

# LibraryCrunch

Service for the Next Generation Library: A Library 2.0 Perspective by Michael Casey

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## Generation Y and Libraries

A [survey released this weekend](#) on library use and Generation Y seems to have struck many by surprise.

*More than half of Americans visited a library in the past year with many of them drawn in by the computers rather than the books, according to a survey released on Sunday.*

*Of the 53 percent of U.S. adults who said they visited a library in 2007, the biggest users were young adults aged 18 to 30 in the tech-loving group known as Generation Y, the survey by the Pew Internet & American Life Project said.*

*"These findings turn our thinking about libraries upside down," said Leigh Estabrook, a professor emerita at the University of Illinois and co-author of a report on the survey results.*

What confuses me is not the percentage of library users under 30 but the shock expressed by the statisticians. Even Lee Rainie, PEW's statistics guru, expressed amazement.

*The survey showed 62 percent of Generation Y respondents said they visited a public library in the past year...*

*"We were surprised by these findings, particularly in relation to Generation Y," said Lee Rainie, co-author of the study and director of the Pew project.*

But we've been seeing this convergence for a long time now. Library use by Gen Y should come as no surprise to anyone who has been following library trends over the past three years, but perhaps this will be a wakeup call for those who haven't been following the discussions regarding technology and our users.

Posted by Michael on December 31, 2007 06:30 AM | [Permalink](#)

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I don't what generation I'm in. Like asking my age I guess.

I'm one of those "read the first third of the book guys, unfortunately." So, the library is perfect for me and our local Columbus is awesome; new titles quickly on the shelf.

Posted by: [Dave](#) | [December 31, 2007 08:44 AM](#)

Leigh was my fantastic advisor in grad school.

But I agree with you. It is no surprise to me that many people, particularly the under-30 crowd, are coming in to use computers more than books. I guess it has taken a while for this understanding to permeate the whole of the library community.

Hopefully this survey will help clarify this for those libraries that have resisted researching and investing in newer technologies as ways satisfy our users (and reach new ones). Though, of course, I still say it isn't all about technology. :)

Laura

Posted by: Laura Savastinuk | [December 31, 2007 01:47 PM](#)

It sometimes (in some discussions) seems as if the library has to be one thing or the other.

You can have a "good" library consisting of books as well as computers and other items of interest for generation Y. There is really no need for fear of one generation dominating or excluding the other.

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