

**EUGENE PUBLIC LIBRARY SURVEY:  
METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS  
NOVEMBER, 2001**

SURVEY RESPONDENT PROFILE  
LIBRARY USE  
SATISFACTION  
KNOWLEDGE AND FUNDING PREFERENCES  
FOCUS ON LATINOS



OREGON SURVEY RESEARCH LABORATORY  
5245 UNIVERSITY OF OREGON  
EUGENE, OR 97403-5245  
TELEPHONE: 541-346-0824  
FACSIMILE: 541-346-0388  
EMAIL: OSRL@OREGON.UOREGON.EDU  
WWW: DARKWING.UOREGON.EDU/~OSRL

By Patricia A. Gwartney, Ph.D., Director  
and Prapimporn (Noy) Rathakette, Ph.D., Research Assistant

## **INTRODUCTION**

In order to find better ways to serve the Eugene community's needs and to better allocate scarce resources, the Eugene Public Library contracted with the University of Oregon Survey Research Laboratory (OSRL) to conduct survey research on city residents' library use, library satisfaction, and their knowledge and preferences for funding options. Working closely with library representatives Claire Ribaud and Connie Bennett, OSRL planned, pre-tested, and implemented a telephone survey of 489 Eugene residents in November 2001. The study included an over-sample of 104 self-identified Latinos and Hispanics to enable focused analysis of this community group's particular views and needs.

This report summarizes the survey methodology and results. The first section reports the survey methodology and the second section digests the substantive survey results.

## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

This section describes OSRL's procedures for developing and implementing the telephone survey instrument and sample to conduct this representative study of the Eugene community.

### **SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

The survey instrument resulted from intensive meetings between library and OSRL representatives, who collaborated to identify key concepts and operationalize them into survey questions. Some questions replicate those asked in previous library and community surveys, to provide points of comparison and the ability to assess reliability. Most questions, however, were originals.

OSRL staff pretested individual questions for clarity, accuracy, validity, and variability of response. They pretested the entire instrument for flow, comprehensiveness, length, and factors which affect respondents' cooperation and attention. OSRL Project Directors Brian Wolf and Vikas Gumbhir programmed the survey instrument and sample into OSRL's computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI) system and staff members further pretested it.

The survey's broad goals were to obtain valid and reliable information about Eugene city residents' use of the sundry services provided by library, their satisfaction with various library services, and their knowledge and preferences for library funding options. Under that broad umbrella, OSRL designed the survey to target the following specific topics:

1. **General library use:** Current and previous library card ownership; visits to library downtown, Bethel Branch, and Sheldon Branch; frequency of visits; use of Bookmobile, Homebound service, telephone reference line, and the library World Wide Web (WWW) site; use of other libraries in community; and reasons for not using the library.
2. **Specific library use:** How survey respondents use the library, e.g., checking out and returning books, videos, CDs, or cassette tapes; finding information or specific facts for work, classes, hobby, and personal curiosity; reading or browsing magazines, newspapers, books, websites, electronic databases, and online journals; relaxing and socializing; and accessing the library's computer catalogue both on-site and from home. Ability to find needed materials; frequency of finding needed materials; and ease or difficulty of using computerized catalogue.
3. **Non-English language materials:** Whether household members speak or study another language; if yes, which language; quality of that language's resources at the library; whether that language receives a fair share of resources; and children's use of non-English language library materials.
4. **Library satisfaction:** Overall feelings toward the library; overall quality rating; whether the library now is better or worse than ten years ago; satisfaction with various dimensions of library services (materials and collections, collection maintenance, technological adaption, fund allocation, future planning, hours of operation, public information) and library staff (welcoming, availability, responsiveness, knowledge, accuracy).
5. **Knowledge:** library information sources; knowledge of how to reach the library; knowledge of new downtown library; and knowledge of branch libraries' funding levy.
6. **Voting behavior and plans:** Registered voter status; city election voting frequency; and voting intentions for spring 2002 levy.
7. **Household information:** Zip code; home ownership; computer ownership and WWW access; household size; presence of children in certain age categories; children's attendance of preschool and summer programs; presence of disabled household member; presence of reading disability or dislike; and household income.
8. **Individual information:** Years lived in Eugene; age; sex; race/ethnicity; educational attainment; labor force status; on-the-job WWW access; computer skill; and whether the interviewer conducted the interview in Spanish.

The interviews included household and individual information to provide a profile of survey respondents and to assess points of variability in the survey results, presented below. All interviews were completely anonymous. OSRL obtained human subjects approval from the University of Oregon. Library representatives approved the final survey instrument.

Section 2 of the three-ring binder documenting this study provides a facsimile of the survey instrument with embedded "topline" frequency results.

#### SURVEY SAMPLE

This study aimed to achieve both a random sample of approximately 400 respondents representing the entire Eugene community and a representative oversample of 100 Eugene households who self-reported Latino or Hispanic race/ethnicity. The oversample recognizes the Latino community's growth and increasing importance in Eugene.

In order to achieve these goals, OSRL employed a combined sampling procedure. The base study sample utilized a random-digit-dial procedure (RDD). For the Latino oversample, OSRL purchased a

representative list of Spanish-surname telephone numbers, and then randomly imported the list into the study sample in the CATI system. The RDD sampling procedure produced approximately one-fifth of the 104 Latino respondents in the study; the remaining four-fifths came from the random-from-list procedure.

Self-reported race and ethnicity enhances survey results' validity and reliability and complies with the U. S. Census Bureau's and the United Nation's recommendations for operationalizing race and ethnicity in surveys. Specifically, this means that how survey respondents define their own race and ethnicity achieves more accurate and repeatable data than externally-imposed definitions by researchers, government agencies, or survey interviewers.

Note, too, that the terms "race" and "ethnicity" represent differing social constructs about socially significant characteristics. "Race" refers to biologically-transmitted traits, such as skin tone, hair texture, and facial features. "Ethnicity" refers to culturally-transmitted traits, such as shared language, religion, food preferences, ritual, marriage patterns, and migration histories. The terms "Hispanic" or "Latino" represent the U.S.'s only census-defined ethnic group, and this report uses the terms interchangeably. Self-identification as "Hispanic" or "Latino" may derive from ancestry, marriage or cultural heritage from countries in South America and Central America, as well as Mexico, Spain, and Portugal. While the U.S. Census Bureau treats race and ethnicity as separate constructs (for Latinos may be white- or black-skinned), both Census and OSRL have found that Latinos increasingly consider themselves as a race. After years of experimentation, and in order to reduce respondent burden, OSRL now usually incorporates "Hispanic/Latino" as a race category; however, in this survey we did not. Rather, interviewers asked "Are you of Mexican-American, Latin American, or Hispanic heritage?" Only those who answered "no" were asked the race question.

Survey sampling errors are calculated to assist data users in assessing how much confidence to place in a particular survey result. Large random samples reduce sampling error. Survey question results with low variability also have less sampling error; for example, a variable with a 50/50 proportional split has wider confidence intervals than a variable with a 5/95 proportional split. By convention, survey researchers present the most conservative sampling error, i.e., that for a 50/50 split.

For this study's *combined sample* of  $n=489$ , the sampling error on a variable with a 50/50 proportional split is  $\pm 4.4$  percentage points (at the 95% confidence level). For a variable with a 5/95 proportional split, the sampling error is  $\pm 1.9$  percentage points. For the *base sample*  $n=400$ , the parallel figures are  $\pm 4.9$  and  $\pm 2.9$  percentage points. For the *Latino sample*  $n=104$ , the parallel figures are  $\pm 9.7$  and  $\pm 4.2$  percentage points.

Importantly, sampling error is just one source of potential error in surveys. Errors also can arise from biased or misleading questions, from improperly trained, motivated or supervised interviewers, or from inaccurate interpretation of results. OSRL works hard to minimize all sources of survey error.

To assure the survey data's reliability, we compared selected demographic data in the base survey sample to census population data. The index of dissimilarity (a common statistic used to compare groups) showed just 2% differences in the distributions of race, ethnicity, home ownership, and children in household between the base sample and census.

## DATA COLLECTION

Interviewer training for this survey took place on November 2, 2001; see Section 3 for summary interviewer instructions. A library representative attended the training session. Only experienced interviewers took part in this study's data collection.

OSRL conducted interviewing from 9:00 AM until 9:00 PM seven days per week (except Sundays, which start at noon) in order to reach citizens with unusual schedules and to avoid nonresponse biases. The target sample size for the base study, n=400, was completed November 19<sup>th</sup>. In the base sample, 29 respondents reported Latino heritage. Spanish-speaking interviewers continued interviewing on the random-from-list sample until the target sample size of 100 Latino interviews was completed. In these, interviewers confirmed respondents' heritage before beginning each interview. On December 9<sup>th</sup>, the Latino oversample finished, with n=104, including 50 interviews conducted in Spanish. Completed interviews averaged 13 minutes.

Altogether, OSRL interviewers made 10,682 calls to complete 489 interviews, making up to 22 calls to each valid telephone number. OSRL interviewers reached answering machines in 3,576 dial attempts (33%); telephones rang unanswered 2,914 times (27% of all dial attempts); interviewers received busy signals for 1,453 (14%); 813 numbers were unusable because the number was non-working, disconnected, wrong or a fax/modem line (8%); adult subjects were present but "too busy" 463 times (4%); subjects were not present 212 times (2%); 198 cases were ineligible because the household was not in Eugene city limits (2%); and telephone screening devices were reached 10 times. At some point during data collection 71 telephone numbers were recorded as "language barrier" (<1%), but all were resolved by the study's completion. Interviewers received "phone slams" and refusals 407 times (4% of all dial attempts), but resolved 259 of those by the study's end. In 56 cases, an in-progress interview was interrupted (<1%); interviewers completed all but three of these with callbacks. Seven cases could not be interviewed because the respondent was hearing disabled, too ill, or away during the study dates. Completed interviews occurred in 489 calls (5% of all dial attempts).

Ultimately, the survey achieved a 67.4% CASRO response rate and a 7.7% refusal rate. Both figures are considered excellent. Section 4 of the three-ring binder provides a complete sample and response rate report.<sup>1</sup>

In administering the survey instrument, OSRL's trained interviewers use a computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI) system, which enables sampling, interviewing, and data entry interactively and seamlessly. Interviewers use telephone headsets in sound-reduced carrels at computer workstations connected by an NT network. CATI randomly distributes telephone numbers which appear automatically at each workstation, mated to pre-programmed survey instruments. Interviewers place telephone calls with a computer keystroke, effectively preventing dialing errors. OSRL automatically strips telephone numbers from the interview data to ensure respondents' anonymity.

The programmed survey instrument contains all survey questions, interviewer probes for consistency, and pre-coded answer categories. As respondents answer questions, interviewers enter the data into the CATI data file. Skip logic is programmed into the system, preventing inappropriate or incorrect questions from being asked. CATI eliminates out-of-range responses and wild codes by validating each response interactively and disallowing entry of inappropriate responses. Thus, the CATI system eliminates many routine and error-prone coding and data entry tasks and enables OSRL to maintain the highest quality control standards.

