The Emerging Trends in Public Libraries:
An Annotated Bibliography

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**Introduction and Scope**

The role of public libraries is more important than ever given the technology, information services and sense of place that they provide within a rapidly changing world. The following bibliography covers the emerging trends within these institutions. Articles touch upon the growing use of digital information and how societal and technological changes are shaping public libraries. A couple of articles discuss the overall trends in public libraries rather than focuses on one specific trend. A few articles focus on international public library trends that show similarities to U.S. Public Library trends. The articles were published from 1994 to 2010. However, because this bibliography focuses on trends, an emphasis was placed on including the most current articles from the sources found. All articles are available in English and in full-text.

**Description**

Public Libraries play a unique role within society, serving several needs and changing with and in response to public needs. Often called the people’s university, public libraries are currently “[operating] with straitened resources responding to a community with growing needs, high expectations and an abundance of choice” (Schwirtlich, 2010, p.27). Much has been written about the topic of public libraries and how they grow and change over time and how they are positioned today. There also is a quite a bit of commentary on international libraries, particularly in Australia and England.

**Summary of Findings**

While investigating emerging trends in public libraries, this student found that information technology and policy has made a difference in the role of public libraries. These institutions are now engaged to respond to and anticipate technological change. Libraries must now consider their role in relation to technology, whether they will be ahead of or slightly behind the curve. This annotated bibliography represents the changes that are occurring in public libraries; many of these changes are driven by technology and the anticipation of how to respond to and serve patrons
while making this transition along with them. Public libraries are very much involved in
determining their own future and making decisions about which services to grow. This annotated
bibliography was developed with that in mind, and strives to serve as a road map that reveals the
current trends of public libraries near and abroad.

There exists a large scope of issues related to public library trends - technological, financial,
services, special groups, social, and institutional. Therefore it should not be surprising that when
searching for literature concerning the trends in public libraries, this student found that a vast
number of articles have been written and that the issues covered were both varied and complex. It
became difficult to narrow the material down to a particular theme or themes. There are also a
number of trends on which much has been written outside of scholarly literature. These, while
raising valid points, were not included. However, there are a few trends that do appear with some
consistency within the scholarly literature. These expert resources add to the conversation
regarding public libraries and their development.

The digital age is upon us. In the current literature, many experts suggest that, as use of
digital materials continues to increase, libraries will become community centers with less square
footage, instead storing digital information and making it available on a larger scale. They also
indicate that Web 2.0 tools such as social networking sites, tagging, RSS and wikis are becoming
essential to the library. Additionally a number of library professionals consider the advent and
rapid growth of Web 2.0 tools to be harbingers of a library collection developed with users.
According to King and Brown, “these tools are about “communication, conversation,
participation…Community” (2009). They engage the user and the patron. Web 2.0 is just one of
the ways that technology is changing what public libraries do and how they do it. It is changing
what it means to access information.

Experts note that technological developments also affect services such as reference. And,
these changes in services are not limited larger cities with progressive libraries. The trend is
touching services in rural libraries as well. In fact, some would argue that changes have been even
more dramatic for the smaller public library. Because reference services are one of the most
primary functions of the library, how the public library responds to information requests has a
large impact on the community. Rural libraries that were lacking resources and space have in many
ways benefited from the ability to access information online. According to Standerfer, while
training issues still exist, “the internet has brought reference services to a whole new level… [acting] as an equalizer” (2006).

In much the same way, digital books are impacting public library acquisitions. Public libraries are faced with a plethora of choices and decisions to make about what to access, what will have posterity, and how to integrate this new technology into the services that it provides patrons. Taylor indicates that while it “is difficult to predict the future of the e-book and public libraries…it is safe to say the e-book is here to stay” (2008). And, in Susan Hoy’s opinion, “libraries need to be aware of…the rapid development of new formats and devices [and] the competitive nature of the current marketplace” (2009). However, while many libraries are implementing ways to stay current and to deliver this content, there are still many libraries that cannot yet afford to make this content available (Duncan, 2010). Library budgets have tightened, and while the jury is out on whether or not public libraries will recoup, one author argues that public libraries are a “lagging economic indicator” (Molyneux, 2008). In other words, when tax revenues go up, so do library revenues eventually. Time will tell if lagging revenue will eventually allow libraries to catch up with the expenditures necessary in the digital age. The aforementioned trends affect public libraries on a global scale. In fact, England has placed an emphasis on generating income in the public library. Clifford points out that this is a result of national funding cuts (2003). Implementation of new technology is vital yet too expensive for many public libraries in Australia so consortia help in this regard.

