications that most are deeply connected to their communities, wherever they live. For instance, 84% rate their communities as “excellent” or “good,” and they are tied for the highest ranking group with Information Omnivores in believing their own voices matter in community affairs: 81% say they think people like them have a big or moderate impact on their communities.

Library Lovers: Where they live

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group

■ LIBRARY LOVERS ■ ALL AMERICANS



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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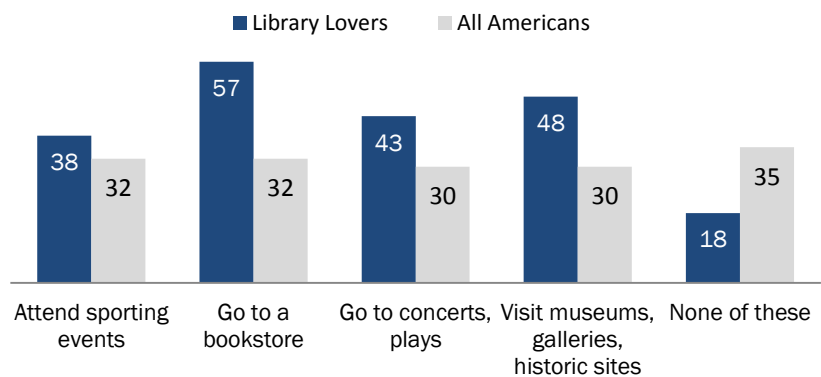
They are also more likely to be active in socializing with their family and friends: 83% socialize with family and friends in some form (whether in person, on the phone, or online) on a daily basis. And they are quite likely to know their neighbors: 33% know all their neighbors, a higher proportion than almost any group.

Library Lovers' higher levels of library use are part of a broader pattern of engagement with their communities. They are significantly more likely to visit bookstores, museums, or concerts than most other groups, and to attend sporting events.

Politically, 35% are Democrats (compared with 31% of the full population) and 28% identify as liberal (compared with 23% of the full population).

Library Lovers' community activities

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who do each activity regularly



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Technology and information

habits

The lives of Library Lovers are much more likely than other groups to be full of both books and technology. They are the heaviest book readers, and they are the most likely to favor borrowing books over buying them—though they are also frequent patrons of bookstores. They have some of the highest rates of internet users, mobile connectivity, and ownership of e-readers and tablet computers, and outpace most other groups in overall social networking site and Twitter usage.

Technology use

Library Lovers are over-index on many measures of technology use, particularly compared with several other groups: 95% use the internet, and among internet users, 76% use social media. Fully 72% say it would be easy for them to use a library website.

Library Lovers' technology profile

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who use various technologies

	Library Lovers	All Americans
Internet use and online activities		
Use the internet at least occasionally	95	86
Access the internet on cell phone, tablet or other mobile device	72	68
Broadband at home	77	71
Use the internet every day or almost every day (among internet users)	84	82
Use social networking site (among internet users)	76	74
Use Twitter (among internet users)	21	20
Mobile devices and e-readers		
Have a cell phone (total, including smartphones)	92	91
Have a smartphone	58	55
Have a tablet computer	39	35
Have an e-reader like a Kindle or Nook	30	24

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Defining information traits

The singular defining distinction of Library Lovers' information habits is how much they love books, reading, and information:

- Library Lovers read an average (mean) of 27 books last year, and a median of 12 books.

- They are the most likely group to be heavy patrons of books stores—57% regularly go to them, compared with 32% of the general population.
- However, they also are the most likely group to say they tend to borrow the books they read, rather than buying them: 58% say they borrowed more books than they purchased in the past year, compared with 38% of the general population.
- Beyond books, Library Lovers are heavy consumers of information and news in general: 69% read a newspaper in print or online daily or almost every day, and 66% read a book that frequently.

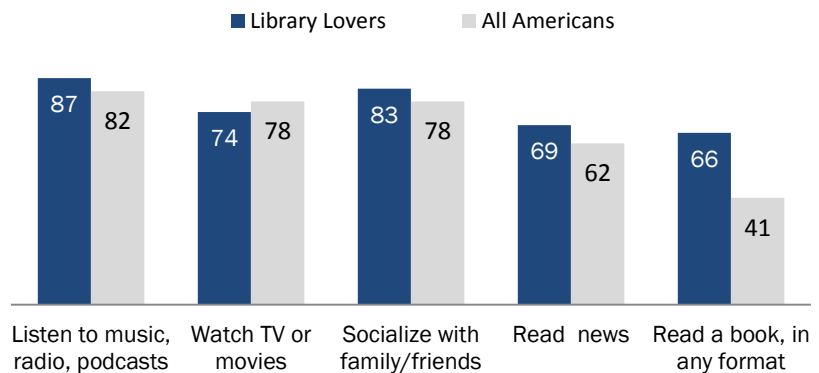
Library Lovers are more active in than the general population other ways as well. They are more likely to listen to music or the radio on a daily basis, and are also more likely to socialize with family and friends. They are somewhat *less* likely to watch television or movies on a daily basis.

In response to a series of questions about their information-seeking habits, Library Lovers also stand out in the answers about how much they like learning new

information, that it would be easy for them to find information on many topics, and that they would feel comfortable on their own completing a variety of information-seeking tasks (rather than seeking help on those activities). Library Lovers are among the least likely groups to say they get frustrated when they can't find information right away, or that they prefer to get information in audio or video format.

Library Lovers' information habits

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who do each activity on a daily basis



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Library Lovers' views about learning new information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say each of the following statements "describes me very well"

	Library Lovers	All Americans
I like to learn new things.	81	69
I like hunting for facts and information that are hard to find.	38	29
I get frustrated when I can't find information I need right away.	17	24
I prefer to get information in audio and video format than reading text.	16	20

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Ease of finding information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say it would be either "easy" or "very easy" to find each type of information

	Library Lovers	All Americans
News about politics and current events	93	88
Information about what's happening in your community	91	85
Reliable health information	83	79
Information about career opportunities, job training, or educational programs	83	77
Information about government benefits and programs	75	67

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Ease of completing tasks

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they would be comfortable completing the following tasks on their own, without assistance

	Library Lovers	All Americans
Use social media like Facebook or Twitter to connect with friends or family	74	67
Learn how to use a new device like a tablet computer or smartphone	56	52
Apply for government services or benefits	53	43
File your taxes	42	33

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Relationship to public libraries

Library Lovers are the most enthusiastic users of libraries and the most appreciative of their local library's role in their own lives, as well as in the community. Almost all of them view public libraries as welcoming and extremely useful places that are easy to navigate and provide a range of important resources.

Public library use and experiences

Library Lovers are the most prolific users of libraries by virtually every measure of usage:

- 98% have library cards.
- 87% visited the library in the last 12 months. Among these recent library visitors, 58% of them go to the library every week, and all go at least once a month.
- 83% visited a library website in the past year. Among them, 98% visit the library website at least monthly.
- 53% say their library use has increased in the past five years.

Nearly all of them (98%) say libraries are welcoming places, and 81% say their local library is a nice, pleasant place to be (compared with 67% of all those ages 16 and older). They know their way around libraries: 50% say they know all or most of the services their library offers, and 99% of those who have visited a public library say it is “easy” or “very easy” for them to find what they are looking for.

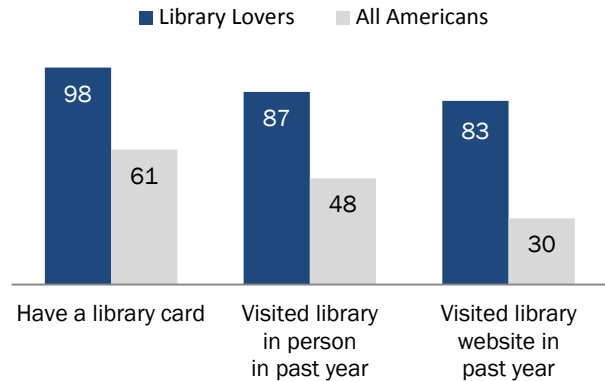
Among parents of minors, Library Lovers are the highest ranking group of those whose children use the library: 96% of the Library Lovers who have minor children say their children have been to a library in the past 12 months.

Public library attitudes

Library Lovers stand out as the topmost group members who have strongly positive views about the role of libraries in communities.

Library Lovers’ public library usage

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group

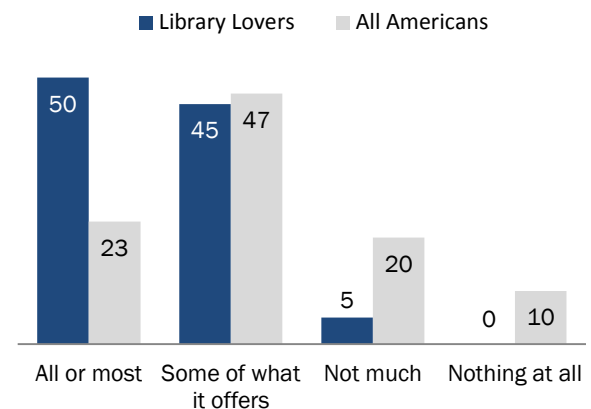


Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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How well-informed do you feel about the services your public library offers?

Do you feel like you know...



Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Views about public libraries in the community

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they “strongly agree” with each of the following statements

	Library Lovers	All Americans
Public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading.	92	77
Having a public library improves the quality of life in a community.	91	69
Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.	89	72
Public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.	70	48

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Views about public libraries and technologies

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they “strongly agree” with each of the following statements

	Library Lovers	All Americans
People do NOT need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own.	5	22
Public libraries have NOT done a good job keeping up with new technologies.	4	11

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

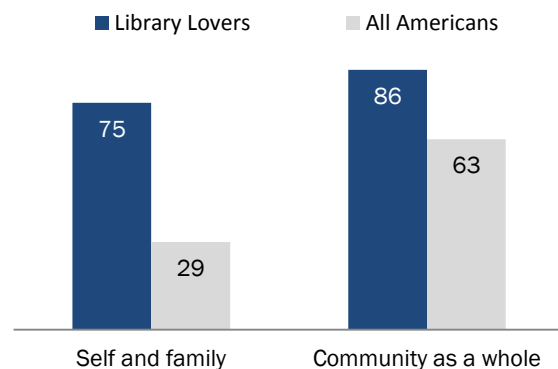
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If their library closed they are the group who are most likely to say they would feel the impact acutely. Three-quarters (75%) of Library Lovers say that their library’s closing would have a “major” impact on them and their family, more than twice the rate for the general public (29%). And 86% say that their library’s closing would majorly impact their community as a whole, compared with 63% of all Americans ages 16 and older.

When it comes to individual library services, Library Lovers are the highest-ranking group in their appreciation for every service, including 86% who say that public libraries’ books and media are “very important” to them and their family.

Most Library Lovers say local library’s closing would have a major impact

% of Americans ages 16+ who say the closing of their local public library would have a “major” impact on...



Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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The importance of individual public library services

Among Americans ages 16 and older who have ever used a public library or have a family member who uses a library, the % who say each of these services is “very important” to them and their family

	Library Lovers	All Americans
Access to free books and media	86	54
Having a quiet and safe place to spend time, read or study	71	51
Resources to do research for school or work	66	47
Programs or events for children or teens	64	45
Getting help from a librarian finding information	62	44
Using the library’s internet, computers or printers	49	33
Programs or events for adults	43	28
Help finding or applying for a job	37	30
Help applying for government programs, permits or licenses	36	29

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Information Omnivores

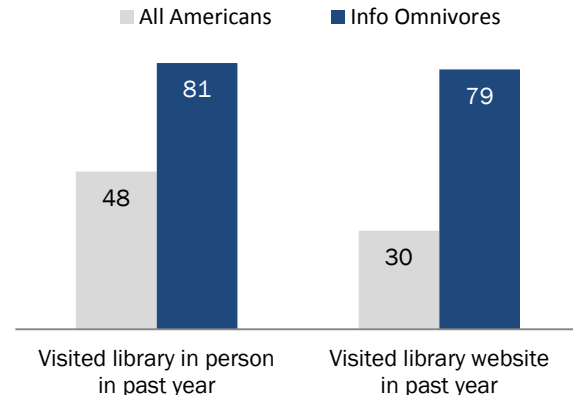
Overview

Information Omnivores, the second-highest group in terms of library engagement, represent about 20% of the U.S. population ages 16 and older; this makes this group about twice the size of the Library Lovers group. Like Library Lovers, they have extremely high levels of engagement with and appreciation for public libraries in their communities, but report lower levels of personal reliance on library services.

As their name implies, Information Omnivores are avid consumers of media and information, and report even higher rates of technology use than Library Lovers. Their library use is high, but not quite as high as Library Lovers—either for themselves or their children. Like Library Lovers, this group has a disproportionate number of parents. As they are somewhat more financially well-off than Library Lovers, it may be that they can afford to purchase more services themselves instead of relying on libraries. However, they are still huge fans of libraries, especially in terms of their value for the communities as a whole.

Information Omnivores' recent public library usage

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Jump to:

- [Who they are: Demographics and other traits](#)
- [Technology and information habits](#)
- [Relationship to public libraries](#)

Who they are

Demographics

Many Information Omnivores sit at top of the socio-economic ladder. They are the group with the highest proportion of financially respondents, and they are more likely to have relatively high levels of education. It is also the group with the greatest share of members working full time. The group also includes significantly higher proportions of women and parents compared with the

general population. It also contains a large share of young people and people who live in big cities, and its respondents tend to rank high in community engagement and a sense of self-efficacy:

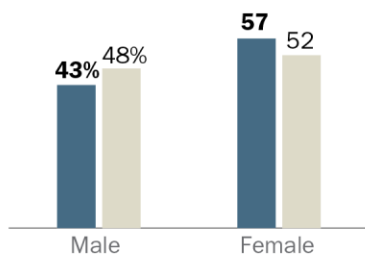
- **Gender:** 57% of Information Omnivores are women, the highest proportion of any group except Library Lovers.
- **Age:** Their median age is 40, making them a somewhat younger group than Library Lovers and the second youngest group in the typology.
- **Race and ethnicity:** Information Omnivores very closely mirror the general population in our sample: 68% are white, 12% are black, and 12% are Hispanic.
- **Household income:** This group has the highest proportion of financially well-off respondents, with 35% of its members living in households earning \$75,000 or more.
- **Education:** They are a relatively highly educated group: 73% of adults in this group have had some college experience, including the 41% who have college or graduate degrees. In addition, 23% are currently students, one of the highest proportions of any group.

Information Omnivores: A demographic portrait

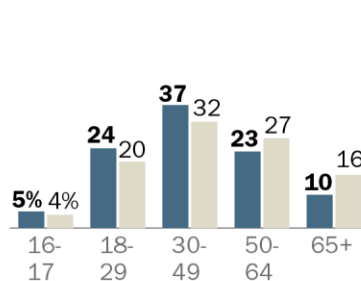
% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group

■ INFO OMNIVORES ■ ALL AMERICANS

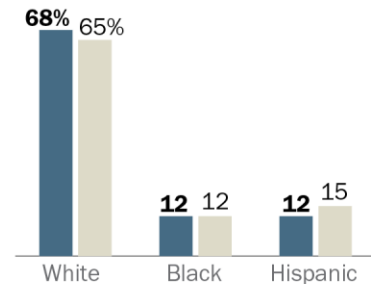
Gender



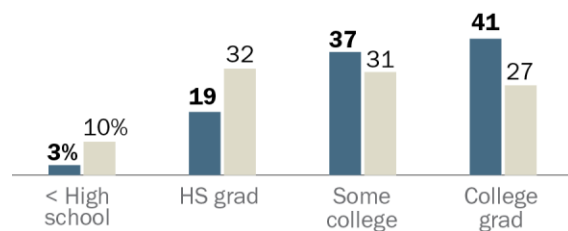
Age



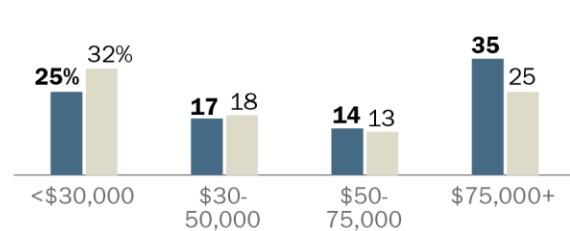
Race/Ethnicity



Education ADULTS 18+



Household Income ADULTS 18+



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Other notable characteristics:

- **Employment:** They are the most likely group to be employed: 52% have full time jobs.
- **Parents:** 36% are parents of minors—similar to Library Lovers—but they are more likely to be parents of young children (ages 2-5). The vast majority of these parents took their child to the library in the past 12 months (90%), but Information Omnivores are somewhat less likely than Library Lovers to have done so.

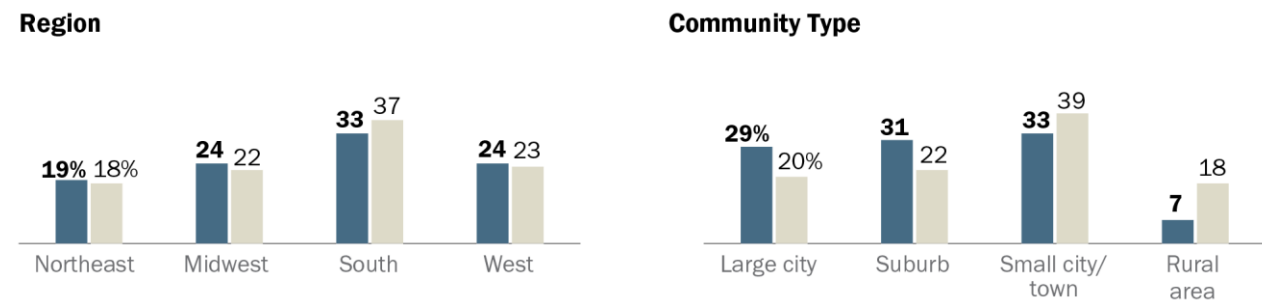
Other lifestyle notes

Information Omnivores are more likely to live in large cities or suburbs compared with other groups, as shown in the following chart.

Information Omnivores: Where they live

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group

■ INFO OMNIVORES ■ ALL AMERICANS



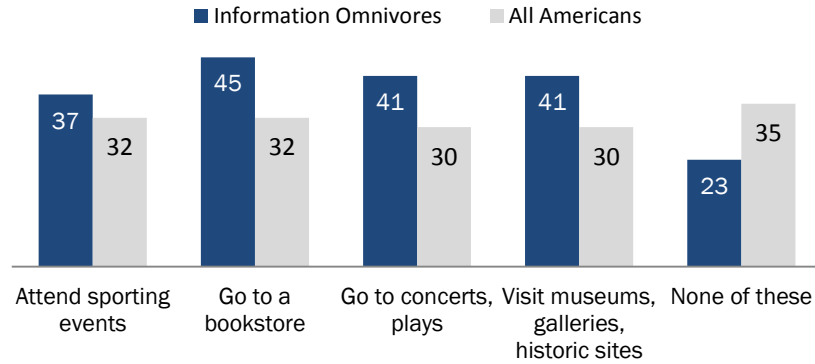
Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Relatively speaking, Information Omnivores tend to be newcomers to their communities: 39% have lived in their community for five years or less. Still, they are more likely to view their communities positively than any other group (84% rate their community as a “good” or “excellent” place to live). They are also more likely to think their voice matters in their community, as 36% say people like themselves can have a “big” impact on making their community a better place to live. Reflecting their cosmopolitan ways, they are more plugged in than most groups to certain activities in their communities. Still, they are significantly less likely than Library Lovers to say they know all their neighbors (25% versus 33%). But Information Omnivores socialize a lot: 84% do so with family and friends in person, on the phone, or online daily.

Information Omnivores' community activities

% of Americans 16 and older in each group who do each activity regularly



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Politically, Information Omnivores tilt Democratic (33% say this) and liberal (29% say this), at higher rates than the general population.

Technology and information habits

One of the most striking characteristics of Information Omnivores is their technology ownership and use. They are tied for the highest ranking group as cell owners and smartphone owners, and are the most intense users of the internet: 90% of the internet users go online every day or almost every day. They are also the top group of tablet computer owners, and are tied with Library Lovers as the leading group owning e-book reading devices.

As their name implies, they are comfortable with a wide variety of information types, and engage with a variety of media sources. They are also more likely than other groups to read books regularly, though their overall book consumption does not quite approach that of Library Lovers. Their book habits also differ in that they are far more likely to prefer to purchase their books than Library Lovers, who generally prefer to borrow them.

Technology use

Almost all Information Omnivores use the internet (97%), and most (68%) have smartphones. Among internet users, 81% use social networking sites, 25% use Twitter. They are also notable for

their significantly higher rates of tablet ownership (46%) and e-readers (33%) compared with almost every other group.

Information Omnivores' technology profile

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who use various technologies

	Information Omnivores	All Americans
Internet use and online activities		
Use the internet at least occasionally	97	86
Access the internet on cell phone, tablet or other mobile device	81	68
Broadband at home	86	71
Use the internet every day or almost every day (among internet users)	90	82
Use social networking site (among internet users)	81	74
Use Twitter (among internet users)	25	20
Mobile devices and e-readers		
Have a cell phone (total, including smartphones)	95	91
Have a smartphone	68	55
Have a tablet computer	46	35
Have an e-reader like a Kindle or Nook	33	24

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Defining information traits

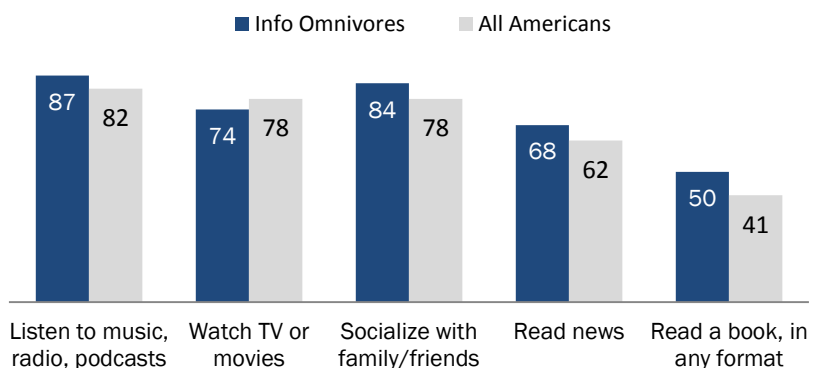
When it comes to information, Information Omnivores stand out in a number of ways.