---

<sup>1</sup> CASRO = Council of American Survey Research Organizations. CASRO response rates, the most rigorous industry standard, are calculated in following manner. Completed interview / (Eligible sample + ((Eligible sample / (Eligible sample + Ineligible sample)) \* Sample with unknown status)). Source: Robert M. Groves, *Survey Errors and Survey Costs*, 1989.

## SURVEY RESULTS

We present the survey results around the following subject areas: how the people of Eugene use their public library, their satisfaction with the library, and their library funding knowledge and preferences. We devote a special analysis section to Latinos. For context, we begin with a profile of survey respondents and their households.

Readers of this report may refer to over ninety Banner Tables in Section 6 of the three-ring binder for more detail on the survey results for the combined survey sample (base sample plus Latino sample). In the Banner Tables, each survey question is cross-tabulated with a range of demographic and library use indicators. The banner data include counts and percentages for each question overall, and counts and percentages for each row and column of the cross-tabulation. See Section 5 for instructions on how to read Banner Tables. Section 7 contains respondents' narrative answers to open-ended questions. Readers also may refer to the "topline" survey results for the base sample in Section 2.

This analysis relies upon the "topline" survey results for the base sample, because those results are most generalizable to the Eugene population. To present variations in the results and to focus on Latinos, the analysis relies upon the banner tables for the combined samples.<sup>2</sup>

### PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

To provide a context for understanding the study results, we present a social and demographic profile of survey respondents and their households (see Figures 1 and 2).

*Household residence:* Thirty percent of the survey respondents in the base sample reported residing in West Eugene's zip code 97402; 28% reported South Eugene's zip code 97405; 22% said downtown Eugene 97401; 8% said North Eugene 97404; and 5% said East Eugene 97403. Over half of the respondents, 54%, owned their homes, while 44% rented and 2% had other arrangements, such as unpaid work in exchange for room.

*Household size and composition:* Twenty-four percent of respondents lived alone; 34% shared their home with one other person; 20% lived with two other persons; 12% lived with three other persons; and 8% lived with four to eight other persons. Just 30% of respondents lived with children less than age 18 in their home.

Twelve percent of all households contained children ages zero to four; 15% contained children ages five to eleven; and 15% contained children ages twelve to seventeen. Among households with infants and toddlers, 43% attended a preschool of some kind. Among households with grade-school children, 28% attended after-school activities and 48% attended summer programs.<sup>3</sup> Note, however, that households with children in preschool comprise just 5% of the entire base sample, and those with children in after-school activities and summer programs comprise 4% and 7%, respectively.

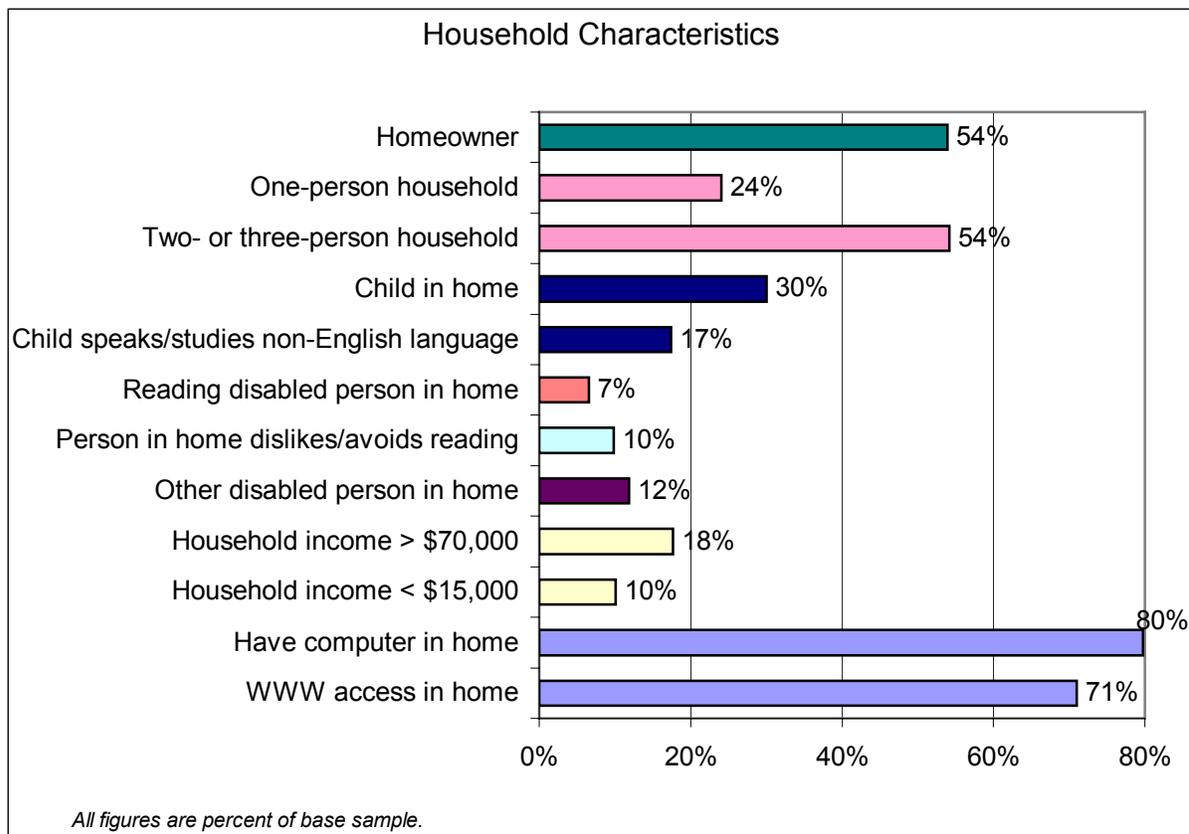
---

<sup>2</sup> The survey data for the combined samples were not statistically weighted to reflect population parameters for three fundamental reasons: 1) to best compare Latinos to the base sample requires unweighted data; 2) weighting costs more money and time than the study budget could afford; and 3) weighting tends to confuse many people who might wish to use the results.

<sup>3</sup> Importantly, the unit of analysis in this narrative is the household, not the child. The survey found that 43% of households with infants and toddlers sent children to a preschool program. But we *cannot* conclude that 43% infants and toddlers attended preschool, because the survey did not ask.

*Households with non-English languages:* Library users were asked whether any household member speaks or has studied a language other than English. Fully two-thirds answered affirmatively: 28% of households contained persons who studied another language; 23% contained persons who both spoke another language and took classes; and 13% appear to contain native speakers (i.e., a person speaks another language but has not taken classes in it). Asked which languages household members spoke or studied, 66% said Spanish, 13% French, 12% other European languages (e.g., German, Russian, Italian and Dutch), 2% Japanese, 3% other Asian languages (e.g., Thai, Vietnamese, Hindi and Urdu), and 4% “other”. None said Chinese or Korean.

**Figure 1: Household Characteristics**



Two-fifths of library users have children in their homes. Among households with children, 58% include children who speak or have studied another language. Extrapolating back to the population, about one in six Eugene households (17%) has children who speak or have studied another language. These encompass 29% who both speak and have studied another language; 17% who studied another language; and 12% apparently native speakers.<sup>4</sup> Most children spoke or studied Spanish; other languages included French, Japanese, Korean, and Russian.

*Household disabilities:* Seven percent of households in the base sample included a reading disabled person, and 10% included a member who dislikes or avoids reading because they “are not very good at it”. Twelve percent included a person with a “lasting physical, mental or emotional disability”.

<sup>4</sup> Children’s percentages should not be summed with household percentages; respondents undoubtedly included children’s other language use and study when answering for their households generally.

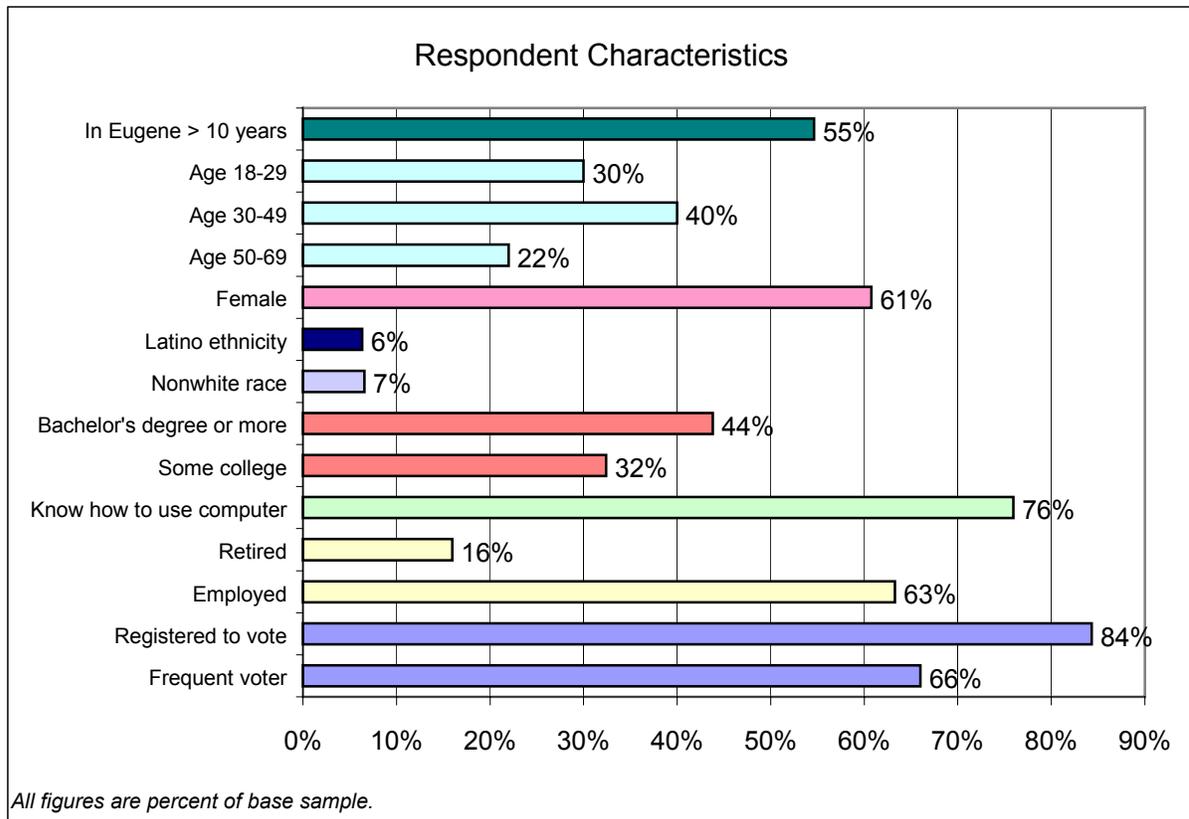
*Household income:* Median annual household income for the base sample fell just at \$40,000, i.e., half earned more and half earned less in 2001.<sup>5</sup> Ten percent of respondents reported household incomes of less than \$15,000 in 2001, 12% earned between \$15,000 and \$25,000, 20% earned \$25,000 to \$40,000, 24% earned \$40,000 to \$70,000, 11% earned \$70,000 to \$100,000, and 6% earned over \$100,000. Another 7% did not know their household's annual income and 10% refused to answer.