However, the trend toward technology affects not only how and what public libraries acquire, how they deliver information and what they can afford, it also affects the user in a way that one might not anticipate. For example, research by Dresand, Gross and Holt suggests that because the library is a gender-neutral environment (the same technology is available to both boys and girls), the library has played a part in reducing the gap between what net-generation girls and boys want to learn (2007). This indicates that libraries are not only following these trends but also in some cases helping create them, shaping the community of current and future public library users. In 2003, Virginia Walter points out that much more research needs to be done to determine how and why children and teens use the library. She does reference a Pew Charitable Trust study estimating that “at least 78 percent of all children between the ages of twelve and seventeen regularly go online for school or personal use” but that they may have difficulty evaluating the
information that they find. Clearly there is a place for public libraries to assist this group with their changing information needs. As technological capabilities increase, it seems that efforts also increase toward community and social development. This student has mentioned how Web 2.0 is not only affecting how patrons access information; it also creates a level of engagement and interaction, an empowering if you will of the user. And, just as libraries provide teens with help in accessing technology, as Walter points out, more public libraries should and do play a role in the social development of youth as well (2009).

But youth aren’t the only ones who have a need for public libraries. Across the country, libraries are indicating an increase in services by seniors (Ahlvers, 2006). Staying current with the habits and reading trends of this demographic has become a key component of library services. Delivery of services in large print and audio and “providing adaptive technologies for users with disabilities” (Ahlvers, 2006) are some of the ways libraries are changing to keep up with their users. Mylee Joseph cites how “silver surfers” have also taken to the technology that is currently offered in libraries. “Amongst other roles for the public libraries, baby boomers [want] a vibrant social hub…to maintain their place in the wired world (2006). As Schwirtlich’s article reveals, technological and social trends are sweeping not only our country but others as well. And, these movements help create trends within public libraries (2010).

Additionally programs for special and/or underserved populations have become more important. Cassell and Weibel add to the literature by updating research they provided in 1980 on the status of programming for women in public libraries (2007). They point out that women are the majority of adult public library “in-person” users. They show how libraries are providing more and different kinds of programming for women than they did thirty years ago. Funding for this type of programming has increased and women’s programming has become legitimized by a number of factors. Personal well-being and fulfillment have been the trends in types of programming – again libraries are creating a community place, a place to grow and change and be creative. (2007).

The literature points again and again to how libraries are adapting with technology and how libraries are becoming community centers. Public libraries provide a larger role in leisure services and are finding ways to foster this relationship with the patron. For example, Catherine Ross points to how models of reading are changing in public libraries as a response to the reader (2009).
Author Candy Davis displays a slightly different perspective. She argues that librarianship is going through a crisis and that changes (both cultural and technological) are having a transformative affect on the profession (2008). She suggests that the trend is for public libraries to serve a community development role and that the core values of librarianship are changing. She says that libraries are vital to social cohesion. They are the glue, shaping social interactions and supporting the ability for societies to sustain themselves (2008).

Sweeney goes a step further, claiming that public libraries cannot succeed by just responding to changing needs and technologies, but that they must stay ahead of the game, in some cases spearheading new technology or means of access (1997). This perspective places public libraries in a more competitive role. Sweeney highlights why “libraries must compete for middle-class users” (1997). And, Holt points out that the ability to change and quality of resources are very tightly connected (1996).

This is important to note because “public libraries are awash in change” (Holt, 1996). Holt shows how becoming essential means changing and anticipating markets. Holt refers to a national survey in which patrons indicate they most want the library to play the role of “education support center, independent learning center, preschoolers’ door to learning, community information center, business and personal reference library, and public work place” (1996). These selections came out ahead of the role of popular material library by large margins.

Those margins may be even greater in 2010.

It’s nothing new that public libraries are playing a role as community center. This has historically been the case to some degree. That they are becoming more so is indicative of the times. As Barbara Anderson puts it, the roles that public libraries play in community government and as community centers, “are [conterminal] in providing the best resources, the best representation, and the best government for the people they represent and for being responsible members in society” (1994). The advent of the technological age has changed how public libraries serve their populations and to what extent they have become and continue to take on the role of community center. This annotated bibliography is an attempt to highlight the related discussions taking place within public libraries in response to the larger conversation of the communities that it serves.