Information Omnivores are just as likely as Library Lovers to listen to music, talk radio, or podcasts (87% do this daily), and reading news offline or online (68%). And like Library Lovers, they are somewhat less likely to watch television or movies (74%) on a daily basis than the general public.

Information Omnivores are

Information Omnivores' information habits

% of Americans 16 and older in each group who do each activity daily



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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more likely than most other groups to read regularly, though they are not as likely as Library Lovers to do so. They rank below Library Lovers in:

- **Daily book reading:** 50% versus 66%.
- **Average number of books read:** Information Omnivores read an average (mean) of 17 books in the past 12 months, compared with 27 for Library Lovers, and a median of 10 books in the past 12 months, compared with 12 for Library Lovers.
- **Bookstore visiting:** 45% of Information Omnivores go to bookstores regularly, compared with 57% of Library Lovers and 32% of the general public.

Among those who read a book in the past 12 months, 52% of Information Omnivores say they bought most of those books and 37% say they borrowed most of the books. Another 10% say they bought and borrowed in equal proportions.

Most Information Omnivores are immersed in information, but few very much mind it: 82% say they like having so much information and only 16% say they feel overloaded. They also stand apart from most other groups—except Library Lovers—in their answers about how much they like learning new information. They are highly confident of their abilities to track down information and master new technologies. They also especially likely to say that it would be easy for them to find information on many topics, and that they would feel comfortable on their own completing a variety of information-seeking tasks (rather than seeking help on those activities).

Information Omnivores' views about learning new information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say each of the following statements "describes me very well"

	Information Omnivores	All Americans
I like to learn new things.	80	69
I like hunting for facts and information that are hard to find.	36	29
I get frustrated when I can't find information I need right away.	21	24
I prefer to get information in audio and video format than reading text.	16	20

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Ease of finding information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say it would be either “easy” or “very easy” to find each type of information

	Information Omnivores	All Americans
News about politics and current events	94	88
Information about what’s happening in your community	90	85
Reliable health information	84	79
Information about career opportunities, job training, or educational programs	85	77
Information about government benefits and programs	74	67

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Ease of completing tasks

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they would be comfortable completing the following tasks on their own, without assistance

	Information Omnivores	All Americans
Use social media like Facebook or Twitter to connect with friends or family	81	67
Learn how to use a new device like a tablet computer or smartphone	64	52
Apply for government services or benefits	50	43
File your taxes	41	33

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Relationship to public libraries

Information Omnivores are deeply engaged with libraries, but not quite at the same level as Library Lovers. For instance, they visit libraries, but not nearly at the same level of frequency. Over the past five years, their library use has mostly held steady, rather than risen in the way that Library Lovers has. Their somewhat lower level of engagement with libraries translates into less knowledge about the things that are going on at the local library.

Public library use and experiences

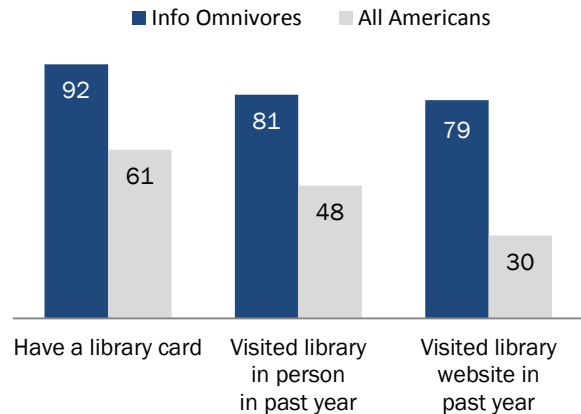
In almost all respects, Information Omnivores' engagement with libraries far exceeds national benchmarks:

- 92% have library cards, compared with 61% of all Americans ages 16 and older.
- 81% of Information Omnivores visited the library in the last 12 months, but their visits are less frequent than that of Library Lovers: Just 3% go to the library every week, while 12% go several times a month and 35% visit about once a month.
- 79% visited a library website in the last 12 months, though only 22% of those recent website users visit monthly—the rest log on less often.
- 62% say their library use has remained the same over the past five years; 16% say it has increased and 21% say it has decreased.
- 90% of the Information Omnivores who have minor children say their children have been to a library in the past 12 months.

Information Omnivores do not rate their knowledge of their local library as high as Library Lovers do. Some 55% of Information Omnivores say they know some of what the library offers and 29% say they know all or most of what it offers. They say it is generally easy for them to navigate the library, but not quite as much as Library Lovers: 40% of Information Omnivores say their experience is that it is “very easy” to find what they are looking for when they visit a public library, compared with 55% of Library Lovers who say that. And, befitting their urban status, Information Omnivores say the library is easy for them to get to: 89% live five miles or less from the nearest library.

Information Omnivores' recent public library use

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Public library attitudes

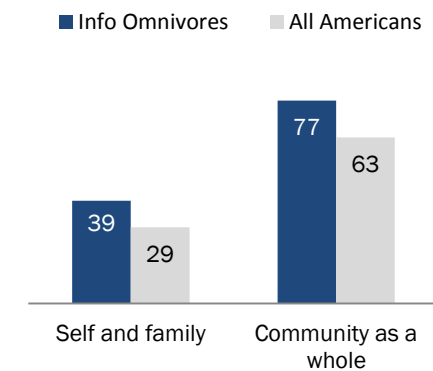
Information Omnivores have strongly positive views of libraries. Nearly all (95%) say their experience is that libraries are welcoming, friendly places; 73% say the physical condition of their local library makes it a nice, pleasant space.

As with other parts of this profile, many of the views of Information Omnivores outrank those in most other groups, but they are a notch or two below the level of personal value expressed by Library Lovers. One striking difference is that Information Omnivores are about half as likely to say that the closing of the local library would have a major impact on them and their families: 39% of Information Omnivores say that versus 75% of Library Lovers. The Information Omnivores are also considerably less likely than Library Lovers to say that library services are important to them and their families.

The groups are much closer in their views that the closing of the library would have a major impact on the community. Perhaps because their technology use is so high, Information Omnivores are less likely than several other groups to say libraries provide services that people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.

Most Information Omnivores say their local library's closing would have a major impact on their community

% of Americans ages 16+ who say the closing of their local public library would have a "major" impact on...



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Views about public libraries in the community

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they “strongly agree” with each of the following statements

	Information Omnivores	All Americans
Public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading.	85	77
Having a public library improves the quality of life in a community.	78	69
Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.	78	72
Public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.	49	48

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Views about public libraries and technologies

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they “strongly agree” with each of the following statements

	Information Omnivores	All Americans
People do NOT need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own.	7	22
Public libraries have NOT done a good job keeping up with new technologies.	7	11

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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The importance of individual public library services

Among Americans ages 16 and older who have ever used a public library or have a family member who uses a library, the % who say each of these services is “very important” to them and their family

	Information Omnivores	All Americans
Access to free books and media	63	54
Having a quiet and safe place to spend time, read or study	54	51
Resources to do research for school or work	50	47
Programs or events for children or teens	47	45
Getting help from a librarian finding information	44	44
Using the library’s internet, computers or printers	33	33
Programs or events for adults	28	28
Help finding or applying for a job	27	30
Help applying for government programs, permits or licenses	27	29

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Medium Engagement

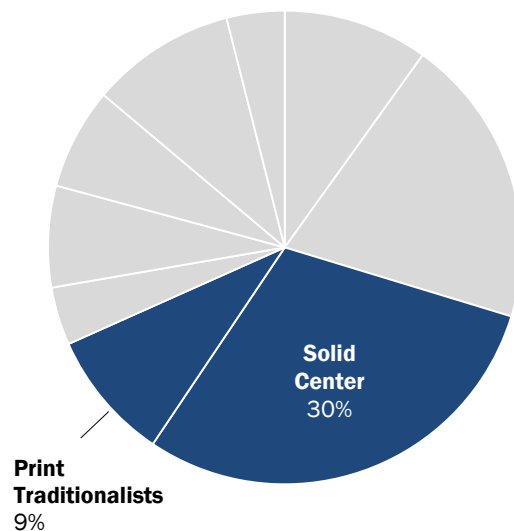
Medium engagement groups make up almost 40% of the overall U.S. population, and often mirror the general population in their habits, views, and demographics. This is especially true of the larger of the two groups, the Solid Center, who make up 30% of Americans ages 16 and older. The other medium engagement group, Print Traditionalists, comprises about 9% of the U.S. population.

Though they tend to be middle-of-the-road in most measures, both of these medium engagement groups are useful in understanding the quiet foundation of public library support in America.

One of the most striking differences between the two high engagement groups and two medium engagement groups is the degree to which they have basic connections to libraries. For instance, almost six in ten members of these medium engagement groups have library cards, roughly in line with the rate for the general population—but notably lower than the high engagement groups. Some 43% of those in the Solid Center and 48% of Print Traditionalists visited the library in the previous 12 months, though few of those recent visitors did so more than once a month. Both groups have typical rates of technology usage, and few members of either group make frequent use of library websites—though Print Traditionalists (20%) are more likely to have used a library website in the past year than those in the Solid Center (5%).

Medium engagement groups

The two medium engagement groups, Solid Center and Print Traditionalists, make up 39% of the general U.S. population (ages 16 and older)



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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One difference in the two groups' library usage is that Print Traditionalists, who are far more rural than those in the Solid Center, tend to live farther from public libraries—just 11% say they live within 5 miles of the nearest library. They are also more likely to indicate there are barriers to their library use: Though 62% of all Americans ages 16 and older say it would be “very easy” to visit a public library in person, this is true for only 46% of Print Traditionalists (but 69% of the Solid Center).

Distance to nearest public library

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group

	Solid Center	Print Traditionalists	All Americans
Less than 5 miles away	93	11	72
6-10 miles away	7	50	13
11-20 miles away	*	30	4
More than 20 miles away	0	8	1

* indicates <1%

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Additionally, while both groups view libraries positively and place a high value libraries' roles in their communities, members of the Solid Center are less likely to say they would be personally impacted by the closing of their local public library. Print Traditionalists are actually more likely to say they and their families rely on various library services, and that the closing of their local public library would have a major personal impact.

The groups also differ somewhat in their demographic make-up:

- Members of the Solid Center generally fall in the middle of the road on all demographic and lifestyle measures, but do include slightly higher proportions of men and older adults compared with the general population; they are also slightly more likely to live in higher income households, and to be politically conservative.
- Meanwhile, Print Traditionalists include a higher proportion of women, and are less likely to have graduated college (about half of adults in this groups have at most a high school education). They are also somewhat more likely to live in lower income households. They are more likely than other groups to be white, while the Solid Center tend to match the general U.S. population on measures of race and ethnicity.

Solid Center

Overview

The Solid Center is the largest group in the spectrum of public library users, representing more than a third of them. From their demographic composition to technology use to perceptions of libraries, they generally reflect the circumstances and habits of the overall U.S. population.

Those in the Solid Center appreciate libraries, but a third of them—32%—say their use of libraries has declined in the past five years. They appreciate libraries as a community resource, but do not view them as an essential personal resource: A majority say that the closing of the local library would have a major impact on their community, but they are significantly less likely than Print Traditionalists to say the loss of the local library would have a major impact on them personally.

The members of the Solid Center cohort feel confident they can get crucial information if they want it. They like having lots of information and do not feel overloaded, and are medium-scale book readers and news consumers. They say they would find it easy to find information about politics and current events, what’s happening in their community, health matters, and career opportunities. However, many of them do not necessarily think of the public library as a go-to resource to the same extent as higher engagement groups such as Library Lovers and Information Omnivores.

Jump to:

- [Who they are: Demographics and other traits](#)
- [Technology and information habits](#)
- [Relationship to public libraries](#)

Who they are

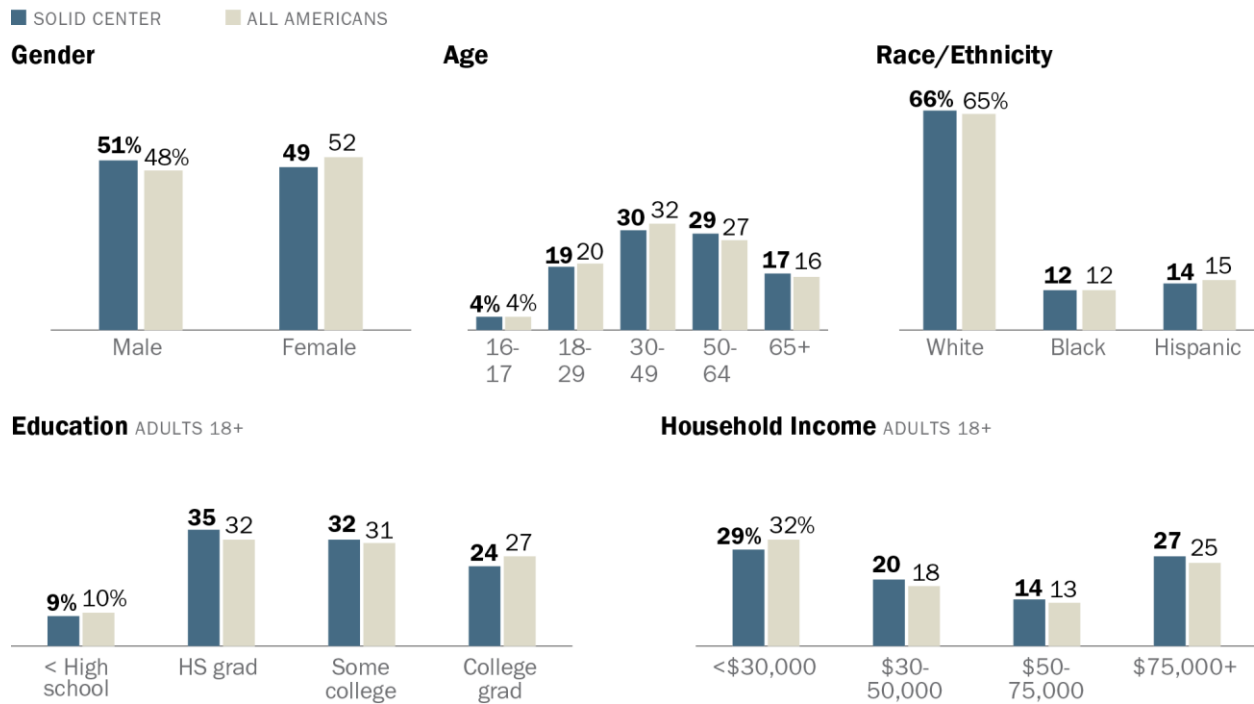
Demographics

Demographically, the Solid Center group can be understood as a microcosm of America. As such, their demographic makeup looks broadly like the country as a whole, with only slight variations. For instance, they are a bit more likely to be male than the general population (51% are male, 49% are female), and they are slightly older than the general population, with a median age of 47. However, racially and ethnically, this group’s makeup is very similar to the U.S. as a whole: 66% are white, 12% are black, and 14% are Hispanic. (In this, members of the Solid Center differ from Print Traditionalists, who are disproportionately white.)

Continuing their “center-ness,” those in this group are married, partnered, singles, divorced, and widowed in the same proportion as the whole population. Some 28% are currently parents of minor children, considerably below the level of the High Engagement groups, but above the level of the Low Engagement groups. And the children of parents in the Solid Center are almost as likely to have visited the library as those in the general population.

Solid Center: A demographic portrait

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013..

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Members of the Solid Center have educational levels that closely map the general adult population in the United States: 9% never graduated from high school; 35% ended their education with a high school diploma; 32% have taken some college courses but have no degree; 24% are college graduates.

Economically, the Solid Center are in the middle of the pack: 46% have full time jobs; 13% have part-time jobs; 18% are retired; 16% are not employed for pay; 2% have their own businesses. Some 19% are looking for jobs, the same number as are seeking work in the full population; and

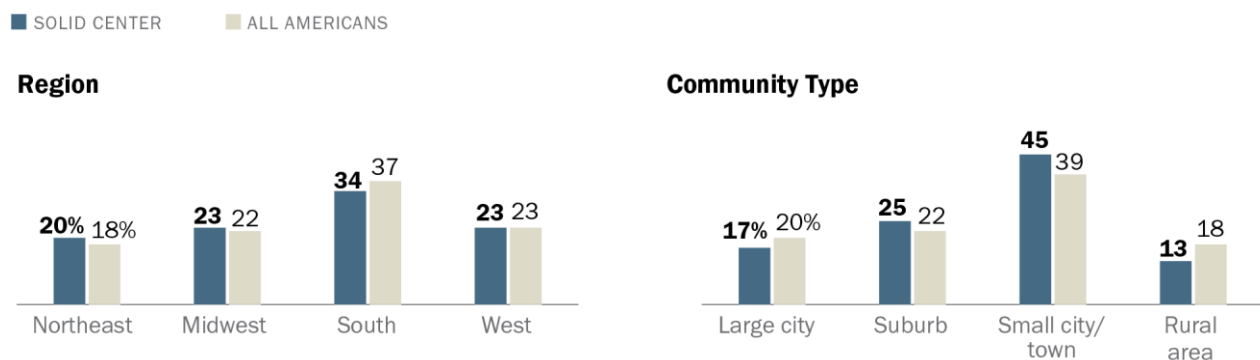
17% are students. Similarly, they map with the income profile of the country as 29% of adults live in households earning less than \$30,000; 20% live in households earning \$30,000-\$49,999; 14% live in households earning between \$50,000 and \$74,999; and 27% live in households earning \$75,000 or more. Compared with Print Traditionalists, those in the Solid Center are more likely to live in higher-income households and less likely to live in lower-income households.

Other lifestyle notes

By being in the middle, Solid Center members are quite different from the other medium engagement group, Print Traditionalists, who are heavily concentrated in rural areas; those in the Solid Center are more evenly distributed throughout various kinds of communities.

Solid Center: Where they live

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013..

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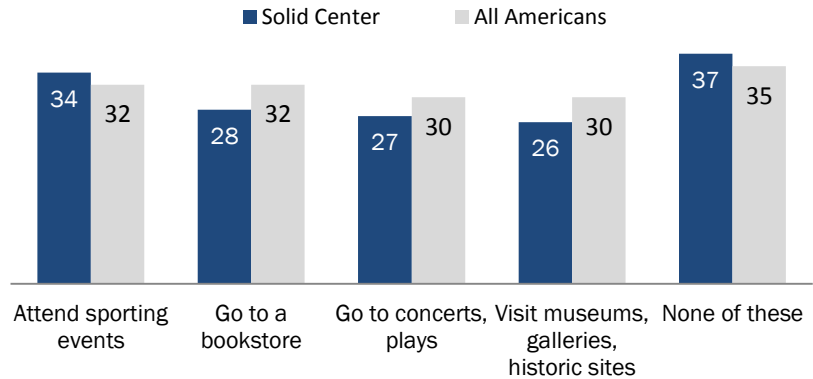
Half of those in the Solid Center have lived in their communities for longer than 10 years, and they are generally happy with their communities: 84% rate them as “good” or “excellent.” At the same time, they are a bit less likely than Print Traditionalists to say they feel that people like them can have a big impact in making their community a better place to live (28% versus 34%). They are also less likely than Print Traditionalists to say they know all their neighbors (27% versus 35%).

Politically, the Solid Center mirrors the partisanship and ideological distribution in the country: 23% are Republican; 32% are Democrats; 36% are independents. Some 37% of Solid Center members say they are conservative, 35% say they are moderate, and 21% say they are liberals.

In community engagement measures, those in the Solid Center are not quite as likely to be regularly engaged in certain activities as those in the high engagement groups, but they are relatively active: 34% attend sporting events regularly, 28% regularly visit bookstores, 27% go to concerts, plays, or dance performances (significantly higher proportions than among Print Traditionalists), and 26% say they frequent museums or art galleries.

Solid Center members' community activities

% of Americans 16 and older in each group who do each activity regularly



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Technology and information habits

The Solid Center group's technology-adoption profile is similar to that of the general population.

Technology profile of Solid Center members

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who use various technologies

	Solid Center	All Americans
Internet use and online activities		
Use the internet at least occasionally	87	86
Access the internet on cell phone, tablet or other mobile device	69	68
Broadband at home	72	71
Use the internet every day or almost every day (among internet users)	82	82
Use social networking site (among internet users)	72	74
Use Twitter (among internet users)	18	20
Mobile devices and e-readers		
Have a cell phone (total, including smartphones)	91	91
Have a smartphone	57	55
Have a tablet computer	35	35
Have an e-reader like a Kindle or Nook	22	24

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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They differ somewhat from Print Traditionalists because they are more likely to have a smartphone (57% versus 47%), more likely to have a tablet computer (35% versus 29%), and more likely to use a mobile device to connect to the internet (69% versus 63%).

Defining information traits

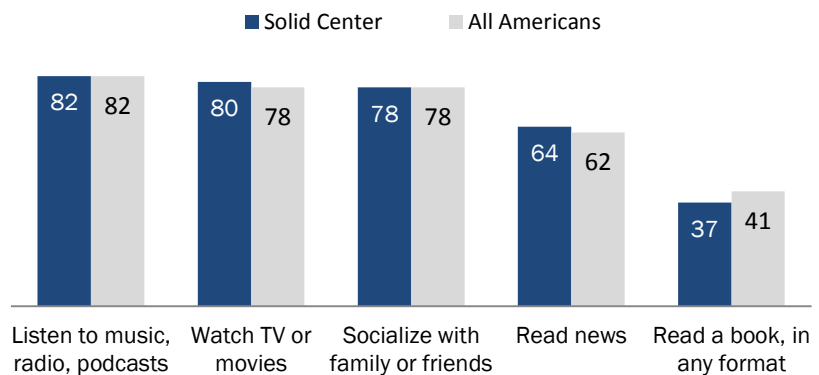
Those in the Solid Center have information practices and attitudes that do not vary much from the overall population, or even from their medium engagement counterparts among the Print Traditionalists. They enjoy learning new things generally feel self-sufficient in getting some of the information they need, though they also say they would be more likely than not to ask for help doing more complicated information activities such as applying for government services or benefits, starting a business, and filing their taxes.

They listen to music, watch television, read newspapers and read books at frequencies very close to the U.S. population as a whole. Some 57% of them say they enjoy keeping up with the news “a lot,” more than most other groups.