*Household computers and WWW access:* Eighty percent of Eugene households reported having a personal computer in the home. Of those, 91% could connect to the WWW, but 2% did not use that capability. Overall, this indicates that 71% of Eugene households currently access the WWW.

*Respondent years in Eugene:* The number of years respondents lived in Eugene ranged from zero to 93, with a median of 12. Ten percent reported living in Eugene one year or less, 31% said two to nine years, 17% said ten to 19 years, 16% said 20-29 years, 12% said 30-39 years, 7% said 40-49 years, and 6% said 50 or more years.

*Respondent age:* Respondents' ages ranged from 18 to 96, with a median age of 43. Those ages 18-19 comprised 3% of the base sample, ages 20-29 comprised 20%, ages 30-39 were 22%, ages 40-49 were 18%, ages 50-59 were 15%, ages 60-69 were 7%, ages 70-79 were 7%, ages 80 and greater were 4%; 3% refused to answer.

**Figure 2: Respondent Characteristics**



<sup>5</sup> Household income includes all household members' pre-tax wages, salary, tips, bonuses, commissions net income from a business, farm or rent, and exercised stock options or awards. It excludes money unrelated to jobs, such as interest, dividends, child support, alimony, welfare, social security, disability and retirement payments, as well as lump-sum payments, such as money from an inheritance or home sale.

*Respondent sex:* Three-fifths of respondents were women and two-fifths men. This seeming disparity is common in surveys because women outlive men, are more often home than men, and comply more often to survey requests than men.

*Respondent race/ethnicity:* In the base sample, 82% were white, 6% Latino, 3% Asian American or Pacific Islander, 2% African American, 1% American Indian, 1% mixed race, 1% “other” or Middle Eastern, and 1% refused. In the combined sample, 69% were white, 21% Latino, 3% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1% African American, 1% American Indian, 1% mixed race, and 1% “other” or refused.

*Respondent education:* Respondents’ modal educational attainment level was “some college, no degree”. Seven percent completed 0-12 years of education with no high school diploma or GED; 15% achieved a high school diploma or GED; 27% completed some college but no degree; 6% attained associate’s degrees; 26% completed bachelor’s degrees; 14% attained master’s degrees; and 4% attained doctorate or professional degrees. Additionally, 76% “know how to use a computer to create or edit documents or graphics, or to analyze data”; however, this figure includes 7% who volunteered that their skill was “little”.

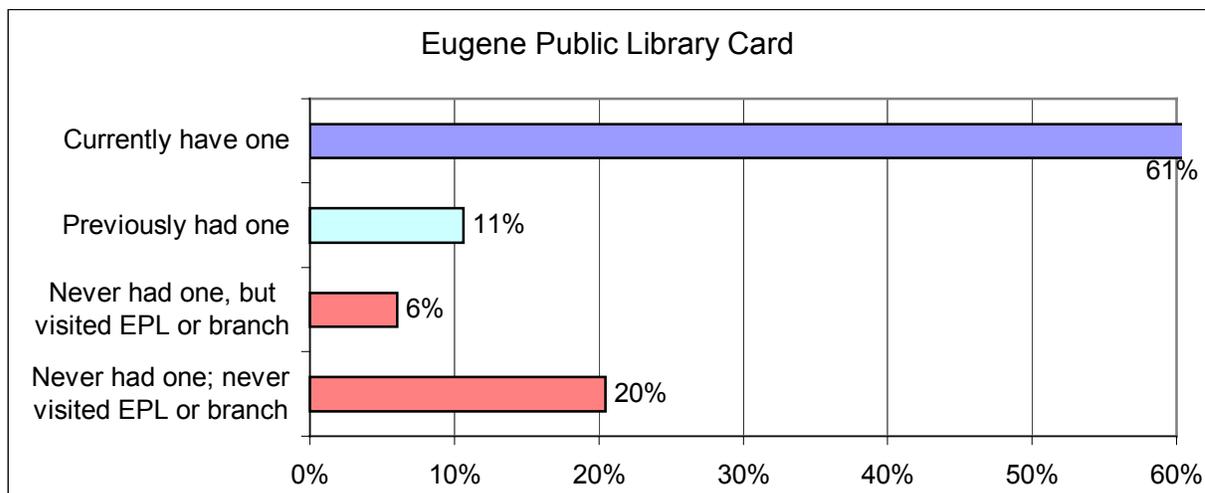
*Respondent labor force and employment status:* Sixty-three percent of the survey respondents reported full- or part-time employment; 5% said they were unemployed and looking for work; and 32% gave statuses considered “out of the labor force”. Those out of the labor force included 16% retired, 4% keeping house, 7% students, 3% disabled, and 1% “other”.

*Respondent voting:* Fully 84% of survey respondents in the base sample said they were registered voters. Their frequency of voting in city elections was 41% “every single time”, 38% “most of the time”, 10% “about half of the time”, 6% “less than half of the time”, and 4% never. Extrapolated to the city generally, about two thirds of adults always or usually vote in city elections.

#### HOW EUGENE HOUSEHOLDS USE THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The survey began by asking whether the respondent or any member of their household had a Eugene Public Library card; 61% answered affirmatively (see Figure 3). Among those who answered “no”, 11% of respondents or their households members reported previously having one.

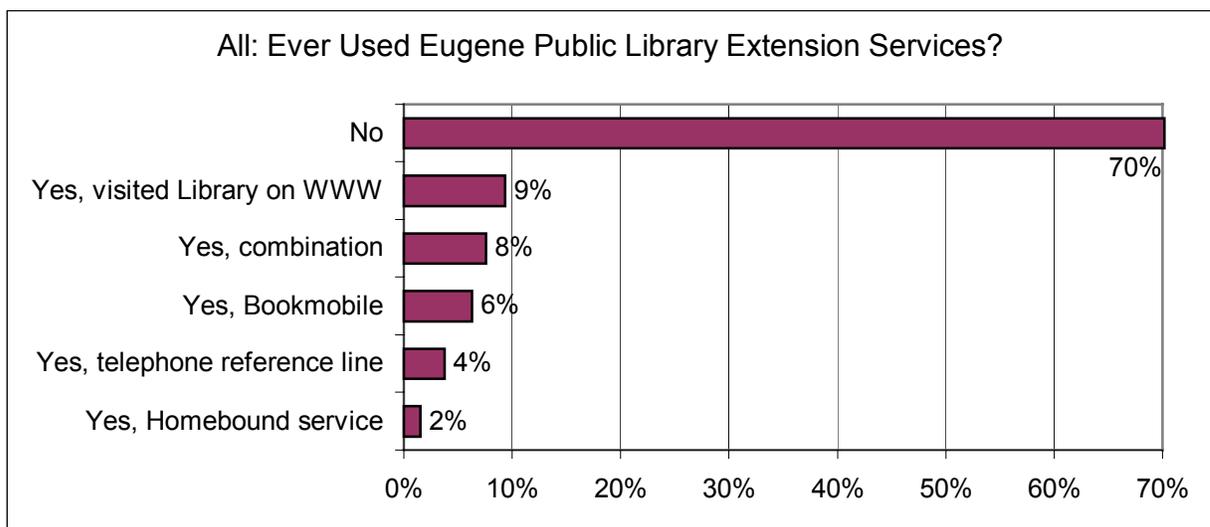
**Figure 3: Eugene Public Library Card**



The survey next asked those who never had library cards if they or household members ever visited the downtown Eugene Public Library, the Bethel Branch Library, or the Sheldon Branch Library; 6% answered affirmatively. These results suggest that roughly one fifth of Eugene households have never visited the local public library; but four-fifths have done so.

Even if they never visited the library, the survey next asked all respondents whether they or another member of their household ever used the library’s extension services, i.e., Bookmobile, Homebound service, telephone reference line, or World Wide Web site (see Figure 4). This question intended to tap contact for persons otherwise unable to use the library. Nine percent visited the library’s website, 6% used the Bookmobile, 4% used the telephone reference line, 21% used the Homebound service, and 8% used a combination of the above; 70% used no library extension service.

**Figure 4: Use of Eugene Public Library Extension Services**

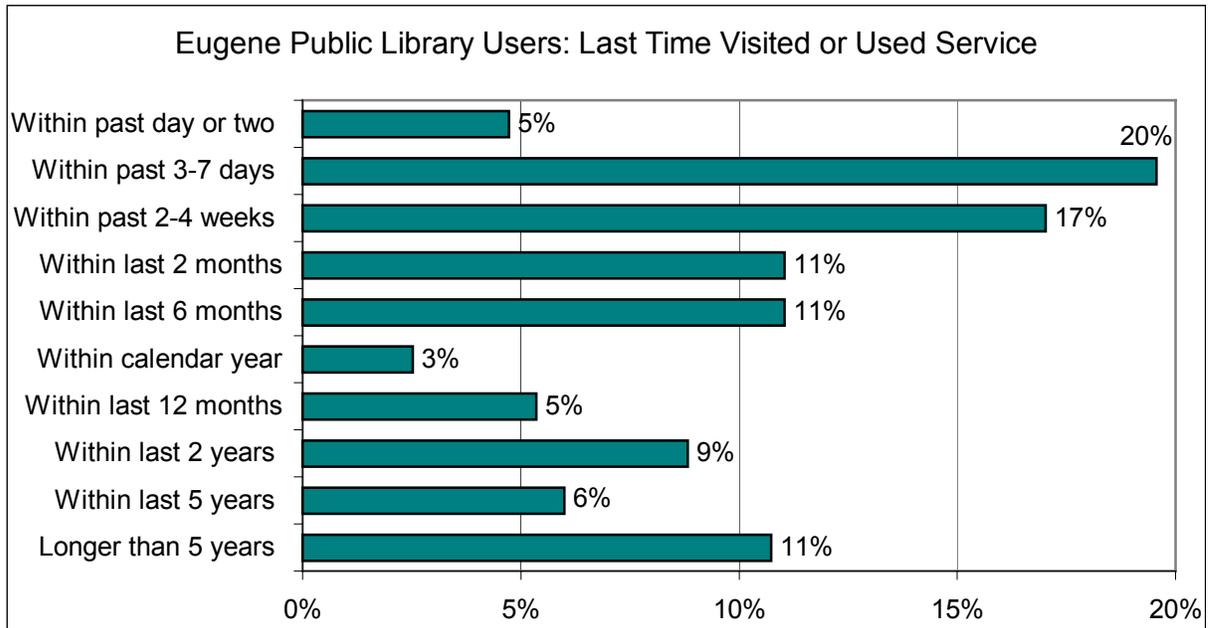


Respondents who reported any contact with the public library were next asked the last time that they or a household member either visited the library or used one of the extension services. One quarter answered that they used some aspect of the library in the preceding week (see Figure 5). Roughly another quarter used some aspect of the library in the preceding two to eight weeks. And roughly one fifth used some aspect of the library in the preceding two to twelve months. Thus, nearly three quarters of Eugene households had some contact with the public library in the preceding year. Only about one-tenth reported no contact in five years or longer.

