

PewResearchCenter

New data on how Americans use and engage with public libraries

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About our libraries research



Nationally representative
telephone surveys

Landlines and cell phones

English and Spanish

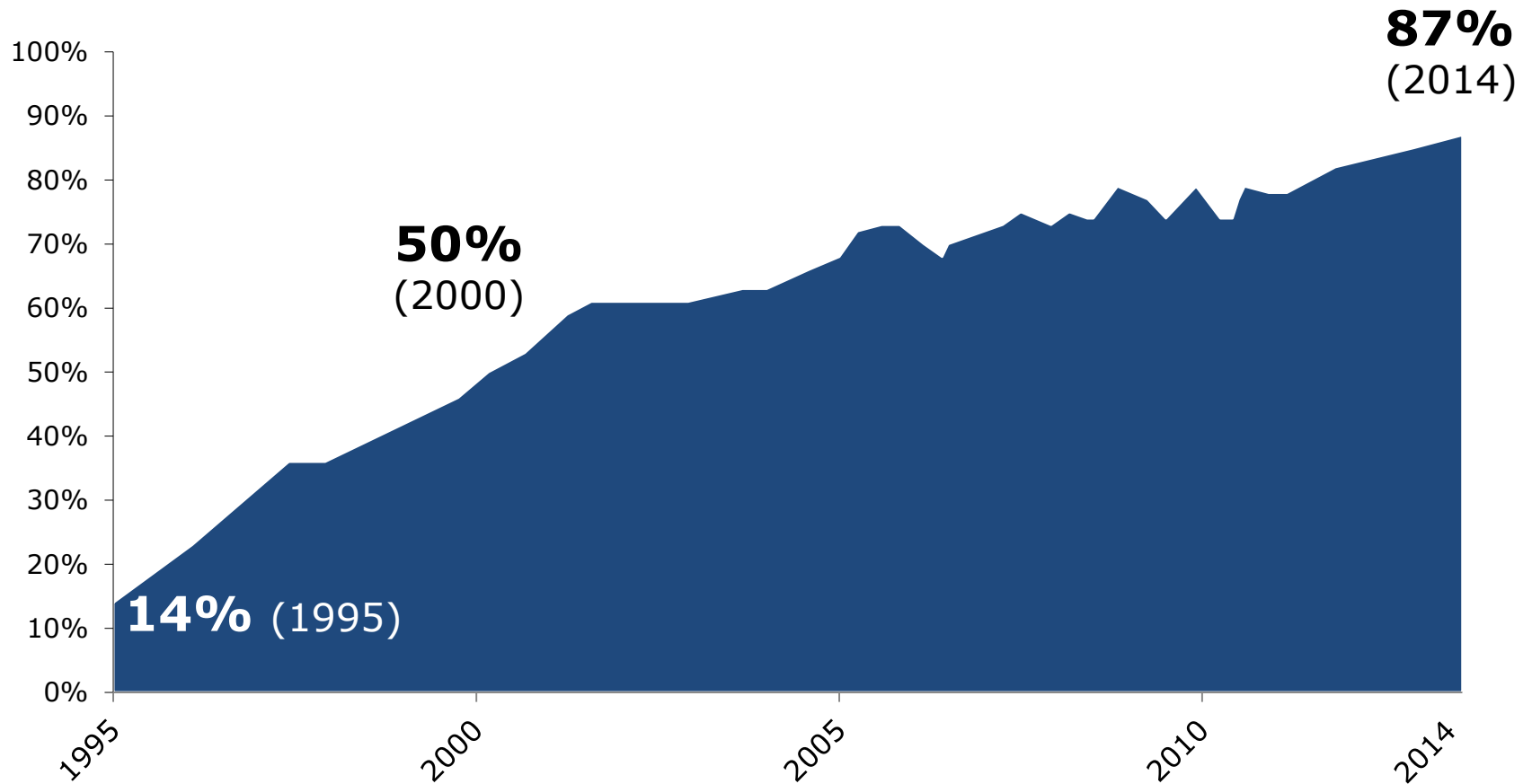
Americans ages 16 and older

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Internet use over time

% of U.S. adults ages 18+ who go online, 1995-present



Adults' technology ownership in the U.S. (ages 18+)

- 90% of adults have a cell phone
- 78% have a desktop or laptop computer
- **58% have a smartphone**
- **42% have a tablet computer**
- **32% have an e-reader**





71% of teens with home computer access say the laptop or desktop they use most often is one they share with other family members.



Americans' reading habits

Print is still the anchor of Americans' reading habits, but e-reading is growing more popular.

- 76% of adults read a book in some format over the previous year.
 - Median: 5 books per year
- 28% of Americans read an e-book in the previous year.