As a group, in the past 12 months, they have read an average of 11 books and a median of five books (half of them have read more than five and half of them have read less than five). Some 28% of them regularly go to bookstores, and 56% say they tend to purchase books rather than borrowing them.

Solid Center information habits

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who do each activity on a daily basis



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Solid Center views about learning new information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say each of the following statements “describes me very well”

	Solid Center	All Americans
I like to learn new things.	68	69
I like hunting for facts and information that are hard to find.	27	29
I get frustrated when I can’t find information I need right away.	27	24
I prefer to get information in audio and video format than reading text.	23	20

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Ease of finding information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say it would be either “easy” or “very easy” to find each type of information

	Solid Center	All Americans
News about politics and current events	90	88
Information about what’s happening in your community	86	85
Reliable health information	81	79
Information about career opportunities, job training, or educational programs	80	77
Information about government benefits and programs	70	67

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Ease of completing tasks

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they would be comfortable completing the following tasks on their own, without assistance

	Solid Center	All Americans
Use social media like Facebook or Twitter to connect with friends or family	66	67
Learn how to use a new device like a tablet computer or smartphone	50	52
Apply for government services or benefits	44	43
File your taxes	32	33

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Relationship to public libraries

One of the most striking differences between the high engagement groups and the medium engagement groups is the degree to which they have basic connections to libraries. As such, those in the Solid Center are less likely than those in the high engagement groups to have library cards or to have visited the library or a library website in the past 12 months.

Notably, 32% of Solid Center members say their library use has gone down in the past five years. At the same time, 98% report the library is easy for them to get to, and the vast majority live within five miles of a branch. Among those who have visited a library at some point, 94% report it is easy to find what they want when they do visit. They also feel pretty familiar with the services and programs their libraries offer.

Those in the Solid Center are more likely than Print Traditionalists to agree that people do not need libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own (67% agree with that versus 47% of Print Traditionalists).

Public library use and experiences

Here are some of the key benchmarks of how members of the Solid Center connect with libraries:

- 58% have a library card.
- 43% have visited the library in the last 12 months; 44% of those recent visitors go to the library at least once a month, and 55% go less frequently.
- Only 5% used a library website in the past 12 months.
- They are more likely than some other groups to say their library use is decreasing (32%).

This more moderate engagement with libraries compared with higher engagement groups also carries over to the lives of their children: Some 64% of Solid Center parents say their children have used a library in the past 12 months, compared with 70% of all parents in the United States.

Public library attitudes

Like the overall population, those in the Solid Center express appreciation for libraries and their role in the community across a range of measures. They generally know a fair amount about their local public library, and tend to rate libraries highly overall.

Views about public libraries in the community

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they “strongly agree” with each of the following statements

	Solid Center	All Americans
Public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading.	77	77
Having a public library improves the quality of life in a community.	67	69
Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.	73	72
Public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.	47	48

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Views about public libraries and technologies

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they “strongly agree” with each of the following statements

	Solid Center	All Americans
People do NOT need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own.	27	22
Public libraries have NOT done a good job keeping up with new technologies.	10	11

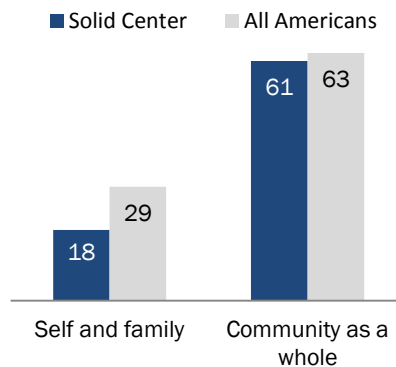
Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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However, though they think that libraries are very important to their communities—67% say that libraries improve the quality of life in a community, and 61% say that their library’s closing would have a major impact on their community as a whole—they tend to value libraries more for their neighbors’ sakes than their own. They are less likely to say the loss of the local library would have a major impact on them personally, and are less likely to rely on different library services.

Solid Center’s views on impact of the local public library closing

% of Americans ages 16+ who say the closing of their local public library would have a “major” impact on...



Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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The importance of individual public library services

Among Americans ages 16 and older who have ever used a public library or have a family member who uses a library, the % who say each of these services is “very important” to them and their family

	Solid Center	All Americans
Access to free books and media	47	54
Having a quiet and safe place to spend time, read or study	46	51
Resources to do research for school or work	42	47
Getting help from a librarian finding information	42	44
Programs or events for children or teens	40	45
Using the library’s internet, computers or printers	30	33
Help applying for government programs, permits or licenses	29	29
Help finding or applying for a job	28	30
Programs or events for adults	25	28

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Print Traditionalists

Overview

Print Traditionalists represent a modest, specific slice of the U.S. population (about 9% of Americans ages 16 and older.) Though they value libraries, both personally and for their communities, they don't always have a lot of personal interaction with their local library: Among recent library visitors, only 5% say they visit at least once a week, and most visit either monthly (47%) or less often (48%). Though their library habits are generally similar to those of the Solid Center, Print Traditionalists are much more likely to live in rural areas, and the vast majority say the nearest public library is at least five miles away.

However, they are just as likely as the general population to say their household relies on various individual library services. We have called them Print Traditionalists because they are one of the higher-ranking groups when it comes to valuing the traditional services libraries perform. They value libraries as an important resource—both for themselves and for their communities—even though libraries aren't necessarily a part of their daily lives.

Unlike their medium engagement counterparts in the Solid Center, Print Traditionalists differ demographically from the general population in several ways. They are more likely to be women, for instance, and are more likely to be white. They are also somewhat more likely to live in lower income households, and are less likely to have graduated college—about half of adults in this groups have at most a high school education.

Finally, Print Traditionalists tend to have lower levels of technology use than some other groups, though most use the internet, own cell phones, and use social networking sites. The overall contours of their reading habits are similar to those of the general population, and they are generally comfortable finding various types of information.

Jump to:

- [Who they are: Demographics and other traits](#)
- [Technology and information habits](#)
- [Relationship to public libraries](#)

Who they are

Demographics

Print Traditionalists include a higher proportion of women (57%) compared with the U.S. population as a whole. They are less likely to have graduated college, as about half (51%) of adults

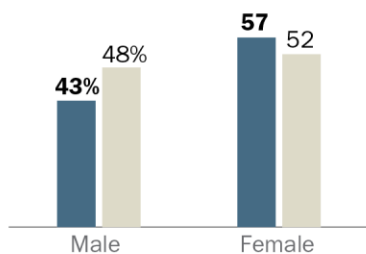
in this groups have at most a high school education. They are also somewhat more likely to live in lower income households.

Print Traditionalists: A demographic portrait

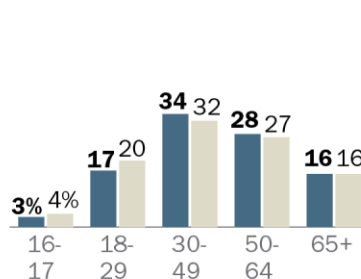
% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group

■ PRINT TRADITIONALISTS ■ ALL AMERICANS

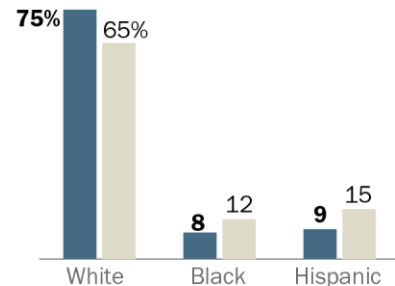
Gender



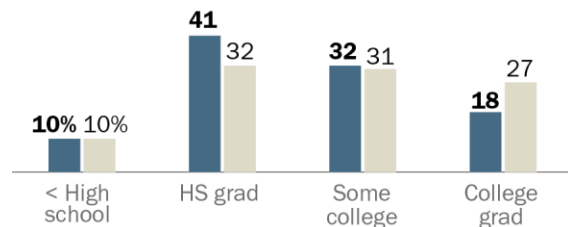
Age



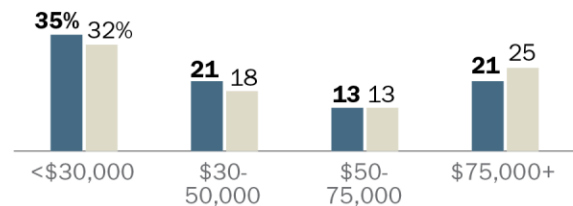
Race/Ethnicity



Education ADULTS 18+



Household Income ADULTS 18+



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Demographically, one of the largest differences between Print Traditionalists and the general U.S. population is that they are more likely to be white: 75% of Print Traditionalists are white, a higher proportion than almost any other group.

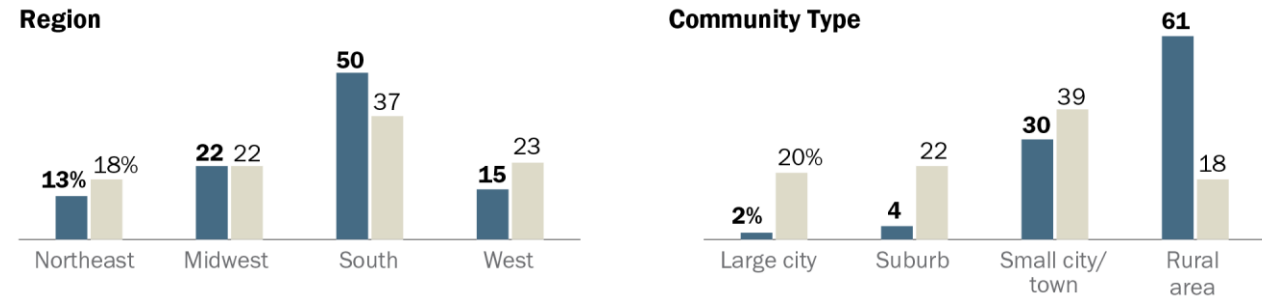
Other lifestyle notes

About half (50%) of Print Traditionalists live in the south, and 61% say they would describe the place where they live as a rural area; just 2% say they live in a large city, compared with 20% of Americans as a whole.

Print Traditionalists: Where they live

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group

■ PRINT TRADITIONALISTS ■ ALL AMERICANS



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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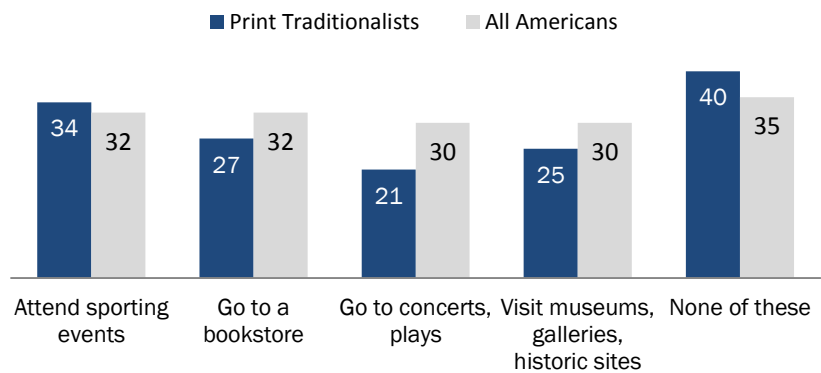
Like those in the Solid Center, Print Traditionalists are more likely to have lived in their neighborhood longer than the two high engagement groups. They are especially likely to say they know the names of all or most of their neighbors, and tend to have positive feelings about where they live. Print Traditionalists are also quite social: 81% say they socialize with friends or family every day or almost every day.

Politically, Print Traditionalists skew Republican (27%), and are more likely to identify as conservative (44%) than any other group.

Finally, Print Traditionalists are fairly typical in their activity levels in their communities. About a third (34%) of Print Traditionalists say they have attended a sporting event in the past year, similar to other high or medium engagement groups.

Print Traditionalists' community activities

% of Americans 16 and older in each group who do each activity regularly



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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However, they are often less likely to visit bookstores, attend concerts, or visit museums than many other groups.

Technology and information habits

Print Traditionalists have fairly typical rates of technology use, but they are somewhat less intense users of the internet and social media services than many other groups.

Technology use

Print Traditionalists as a group have typical rates of internet use (87% go online, similar to the general U.S. population). However, those that do go online log on somewhat less often than other internet users: 74% of online Print Traditionalists say they use the internet every day, versus 82% of all internet users. Print Traditionalists are also less likely than some other groups to have internet access at home (85%).

Print Traditionalists are not averse to e-book reading devices: They are just as likely to own e-readers as Americans as a whole (24% own an e-reader like a Kindle or Nook), but just 29% own tablets (compared with 35% of Americans ages 16 and older).

Print Traditionalists' technology profile

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who use various technologies

	Print Traditionalists	All Americans
Internet use and online activities		
Use the internet at least occasionally	87	86
Access the internet on cell phone, tablet or other mobile device	63	68
Broadband at home	67	71
Use the internet every day or almost every day (among internet users)	74	82
Use social networking site (among internet users)	69	74
Use Twitter (among internet users)	16	20
Mobile devices and e-readers		
Have a cell phone (total, including smartphones)	91	91
Have a smartphone	47	55
Have a tablet computer	29	35
Have an e-reader like a Kindle or Nook	24	24

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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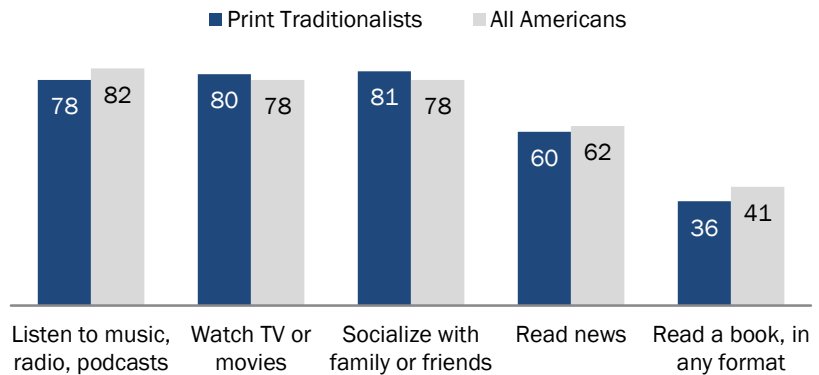
Defining information traits

Print Traditionalists' daily information habits are generally similar to those of the general population as a whole.

Like those in the Solid Center, Print Traditionalists are less likely to say they read books daily (36%) than high engagement groups. Print Traditionalists read an average of 13 books in the past year, and a median of 5.⁶ They are slightly less likely to go to bookstores regularly, though are just as likely to purchase (50%) or borrow (37%) most of the books they read as the national population.

Print Traditionalists' information habits

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who do each activity on a daily basis



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Print Traditionalists' views and expectations surrounding information are similar to those of the U.S. population as a whole, as shown in the charts below.

Print Traditionalists' views about learning new information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say each of the following statements "describes me very well"

	Print Traditionalists	All Americans
I like to learn new things.	68	69
I like hunting for facts and information that are hard to find.	25	29
I get frustrated when I can't find information I need right away.	24	24
I prefer to get information in audio and video format than reading text.	21	20

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⁶ NOTE: uses figures for ALL Americans (including non-book readers).

Ease of finding information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say it would be either “easy” or “very easy” to find each type of information

	Print Traditionalists	All Americans
News about politics and current events	88	88
Information about what’s happening in your community	88	85
Reliable health information	79	79
Information about career opportunities, job training, or educational programs	78	77
Information about government benefits and programs	66	67

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Ease of completing tasks

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they would be comfortable completing the following tasks on their own, without assistance

	Print Traditionalists	All Americans
Use social media like Facebook or Twitter to connect with friends or family	67	67
Learn how to use a new device like a tablet computer or smartphone	48	52
Apply for government services or benefits	41	43
File your taxes	32	33

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Relationship to public libraries

Public library use and experiences

Like those in the Solid Center, Print Traditionalists’ library habits generally do not differ too much from the general population:

- 55% of Print Traditionalists have library cards.
- Most Print Traditionalists say that their library use has stayed about the same over the past five years, and 23% say their library use has decreased in that time. Another 9% say their library use has increased (somewhat lower than the national rate for all recent library users).
- 48% of Print Traditionalists say they have visited a library in person in the past year.
- Among parents of minors, 61% say their children have visited a library in the past year, somewhat lower than the rate for the general population (70%).

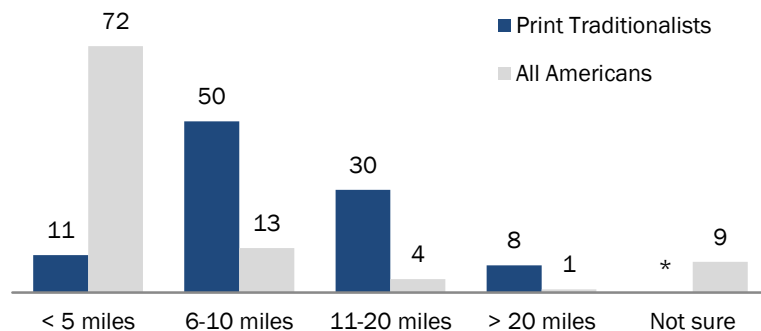
Though Print Traditionalists are less likely to have ever used a library website (39%) than higher engagement groups, one in five (20%) have used one in the past year, compared with just 5% of those in the Solid Center. They visit library websites monthly at most—47% of website visitors do this—with another 48% visiting less often. Most members of this group say it would be easy to use a library website if they wanted to, with 42% saying it would be “very easy.”

Like those in the Solid Center, Print Traditionalists’ in-person library visits are relatively infrequent: Among recent library visitors, only 5% say they visit at least once a week, and most visit either monthly (47%) or less frequently (48%). However, Print Traditionalists tend to live farther from public libraries, with just 11% reporting they live within 5 miles of the nearest library. Similarly, though 62% of all Americans ages 16 and older say it would be “very easy” to visit a public library in person, this is true for only 49% of Print Traditionalists.

Though they tend to live farther away from their libraries, Print Traditionalists’ familiarity with what their libraries is in line with the national benchmark: They are about as likely to know all or most of the services their library offers (21%) and to say it’s usually easy or very easy to find what they’re looking for at the library (93%). They have also had very positive experiences at public libraries:

Most Print Traditionalists say the nearest public library is at least five miles away

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group



Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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- Like other high and medium engagement groups, almost all those who have visited a library say that libraries are welcoming places (97%).
- 70% describe their library as a nice, pleasant place to be.
- Just 7% say they have ever had a negative experience using a public library.

Public library attitudes

Overall, Print Traditionalists have more positive views of public libraries than those in the Solid Center, and most strongly think that libraries are important to their communities in many ways. Asked about the impact of newer technologies on libraries' roles, Print Traditionalists are less likely to think that people do not need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own.

Views about public libraries in the community

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they "strongly agree" with each of the following statements

	Print Traditionalists	All Americans
Public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading.	80	77
Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.	75	72
Having a public library improves the quality of life in a community.	73	69
Public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.	53	48

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Views about public libraries and technologies

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they "strongly agree" with each of the following statements

	Print Traditionalists	All Americans
People do NOT need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own.	17	22
Public libraries have NOT done a good job keeping up with new technologies.	10	11

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Along these lines, they are more likely than the general population to say it would have a major impact on their community as a whole—69% say this. And 25% say that their local public library's closing would have a major impact on them and their families, more than those in the Solid Center (18%).

One of the more interesting aspects of their relationship to libraries is that despite their fairly low rates of personal library use, Print Traditionalists are generally as likely as other respondents—and often more likely than Solid Center members—to say that various library services are very important to them and their families, as shown in the following chart.

The importance of individual public library services

Among Americans ages 16 and older who have ever used a public library or have a family member who uses a library, the % who say each of these services is “very important” to them and their family

	Print Traditionalists	All Americans
Having a quiet and safe place to spend time, read or study	54	51
Access to free books and media	50	54
Resources to do research for school or work	48	47
Programs or events for children or teens	45	45
Getting help from a librarian finding information	43	44
Using the library’s internet, computers or printers	34	33
Help finding or applying for a job	32	30
Help applying for government programs, permits or licenses	28	29
Programs or events for adults	27	28

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Low Engagement

The three low engagement groups in our typology—Not For Me, Young and Restless, and Rooted and Roadblocked—fall at the farthest end of the spectrum of library users. Unlike members of the medium engagement groups, who generally report being moderately active in their library habits, only about a third of the low engagement users have used a public library in any form in the past year. However, those in the low engagement groups *have* used a library at some point in their lives, which sets them apart from the non-engagement groups (who have no personal library experience).

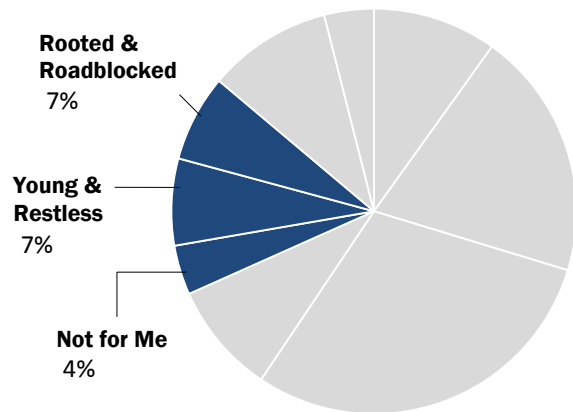
These three groups are relatively small, together accounting for less than 20% of the U.S. population. They are also some of the most interesting groups in the typology because they are relatively distinct in their habits and views.

Members of these three groups generally share a lack of personal engagement with their local libraries, as well as a general familiarity with library services. A majority of all three groups say they know “not much” or “nothing at all” about the services at their local public library. However, the context of their low library engagement varies from group to group.

For instance, the **Not For Me** group is set apart by its negative views of public libraries. In contrast to the other two low engagement groups, they don’t view libraries as particularly important to their communities. In fact, only 56% of the Not For Me group say their library’s closing would have any impact on their community, compared with 85% of the other two low engagement groups and 90% of the general population. This group includes a somewhat higher proportion of men, and its respondents are often older (as a group, the median age is 46). Members of this group also tend to have lower levels of education, with just 18% having graduated college.