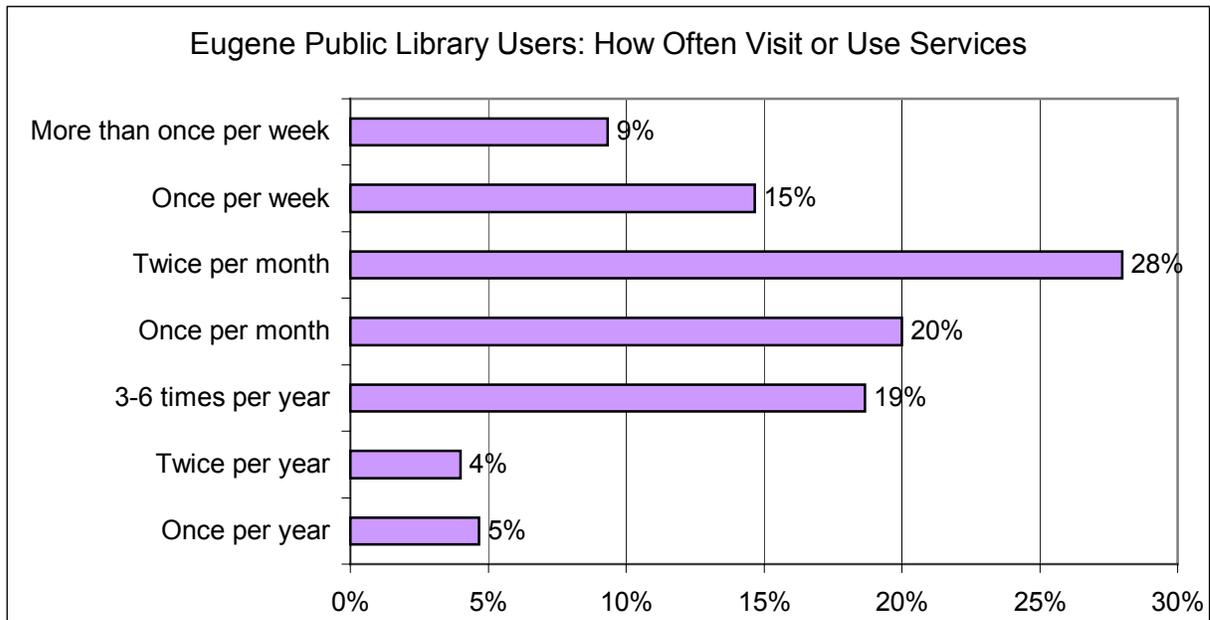
For those who used the library at all in the preceding calendar year, since January 2001 (38% of the base sample), the survey asked how many times per week or per month they or their household members visited the library or used its services. About one in eleven used the library more than once per week (see Figure 6). Fifteen percent used the library once per week, another 28% used it twice per month, and another 20% used it once per month. This indicates that nearly three-fourths of Eugene households who used the library in the preceding year did so once per month or more. And almost another fifth (19%) used it three to six times per year. Less than one tenth (9%) used the library or its services only once or twice per year.

Eugene library users visited the downtown library most (83%), followed by the Bethel branch library (8%), and the Sheldon branch (7%). Just 1% equally visited a combination of branches. Less than 1% never visited any branches, presumably only using the library's other services.

**Figure 5: Last Time Eugene Public Library Users Visited Library or Used Library Services**



**Figure 6: How Often Eugene Public Library Users Visit Library or Use Library Services**

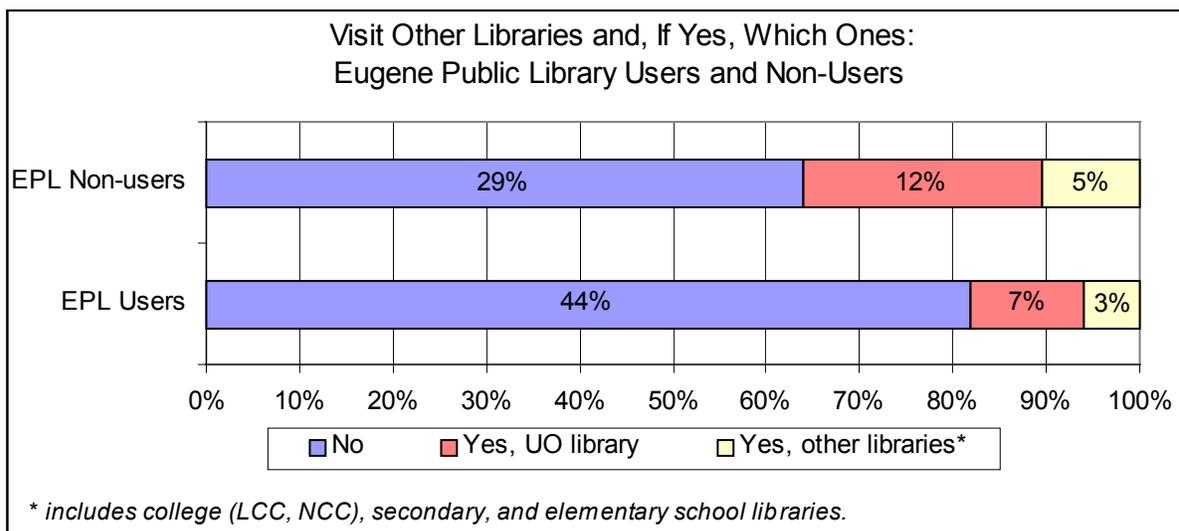


By this point in the survey, it was clear that approximately 54% of respondents and their households used some aspect of the Eugene Public Library and its services, but 46% did not. In order to ascertain whether non-users frequent other libraries differentially than users, the survey next asked separate “other library” questions for the two groups.

Library users were asked whether they and their household members “use another library in the community more frequently than the Eugene Public Library”. Seven percent used the University of Oregon libraries more frequently, 1% used another college library more frequently, 1% used a school library more frequently, and 1% used an “other” library more frequently(see Figure 7). Apparently, 44% of Eugene households only use the public library.

Library non-users were asked whether they and their household members “usually use another library in the community instead of the Eugene Public Library”. Twelve percent used the University of Oregon libraries instead, 2% used another college library, 1% used a school library, and 3% used an “other” library. Apparently, 29% of Eugene households use no library at all.

**Figure 7: Other Library Use, for Eugene Public Library Users and Non-Users**



Here, the survey instrument branched, asking library non-users an open-ended question about “the main reasons [they] do not use the Eugene Public Library”. Their detailed answers, and other answers to open-ended questions, may be found in another section of this report. Some of their reasons include: it’s too far away; do not go downtown; not enough materials; buy or own their books; use other libraries or closer libraries; too crowded; too busy; too small; not enough time; bad hours; and conflict with work hours. From here, non-users were skipped to the knowledge questions.

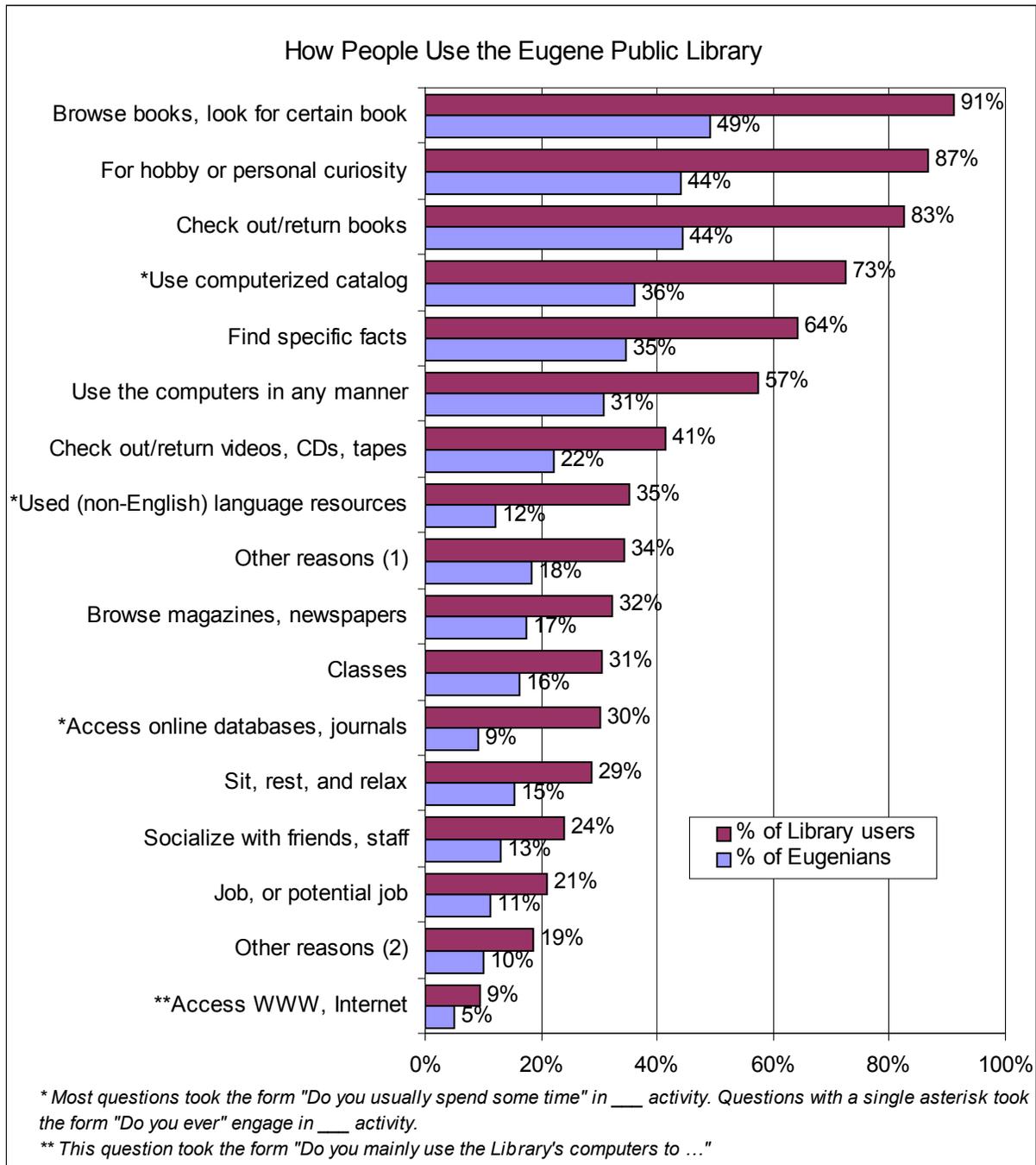
Library users next responded to a detailed series of yes/no questions about the activities in which they “usually spend some time” when visiting the public library. Figure 8 summarizes their answers and also provides estimates of the percentage of Eugene adults who engage in these library activities. Note that from hereon the survey focuses on respondents’ own behavior, not their household members’.