This student collected entries and materials for this literature review from the following sources: JSTOR and Web of Science for the Humanities, Dialog, LISTA, LISA, ERIC, and a
number of databases on computing sciences and some non-profit web sites. Not all collected materials were deemed appropriate for this bibliography. The most crucial requirement was that the material be peer-reviewed. While the author considered materials and sources with a publication date prior to January 1996, the majority of the entries in this review are less than a decade old to ensure that the material is relevant. Older materials are included when appropriate for background or as evidence of ongoing developments in the library world.

Bibliography

Entry 1:


Abstract: “The author examines some of the generational trends of which readers' advisors should be aware when working with older people. She considers working with older people as one of the most rewarding customer interactions in the library. She describes the G.I. Generation, the Silent Generation, and the Baby Boomers. She cites several [items] frequently requested by older people”

Annotation: This article illuminates the increase in public library use by seniors. It indicates that libraries provide information and socialization. It covers the various generations and their changing needs as well as readers’ advisory trends. It points to ways public libraries are overcoming physical and transportation barriers for this age group to provide resources. The article is from 2006, and the author is a Senior Services Librarian who clearly enjoys this demographic (seems to prefer it to other age groups) and knows much about the evolving trends in their reading. She frequently cites the Home Bound Book customer database histories at the Kansas City Public Library.

Search Strategy: I selected LISTA (Library Information Science & Technology
Abstracts) because of its coverage of librarianship and information management. This was an initial search, and I used a keyword and phrase search. I also limited to scholarly articles and to the years 1995-2010 for recent trends.

**Database:** LISTA [EBSCO]

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching

**Search String:** trend? And public libraries
  
  Limiter: Scholarly
  
  Limiter: 1995-2010

**Entry 2:**


**Abstract:** “The public library has traditionally functioned as a center of community life, and it is increasingly expanding its responsibilities for meeting public needs. This trend puts new demands on financial resources and necessitates seeking new funding sources.”

**Annotation:** This 1994 article points to ways that the library has become and continues to be a community center. It asks how libraries can answer the needs of all the different people it serves and addresses the ongoing budget issues that many public libraries face. While the article is 16 years old, it still resonates as a preceptor of trends, citing scholarly as well as professional journals as resources.

**Search Strategy:** I selected Dialog because of its sophistication and power as a search
tool and for the range of journals and subjects that it covers. I chose Library Literature and Information Science as a database because it has been noted that it assists users with information about current trends and concepts within the realm of library and information science.

**Database:** Library Literature and Information Science (Dialog)

**Method of Searching:** Controlled vocabulary

**Search String:**
- s program planning/de
- s public library?/de
- s s1 and s2

**Entry 3:**


**Abstract:** “Has your library discussed creating a Flickr account, a MySpace teen website, or a blog? David discussed the current social networking transformation taking place, and applied those changes to a library setting. He explained and demonstrated several Web 2.0 tools, including blogs, RSS, Flickr, as well as many “friending” sites like Facebook and Twitter. Finally, David reviewed the changes a library needs to make to meet and participate in our new online and participatory world.”

**Annotation:** This 2009 presentation addresses the growing 2.0 community and describes its communication venues, i.e. RSS, tagging, commenting, user-supplied content, web as platforms, mash-ups and friending. It gives examples such as blogs, social networking site, wiki, and instant
messaging, podcasting. The presenter indicates that patrons want the web 2.0 elements and addresses how libraries are changing in terms of how the information they provide is accessed. In keeping with the fast pace of technology, presentation notes indicate that the definition of Web 2.0 has changed since the author collected it. While *The Serials Librarian* is a peer-reviewed journal, I found no mention of the qualifications for this presenter.

**Search Strategy:** I selected Library Information & Science Abstracts (LISA) because of the broad range of periodicals (over 440) relating to my subject. I ultimately chose a keyword search because I had greater success using that method with limiters.