Low engagement groups

The three low engagement groups (Not For Me, Young and Restless, and Rooted and Roadblocked) make up 17% of the general U.S. population (ages 16 and older)

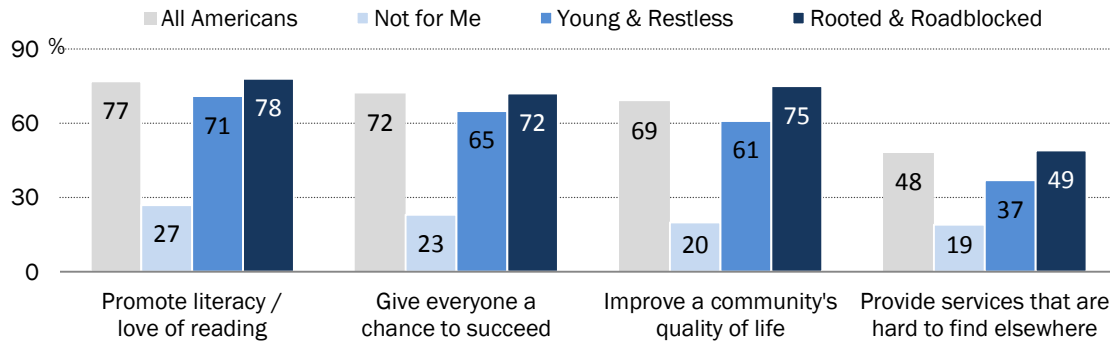


Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Low engagement groups vary in their views of public libraries

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who “strongly agree” that public libraries...



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

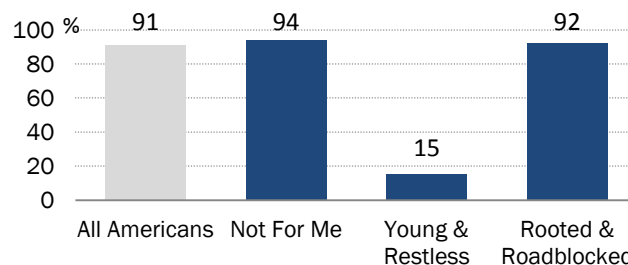
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As the name of the second low engagement group implies, the **Young and Restless** tend to be both younger and more transient: Almost three-quarters (73%) are under the age of 50 (their median age is 33), and most say they have lived in their current neighborhood five years or fewer. This might help account for the fact that fewer than one in six (15%) even know where the closest public library is located—a lower proportion than any other group, and the most striking aspect of their current relationship with libraries. However, all have used a library at some point in their lives, and they tend to have positive views of libraries in general; at the moment, however, libraries aren't a part of their daily lives.

The final low engagement group, **Rooted and Roadblocked**, stands apart from the others on many measures. Their name comes from the fact that they tend to be longtime residents of their neighborhoods, but in many ways are disengaged from their communities. This is likely related to their age (most are over the age of 50) and various circumstances in their lives: 35% are retired, 27%

Few “Young and Restless” know where the closest public library is to where they currently live

% of Americans ages 16+ in each group



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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are living with a disability, and 34% say that they or a loved one had a major illness within the past year. Many say they would need help using newer technologies.

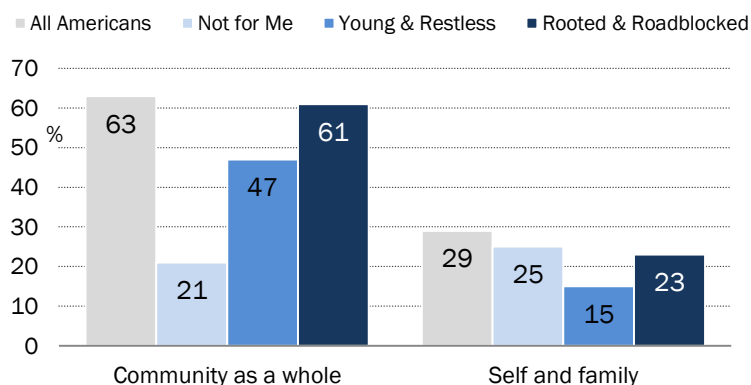
Like the other two low engagement groups, Rooted and Roadblocked respondents tend to have low levels of personal library use—about a third (33%) visited the library in the last 12 months, and only 6% used a library website in that time. However, they are far *more* likely than the other two low engagement groups to say their library's closing would majorly impact themselves and their families, as well as on their communities as a whole.

Though many in these low engagement groups are in life stages where they won't necessarily be pulled into the library by certain life stage-related factors (such as having minor children, having research needs related to college, or exploring training for work), this is not to say that they would have no use for libraries. On the contrary, groups such as Not For Me and Rooted and Roadblocked are less comfortable with newer technologies, tend to have lower levels of education and household income, and are generally more likely to say they would need help finding various types of information; thus while they seem to have many needs that could be met by libraries, they are often less likely to turn to the library for various reasons, such as perceived lack of relevance due to lack of familiarity, or a lack of personal mobility.

Overall, each of the low engagement groups have unique circumstances for their lack of library use, which may point to distinct barriers to engagement. For instance, few Young and Restless respondents are even aware of where their local library is located, but they report having an easier time finding what they're looking for when they do visit. Meanwhile, the Not For Me respondents are more likely to have difficulty visiting their library, and are often less comfortable navigating libraries in person or online.

Low engagement groups differ in their perceptions of the impact of their local public library's closing

% who say it would have a major impact on their . . .



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Not For Me

Overview

Though accounting for only 4% of the U.S. population, the Not For Me group is striking in its negative perceptions of public libraries, even in comparison with the other two low engagement groups. Unlike the other two low engagement groups, they generally do not view libraries as an important resource for their communities:

- 70% say that people do not need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own, compared with 52% of all respondents.
- Only 56% say their library's closing would have any impact on their community, compared with 85% of the other two low engagement groups and 90% of the general population.
- Just 38% say that having a public library improves the quality of life in a community, compared with 94% of the U.S. population as a whole.

Perhaps related to their lack of interest in libraries, members of the Not for Me group know less about what services are offered, have more difficulty finding things, and are more likely to have had a negative experience at their local public library:

- 39% say it would be “very easy” to visit a public library in person, compared with a majority 62% of the general population.
- 32% say they know nothing at all about the services at their local public library.
- 26% say it would be “very easy” to use a public library website, compared with 47% of the general population.
- 21% have had a negative experience at a library, compared with 9% of all those who have ever used a public library.

Members of this group do not appear to reject libraries because they have lots of technology in their lives and use it for information acquisition, rather than libraries. On the contrary, they tend to have lower rates of technology adoption, particularly internet use, and are less confident navigating several types of information. An important clue to their state of mind about the importance of information is that only 57% of the Not For Me group say that people like them can have an impact on making their community a better place—the second lowest ranking group on that question.

The Not for Me group includes a higher proportion of men, with a slightly older median age of around 46. Members of this group also tend to have lower levels of education than the general population, with fewer than one in five (18%) having graduated college. They are much more likely

to have lived in their neighborhood for longer periods, though less active in certain activities in their communities.

Jump to:

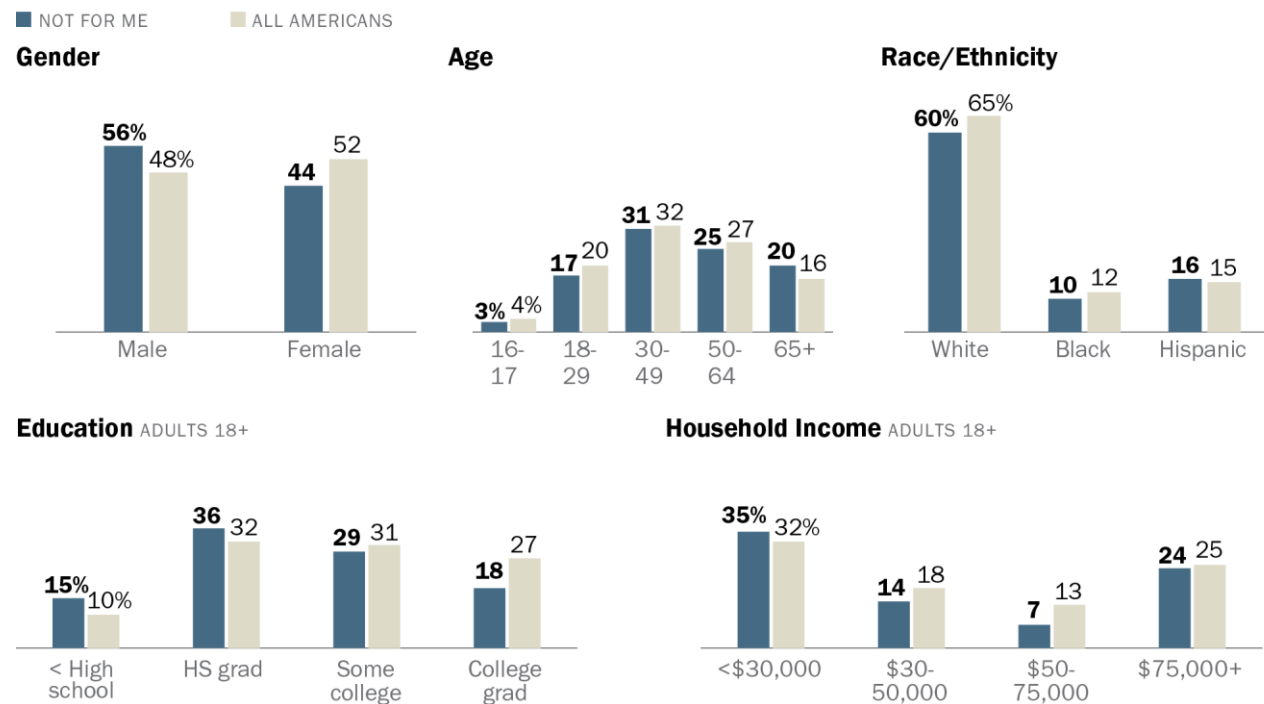
- [Who they are: Demographics and other traits](#)
- [Technology and information habits](#)
- [Relationship to public libraries](#)

Who they are

Demographics

Not For Me: A demographic portrait

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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The Not For Me group is often very similar in some demographics to the general population, with some exceptions:

- **Gender:** Unlike the general population, this group includes a higher proportion of men: 56% are men, compared with 48% of all Americans in our sample.
- **Education:** Members of this group tend to have lower levels of education, with just 18% having graduated college.
- **Age:** The Not For Me tend to be slightly older, with a median age of around 46.

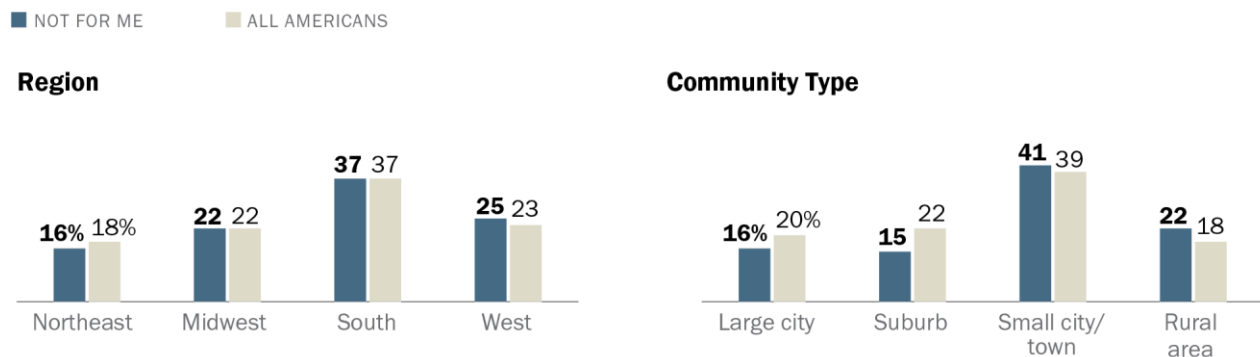
Members of this group are also somewhat less likely to be married (41%), and are also a little less likely to be parents (26%) than the general population. They are also a little less likely to be employed full-time (39%), and more likely to be retired (23%).

Other lifestyle notes

In terms of where they live, those in the Not For Me group are in line with the U.S. population as a whole; they can be found in every U.S. region and in every community type, though they are slightly less likely than the general population to live in urban or suburban areas.

Not For Me: Where they live

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Like their fellow low engagement group Rooted and Roadblocked, Not For Me respondents are tend to have lived in their neighborhood for longer periods than other groups: 34% have lived in their current neighborhood for more than 20 years (compared with the national benchmark of 26%), and another 22% have lived there for 11-20 years. Yet they do not feel as positively about their community as some other groups, or feel as empowered to effect change:

- Though most still describe it as an “excellent” or “good” place to live, Not For Me respondents are more likely than many other groups to describe their community as “fair” or “poor”.
- Only 57% think people like them can have even a moderate impact on their community, and a third (34%) think they can only have a small impact or none or at all.

Members of the Not For Me group are less engaged in their communities in terms of activities such as attending sporting events, museums, or concerts. Notably, 45% do not participate in any of these activities regularly at all.

In terms of politics, those in the Not For Me group skews conservative, but also disengaged. They identify as Democrat at about half the national rate (15%, compared with a national benchmark of 31%), but are not necessarily more likely to identify as Republican; rather, they are more likely to not have political identification overall (12%).

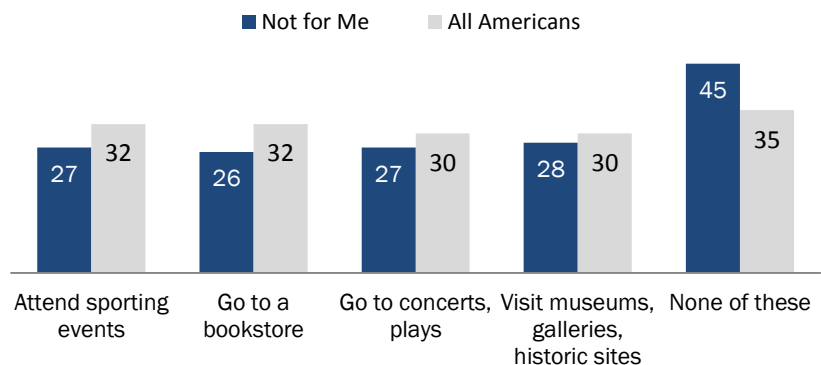
Technology and information habits

Members of the Not For Me group have lower levels of technology use in some areas, and are also less likely to read or consume other forms of media regularly. They read an average of 10 books in the past 12 months (a median of 3), significantly fewer than higher engagement groups such as Library Lovers, Information Omnivores, and Print Traditionalists—though these habits are similar to other low engagement groups.

The Not for Me group does not resist library use because they feel self-sufficient. Rather, Not For Me respondents are more likely to say they would need assistance finding various types of information, such as reliable health information.

Not For Me members' community activities

% of Americans 16 and older in each group who do each activity regularly



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Technology use

Those in the Not For Me group have somewhat lower rates of technology use than Americans as a whole, particularly internet adoption. Most do go online, but they log on somewhat less often than other internet users—though they are generally as likely as other internet users to use social networking sites or Twitter.

The Not for Me group's technology profile

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who use various technologies

	Not For Me	All Americans
Internet use and online activities		
Use the internet at least occasionally	78	86
Access the internet on cell phone, tablet or other mobile device	62	68
Broadband at home	66	71
Use the internet every day or almost every day (among internet users)	78	82
Use social networking site (among internet users)	75	74
Use Twitter (among internet users)	17	20
Mobile devices and e-readers		
Have a cell phone (total, including smartphones)	89	91
Have a smartphone	52	55
Have a tablet computer	31	35
Have an e-reader like a Kindle or Nook	20	24

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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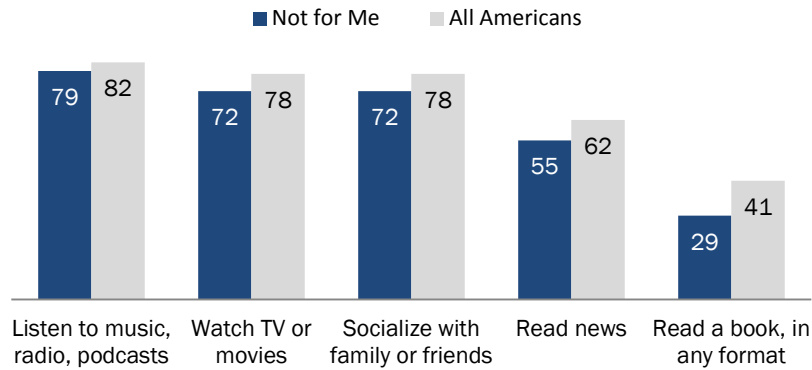
Defining information traits

Looking closer at their information habits, we find that Not For Me members are much less likely to report reading a book daily than most other groups, though most say they read the news.

A lack of engagement with reading and books is one of the most striking features of Not For Me respondents' information habits, and may be a contributing factor to their lower levels of engagement with libraries. For instance, they are less likely to say that they read books on a daily basis, and read an average of 10 books in the past 12 months (a median of 3), significantly fewer than higher engagement groups such as Library Lovers, Information Omnivores, and Print Traditionalists—though these habits are similar to other low engagement groups.

Not For Me information habits

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who do each activity on a daily basis



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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In addition:

- 26% say they go to bookstores regularly, compared with 32% of the general population.
- About half say they purchase most books (50%), in line with the national benchmark, though the Not For Me are slightly less likely to borrow (30%) them. Another 8% say they are just as likely to buy their books as to borrow them.
- They are also more likely than the general population to prefer information in audio or visual format to reading text (54%, compared with 49% of all Americans).

Asked a series of questions about their information attitudes and abilities, they are more likely to say it would be difficult to find various types of information, such as reliable health information.

Not for Me views about learning new information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say each of the following statements “describes me very well”

	Not For Me	All Americans
I like to learn new things.	58	69
I like hunting for facts and information that are hard to find.	28	29
I get frustrated when I can’t find information I need right away.	25	24
I prefer to get information in audio and video format than reading text.	25	20

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Ease of finding information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say it would be either “easy” or “very easy” to find each type of information

	Not For Me	All Americans
News about politics and current events	75	88
Information about what’s happening in your community	73	85
Reliable health information	69	79
Information about career opportunities, job training, or educational programs	65	77
Information about government benefits and programs	56	67

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Ease of completing tasks

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they would be comfortable completing the following tasks on their own, without assistance

	Not For Me	All Americans
Use social media like Facebook or Twitter to connect with friends or family	59	67
Learn how to use a new device like a tablet computer or smartphone	50	52
Apply for government services or benefits	39	43
File your taxes	29	33

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Relationship to public libraries

Public library use and experiences

The Not For Me group’s recent library usage is consistent with that of the other low engagement groups. They are also particularly less likely to have recently used a library website:

- 40% have library cards.
- 31% have visited a library in person in the past year.
- 12% say they have used a library website in the past year.
- 9% say their library use has increased in the past five years; 53% say their library use has stayed about the same, and another 29% say their library use has decreased in that time.

Those in the Not For Me group are much less likely than higher engagement groups to say they would have no problems visiting a library or used a library website if they wanted to: Just 39% say it would be “very easy” to visit a public library in person (compared with the national benchmark of 62%), and 26% say it would be “very easy” to use a public library website (compared with the national benchmark of 47%.) In addition:

Not for Me respondents are somewhat less likely to say they live within five miles of the nearest library (62%, versus 72% of the general population).

- They are also less likely to say it’s usually easy or very easy for them to find what they’re looking for at the library: 70% say this, compared with 91% of all those who have ever visited a public library in person.
- Altogether, over half say they know “not much” (25%) or “nothing at all” (32%) about the services at their local public library.

Another clue to their low levels of engagement might be that Not For Me respondents have more negative experiences with the libraries they have come into contact with:

- They are the group most likely to say that they have had a negative experience using a public library, at more than twice the national rate: 21% have had a negative experience, compared with 9% of all those who have ever used a public library.
- Among the groups with any personal library experiences, they are the group least likely to say that public libraries are welcoming and friendly places: Just 70% say that, while 16% say libraries are *not* welcoming.
- Just over half (52%) say their library is a nice, pleasant place to be, lower than the 67% of the general population who say this. Another 20% say it’s an okay space (but needs improvements), and 5% say it needs a lot of improvement; another 18% say they could not give an opinion because they have never been inside their local public library.

Public library attitudes

In general, the Not For Me have much more negative opinions about public libraries than any other group. Not only do they not have a personal relationship with public libraries, they do not

view libraries as useful to their communities or even relevant in the digital age. For instance, 70% say that people do not need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own; not even half (48%) agree overall that libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading. And just 38% agree that having a public library improves the quality of life in a community, compared with 94% of all Americans.

In addition, many Not For Me members also do not have the familiarity with libraries to give an opinion one way or another. In one example, 31% did not know whether or not libraries do a good job keeping up with new technologies.

Views about public libraries in the community

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they “strongly agree” with each of the following statements

	Not For Me	All Americans
Public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading.	27	77
Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.	23	72
Having a public library improves the quality of life in a community.	20	69
Public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.	19	48

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Views about public libraries and technologies

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they “strongly agree” with each of the following statements

	Not For Me	All Americans
People do NOT need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own.	45	22
Public libraries have NOT done a good job keeping up with new technologies.	20	11

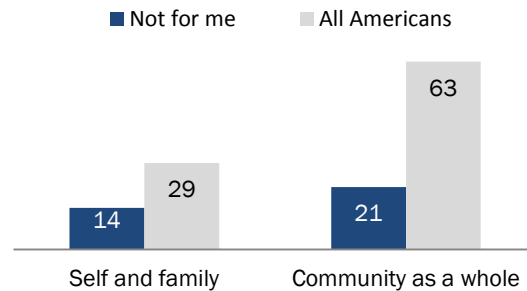
Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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These negative views are reflected further in their overall evaluation of the important of libraries, both to themselves and to their communities. This is illustrated most strikingly by the fact that only one in five (21%) of the Not For Me group say that their local public library's closing would have a major impact on their community, compared with 63% of the general population. Similarly, just 14% say it would have a "major impact" on them and their family, compared with the 29% of all Americans ages 16 and older who say it would have a major household impact.

Few Not for Me say local library's closing would have major impact on community

% of Americans ages 16+ who say the closing of their local public library would have a "major" impact on...



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Some respondents in this group do say that certain library services are very important to them and their family, but far fewer say this than almost any other group—including at least one of the non-user groups. And almost half (48%) say that *none* of these services are very important, a significantly higher rate than any other group.