Ninety-one percent of library users “usually spend some time browsing the books or looking for a certain book”; 87% used the library “for a hobby or personal curiosity”; 83% check out or return books; and 73% used the computerized catalog. Of those who used the computerized catalog, 66%

used it at the library, and 32% used it both at the library and at home; none reported using the computer catalog only from home.

Sixty-four percent of library users found “specific facts”; 57% used the computers in some manner; 41% “usually checked out or returned other materials, such as videos, CDs, or cassette tapes”; and 35% “used resources in (a non-English) language at the Eugene Public Library”.

**Figure 8: How People Use the Eugene Public Library**

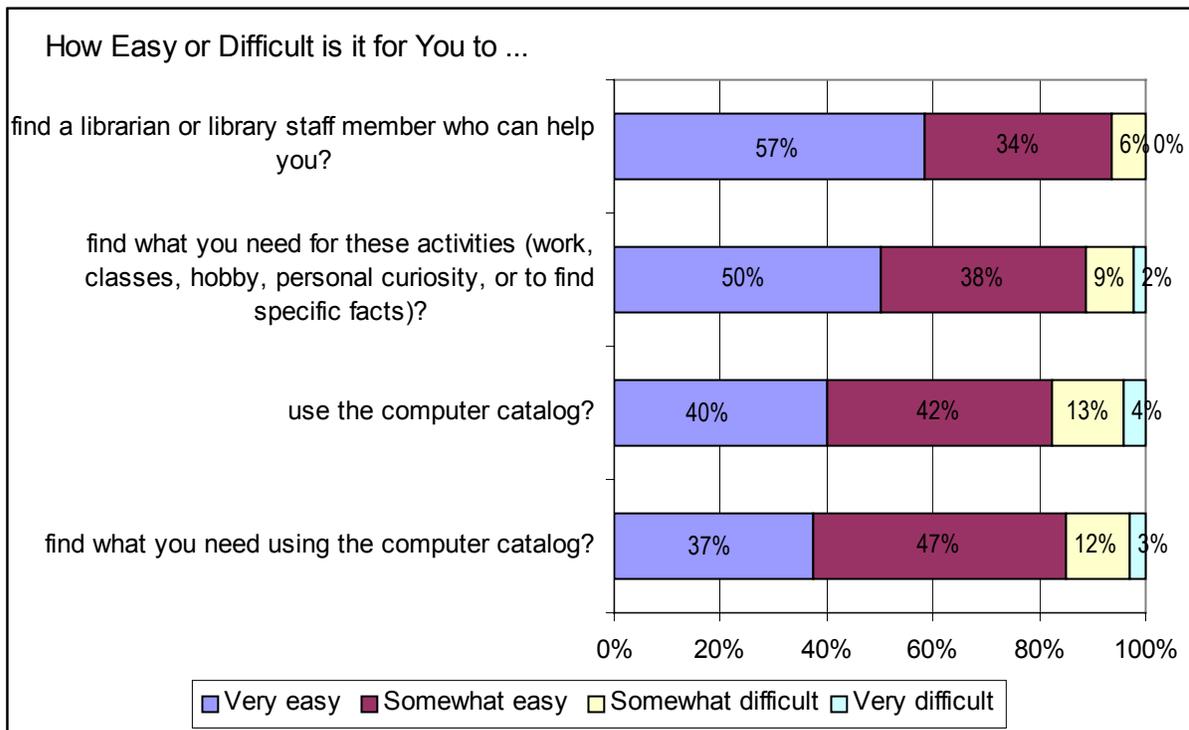


Almost one-third (32%) of library users “usually spend some time browsing the magazines or newspapers”; 31% used the library for classes; 30% accessed online databases or journals from library computers; 29% “usually sit, rest, and relax” when visiting the library; 24% “usually socialize with friends or with the staff”; and 21% used the library “for (their) job, or for a potential job”. Nine percent of library users, or only 5% of Eugene adults, “mainly use the library’s computers to access the World Wide Web or Internet”.

In two places, the survey asked library users about “other” reasons for visiting the public library. Their answers included: children’s activities, such as story time, shows, or performances; attending meetings; magazine or book sales; and looking at the public notice bulletin board.

Interwoven with the library activities questions were questions about library users’ ease or difficulty finding specific resources and finding help. Very few library users experienced difficulty finding resources or help (see Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Ease or Difficulty of Using Library Resources and Finding Help**



Ninety-one percent responded that finding a librarian or library staff member who could help them was “very easy” or “somewhat easy”. Of the 6% who experienced “some difficulty” finding a librarian or library staff member, 56% said staff were busy.

Among respondents who used the library for work, classes, hobby, personal curiosity, or to find specific facts, 88% found what they needed “very” or “somewhat” easily. Just 9% answered “somewhat difficult” and 2% “very difficult”.

Of those who used the computerized catalog (73%), over four-fifths (82%) found it “very easy” or “somewhat easy”, 12% found it “somewhat difficult”, and just 3% found it “very difficult” to use.

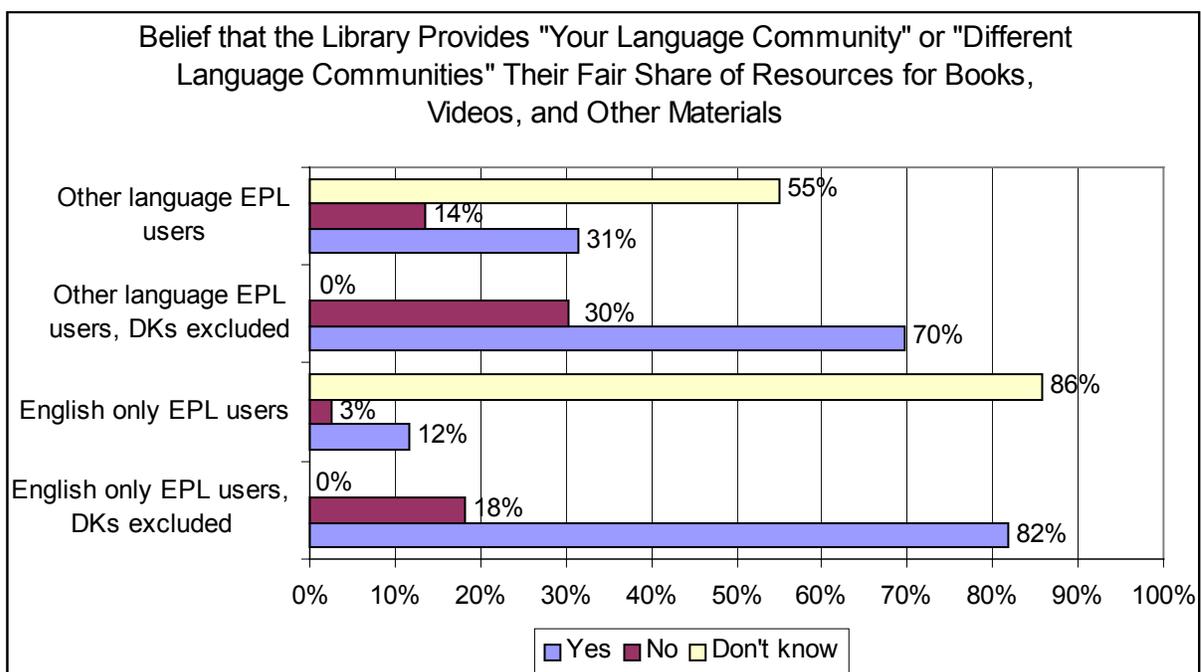
Eighty-four percent also found what they needed on the computer catalog “very” or “somewhat” easily. The 15% who found it “somewhat difficult” or “very difficult” offered the following reasons in answers to an open-ended question: unfamiliarity with the new computer system; a poor search engine; preferring the old card catalog; not knowing the author of needed material; and hating computers.

The Eugene Public Library expresses special concern about meeting the needs of community members who speak or study other languages. For this reason, a special question loop for library users ensued from this question: “Does any member of your household speak a language other than English, or has anyone taken classes to learn another language?” Fully 64% answered affirmatively, indicating that two of three library users’ households speaks or studies a non-English language (or previously did so). This includes 28% of households took classes, 23% both speak and took classes, and 13% apparently native speakers. The principal language was Spanish (66%).

Of those who spoke or studied other languages, 35% used the library’s non-English language resources. Their ratings of “the library’s selection of books, tapes, videos and other resources in that language” were mixed. Just 6% rated them “excellent”, 28% “very good”, 34% “good”, 14% “fair”, and 12% “poor”.

Nonetheless, many of those with household members who speak or studied other languages believed that the language receives its fair share of library resources. While a plurality (55%) did not know whether their language receives its fair share of resources (see first panel of Figure 10), among those who knew, fully 70% answered “yes” (second panel). In contrast, among those with no household members speaking or studying another language, 86% answered “don’t know” to the parallel question about “different language communities” (third panel). Among those who knew, fully 82% believed the library provides different communities their fair share of resources for books, videos, and other library materials (fourth panel).

**Figure 10: Do Non-English Languages Receive Their Fair Share of Library Resources?**



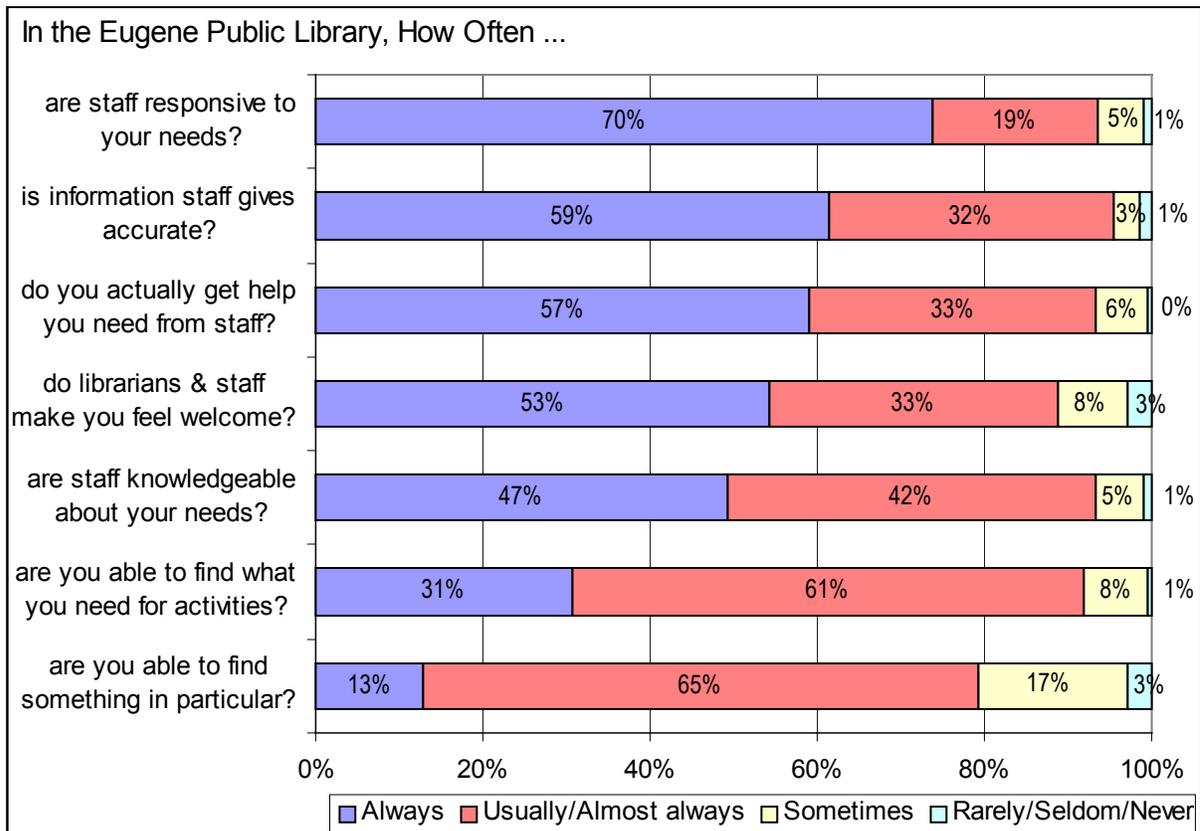
SATISFACTION WITH THE EUGENE PUBLIC LIBRARY

This report examines library satisfaction in three dimensions: 1) library users’ reported frequency of quality experiences on seven items, particularly concerning library staff; 2) library users’ quality ratings of seven library tasks and resources, and 3) summary opinions from both library users and non-users.