Americans and public libraries

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 - 48% visited in person
 - 30% used a library website
- 72% of Americans live in a “library household”

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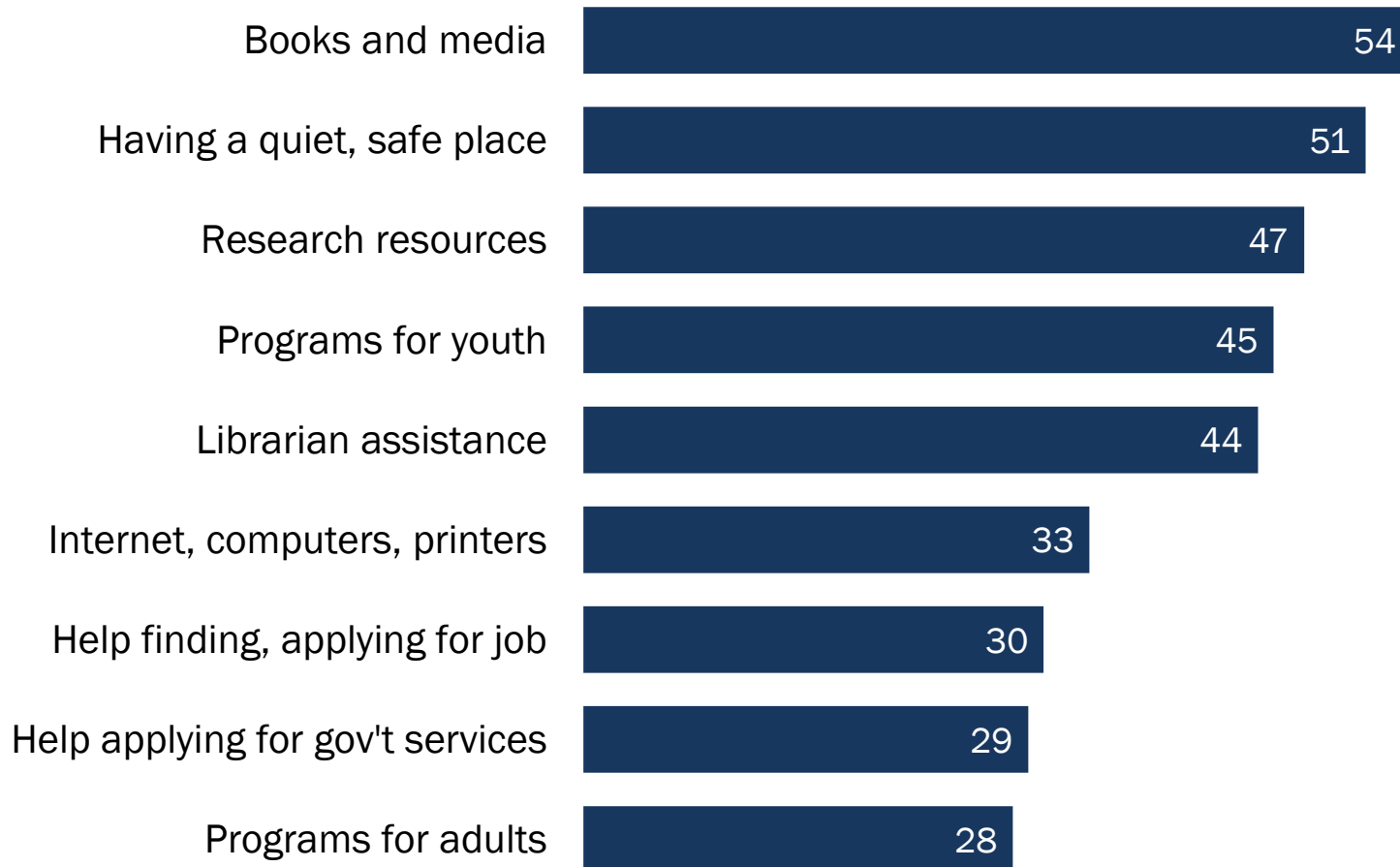
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- Relationships to libraries are part of Americans’ broader resource networks

Public library services that are “very important”

Among Americans who have ever used a public library or had a household member use a public library



What do Americans want from libraries?



More activities, more separate spaces

...and print books, quiet

Convenience & tech (apps, e-books, kiosks)

... and closer relationships with librarians

Summary: How Americans use libraries

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- Relationships to libraries are part of Americans' broader resource networks
- Once libraries are a part of their networks, services are especially important to low-income households
- Books, browsing, and librarians are still central to how people use libraries and what they expect from them.
- However, technology (computers, internet) is also a common use and a high priority.
- Public libraries are also used and viewed as important community spaces.

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Thank you!

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