The importance of individual public library services: Not For Me

Among Americans ages 16 and older who have ever used a public library or have a family member who uses a library, the % who say each of these services is "very important" to them and their family

	Not For Me	All Americans
Having a quiet and safe place to spend time, read or study	32	51
Programs or events for children or teens	27	45
Access to free books and media	26	54
Getting help from a librarian finding information	26	44
Resources to do research for school or work	25	47
Help finding or applying for a job	23	30
Help applying for government programs, permits or licenses	19	29
Using the library's internet, computers or printers	18	33
Programs or events for adults	14	28

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Young and Restless

Overview

On first glance, the Young and Restless group might seem to confirm certain narratives about young people's perceived lack of engagement with libraries. However, this group does not represent *all* young people—in fact, [young people in general do not have lower rates of library use than older adults](#), and high engagement groups tend to be younger than the less engaged. Instead, it is the case that this is a group of non-users that tends to be younger. However, Young and Restless group members do tend to have generally positive views of libraries, and some personal experiences with them; they simply are not using public libraries at their current point in life.

Similar to the other low engagement groups, only a third of the members of this group have a library card, and about as many have visited a library in the past year. Most are under the age of 50 (their median age is 33), and they are more urban than most other groups. They also haven't lived in their neighborhoods very long, which might help account for the fact that fewer than one in five even know where the closest public library is located—far fewer than members of any other group, and the defining feature of their current relationship with libraries. However, all have used a library at some point in their lives, and they tend to have positive views of libraries in general; at the moment, libraries just aren't on their radar.

Jump to:

- [Who they are: Demographics and other traits](#)
- [Technology and information habits](#)
- [Relationship to public libraries](#)

Who they are

Demographics

As their name implies, Young and Restless respondents are much more likely to be younger than most other groups. Most are under the age of 50, and their median age is 33. They stand out from the general population in other ways as well:

- **Gender:** They include a higher proportion of men compared with the general population, as 53% are men and 47% are women.
- **Race/ethnicity:** This group is also more diverse than most others, as just 56% of its members are white (compared with 65% of the general population).
- **Household income:** The distribution of their household income more or less reflects that of the general population, although it is a little more divided: 37% are in households

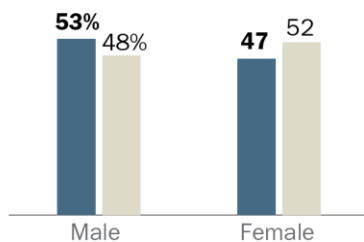
earning less than \$30,000 per year, but 26% live in households earning at least \$75,000 per year—fewer are in the intervening categories.

Young and Restless: A demographic portrait

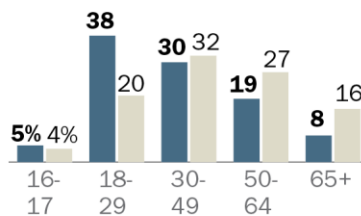
% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group

■ YOUNG & RESTLESS ■ ALL AMERICANS

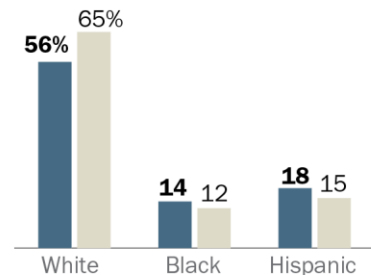
Gender



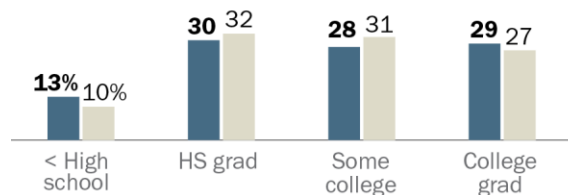
Age



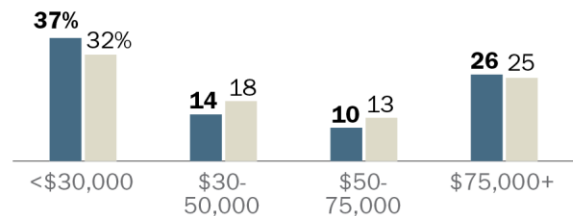
Race/Ethnicity



Education ADULTS 18+



Household Income ADULTS 18+



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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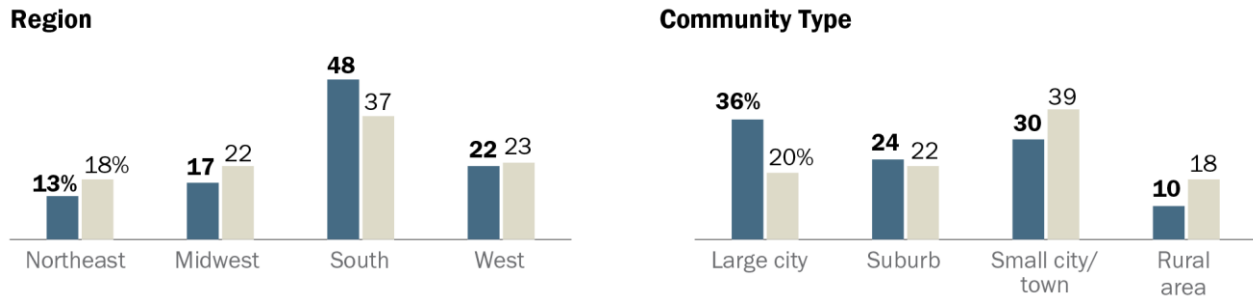
Other lifestyle notes

Some 36% of the members of this group say they live in large cities, a higher proportion than almost any other group—though many also live in suburbs or small towns. In terms of region, almost half (48%) live in the South, significantly more than almost any other group except for Print Traditionalists and those “Off the Grid”.

Young and Restless: Where they live

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group

■ YOUNG & RESTLESS ■ ALL AMERICANS



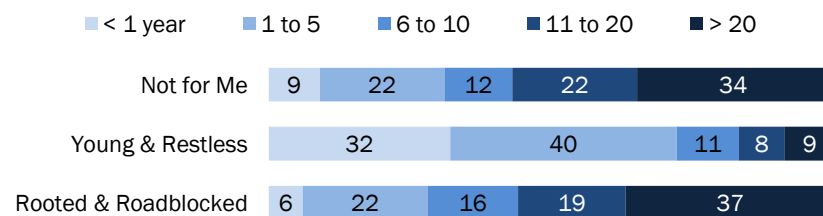
Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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As denoted by the second half of their name, they are more transient than other groups. A third have lived in their neighborhood less than a year, and 40% have lived there for one to five years. Perhaps related to their shorter tenure, few (12%) say they know the names of all their neighbors, and 44% say they don't know any—one of the highest rates in any group.

Most members of the Young & Restless have lived in their neighborhoods for five years or fewer

How long the following groups have lived in their neighborhoods



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Young and Restless respondents generally feel positively about their communities, and feel they have the power to effect change. They are also very similar to the overall population in their attendance of most of the activities we asked about.

Politically, they tend to lean a little more moderate or liberal, though their party identification is similar to that of the general population: 32% identify as Democrat, 22% identify as Republican, and 34% identify as independent.

Technology and information habits

The Young and Restless have high rates of technology use overall, particularly when it comes to mobile adoption. However, they do not differ too much from the general population in the broad outlines of their basic daily information and media habits. They like to learn, and are comfortable finding various types of information on their own.

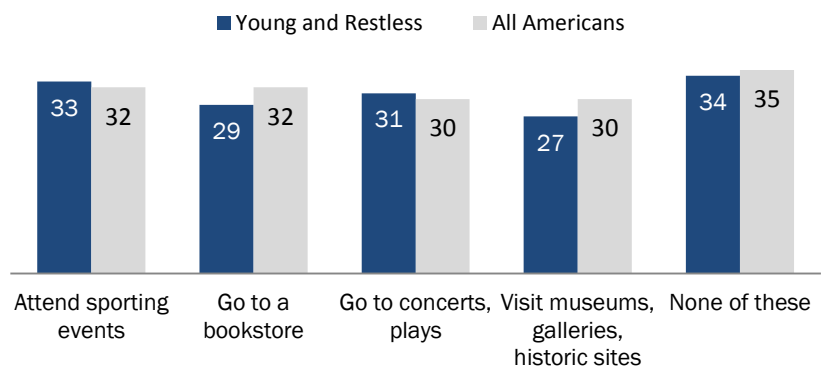
Their overall reading habits are fairly typical, and they read an average of 11 books in the year. At least six in ten (61%) say they purchase most of their books, one of the highest rates among any group. However, it seems they make more of their book purchases online, as they are *less* likely to visit bookstores in person than the general population.

Technology use

Members of the Young and Restless group are distinguished by their extremely high rates of mobile use: 82% access the internet on a cell phone, tablet, or other mobile device, and 68% own a smartphone specifically. They also have higher rates of social media usage compared with other internet users. However, this group is not necessarily more likely to score highly on all our measures of technology use. Their rates of tablet and e-reader ownership are similar to that of the general population (36% own a tablet, and 24% an e-reader), as are their overall internet and cell phone ownership rates.

Young and Restless members' community activities

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who do each activity regularly



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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The Young and Restless group's technology profile

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who use various technologies

	Young and Restless	All Americans
Internet use and online activities		
Use the internet at least occasionally	90	86
Access the internet on cell phone, tablet or other mobile device	82	68
Broadband at home	76	71
Use the internet every day or almost every day (among internet users)	82	82
Use social networking site (among internet users)	86	74
Use Twitter (among internet users)	27	20
Mobile devices and e-readers		
Have a cell phone (total, including smartphones)	93	91
Have a smartphone	68	55
Have a tablet computer	36	35
Have an e-reader like a Kindle or Nook	24	24

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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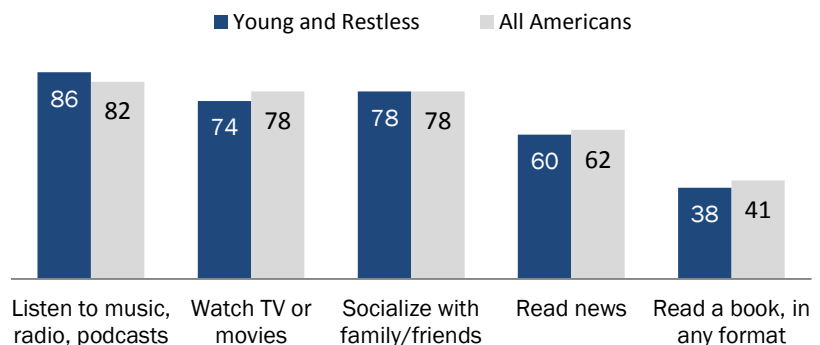
Defining information traits

In broad strokes, the Young and Restless do not differ too much from the general population in their basic daily information and media habits. They are a little more likely than the national benchmark to listen to music or the radio on a daily basis, and a little less likely to watch television or movies or read a book that often.

Their overall reading habits are also fairly typical: As a group, the Young and Restless read an average of 11 books in the past 12 months, and a median of 5. Some 16% did not read any books in the previous year, similar to the rate for all Americans. They are also more likely to buy their books: At

Young and Restless information habits

% of Americans 16 and older in each group who do each activity daily



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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least six in ten (61%) say they purchase most of their books instead of borrowing them, one of the highest rates of any group. However, like other low and medium engagement groups, they are somewhat *less* likely to visit bookstores in person than the general population.

Young and Restless views about learning new information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say each of the following statements “describes me very well”

	Young and Restless	All Americans
I like to learn new things.	69	69
I get frustrated when I can’t find information I need right away.	30	24
I like hunting for facts and information that are hard to find.	26	29
I prefer to get information in audio and video format than reading text.	22	20

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Ease of finding information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say it would be either “easy” or “very easy” to find each type of information

	Young and Restless	All Americans
News about politics and current events	88	88
Reliable health information	83	79
Information about what’s happening in your community	80	85
Information about career opportunities, job training, or educational programs	76	77
Information about government benefits and programs	62	67

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Ease of completing tasks

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they would be comfortable completing the following tasks on their own, without assistance

	Young and Restless	All Americans
Use social media like Facebook or Twitter to connect with friends or family	79	67
Learn how to use a new device like a tablet computer or smartphone	68	52
Apply for government services or benefits	38	43
File your taxes	33	33

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Looking closer at their information habits and attitudes, we find that they like to learn new things, and most (80%) say they like having so much information available these days—only 16% say they feel overloaded. They generally feel more confident than many other groups in being able to complete the tasks related to technology, though are a little more likely to need help with tasks such as applying for government services or benefits.

Relationship to public libraries

Public library use and experiences

The basic library habits of the Young and Restless are similar to those of the other two low engagement groups, though they are more likely to make use of library websites:

- 32% have a library card.
- 32% visited a library in person in the past year. Among these recent library visitors, hardly any go to the library every week; 34% go at least once a month, and 62% go less often.
- 25% used a library website in the past year. (About half—50%—have used a library website at some point in their lives.)
- 36% say their library use has increased in the past five years, compared with 25% of the general population.

They generally feel it would be easy to use the library, but are less likely to know much about what resources and services are offered:

- Just 11% know all or most of the services their library offers (compared with 23% of general population), and 32% say they know nothing at all.
- Among those who have ever visited a library in person, most say it would be easy to visit a public library, and only 22% say it would be “very easy.”

The biggest obstacle to their library use might simply be lack of awareness of local offerings:

85% do *not* know where their closest public library is, compared with 9% of general population. Among the 15% who do know where the nearest library is, most say it is within five miles.

Distance from nearest library

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say the nearest public library is . . .

	Young and Restless	All Americans
Less than 5 miles away	11	72
6-10 miles away	3	13
11-20 miles away	1	4
More than 20 miles away	0	1
Not sure where the nearest library is	85	9
Total % who know where the nearest library is	15	91

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Public library attitudes

Though most have not used a library recently, most Young and Restless respondents have positive views of public libraries and their roles in the community. For instance, 93% say libraries are welcoming places, and 99% overall agree that libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading. They are somewhat less likely to feel that libraries are as essential in other roles in their communities. For instance, just 37% strongly agree that public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere, compared with the national benchmark of 48%.

Views about public libraries in the community

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they “strongly agree” with each of the following statements

	Young and Restless	All Americans
Public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading.	71	77
Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.	65	72
Having a public library improves the quality of life in a community.	61	69
Public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.	37	48

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Views about public libraries and technologies

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they “strongly agree” with each of the following statements

	Young and Restless	All Americans
People do NOT need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own.	24	22
Public libraries have NOT done a good job keeping up with new technologies.	12	11

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Young and Restless respondents are somewhat more likely than all those who have ever visited a public library to be ambivalent about the individual libraries they have encountered: They are far less likely to say their local library is a nice, pleasant place to be (29% say this, compared with 67% of all those ages 16 and older). Another 13% say that it was an okay space but could use some improvement, but 51% volunteered that they could not say because they have never been inside their local library.

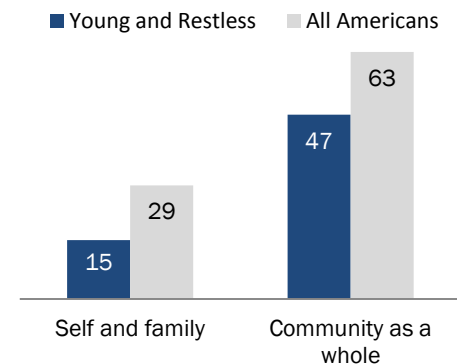
The Young and Restless differ from the other two low engagement groups in their moderate views towards the importance of libraries in the community. They are similar to Not For Me respondents

in that few say their local library's closing would have a major personal impact; more say that their library's closing would have a major impact on their community as a whole, but not at the levels of Rooted and Roadblocked respondents.

Members of this group are less likely to say that they and their family rely on various individual library services (38% say another member of their household uses the library), though they are more likely than Not For Me respondents to say so. One of the biggest differences is in the importance of libraries' free books and media: Only 44% say this resource is "very important," compared with 54% of all respondents with some library exposure. Finally, 35% say that *none* of these services are very important to them and their family.

Young & Restless views on impact of library's closing

% of Americans ages 16+ who say the closing of their local public library would have a "major" impact on...



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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The importance of individual public library services: Young & Restless

Among Americans ages 16 and older who have ever used a public library or have a family member who uses a library, the % who say each of these services is "very important" to them and their family

	Young and Restless	All Americans
Having a quiet and safe place to spend time, read or study	48	51
Access to free books and media	44	54
Resources to do research for school or work	42	47
Getting help from a librarian finding information	36	44
Programs or events for children or teens	35	45
Help finding or applying for a job	33	30
Help applying for government programs, permits or licenses	28	29
Using the library's internet, computers or printers	26	33
Programs or events for adults	21	28

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Rooted and Roadblocked

Overview

The final low engagement group, Rooted and Roadblocked, represents about 7% of the U.S. population. Their name derives from the fact that they are longtime residents of their neighborhoods, but many have challenging factors in their lives and are less active in certain community activities. They stand out in part due to their age (most are over the age of 50) and various circumstances in their lives: 35% are retired, 27% are living with a disability, and 34% experienced a major illness (either personally or that of a loved one) within the past year.

While they too have low levels of personal library use—33% visited the library in the last 12 months, and only 6% used a library website in that time— Rooted and Roadblocked members are far more likely than other low engagement groups to say their library’s closing would have a major impact on their families and on their communities. Thus, rather than representing a more negative view of libraries, as with the Not For Me group, Rooted and Roadblocked respondents’ low levels of library engagement seem to fit into a broader context of low engagement with certain types of information and similar community activities.

Jump to:

- [Who they are: Demographics and other traits](#)
- [Technology and information habits](#)
- [Relationship to public libraries](#)

Who they are

Demographics

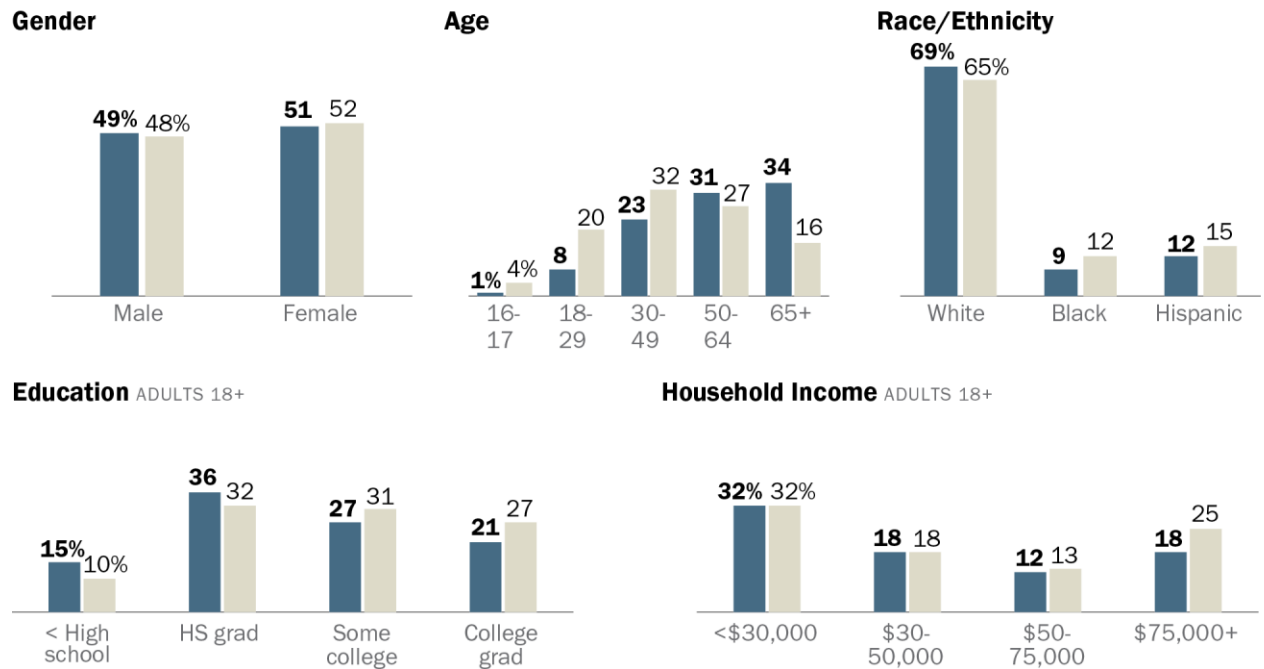
In terms of age, Rooted and Roadblocked respondents represent one of the oldest groups in the typology: Almost two-thirds (66%) are over the age of 50, and one in three (34%) is over the age of 65; the group’s median age is 58. They stand out in other ways as well:

- **Race/ethnicity:** This group has a somewhat higher proportion of whites (69%) compared with many other groups, and the U.S. population as a whole.
- **Socioeconomic status:** Members of this group are also more likely to have lower levels of education (51% of adults in this group did not attend college) and slightly lower household incomes than the general population.

Rooted and Roadblocked: A demographic portrait

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group

■ ROOTED & ROADBLOCKED ■ ALL AMERICANS



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

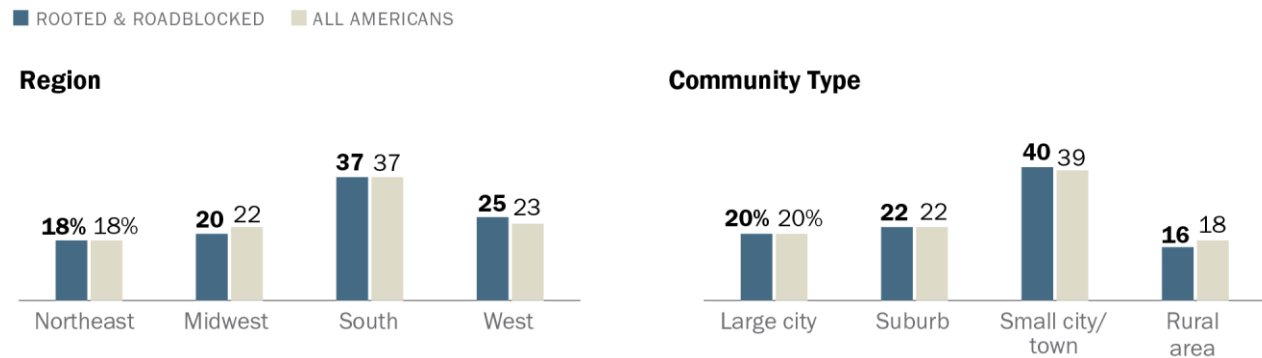
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Other lifestyle notes

Rooted and Roadblocked respondents can be found in every region, and in every community type. Some 20% live in big cities, 22% live in the suburbs, 40% live in a small city or town, and 16% live in a rural area.