*Frequency of Quality Experiences:* When asked how frequently they experienced specific helpful, knowledgeable, and responsive behaviors with librarians and library staff, library users’ modal answers were “always” or “almost always” (see Figure 11<sup>6</sup>).

Fully 91% said that library staff “always” or “almost always” responded to their needs; 90% said the same about library staff providing both accurate information and needed help to users. Those who did not get needed help often said it was due to language barriers, specifically staff not speaking Spanish. Eighty-nine percent found the library staff knowledgeable about things they needed to know “always” or “almost always”; 86% reported the same about feeling welcomed by staff. These results agree with a previous one, in which 91% of library users found library staff for help “very” or “somewhat” easily.

**Figure 11: Frequency of Library Users’ Quality Experiences at the Library**



<sup>6</sup> In order to combine several questions’ frequency scales into one graph, we merged some categories. For example, several questions used the answer categories “always, usually, sometimes, rarely, or never” and several others used “always, almost always, sometimes, or seldom”. We merged the second categories “usually” and “almost always”. In addition, the last categories, “rarely, or never” and “seldom” received so few answers from respondents, that we had to merge them to make them visible on the graph.

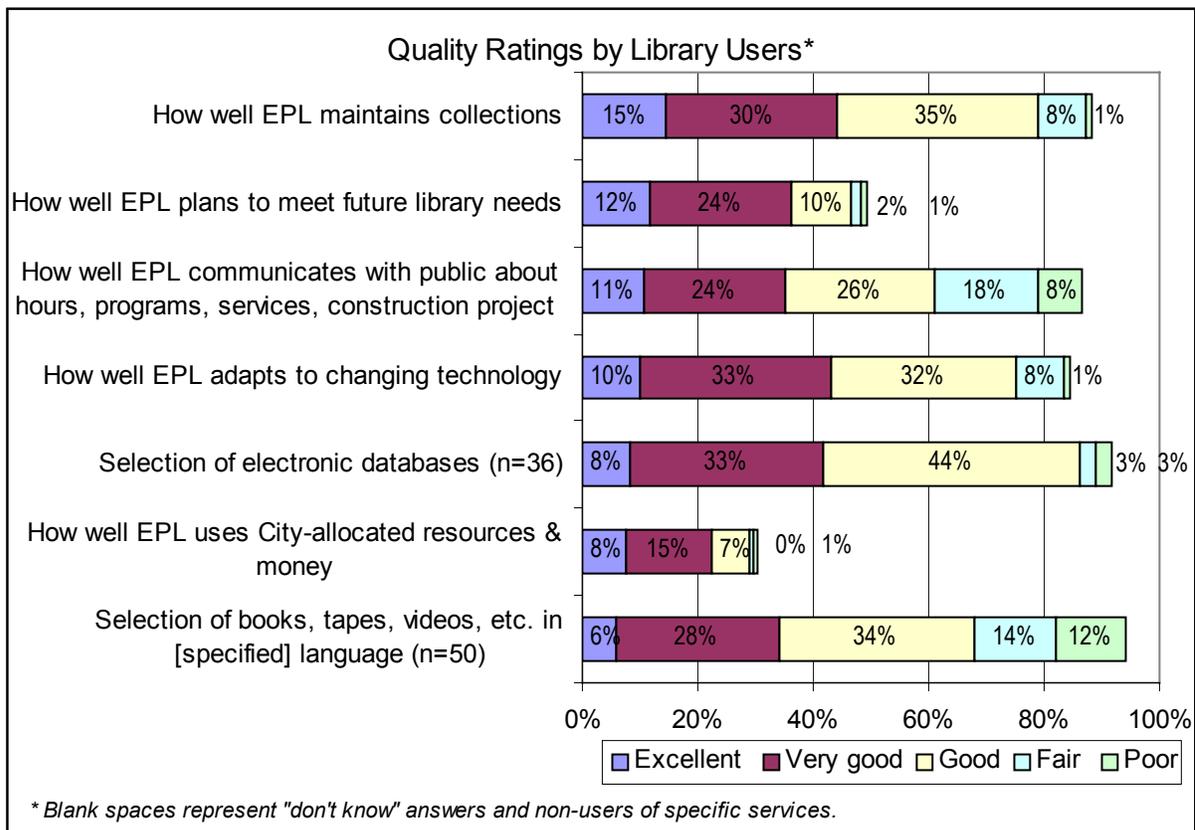
Library users also reported strongly positive experiences about finding needed resources. Among those who usually used the library for work, classes, hobbies, personal curiosity, or to find specific facts, 92% said they “always” or “usually” found what they needed for these activities; only 1% answered “rarely”. Among those who “visited the Library to find something in particular”, 78% said they “always” or “usually” found it; only 3% answered “rarely” or “never”.

*Library Task and Resource Quality Ratings:* The survey asked library users to rate five library tasks by “how good a job you think the Eugene Public Library does, using the scale excellent, very good, good, fair or poor”. The same quality rating scale applied to two library resource questions. The modal reply for the seven quality indicators was “very good” or “good”; only 6% to 15% of library users rated an indicator “excellent” and, likewise, very few library users rated the quality indicators “poor”.

Many respondents, however, lacked sufficient knowledge or experience to answer certain questions. To remove the potential stigma of respondents’ not knowing, some questions offered a “don’t know” answer category (examples provided below). For these reasons, “don’t know” replies ranged from 6% to 69% in answers to the seven quality rating questions.

To accommodate the disparate “don’t know” replies in the quality ratings, we present results in two ways: Figure 12 shows the “raw” quality answers, with “don’t know” replies indicated as blanks. Figure 13 shows the same data re-percentaged to exclude “don’t know” replies; in other words, Figure 13’s percentages include in the denominators only those library users who knew something about the questions’ subject matter.

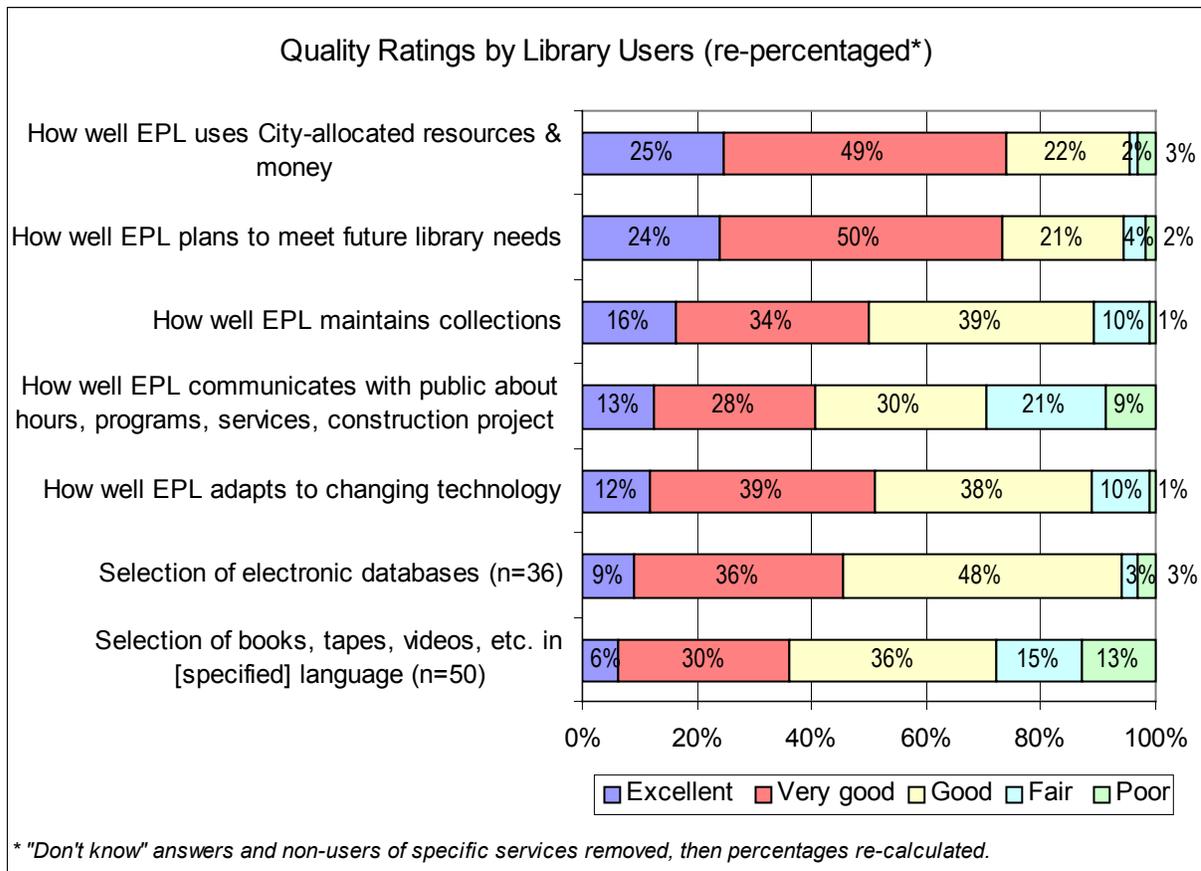
**Figure 12: Quality Ratings, with “Don’t Know” Answers Included in Denominator**



When asked “how well do you think the library maintains its collections”, 80% of public library users rated it positively: 15% “excellent”, 30% “very good”, and 35% “good”. However, 12% did not know how well the library maintains its collections; when considering only those who knew, 96% rated the library collection maintenance positively.

The question about “planning to meet citizens’ future library needs” offered “don’t know” as an answer category, and half the library users chose it. Among those who knew, 95% offered positive opinions: 24% “excellent”, 50% “very good”, and 21% “good”.