Rooted and Roadblocked: Where they live

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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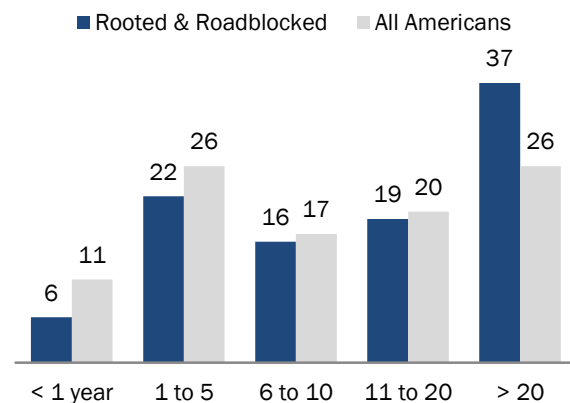
The first half of the “Rooted and Roadblocked” name stems from the fact that most have lived in their neighborhood for at least 11 years—including the 37% who have lived in their current neighborhood for more than 20 years. However, despite their longer tenure, they are not more likely to know their neighbors’ names than many groups who have lived in their neighborhoods for shorter periods—and 25% don’t know any of their neighbors’ names.

The second half of their name relates to the various roadblocks many of them face in their life circumstances. For instance, like the Not For Me group, they are less likely to feel that they can effect change in their communities: only 62% say they feel they can have at least a moderate impact on their community, and 33% say people they can only make a small impact or no impact at all. Other circumstances are more likely to affect their lives as well:

- **Employment:** Rooted and Roadblocked respondents are less likely to be in the

Most Rooted and Roadblocked members have lived in their current neighborhood for at least 11 years

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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workforce, and 35% are retired.

- **Health issues:** 34% experienced a major illness—either their own, or that of a loved one—within the past year, more than most other groups.
- **Living with disability:** 27% are living with a disability, a significantly higher proportion than almost any other group.

Perhaps as a result, they are also less engaged in certain community activities, from attending sporting events to visiting museums; over half do not regularly participate in any of the general activities we asked about (though they may be engaged in other community activities not covered in our questions).

Rooted and Roadblocked respondents are fairly typical in their political identification—23% identify as Republican, 29% say they are Democrats, and 32% are Independents—

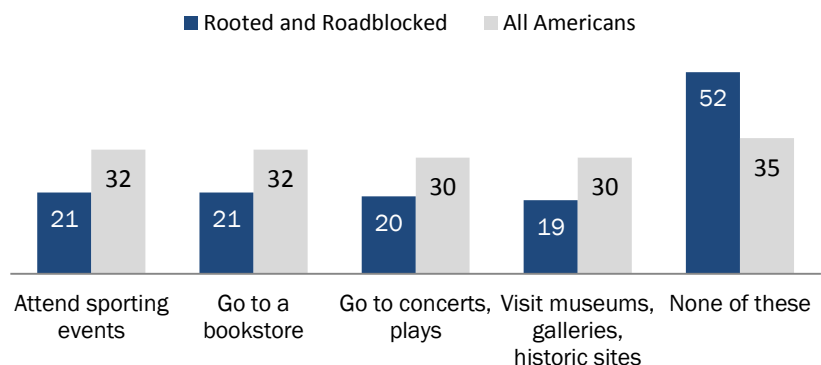
though they are also less likely to have a party affiliation (8%) than many groups. In terms of political ideology, 34% identify as conservative, 36% as moderate, and 17% as liberal, making them less likely to identify as liberal than the general population.

Technology and information habits

Members of this group are less likely than most other groups to own or use new technologies, particularly mobile technologies. However, most do go online, and many have tablets (24%) or e-readers (20%). Most of them watch television on a daily basis and interact with family and friends, but they are less likely to read the news or read books compared with the general population. Additionally, 28% say they have physical or health conditions that make reading difficult, much higher than the national benchmark of 16% (and the highest proportion of any group).

Rooted and Roadblocked community activities

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who do each activity regularly



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Technology use

Overall, Rooted and Roadblocked respondent are less technologically engaged, which might be related to their age and higher rate of physical limitations. This is not to say they're offline—most (74%) use the internet, for instance, and 63% of those internet users use social networking sites—but the frequency and depth of their use is lower than that of the general population.

As will be discussed in the next section, they are also less likely to use library websites, and just 12% say it would be very easy to use the website of a local public library (many weren't sure).

The Rooted and Roadblocked group's technology profile

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who use various technologies

	Rooted and Roadblocked	All Americans
Internet use and online activities		
Use the internet at least occasionally	74	86
Access the internet on cell phone, tablet or other mobile device	51	68
Broadband at home	58	71
Use the internet every day or almost every day (among internet users)	78	82
Use social networking site (among internet users)	63	74
Use Twitter (among internet users)	10	20
Mobile devices and e-readers		
Have a cell phone (total, including smartphones)	84	91
Have a smartphone	40	55
Have a tablet computer	24	35
Have an e-reader like a Kindle or Nook	20	24

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

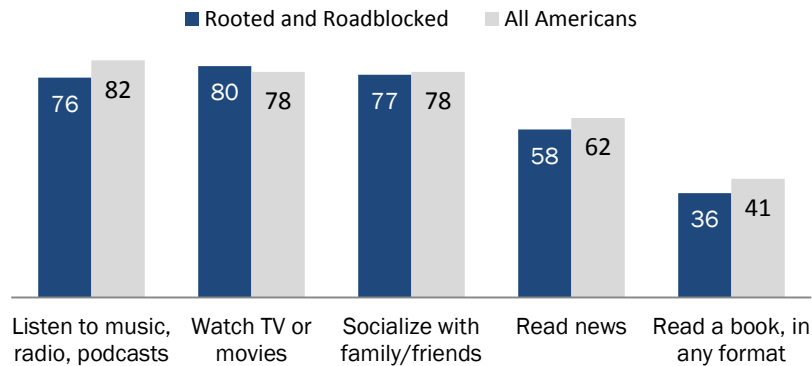
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Defining information traits

Rooted and Roadblocked respondents are not terribly different from the general population in their media habits, though they are less likely to listen to music or the radio, or read the news or books, on a daily basis.

Rooted and Roadblocked information habits

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who do each activity on a daily basis



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Looking closer at their reading and information habits, particularly their relationship to books and reading:

- As noted above, 58% say they read the news daily or almost every day, a slightly lower rate than the general population.
- 36% read books daily, and two-thirds (68%) read a book in the past year—fewer than many other groups (especially higher engagement groups).
- Overall, Rooted and Roadblocked respondents read an average of 11 books in the past 12 months, and a median of 3.
- 21% visit bookstores regularly, compared with 32% of the general population. They are also slightly more likely than other groups to say they usually buy their books (53%), rather than borrow them (32%).

Looking at their general information habits, a striking pattern emerged when we asked about the relative ease of completing various tasks. Less than half of the Rooted and Roadblocked group say they would be comfortable completing the various tasks on their own, and were particularly less likely to feel comfortable with the technology-related tasks (such as using social media or learning how to use new devices); almost a quarter (23%) say they would need help with all of them.

Rooted and Roadblocked views about learning new information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say each of the following statements “describes me very well”

	Rooted and Roadblocked	All Americans
I like to learn new things.	56	69
I like hunting for facts and information that are hard to find.	24	29
I get frustrated when I can’t find information I need right away.	22	24
I prefer to get information in audio and video format than reading text.	21	20

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Ease of finding information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say it would be either “easy” or “very easy” to find each type of information

	Rooted and Roadblocked	All Americans
News about politics and current events	84	88
Information about what’s happening in your community	82	85
Reliable health information	72	79
Information about career opportunities, job training, or educational programs	61	77
Information about government benefits and programs	56	67

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Ease of completing tasks

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they would be comfortable completing the following tasks on their own, without assistance

	Rooted and Roadblocked	All Americans
Use social media like Facebook or Twitter to connect with friends or family	48	67
Learn how to use a new device like a tablet computer or smartphone	37	52
Apply for government services or benefits	37	43
File your taxes	26	33

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Relationship to public libraries

Public library use and experiences

Similar to other low engagement groups, 36% of the Rooted and Roadblocked have library cards, and they tend to have lower levels of personal use:

- Only a third (33%) visited a public library in the last 12 months, and those that do visit the library do so infrequently—among these recent visitors, a majority (64%) do so less than once a month.
- Just 6% of Rooted and Roadblocked respondents used a library website in the past year. Few feel comfortable interacting with libraries digitally: Though 49% say it would be “very easy” to visit a public library in person, just 12% say it would be very easy to use the website of a local public library (many also weren’t sure).
- Only 9% say their library use has increased in the past five years, while 60% say it has stayed about the same and 24% say it has decreased in that time.

They also don’t know very much about their local libraries. Just 5% know all or most of the services their library offers (compared with 23% of general population), and only 16% of those who have ever visited a library say it is usually very easy to find what they are looking for when they visit. However, the vast majority (92%) *do* know where the closest library is, with over three-quarters (76%) saying it is five miles away or closer.

Public library attitudes

Despite their low rates of general library use, Rooted and Roadblocked have generally positive feelings about public libraries, and are more likely to say that having a public library improves the quality of life in a community. However, many also do not have the familiarity with libraries to give an opinion one way or another, particularly regarding more recent changes—for instance, 46% did not know whether or not libraries do a good job keeping up with new technologies.

They also have positive views about their libraries’ physical presences, with 83% of those who have ever visited a library describing libraries as welcoming places, and 50% saying their library is a nice, pleasant place to be (though 25% say that they had never been inside).

Views about public libraries in the community

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they “strongly agree” with each of the following statements

	Rooted and Roadblocked	All Americans
Public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading.	78	77
Having a public library improves the quality of life in a community.	75	69
Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.	72	72
Public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.	49	48

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Views about public libraries and technologies

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they “strongly agree” with each of the following statements

	Rooted and Roadblocked	All Americans
People do NOT need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own.	27	22
Public libraries have NOT done a good job keeping up with new technologies.	10	11

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

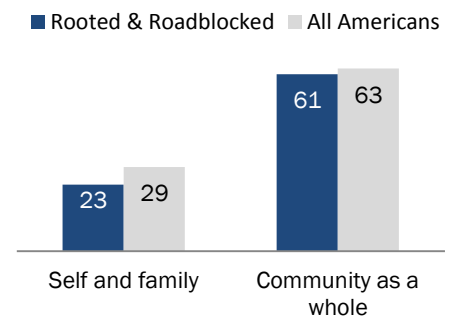
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As noted earlier, members of the Rooted and Roadblocked group stand out from the other two low engagement groups by the level of importance they ascribe to their local public library. Specifically, they are significantly more likely than other low engagement groups to say library’s closing would impact them and their families, and their communities as a whole—at rates similar to the national benchmark.

Likewise, Rooted and Roadblocked members are only somewhat less likely than the general population to rank various individual services as “very important” to them and their families, though almost a third (32%) say that none of these services are very important.

Rooted & Roadblocked’s views on impact of local public library’s closing

% of Americans ages 16+ who say the closing of their local public library would have a “major” impact on...



Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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The importance of individual public library services: Rooted & Roadblocked

Among Americans ages 16 and older who have ever used a public library or have a family member who uses a library, the % who say each of these services is “very important” to them and their family

	Rooted and Roadblocked	All Americans
Having a quiet and safe place to spend time, read or study	46	51
Access to free books and media	41	54
Programs or events for children or teens	40	45
Getting help from a librarian finding information	40	44
Resources to do research for school or work	37	47
Using the library’s internet, computers or printers	26	33
Help applying for government programs, permits or licenses	26	29
Programs or events for adults	24	28
Help finding or applying for a job	24	30

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Non-engagement

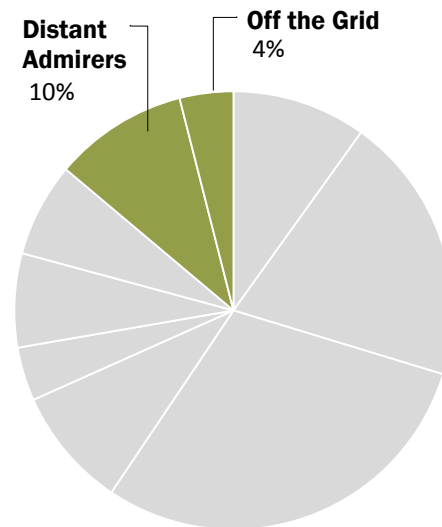
The final category in our library engagement typology represents the almost 15% of Americans ages 16 and older who have never personally used a public library in their lifetime. These “never” library users break out into two non-engagement groups: Distant Admirers and Off the Grid. Though neither group has any personal library experience, they have different opinions of libraries and differing views on libraries’ roles in their communities.

The first non-engagement group, **Distant Admirers**, represent the majority of non-users. Despite their lack of personal library use, many say that someone else in their household is a library user—and may rely indirectly on many library services. And while many say that their library’s closing would not affect them personally, most say it *would* have a major effect on their community.

Demographically, Distant Admirers include a higher proportion of men than the U.S. population as a whole, and tend to be slightly older than the national benchmark; adults in this group are also more likely to report lower levels of education and household income. Many do not follow the news or read often. One way their relationship to libraries stands out from the other non-engagement groups is that Distant Admirers who say that another member of their household uses the library are actually *more* likely than some of the library-using groups to value individual library services; however, those without even household exposure often do not view libraries as potentially relevant to their lives.

Non-engagement groups

The non-engagement groups (Distant Admirers and Off the Grid) make up about 14% of the general U.S. population (ages 16 and older)



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Summary of non-user groups' indirect engagement with and views on public libraries

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group in each group

	Distant Admirers	Off the Grid	All Americans
Indirect public library engagement			
Have library card to public library	37	19	61
Someone else in household uses library	40	17	54
Distance to closest public library			
Less than 5 miles away	66	32	72
6-10 miles away	11	15	13
11-20 miles away	1	18	4
More than 20 miles away	0	9	1
Not sure where closest public library is	22	24	9
Local public library's closing would have major impact on...			
Themselves or their family	28	10	29
Their community as a whole	55	28	63
Local public library's closing would have any (major or minor) impact on...			
Themselves or their family	60	23	67
Their community as a whole	85	53	90

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Meanwhile, those in the **Off the Grid** group are disconnected in many ways—from their communities, from libraries, from technology and information sources. They're more likely to be older than the general population, more likely to be living in rural areas, and less likely to know the names of many of their neighbors; they also tend to have low levels of reading and technology use. Like Distant Admirers, they have never used a public library themselves, but few Off the Grid respondents have indirect exposure to libraries via someone else in their household; as a result, few know very much about libraries in general, and many say visiting one would be difficult even if they wanted to. They also tend to be more ambivalent about the role that libraries play in their communities, and have the least positive views of libraries among all the groups.

Distant Admirers

Overview

Distant Admirers make up three-quarters of the “no library experience” group. Despite their lack of personal library use, many say that someone else in their household is a library user—and may rely indirectly on many library services. And while many say that their library’s closing would not affect them personally, most say it *would* have a major effect on their community.

Demographically, Distant Admirers include a higher proportion of men than the general population. As a group, they also tend to be slightly older than the national benchmark, and are more likely to report lower levels of education and household income. Many do not follow the news or read often (27% did not read a book last year). Interestingly, those who say that another member of their household uses the library are actually more likely than some other groups to value individual library services, but those without even household exposure may not see how a library would be relevant to their lives.

Jump to:

- [Who they are: Demographics and other traits](#)
- [Technology and information habits](#)
- [Relationship to public libraries](#)

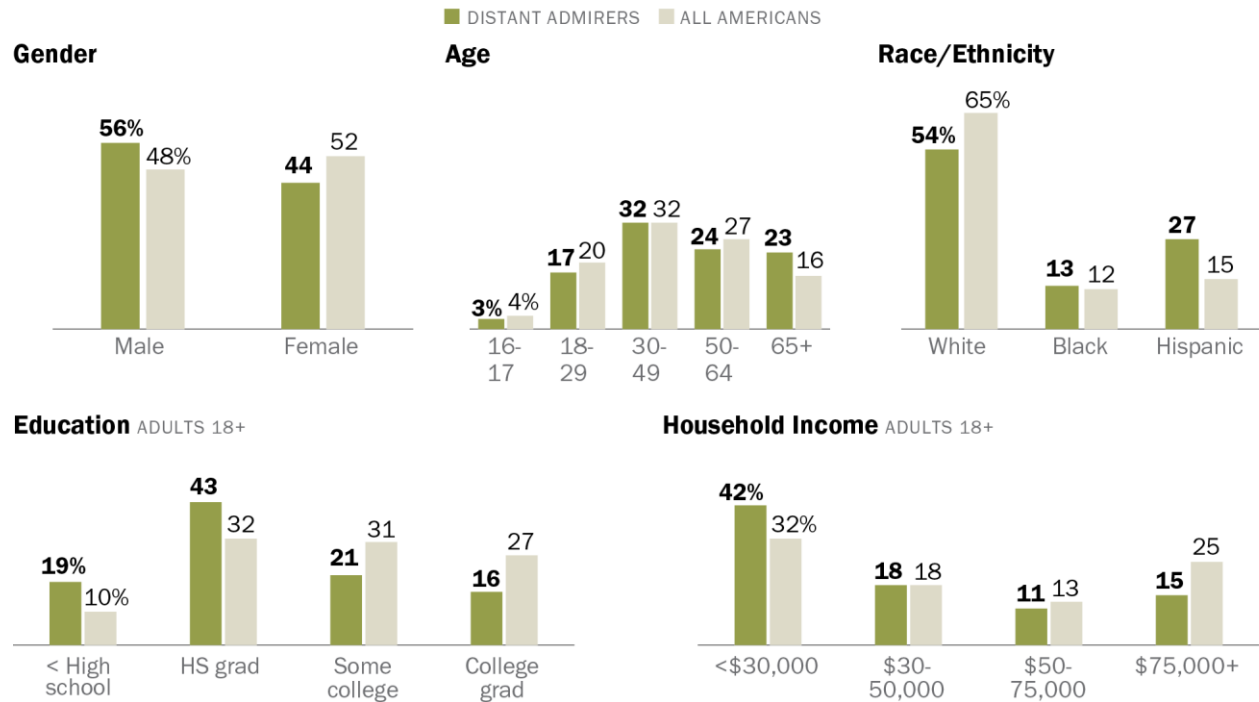
Who they are

Demographics

As a group, Distant Admirers include a higher proportion of men than the general population (56% are male, and 44% are female). This group is also more diverse compared with many other groups, as well as the population as a whole: over a quarter (27%) are Hispanic, most of whom were born outside the United States. Distant Admirers are also more likely to be older than the general population, though not by much (their median age is 48). They also tend to report lower levels of education and lower household income: 42% live in households earning less than \$30,000 per year, and six in ten did not attend college.

Distant Admirers: A demographic portrait

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013

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Other lifestyle notes

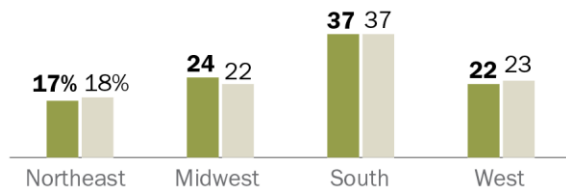
Distant Admirers are more likely than the general population to live in a small city or town, and as with several other low or non-engagement groups, there are some indications that they are more isolated in their communities. For instance, as many as 37% say they do not know the names of any of their neighbors, compared with 26% of the general population. They are also less likely to describe their community positively (77% do, compared with 82% of the general population), and are less likely to feel they can have even a moderate effect on their community (62% say this, compared with 72% of the general population).

Distant Admirers: Where they live

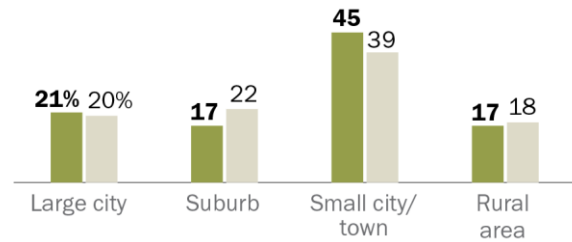
% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group

■ DISTANT ADMIRERS ■ ALL AMERICANS

Region



Community Type



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013

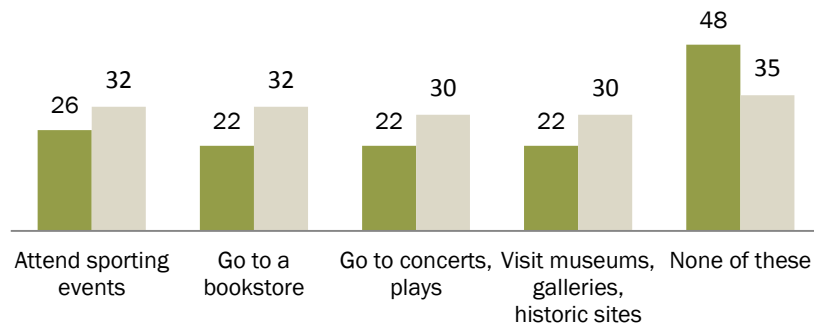
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Distant Admirers are also less likely to be regularly engaged in several community activities, part of the context for their lack of library engagement. In this they are similar to the low engagement group Rooted and Roadblocked, with almost half (48%) saying they don't do any of these activities regularly.

Distant Admirers' community activities

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who do each activity regularly

■ Distant Admirers ■ All Americans



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013

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Technology and information habits

In terms of their technology and information habits, Distant Admirers tend to be somewhat less connected than other groups. They are less likely to read regularly, and 27% read no books in the past year; as a group, they read an average of 8 books in the past 12 months, and a median of 3. Most (72%) do use the internet, but only about half (51%) have home broadband. Many say they would need help using new technologies if they wanted to in the future, particularly if they wanted to use a new device like a tablet computer or smartphone.

Technology use

Distant Admirers have lower levels of technology use than the American population as a whole, but not dramatically so. Most use the internet at least occasionally, and over half access the internet on mobile devices. Most internet users in this group go online on a daily basis, and two-thirds use social media (though these rates are again lower than national levels). However, only about half (51%) have broadband at home, compared with 71% of all Americans.

Distant Admirers' technology profile

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who use various technologies

	Distant Admirers	All Americans
Internet use and online activities		
Use the internet at least occasionally	72	86
Access the internet on cell phone, tablet or other mobile device	54	68
Broadband at home	51	71
Use the internet every day or almost every day (among internet users)	70	82
Use social networking site (among internet users)	67	74
Use Twitter (among internet users)	16	20
Mobile devices and e-readers		
Have a cell phone (total, including smartphones)	88	91
Have a smartphone	41	55
Have a tablet computer	27	35
Have an e-reader like a Kindle or Nook	18	24

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Defining information traits

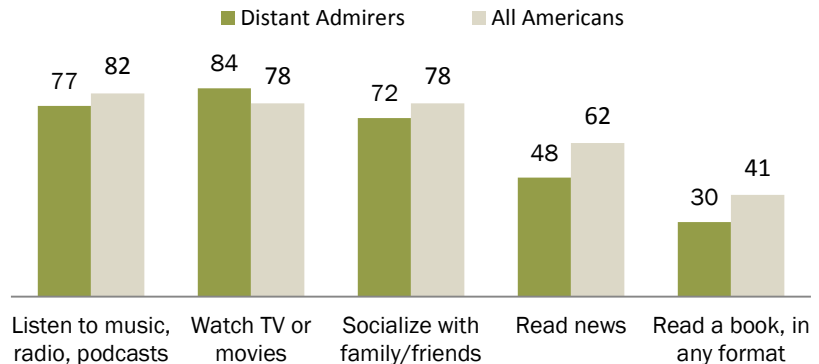
In terms of media habits, Distant Admirers are more likely to watch television daily (84% do this on a daily or near-daily basis), but otherwise they are less likely to do each of the activities we asked about. For instance, only 48% read the newspaper daily, and just 30% read a book that often.

As a group, Distant Admirers read an average of 8 books in the past 12 months, and a median of 3. Some 27% read no books in the past year, higher than national levels. Some 22% do visit bookstores regularly (lower than the 32% of the general population who do this), and they are a little more likely to borrow books (44%) than general population—another 45% prefer to purchase their books.

Looking at their information attitudes more broadly, Distant Admirers are less likely to say they like to learn new things (58% say this, compared with 69% of the general population). In response to a separate question, they were more likely to say they feel overloaded with too much information these days, though most still say they like having so much information available. Many also say they would need help using new technologies if they wanted to in the future: Just about half (52%) say they would feel comfortable using social media like Facebook or Twitter to connect with friends or family on their own, but only 37% say they would be able to how to use a new device like a tablet computer or smartphone without assistance.

Distant Admirers information habits

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who do each activity on a daily basis



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Distant Admirers' views about learning new information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say each of the following statements "describes me very well"

	Distant Admirers	All Americans
I like to learn new things.	58	69
I like hunting for facts and information that are hard to find.	27	29
I get frustrated when I can't find information I need right away.	26	24
I prefer to get information in audio and video format than reading text.	22	20

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Ease of finding information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say it would be either "easy" or "very easy" to find each type of information

	Distant Admirers	All Americans
News about politics and current events	78	88
Information about what's happening in your community	78	85
Reliable health information	74	79
Information about career opportunities, job training, or educational programs	65	77
Information about government benefits and programs	62	67

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Ease of completing tasks

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they would be comfortable completing the following tasks on their own, without assistance

	Distant Admirers	All Americans
Use social media like Facebook or Twitter to connect with friends or family	52	67
Learn how to use a new device like a tablet computer or smartphone	37	52
Apply for government services or benefits	34	43
File your taxes	20	33

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013..

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Relationship to public libraries

Despite their lack of personal library use, quite a few members this group say that someone else in their household is a library user—and there are indications that some Distant Admirers rely indirectly on many library services. They also tend to view libraries as vital community resources:

Even though many say that their library's closing would not affect them personally, most agree it *would* have a major effect on their community.

Public library use and experiences

About 37% Distant Admirers say they have library cards, a similar rate as low engagement groups. However, none have ever used a public library personally, either by visiting a public library or using a library website. They do have some household exposure: 40% say that someone else in their household uses the library, and among parents of minors, 43% say their children have visited a library in the past year (though lower than the 70% of all parents who say this). Almost eight in ten (78%) say they do know where the closest public library is, with most saying the closest library is within five miles of where they live.

Public library attitudes

As their name implies, Distant Admirers generally have positive views of libraries, though their support is not quite as strong as library-using groups in some areas. They are somewhat more ambivalent about the current role of libraries in the digital age.

Views about public libraries in the community

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they "strongly agree" with each of the following statements

	Distant Admirers	All Americans
Public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading.	68	77
Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.	66	72
Having a public library improves the quality of life in a community.	64	69
Public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.	47	48

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Views about public libraries and technologies

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they "strongly agree" with each of the following statements

	Distant Admirers	All Americans
People do NOT need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own.	35	22
Public libraries have NOT done a good job keeping up with new technologies.	19	11

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

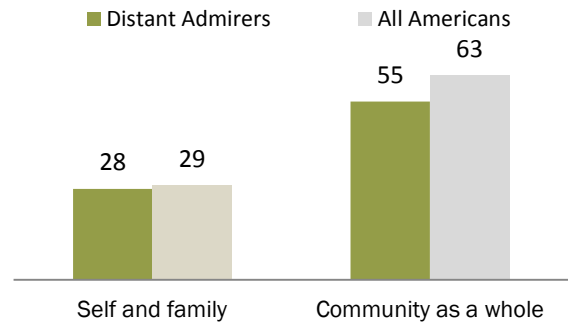
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What sets Distant Admirers apart from the other non-engagement group is that even though they don't personally use the library, they are just as likely as the general population to say that if the local public library closed it would have a "major" impact on them and their family (though they were also more likely to say it would have no impact). A majority (55%) also say it would have a major impact on the community.

Among those with a household member who uses the library, Distant Admirers are actually more likely than the national benchmark to highly value almost all of the services libraries offer, even though they do not use those services themselves. Only 19% say that none of these services are very important.

Distant Admirers' views on impact of local public library's closing

% of Americans ages 16+ who say the closing of their local public library would have a "major" impact on...



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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The importance of individual public library services

Among Americans ages 16 and older who have ever used a public library or have a family member who uses a library, the % who say each of these services is "very important" to them and their family

	Distant Admirers	All Americans
Resources to do research for school or work	57	47
Access to free books and media	55	54
Getting help from a librarian finding information	55	44
Having a quiet and safe place to spend time, read or study	53	51
Programs or events for children or teens	53	45
Help applying for government programs, permits or licenses	43	29
Help finding or applying for a job	42	30
Using the library's internet, computers or printers	39	33
Programs or events for adults	39	28

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013

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Off the Grid

Overview

The Off the Grid group sits at the farthest end of the spectrum of library engagement. A small group representing just a quarter of non-library users and 4% of the entire U.S. population, they are disconnected in many ways—not only from libraries, but from their communities, from technology, and from information sources.

Off the Grid respondents generally have the least positive views of libraries among all the groups. In line with their extremely low levels of contact with public libraries, almost two-thirds (66%) say that if the local public library closed it would have no impact on them and their family. However, one factor that sets the “Off the Grid” group apart from the others is how small of a role its respondents felt that libraries play in their communities. Fewer than one in three (28%) of those “Off the Grid” say their library’s closing would have a major impact on their community, and another one in four (25%) say it would have no impact at all.

Off the Grid respondents tend to be older, and often live in rural areas; many don’t know many of their neighbors, and they tend to have low levels of reading and technology use. Almost half don’t use the internet, the highest rate of any group.

Like Distant Admirers, they have never used a public library themselves, but few in this group have regular exposure to libraries through someone else in their household; as a result, they don’t know much about libraries, and many say visiting one would be difficult even if they wanted to.

Jump to:

- [Who they are: Demographics and other traits](#)
- [Technology and information habits](#)
- [Relationship to public libraries](#)

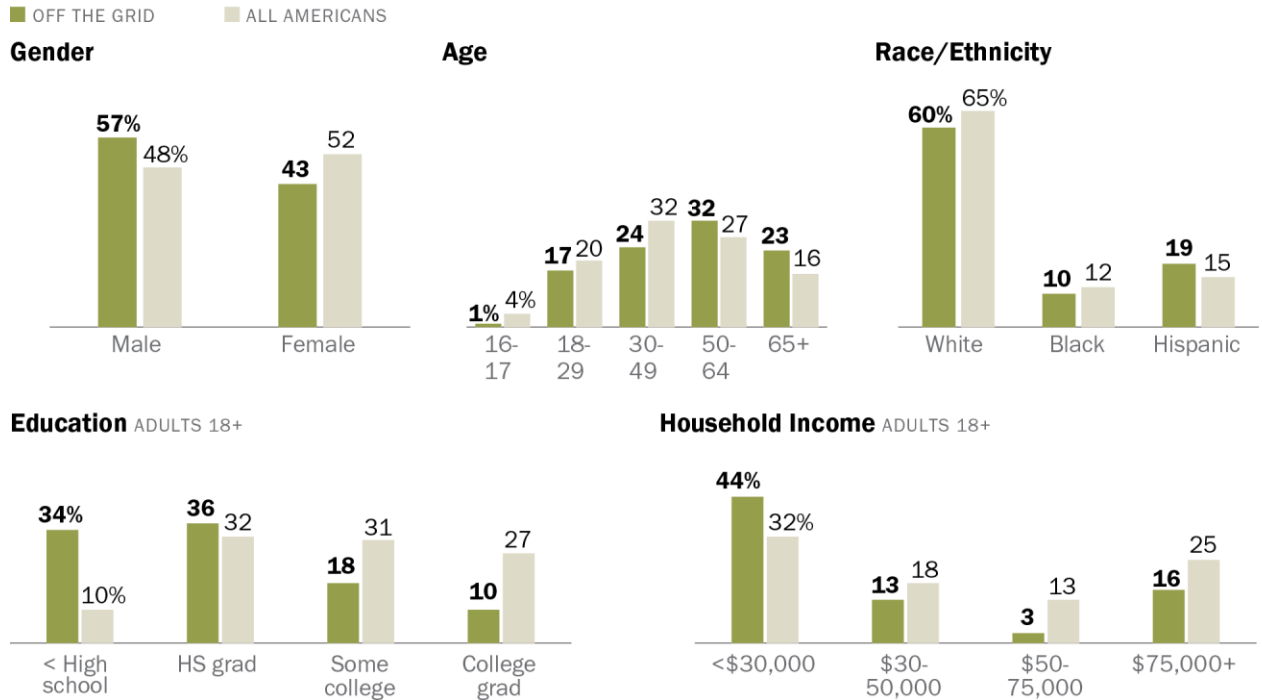
Who they are

Demographics

As a group, Off the Grid respondents include a disproportionate amount of men compared with the general population, and also include more older adults (their median age is 52). They are more diverse than most other groups—though not to the same extent as Distant Admirers—and are more likely to have completed the survey’s interview in Spanish (15% did so).

Off the Grid: A demographic portrait

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013

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Many Off the Grid respondents face economic barriers in their lives. They are more likely to have low levels of education, with a third of adults in this group reporting that they did not complete high school, and only one in ten having graduated college; they are also more likely to live in lower-income households, with 44% living in households earning less than \$30,000 per year. Less than half (46%) are employed, either full- or part-time.

Other lifestyle notes

Off the Grid members are far more rural than Distant Admirers, and in fact are one of the most rural groups in the typology. Hardly any members of this group live in a large city or suburb; 39% say they live in a small city or town, and 45% say they live in a rural area. They have also lived in their neighborhoods for longer—37% have lived in their current neighborhood for more than 20 years—but almost four in ten (38%) say they don't know the names of anyone who live close by.

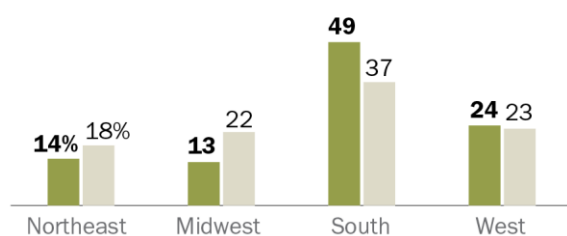
Members of this group are less likely than several other groups to think their community is a “good” or “excellent place to live,” and they are much less likely to feel like they can effect change in their communities: Only 50% of those in the “Off the Grid” group feel they can have even a moderate impact on their community, compared with 72% of the general population.

Off the Grid: Where they live

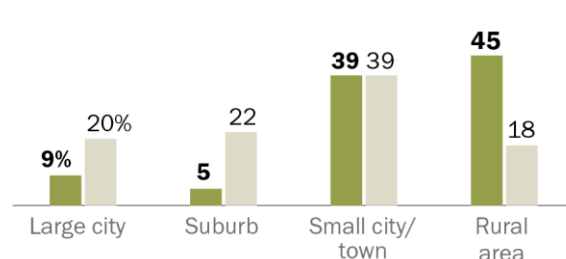
% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group

■ OFF THE GRID ■ ALL AMERICANS

Region



Community Type



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013

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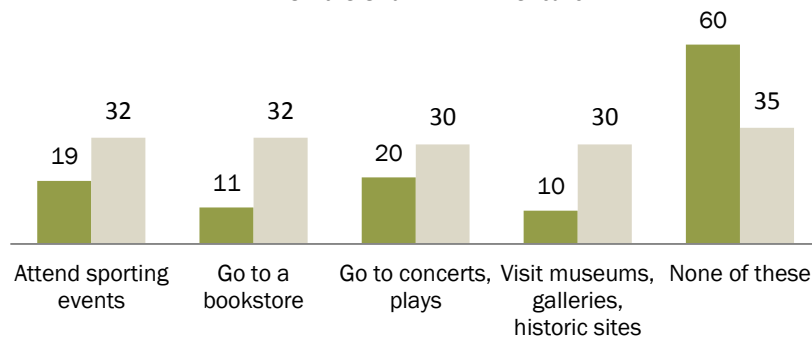
Among all the groups, those “Off the Grid” are the least engaged in the community activities we asked about—and a majority say they don’t do any of these activities regularly.

Politically, they are more likely to be both conservative: 15% identify as very conservative (twice the national rate). However, another 16% don’t know their ideological leaning. Another 10% have no party preference, and 5% don’t know their affiliation.

Off the Grid members’ community activities

% of Americans 16 and older in each group who do each activity regularly

■ Off the Grid ■ All Americans



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Technology and information habits

Members of this group are less likely to use the internet or own mobile devices, behaviors that are strongly correlated with age, household income, and education. They are less engaged with various types of media, and are less comfortable navigating several types of information.

Technology use

The Off the Grid group's technology profile

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who use various technologies

	Off the Grid	All Americans
Internet use and online activities		
Use the internet at least occasionally	56	86
Access the internet on cell phone, tablet or other mobile device	45	68
Broadband at home	37	71
Use the internet every day or almost every day (among internet users)	68	82
Use social networking site (among internet users)	70	74
Use Twitter (among internet users)	19	20
Mobile devices and e-readers		
Have a cell phone (total, including smartphones)	77	91
Have a smartphone	33	55
Have a tablet computer	19	35
Have an e-reader like a Kindle or Nook	12	24

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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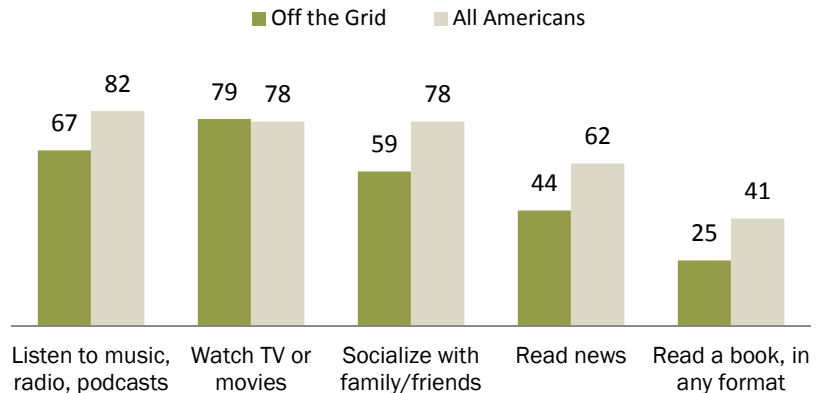
In keeping with their name, just over half (56%) of the members of the "Off the Grid" group use the internet, far lower than the national benchmark of 86%. They are likewise less likely to own or use mobile devices, with only 33% reporting that they own a smartphone.

Defining information traits

We named this group “Off the Grid” due to their lower levels of engagement in many spheres. For instance, while they are as likely to watch television daily as the general population, they otherwise are far less likely to socialize with friends and family on a daily basis, listen to music or the radio, or follow the news. They are also less likely to say they enjoy keeping up with the news in general.

Off the Grid information habits

% of Americans 16 and older in each group who do each activity daily



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

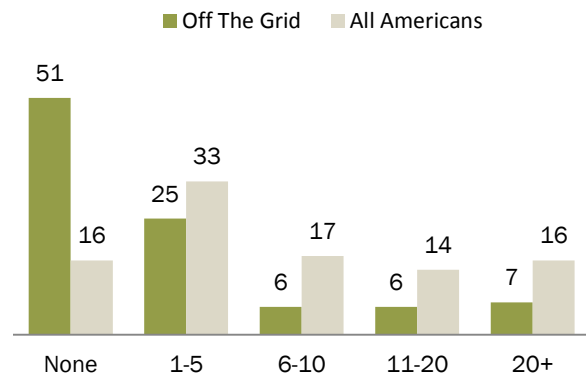
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Off the Grid respondents also have very low rates of engagement with books and reading:

- 51% read no books in the past year. (Among all Americans ages 16 and older, only 16% did not read any books in that time.)
- Only 25% say they read books daily (in any format), compared with 41% of the general population.
- Overall, Off the Grid respondents read an average of 5 books in the past 12 months; since a majority read no books in the past year, the median for the whole group is 0. Among those who did read a book last year, the average number read is 10 and a median number is 4, which is still lower than the national benchmark.
- About one in ten (11%) Off the Grid respondents visit bookstores regularly, roughly a third of the national rate.

Over half of those “Off the Grid” did not read any books in the past year

% of Americans ages 16+ in each group who read the following number of books in the past year



Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Off the Grid respondents are less likely than most other groups to say they are comfortable learning new things, and they stand out for the obstacles they face in their abilities to navigate different types of information. Fewer than half say it would be easy for them to find information about government benefits and programs, for instance, and only 63% say they feel they could easily locate reliable health information.

Off the Grid views about learning new information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say each of the following statements “describes me very well”

	Off the Grid	All Americans
I like to learn new things.	49	69
I like hunting for facts and information that are hard to find.	19	29
I get frustrated when I can’t find information I need right away.	18	24
I prefer to get information in audio and video format than reading text.	17	20

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Ease of finding information

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say it would be either “easy” or “very easy” to find each type of information

	Off the Grid	All Americans
Information about what’s happening in your community	74	85
News about politics and current events	68	88
Reliable health information	63	79
Information about career opportunities, job training, or educational programs	55	77
Information about government benefits and programs	45	67

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Ease of completing tasks

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they would be comfortable completing the following tasks on their own, without assistance

	Off the Grid	All Americans
Use social media like Facebook or Twitter to connect with friends or family	45	67
Learn how to use a new device like a tablet computer or smartphone	29	52
Apply for government services or benefits	21	43
File your taxes	15	33

Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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Finally, a majority of Off the Grid respondents would need help completing various tasks, particularly those centered around using the internet or newer technologies. Some 36% would not be comfortable doing completing any of the tasks we asked about on their own.

Relationship to public libraries

Public library use and experiences

As with other non-engagement group, none of those in the Off the Grid category have ever visited a public library or used a library website. Some 19% do say they have library cards, although this is the lowest rate of any group in the typology.

Most (75%) members of this group say they do know where the closest public library is, with a majority reporting that the closest library is more than five miles away from where they live. However, the data suggests many would encounter difficulties if they did want to use library resources: 24% say it would be difficult to visit a library in person, and 38% say it would be difficult for them to use a library website.

Public library attitudes

Few Off the Grid respondents have positive views of libraries—setting them apart even from the other non-engagement group, Distant Admirers. For instance, less than half (45%) Off the Grid respondents “strongly agree” that public libraries play an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed by providing access to materials and resources, a view that is otherwise shared by 72% of the general population; only four in ten (39%) strongly feel that public libraries improve the quality of life in a community. They are also more likely to feel that libraries not as necessary today for finding information due to technological advances, though due to their overall lack of exposure to public libraries, many were give an opinion one way or another.

Off the Grid views about public libraries in the community

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they “strongly agree” with each of the following statements

	Off the Grid	All Americans
Public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading.	58	77
Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.	45	72
Having a public library improves the quality of life in a community.	39	69
Public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.	32	48

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Views about public libraries and technologies

% of Americans ages 16 and older in each group who say they “strongly agree” with each of the following statements

	Off the Grid	All Americans
People do NOT need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own.	33	22
Public libraries have NOT done a good job keeping up with new technologies.	11	11

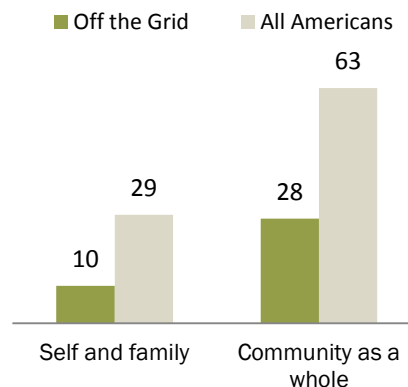
Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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In line with their extremely low levels of contact with public libraries, almost two-thirds (66%) say that if the local public library closed it would have no impact on them and their family. Even more striking is how small of a role its respondents felt that libraries play in their communities: Only 28% of those “Off the Grid” say their library’s closing would have a major impact on their community, and another 25% say it would have no impact at all.⁷

Most Off the Grid say local library’s closing would not majorly impact community

% of Americans ages 16+ who say the closing of their local public library would have a “major” impact on...



Source: Pew Research Center’s Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older conducted July 18-September 30, 2013.

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⁷ Note: There were too few members of the sample who say another member of their household used the library to analyze their responses about the relative importance of individual library services.

Methods

Creating the Typology

This library engagement typology divides the public into seven groups of people who have *ever* used a public library, either in person or online, in addition to two groups of people who have *never* used a public library. The assignment of individuals to one of the seven core typology groups is based on a two-step analysis comprised of principal components (PCA) analysis to simplify multiple measures of library use, first by identifying and scoring respondents on underlying components of this behavior, and then using PCA scores to run a “cluster analysis” identifying internally consistent groups within the broader universe of library users.