**Figure 13: Quality Ratings, with “Don’t Know” Answers Excluded from Denominator**



For “communicat[ing] with the public about ... hours, programs, services, and the downtown construction project”, 61% of library users voiced positive impressions: 11% “excellent”, 24% “very good”, and 26% “good”. Excluding “don’t know” replies from the denominator of the percentages, the overall positive ranking increases to 71%. However, 30% rated the library “fair” or “poor” on communicating with the public - the worst among the seven quality indicators. Respondents get most of their information about the library “from the library itself” (48%); in addition, 18% said they get most of their library information from newspapers, 7% from word-of-mouth, 5% from direct mail, 3% from World Wide Web, 2% from TV, 1% from radio, and 10% from a combination.

For “how well ... the Library adapts to changing technology”, 75% rated the library positively: 10% “excellent”, 33% “very good”, and 32% “good”. However, 16% did not know; when re-percentage to exclude “don’t know” replies, the overall positive ranking jumps to 89%.

Among those few library users who used the library's computers to access online databases and journals (9% of the base sample), 8% rated the selection of electronic databases "excellent", 33% said "very good" and 44% "good", for a summative positive rating of 85%. Excluding "don't knows", this figure increases to 94%.

The question about "how well ... the library uses the resources and money allocated by the City" offered "don't know" as an answer category, and two-thirds of library users chose it. Among those who knew, 96% offered positive opinions: 25% "excellent", 49% "very good", and 22% "good".

Library users with household members who speak or study another language were asked to "rate the library's selection of books, tapes, videos and other resources in that language." While only 50 people answered this question, two-thirds provided positive ratings: 6% "excellent", 28% "very good", and 34% "good". When "don't know" replies are excluded, this summative positive assessment increases to 72%. However, 28% said "fair" or "poor", which was among the lowest ratings.

*Summary Opinions:* Figure 14 shows the third measure of Eugene citizens' satisfaction with the public library, i.e. their summary opinions about it. These evidence strong public satisfaction and support. For example, the first item in Figure 14 was also the survey's first question, tapping library users' and non-users' feelings alike; it indicates that two out of three Eugene adults feel positively toward the library.

The survey also asked all interviewees whether Eugene's library system today is "better, about the same, or worse than it was ten years ago". Fully 61% answered "don't know"; these three-fifths undoubtedly include those who lived in Eugene less than ten years, 45% of the base sample, as well as library non-users, 46% of the base sample. However, among those who knew, 63% said the library is better now than ten years ago.

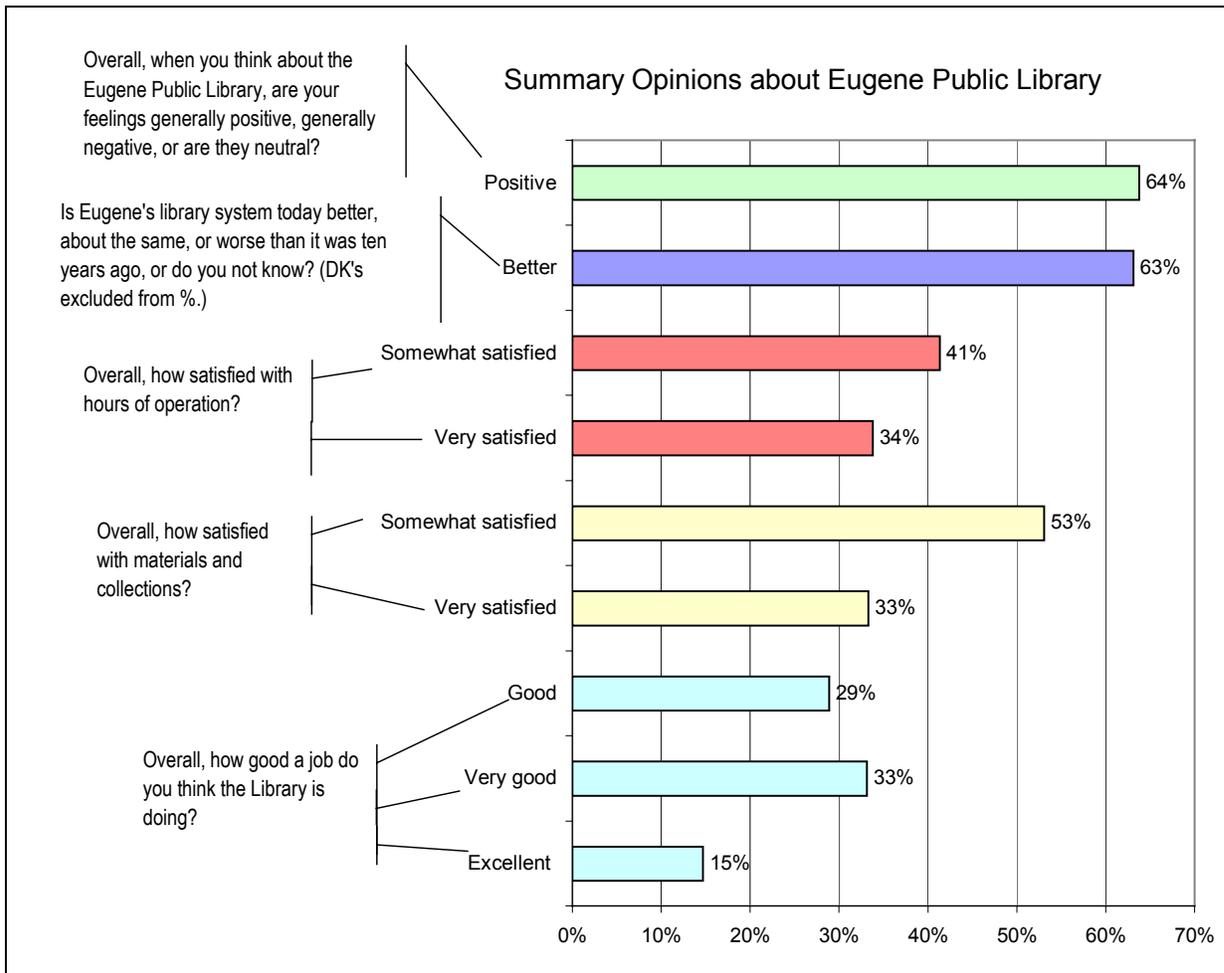
Only library users were asked their satisfactions with the library's hours of operations and its materials and collections. Fully 75% voiced satisfaction with the library's hours of operation, including 34% "very satisfied" and 41% "somewhat satisfied".

Similarly, 86% expressed satisfaction with the library's materials and collections, including 33% "very satisfied" and 53% "somewhat satisfied". Those "not very satisfied" or "not at all satisfied" gave such reasons as these: the library lacks newer books; the library lacks enough copies of books; more selection is needed; videos are poor quality and low in quantity; and children's books are not up-to-date.

Among all interviewees, both library users and non-users, 77% offered positive assessments to the summary question: "Overall, how good a job do you think the Eugene Public Library is doing?" While 17% said "don't know", 15% said "excellent", 33% "very good" and 29% "good", with only 4% fair and 1% "poor".

Not included in the graph are respondents' narrative responses to the open-ended question "For you, what is the one best thing about the Eugene Public Library?" Answers included: accessibility; large selections of books, children's books, and CDs; computer, WWW, and Internet access; variety of resources; the Bookmobile; convenience; location; a supportive staff; and the fact that it is free. Over 450 of these answers, as well as answers to the parallel question "If there were one thing you could change or improve about the Eugene Public Library, what would it be?" may be found in Section 7 of the three-ring binder entitled "Narrative Responses to Open-ended Questions".

**Figure 14: Survey Respondents' Summary Opinions about the Eugene Public Library**



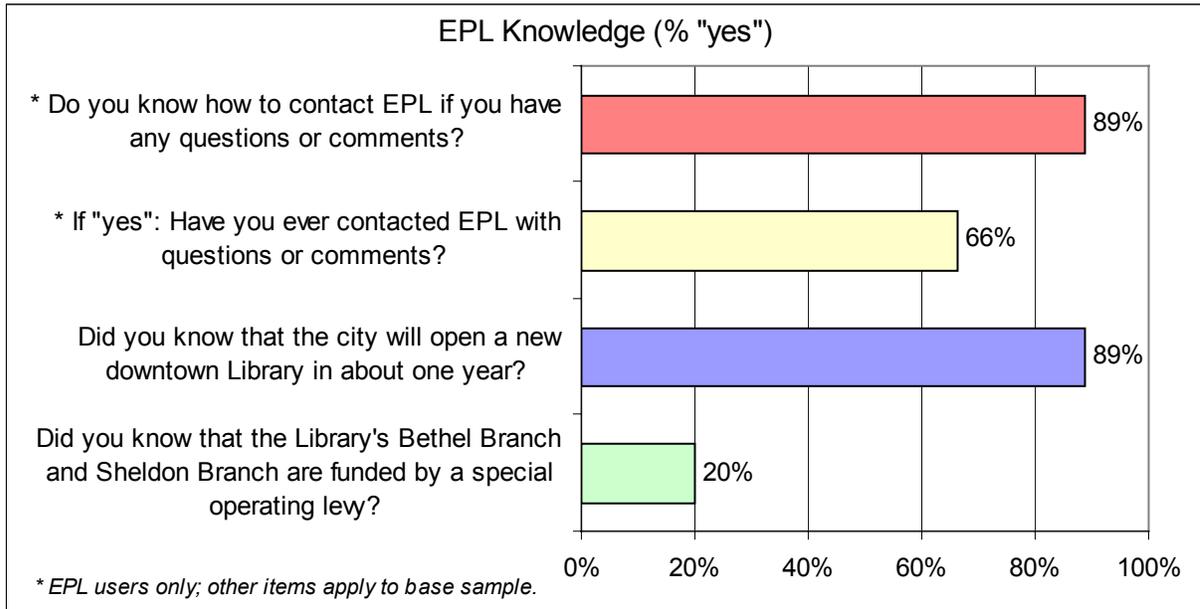
**LIBRARY KNOWLEDGE AND FUNDING PREFERENCES**

As a “warm-up” to asking about library funding issues, the survey first asked some general knowledge and action questions. Fully 89% of library users knew how to contact the library if they had any questions or comments, and two-thirds have done so (see Figure 15). In addition, 89% knew that the city will open a new downtown library in about one year.

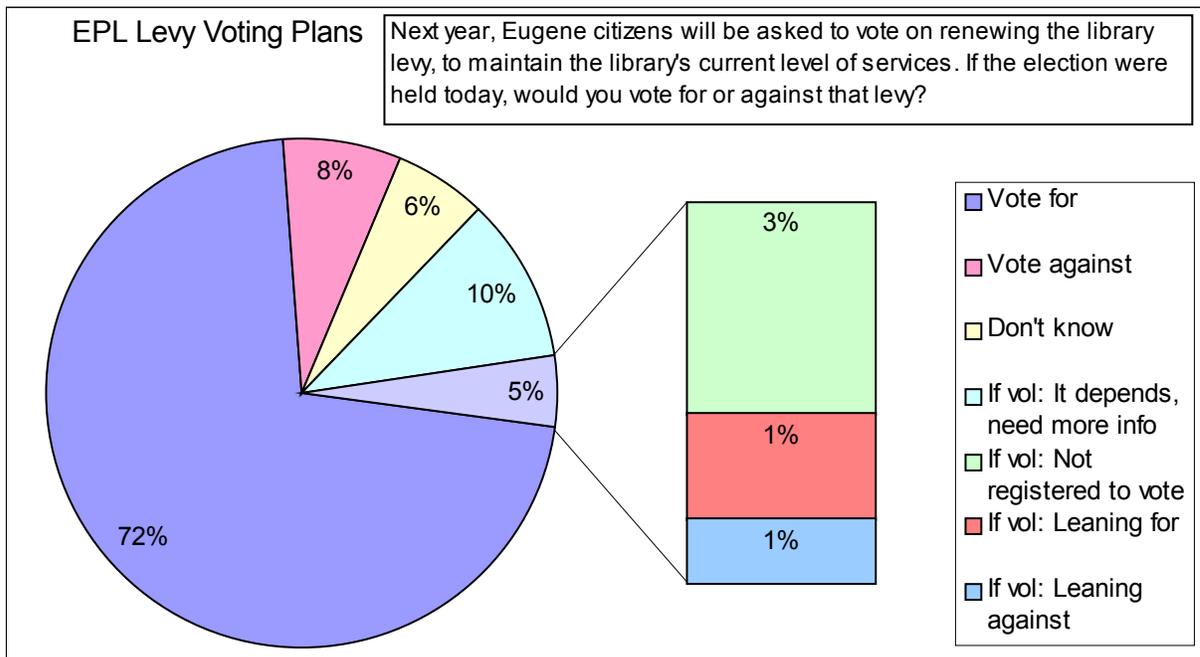
Just 20% of survey respondents knew that a special operating levy funds the Library’s Bethel Branch and Sheldon Branch. This fact seems contradicts the finding that 84% of respondents were registered to vote and 66% reported voting in city elections “every single time” or “most of the time”.

For the ballot on renewing the library levy, to maintain the library’s current level of services next year, 72% would vote for and 8% would vote against (see Figure 16). In addition, 6% did not know, 10% volunteered that “it depends” or that they need more information, 1% volunteered that they were leaning for, 1% volunteered that they were leaning against, and 3% volunteered that they were not registered to vote. Those most likely to vote “no” are males, whites, ages 50-59 and 70 or older, with low incomes, low education, who rated the library “fair” or “poor”, and who refused to answer many survey questions.

**Figure 15: Library Knowledge**



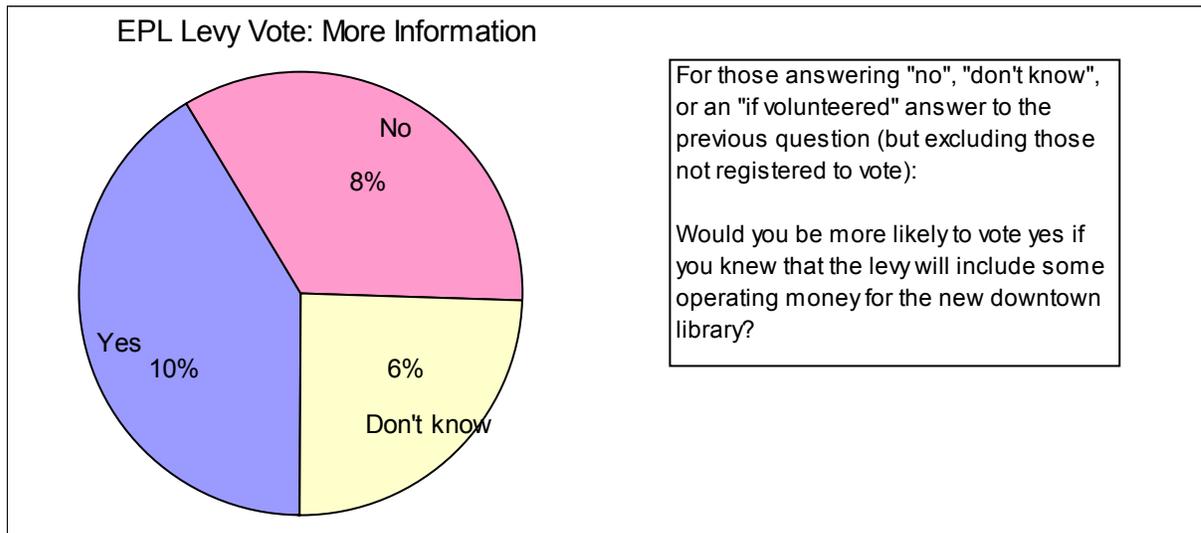
**Figure 16: How Citizens Expect to Vote on Library Levy**



For those answering “no”, “don’t know”, or a “volunteered” reply to the levy renewal question (excluding those not registered to vote), the next survey question asked: “Would you be more likely to vote yes if you knew that the levy will include some operating money for the new downtown library?” Ten percent more said “yes”, but 6% still don’t know and 8% still said “no”. Only 25% of those who said they would vote “no” indicated that this appeal (some funds used for the new library) would

change their vote, and a few more people said “no” to this question than the first; this suggests that such an appeal may backfire for some voters, at least when presented in a survey. Those least likely to be moved by this appeal are males, whites, ages 50 or older, with high incomes, with either masters degrees or less than eight years of formal education, and who rated the library “fair” or “poor”.

**Figure 17: How “No” Votes and Uncertain Votes Would Change with More Information**



#### PORTRAIT OF LATINOS IN THE SAMPLE

Latinos comprised 22% of the combined sample (base sample plus Latino oversample), but just 5% of the Eugene population in the 2000 census. OSRL interviewers conducted 47% of the Latino interviews in Spanish.

Demographically, the Latino population is much younger than the base survey sample, with respondents’ median age in the mid-thirties compared to the mid-forties for the general sample. Latinos’ median household size of three is larger than the general sample’s median household size of two. Forty percent of Latinos lived in four-person households or larger, compared to just 23% in the general sample.

More Latino households also had children (63% compared to 44%). Moreover, their children were younger than the general sample’s: 49% ages 0-4 compared to 40%; 67% ages 5-11 compared to 51%; and just 32% ages 12-17 compared to 46%. Children in Latino households less often attended preschool (34% compared to 42%), and after-school programs (16% compared to 24%). However, they were equally likely to attend summer programs (45% each). Children in Latino households were much more likely to speak another language (51% compared to 24% of the general sample).

For residence, Latinos much more frequently lived in zip code 97402 (42% compared to 32% in the general sample) and less frequently lived in zip code 97405 (22% compared to 28%). Latinos more often rented their homes (56% compared to 46%). They also lived in Eugene fewer years, with a median of roughly nine years compared to a median of roughly 15 years for the general sample.

Latino households earned less; for example, 36% earned less than \$25,000 in 2001, compared to 24% in the general sample. Likewise, they less often owned a computer in the home (61% compared to 77%).

Certain average respondent characteristics also differ between Latinos and the general sample, specifically in labor force status and gender. For example, approximately equal proportions reported working for pay, but more Latinos were unemployed and looking for work (10% compared to 5%), more were keeping house (9% compared to 5%), and fewer were retired (6% compared to 14%). In addition, nearly equal number of Latino males and females were interviewed for this study, compared to 61% females in the general sample.

Education and computer skill levels were lower among Latinos. More Latinos' educational level was less than a high school diploma (23% compared to 10% in the general sample); and fewer answered the "benchmark" computer skill question affirmatively (54% compared to 67%). Somewhat more Latinos said that a person in the household dislikes or avoids reading (14% vs. 10%), but fewer have other disabilities.

Latino respondents less often register to vote and actually vote. Just 54% of Latinos were registered to vote, compared to 79% in the general sample. And among registered voters, 27% of Latinos voted "never" or "less than half the time" compared to 12% in the general sample.

Certain library-related attitudes and behaviors in the survey show scant differences between Latinos and the general sample, while others show notable differences. For example, differences were slight in Latino respondents' and household members' library cards and use of library extension services compared to the general sample. Similarly, virtually no differences exist in the patterns or frequency of library visits, or in treatment by library staff.

However, Latinos *more often* reported checking out "other" (non-book) materials, at 59% compared to 44% in the general sample, using the library for classes (50% compared to 37%), browsing periodicals (43% vs. 34%), relaxing in the library (51% vs. 31%), and socializing in the library (51% vs. 28%). But Latinos *less often* reported using the library to seek job information (19% vs. 25%), pursuing hobbies or curiosity (81% vs. 90%), browsing or seeking books (75% vs. 88%), and using the computerized catalog (55% vs. 70%). While fewer Latino respondents used the computer catalog, those who did reported greater ease of use and greater ease in finding information (90%-97% "easy", compared to 84% "easy" in the general sample). Similarly, Latinos more often reported "always" finding the information they need (50%, compared to 33% in the general sample).

In the language questions, not surprisingly, 49% of Latinos said that a household member speaks or studies another language, compared to 20% of the general sample; and for 83% of Latinos that language is Spanish, compared to 63% of the general sample. Likewise, 60% of Latinos reported using the library's language resources, compared to 40% of others. But 54% of Latinos rated the materials in Spanish "fair" or "poor" compared to 37% of the general sample (and just 26% of whites). While 36% of Latinos believed that their language community gets its fair share of library resources, 34% answered "no", and 30% "don't know"; in contrast, in the general population that uses the library's language resources 31% said "yes", 19% "no" and 50% "don't know".

Latinos reported higher levels of satisfaction with the public library than the general sample. For example, 72% of Latinos felt positively toward the library, compared to 64% in the general sample; 74% said that the library is better now than ten years ago, compared to 65% (with "don't know" replies removed); and 23% said the library does an "excellent" job overall, compared to 16%. Latinos

also reported greater satisfaction with the library's hours, resource allocation, future planning, and public information efforts.

That Latinos have greater satisfaction with the library's public information efforts is interesting, because their library information patterns were quite different. First, just 26% said they get most of their library information from the library, compared to 43% of the general sample. Instead, Latinos more often reported these information sources than the general sample: word-of-mouth (15% vs. 8%), schools (15% vs. 3%), and direct mail (11% vs. 5%). Moreover, substantially more Latinos did not know how to contact the public library (26%, compared to 10% in the general sample). Even among those who knew how, fewer have done so (just 46%, compared to 63% overall).

Slightly fewer Latinos knew about the new downtown library, and fewer knew that the branch libraries are funded by a special levy (12% vs. 18%). But more plan to vote for the levy in 2002 than the general sample (77% vs. 72%), and more were swayed to vote yes by information that some levy funds would go to the new downtown library (53% vs. 40%).

## **CONCLUSION**

These survey results show conclusively that the Eugene community values its public library and overall is highly satisfied with the resources and services it provides. The results suggest that the library could focus more on communicating with the public, particularly to Latinos, to fill some significant information gaps.