Library Users

The first step in identifying library user “types” involved streamlining a wide array of library use survey questions into core underlying components on which each respondent could be scored. Principal components analysis (PCA) identified seven library use components from a combination of 17 survey questions, many of which were multi-item and used different response scales. To account for variations across question format, PCA was run on a correlation matrix of 25 items from the 17 key survey questions about past and present library use, attitudes toward libraries, and access to library services. The final rotated solution (varimax rotation) identified seven components with Eigenvalues greater than 1, and together these components accounted for 47% of total variance. Component scores were calculated for each respondent for each of these seven components of library use. The combination of library use measures used in the final PCA was determined by running multiple models to see which produced the most consistent and recognizable components, based on measures of fit, face validity, prior Pew Internet research on library use, and extensive qualitative research with library patrons and non-patrons.

Principal Component Analysis of Library Users		
Components Identified (descending Eigenvalues)	Questions Comprising Component Score (descending order of contribution to each factor)	
Importance of public library to community as a whole	Q18	<p>Please tell me if you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements about public libraries.</p> <p>e. Public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading</p> <p>f. Having a public library improves the quality of life in a community</p> <p>a. Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed</p> <p>d. Public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time</p>

	finding elsewhere
	Q20 If your local public library CLOSED, would that have a MAJOR impact, MINOR impact or NO IMPACT on your community as a whole?
Personal/Household library use	<p>Q17 Do you have a library card for a public library?</p> <p>Q21 Have you, personally, EVER used a public library WEBSITE, or is this something you've never done? IF YES, ASK: Have you done this in the past 12 months?</p> <p>Q20 If your local public library CLOSED, would that have a MAJOR impact, MINOR impact or NO IMPACT on you and your family?</p> <p>Q21 Have you, personally, EVER visited a public library or used a public library bookmobile IN PERSON, or is this something you've never done? IF YES, ASK: Have you done this in the past 12 months?</p> <p>Q25 Does anyone else in your household ever visit a public library or bookmobile or use a public library website?</p>
Personal experiences using library and services	<p>Q19 If you, personally, wanted to Use the website of a local public library, would that be very easy, easy, difficult or very difficult?</p> <p>Q30 And in your experience, is it usually very easy, easy, difficult, or very difficult to find what you're looking for when you visit a public library?</p> <p>Q19 If you, personally, wanted to visit a public library in person would that be very easy, easy, difficult or very difficult?</p> <p>Q27 Overall, how well-informed do you feel you are about the different services and programs your public library offers? Do you feel like you know ALL or MOST of the services and programs your library offers, SOME of what it offers, NOT MUCH of what it offers, or NOTHING at all?</p> <p>Q28 Based on your own experiences, would you say... [READ AND ROTATE 1-2]</p> <p>1 Public libraries are welcoming, friendly places (OR)</p> <p>2 Public libraries are NOT welcoming and friendly places (OR)</p> <p>3 (VOL.) Sometimes welcoming/friendly, sometimes not</p> <p>8 (DO NOT READ) Don't know</p> <p>9 (DO NOT READ) Refused</p>
Intensity of library use	<p>Q23 How often do you use a public library website? Would you say at least once a week, several times a month, at least once a month, or less often?</p> <p>Q22 How often do you visit public libraries or bookmobiles in person? Would you say at least once a week, several times a month, at least once a month, or less often?</p>
Familiarity with closest library location	<p>Q32 Do you happen to know where the CLOSEST public library is to where you currently live, or are you not sure?</p> <p>Q31 If you had to describe the physical condition of the public library nearest you, would you say...</p> <p>1 It's a nice, pleasant space to be (OR)</p> <p>2 It's an okay space but could use some improvements (OR)</p> <p>3 It's not a pleasant space and needs a lot of improvement (OR)</p> <p>4 Have you never been inside your local library</p>

		8 (DO NOT READ) Don't know 9 (DO NOT READ) Refused
Proximity to public library	Q33	Approximately how many miles from your home is the closest public library? Would you say... 1 Five miles or less 2 Six to 10 miles 3 11 to 20 miles (OR) 4 More than 20 miles away 8 (DO NOT READ) Don't know 9 (DO NOT READ) Refused LIVE1 Which of the following BEST describes the place where you now live? 1 A large city 2 A suburb near a large city 3 A small city or town (OR) 4 A rural area 8 (DO NOT READ) Don't know 9 (DO NOT READ) Refused
Negative perceptions of/experiences with public libraries	Q18	Please tell me if you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements about public libraries. b. Public libraries have NOT done a good job keeping up with new technologies c. People do NOT need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own Q24 Over the past five years, has your own use of the public library, either in-person or online, [READ 1-3; ROTATE 1-2] 1 Increased (OR) 2 Decreased (OR) 3 Stayed about the same 8 (DO NOT READ) Don't know 9 (DO NOT READ) Refused Q29 Have you, personally, ever had a NEGATIVE experience using a public library, either in person or online?

The typology groups were then created using a statistical procedure called “cluster analysis” which uses respondents’ scores on all seven components to sort them into relatively distinct and internally consistent groups. The table below shows each library user group’s mean score on the seven components identified through PCA.

	Importance of library to community	Personal/household library use	Personal experience using library/services	Intensity of library use	Familiarity with closest library	Proximity to public library	Negative perceptions/experiences
Library Lovers (n=653)	0.19	0.76	0.35	1.91	0.10	0.14	-0.18
Info Omnivores (n=1248)	0.04	0.84	0.43	-0.72	-0.02	0.34	-0.23
Solid Center (n=1893)	0.11	-0.48	0.01	-0.09	0.46	0.22	0.30
Print Traditionalists (n=584)	0.26	-0.19	0.15	-0.15	0.13	-1.67	0.04
Not For Me (n=238)	-3.02	-0.22	-0.45	0.11	-0.01	-0.86	-0.23
Young & Restless (n=339)	0.19	-0.56	0.22	-0.11	-2.49	0.18	0.43
Rooted and Roadblocked (n=438)	0.34	-0.62	-2.05	-0.02	0.09	0.28	-0.76

Cluster analysis is not an exact process. Different cluster solutions are possible using the same data depending on model specifications and even the order in which respondents are assessed. Several different cluster solutions were evaluated for their effectiveness in producing cohesive groups that were sufficiently distinct from one another, large enough in size to be analytically practical, and substantively meaningful. While each solution differed somewhat from the others, all of them shared certain key features. The final solution selected to produce the library use typology was judged to be strongest from a statistical point of view, most persuasive from a substantive point of view, and was representative of the general patterns seen across the various cluster solutions.

Library “Non-Users”

Prior to conducting the PCA and cluster analysis, two measures of library use were used to separate library “users” from library “non-users.” Users were defined as anyone who had *ever* used a public library in the past, either online or in person. Non-users were defined as those who reported *never* using a public library in either format. Non-users represent 13% of the overall population, and were held aside prior to analysis of library users.

Separating out non-users was critical from both a substantive and statistical standpoint. Substantively, non-users do not have the personal experience necessary to judge the value and performance of public libraries in the same way users can. As a result, they were filtered out of several survey questions that rely on personal experience with libraries. To account for this, a separate analysis was run on non-users using some but not all of the variables included in the user

typology. The goal was to determine if there are distinct types of non-users among the broader population of Americans who have no personal experience with public libraries. PCA run on a slightly smaller set of variables (9 rather than 17) identified six underlying components of library experience with Eigenvalues greater than 1, accounting for 62% of total variance. These components are similar to those found in the analysis of library users. The sixth “component” below is comprised of a single variable; for consistency and ease of analysis it was treated as a component and respondents were given a score which could then be used in the cluster analysis with the other five factor scores.

Principal Component Analysis of Library Non-Users		
Components Identified (descending Eigenvalues)	Questions Comprising Component Score (descending order of contribution to each factor)	
Broad importance of public libraries	Q18	Please tell me if you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements about public libraries. e. Public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading a. Because it provides free access to materials and resources, the public library plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed f. Having a public library improves the quality of life in a community d. Public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere
Importance of public library to respondent and their own community	Q20 Q17 Q20	If your local public library CLOSED, would that have a MAJOR impact, MINOR impact or NO IMPACT on you and your family? Do you have a library card for a public library? If your local public library CLOSED, would that have a MAJOR impact, MINOR impact or NO IMPACT on your community as a whole?
Ease of access to library	Q19 Q32	If you, personally, wanted to [INSERT ITEMS IN ORDER], would that be very easy, easy, difficult or very difficult? a. Visit a public library in person b. Use the website of a local public library Do you happen to know where the CLOSEST public library is to where you currently live, or are you not sure?
Declining value of libraries	Q18	Please tell me if you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements about public libraries. c. People do NOT need public libraries as much as they used to because they can find most information on their own b. Public libraries have NOT done a good job keeping up

	with new technologies	
Proximity to public library	LIVE1	Which of the following BEST describes the place where you now live? 1 A large city 2 A suburb near a large city 3 A small city or town (OR) 4 A rural area 8 (DO NOT READ) Don't know 9 (DO NOT READ) Refused Q33 Approximately how many miles from your home is the closest public library? Would you say... 1 Five miles or less 2 Six to 10 miles 3 11 to 20 miles (OR) 4 More than 20 miles away 8 (DO NOT READ) Don't know 9 (DO NOT READ) Refused
Someone else in household uses library	Q25	Does anyone else in your household ever visit a public library or bookmobile or use a public library website?

Scores for the six components above were used in a cluster analysis which revealed two fairly distinct groups of “non-users.” The table below shows each library non-user group’s mean score on the six components identified through PCA.

	Importance of public libraries broadly	Importance of library to me/my community	Ease of access to library	Declining value of libraries	Proximity to public library	Someone else in household uses library
Distant Admirers (n=615)	0.17	0.21	0.05	0.16	0.24	0.17
Off the Grid (n=203)	-0.49	-0.62	-0.14	-0.47	-0.70	-0.50

Again, cluster analysis is not an exact process and several different cluster solutions were evaluated for their effectiveness in producing cohesive groups of non-users that were sufficiently distinct from one another, large enough in size to be analytically practical, and substantively meaningful. The final solution selected to produce the library use typology was judged to be strongest from a statistical point of view, most persuasive from a substantive point of view, and was representative of the general patterns seen across the various cluster solutions.

Final Typology Groups

In combination, the above cluster analyses produced a typology of nine separate groups of individuals with fairly distinct and internally cohesive behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes related to public libraries. The table below provides unweighted demographic information for these nine groups. (For a similar table with weighted demographic information, see the Appendix.)

Demographic Profile of Library Engagement Typology Groups										
<i>Among Americans age 16+, the unweighted % of each group in each demographic category</i>										
	Total 16+ (n=6211)	Library Lovers (n=653)	Info Omni. (n=1248)	Solid Cent (n=1893)	Print Trad. (n=584)	Not For Me (n=238)	Young & Restless (n=339)	Rooted & Road-blocked (n=438)	Distant Admirers (n=615)	Off the Grid (n=203)
Men	46	34	42	49	40	54	53	43	53	54
Women	54	66	58	51	60	46	47	57	47	46
Race/ethnicity										
White, Non-Hispanic	69	72	70	71	78	66	58	75	61	66
Black, Non-Hispanic	11	12	12	12	7	9	14	9	13	10
Hispanic	12	10	10	11	7	13	17	10	20	16
Age										
16-17	3	2	5	4	3	3	5	*	3	1
18-29	15	14	18	14	13	13	35	6	13	15
30-49	26	31	31	23	27	24	25	17	23	19
50-64	30	33	28	31	33	28	20	32	25	31
65+	25	18	16	26	23	29	13	43	33	30
Household income (18+ only)										
< \$30,000/year	28	27	21	26	33	33	36	31	36	40
\$30,000-\$49,999	17	17	15	19	20	15	14	17	19	14
\$50,000-\$74,999	13	15	15	14	13	8	10	12	12	4
\$75,000+	28	27	38	30	23	24	27	18	18	17
Education attainment (18+ only)										
No HS diploma	8	2	2	6	8	11	11	12	14	18
High school grad	28	17	15	30	36	35	28	33	40	41
Some College	27	26	30	29	30	25	24	26	21	17
College+	37	54	52	35	26	26	36	29	23	13
Parent of minor										
Parent	25	34	31	23	24	20	22	15	20	20
Non-parent	75	65	68	77	75	78	77	84	80	80
Community type										
Urban	31	34	37	31	13	29	42	27	32	24
Suburban	50	50	53	51	45	47	46	53	46	40
Rural	20	16	10	18	41	24	12	20	23	36
Student										
Student, FT or PT	14	15	19	14	11	10	25	6	11	4
Not a student	86	85	80	86	89	89	75	94	89	96

Employment										
Full-time or part-time	53	55	63	54	50	45	56	38	44	41
Retired	26	23	17	27	25	31	14	42	33	26
Not employed	15	17	15	13	16	14	23	13	15	19

Source: Pew Research Center Libraries Typology Survey, July 18–September 30, 2013. N=6224 Americans ages 16+. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones.

Typology Survey

Prepared by Princeton Survey Research Associates International for the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project and the Gates Foundation

October 2013

Summary

The Gates Typology Survey, sponsored by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project and the Gates Foundation, obtained telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 6,224 people ages 16 and older living in the United States. Interviews were conducted via landline (nLL=3,122) and cell phone (nC=3,102, including 1,588 without a landline phone). The survey was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International. The interviews were administered in English and Spanish by Princeton Data Source from July 18 to September 30, 2013⁸. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for results based on the complete set of weighted data is ± 1.4 percentage points. Results based on the 5,320 internet users⁹ have a margin of sampling error of ± 1.5 percentage points.

Details on the design, execution and analysis of the survey are discussed below.

Design and data collection procedures

Sample Design

A combination of landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) samples was used to represent all adults in the United States who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. Both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International, LLC (SSI) according to PSRAI specifications.

Numbers for the landline sample were drawn with probabilities in proportion to their share of listed telephone households from active blocks (area code + exchange + two-digit block number) that contained three or more residential directory listings. The cellular sample was not list-assisted, but was drawn through a systematic sampling from dedicated wireless 100-blocks and shared service 100-blocks with no directory-listed landline numbers.

Contact Procedures

⁸ Twenty-one pretest interviews conducted on July 18 and 19 were included in the final data file since no changes were made to the questionnaire. Full data collection started on July 22.

⁹ Internet user is defined as those accessing the internet occasionally, sending or receiving email, and/or accessing the internet on a cell phone, tablet, or other mobile handheld device.

Interviews were conducted from July 18 to September 30, 2013. As many as 10 attempts were made to contact every sampled telephone number. Sample was released for interviewing in replicates, which are representative subsamples of the larger sample. Using replicates to control the release of sample ensures that complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample. Calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chance of making contact with potential respondents. Interviewing was spread as evenly as possible across the days in field. Each telephone number was called at least one time during the day in an attempt to complete an interview.

For the landline sample, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest male or female ages 16 or older currently at home based on a random rotation. If no male/female was available, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest person age 16 or older of the other gender. This systematic respondent selection technique has been shown to produce samples that closely mirror the population in terms of age and gender when combined with cell interviewing.

For the cellular sample, interviews were conducted with the person who answered the phone. Interviewers verified that the person was age 16 or older and in a safe place before administering the survey. Cellular respondents were offered a post-paid cash reimbursement for their participation.

Weighting and analysis

Weighting is generally used in survey analysis to compensate for sample designs and patterns of non-response that might bias results. The sample was weighted to match national adult general population parameters. A two-stage weighting procedure was used to weight this dual-frame sample.

The first stage of weighting corrected for different probabilities of selection associated with the number of adults in each household and each respondent's telephone usage patterns.¹⁰ This weighting also adjusts for the overlapping landline and cell sample frames and the relative sizes of each frame and each sample.

The first-stage weight for the i^{th} case can be expressed as:

¹⁰ i.e., whether respondents have only a landline telephone, only a cell phone, or both kinds of telephone.

$$WT_i = \left[\left(\frac{S_{LL}}{F_{LL}} \times \frac{1}{AD_i} \times LL_i \right) + \left(\frac{S_{CP}}{F_{CP}} \times CP_i \right) - \left(\frac{S_{LL}}{F_{LL}} \times \frac{1}{AD_i} \times LL_i \times \frac{S_{CP}}{F_{CP}} \times CP_i \right) \right]^{-1}$$

Where S_{LL} = the size of the landline sample

F_{LL} = the size of the landline sample frame

S_{CP} = the size of the cell sample

F_{CP} = the size of the cell sample frame

AD_i = Number of adults in household i

$LL_i=1$ if respondent has a landline phone, otherwise $LL=0$.

$CP_i=1$ if respondent has a cell phone, otherwise $CP=0$.

The second stage of weighting balances sample demographics to population parameters. The sample is balanced to match national population parameters for sex, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region (U.S. Census definitions), population density, and telephone usage. The Hispanic origin was split out based on nativity; U.S. born and non-U.S. born. The White, non-Hispanic subgroup was also balanced on age, education and region.

The basic weighting parameters came from the US Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey data.¹¹ The population density parameter was derived from Census 2010 data. The telephone usage parameter came from an analysis of the July-December 2012 National Health Interview Survey.^{12 13}

Weighting was accomplished using Sample Balancing, a special iterative sample weighting program that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables using a statistical technique called the *Deming Algorithm*. Weights were trimmed to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on the final results. The use of these weights in statistical analysis ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the national population. Table 1 compares weighted and unweighted sample distributions to population parameters.

¹¹ ACS analysis was based on all people ages 16 and older excluding those living in institutional group quarters (GCs).

¹²Blumberg SJ, Luke JV. Wireless substitution: Early release of estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, July-December, 2012. National Center for Health Statistics. June 2013.

¹³ The phone use parameter used for this 16+ sample is the same as the parameter we use for all 18+ surveys. No adjustment was made to account for the fact that the target population for this survey is slightly different than a standard 18+ general population survey.

Table 1: Sample Demographics

	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Unweighted</u>	<u>Weighted</u>
<u>Gender</u>			
	Male	48.2	45.6
	Female	51.8	54.4
<u>Age</u>			
	16-24	15.2	13.5
	25-34	17.0	11.7
	35-44	16.9	12.8
	45-54	18.4	16.7
	55-64	15.8	19.6
	65+	16.7	25.7
<u>Education</u>			
	HS Graduate or Less	44.5	37.7
	Some College/Assoc. Degree	29.8	26.2
	College Graduate	25.7	36.1
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>			
	White/not Hispanic	66.3	71.1
	Black/not Hispanic	11.5	11.2
	Hisp - US born	7.5	6.5
	Hisp - born outside	7.4	5.4
	Other/not Hispanic	7.3	5.8
<u>Region</u>			
	Northeast	18.1	16.5
	Midwest	21.5	24.3
	South	37.1	36.7
	West	23.3	22.4
<u>County Pop. Density</u>			
	1 - Lowest	19.9	24.1
	2	20.0	20.5
	3	20.1	21.3
	4	20.0	18.3
	5 - Highest	20.0	15.7
<u>Household Phone Use</u>			
	LLO	6.5	4.9
	Dual - few, some cell	35.9	50.7
	Dual - most cell	18.3	18.7
	CPO	39.3	25.7

Effects of Sample Design on Statistical Inference

Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. PSRAI calculates the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from unequal weights. The total sample design effect for this survey is 1.25.

PSRAI calculates the composite design effect for a sample of size n , with each case having a weight, w_i as:

$$deff = \frac{n \sum_{i=1}^n w_i^2}{\left(\sum_{i=1}^n w_i \right)^2} \quad \text{formula 1}$$

In a wide range of situations, the adjusted *standard error* of a statistic should be calculated by multiplying the usual formula by the square root of the design effect (\sqrt{deff}). Thus, the formula for computing the 95% confidence interval around a percentage is:

$$\hat{p} \pm \left(\sqrt{deff} \times 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}} \right) \quad \text{formula 2}$$

where \hat{p} is the sample estimate and n is the unweighted number of sample cases in the group being considered.

The survey's *margin of error* is the largest 95% confidence interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample—the one around 50%. For example, the margin of error for the entire sample is ± 1.4 percentage points. This means that in 95 out every 100 samples drawn using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 1.4 percentage points away from their true values in the population. It is important to remember that sampling fluctuations are only one possible source of error in a survey estimate. Other sources, such as respondent selection bias, questionnaire wording and reporting inaccuracy, may contribute additional error of greater or lesser magnitude.

Response Rate

Table 2 reports the disposition of all sampled telephone numbers ever dialed from the original telephone number samples. The response rate estimates the fraction of all eligible respondents in

the sample that were ultimately interviewed. At PSRAI it is calculated by taking the product of three component rates:¹⁴

- Contact rate – the proportion of working numbers where a request for interview was made¹⁵
- Cooperation rate – the proportion of contacted numbers where a consent for interview was at least initially obtained, versus those refused
- Completion rate – the proportion of initially cooperating and eligible interviews that were completed

Thus the response rate for the landline sample was 10 percent. The response rate for the cellular sample was 13 percent.

¹⁴ PSRAI's disposition codes and reporting are consistent with the American Association for Public Opinion Research standards.

¹⁵ PSRAI assumes that 75 percent of cases that result in a constant disposition of "No answer" or "Busy" are actually not working numbers.

Sample Disposition

<u>Landline</u>	<u>Cell</u>	
116,709	61,496	Total Numbers Dialed
5,165	1,052	Non-residential
4,316	225	Computer/Fax
30	0	Cell phone
70,002	25,290	Other not working
5,084	497	Additional projected not working
32,113	34,432	Working numbers
27.5%	56.0%	Working Rate
1,695	166	No Answer / Busy
8,341	6,795	Voice Mail
116	50	Other Non-Contact
21,961	27,421	Contacted numbers
68.4%	79.6%	Contact Rate
843	3,543	Callback
17,666	19,219	Refusal
3,452	4659	Cooperating numbers
15.7%	17.0%	Cooperation Rate
204	228	Language Barrier
0	1,250	Child's cell phone
3,248	3,181	Eligible numbers
94.1%	68.3%	Eligibility Rate
126	78	Break-off
3,122	3,103	Completes
96.1%	97.5%	Completion Rate
10.3%	13.2%	Response Rate