**Database:** LISA [EBSCO]

**Method of Searching:** Keyword

**Search String:** trend* and (“public libraries” or “public library”) and (current or change or emerging)
Limiters: Date range - earliest to current
Peer reviewed journals only

**Entry 4:**


**Abstract:** “Updating research done in 1980, the authors survey the current status of programming for women in public libraries, concentrating on the largest U.S. public libraries. The designation of National Women’s History Month was assumed to provide a legitimizing factor that libraries could
use to develop women’s programming. Many libraries have indeed developed programming for women during National Women’s History Month, but many more have planned women’s programming as part of their regular offering of programs. Women’s programming has been strengthened by a greater visibility of the diverse needs and interests of women, funding for programs for women, and greatly expanded publishing activity that continually provides new titles on women’s issues for public library collections. Women themselves have been a catalyst for programming as they have been avid users of public libraries and often the primary audience for library programs. Although librarians seem reluctant to identify their target audience by gender, they continue to develop programming that attracts more women than men.”

**Annotation:** The author notes that little research has been done on library service to women. This 2007 article is itself a follow-up to a 1980’s article by the same author. However, funding for services to women has grown. The article presents three case studies that show exemplary programming for women. The author notes that since her previous study in 1980, women’s programming has become more legitimized by National Women’s History Month, and other proclamations. And, the kind of women’s programming is changing, focusing less on policy and more on personal growth. Libraries are also partnering to strengthen programming. The article does a good job of reviewing the literature and outlining the methodology and definition of terms for research. The appendix provides useful resources for follow up in this study.

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**Database:** Library Literature and Information Science (Dialog)

**Abstract:** “In May and June 2002, 27 libraries and 3 central support services were visited in Singapore, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, UK, Canada and the US. Outcomes of the visits are described under lifelong learning and community development; program delivery; reference services; user empowerment; materials handling; opening hours; workforce; staff development; staff structures; funding; library design. Notable trends, mostly very positive for public libraries, are identified. Edited version of a paper given at the 7th biennial conference of the WA Local Government Librarians Association March 2003.”

**Annotation:** This paper is unique in that it focuses on the future of public libraries from an international perspective. It highlights the positive trends taking place and the growing role of libraries as centers for lifelong learning. Memberships are high, visits and demand for services are increasing, and governments are acknowledging the role of libraries as ensurers of equitable access to information. Most notably there is a sense of excitement about the future of public libraries in this 2002 article by an Assistant Library Manager in Cambridge WA.

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Database: LISTA [EBSCO]

Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String: trend? And public libraries
   Limiter: Scholarly
   Limiter: 1995-2010

Entry 6:


Abstract: “The author argues that the profession of librarianship is in crisis. She seeks to identify the characteristics and analyze the qualities of this phenomenon in order to draw conclusions about future trends and directions for the profession. It is argued that this crisis is an outward sign of a deeper transformation which is taking place and which affects the discipline as a whole including education and practice. The recent evolution of the profession is traced against the background of the broader transition from the modern to the postmodern era. The object here is to reveal how the widespread social, cultural and technological changes of the 21st century are impacting on the library, the librarian, the customer or client and the fundamental nature of information itself.”

Annotation: This article poses that public libraries are in a position to collaborate with partners to build communities. The trend for public libraries is to provide their patrons with a sense of place or “village green.” The major idea is the shift of perspective from a guardian of information to a facilitator. This 2008 article by a Community Research Officer responds to the social and technological changes that are currently shaping society.
Search Strategy: I selected LISTA (Library Information Science & Technology Abstracts) because of its coverage of librarianship and information management. This was an initial search, and I used a keyword and phrase search. I also limited to scholarly articles and to the years 1995-2010 for recent trends.

Database: LISTA [EBSCO]

Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String: trend? And public libraries
  Limiter: Scholarly
  Limiter: 1995-2010

Entry 7:


Abstract: “In the Project CATE (Children’s Access to and Use of Technology Evaluation), based on grades 4-8 children’s responses from surveys, focus group participations, and observations in the Saint Louis Public Library, girls’ attitudes toward computers and toward their skill level were equally as positive as those of their male counterparts. Girls differed little from boys in what they wanted to learn and how they used computers, with games the largest portions of observed computer use for both genders. Eighty-five parents queried by survey and ten by focus group responded very similarly about their children’s attitudes and use. Juxtaposing this study with other contemporary research findings suggests that some former research results, as well as conventional wisdom about gender differences in relation to computers, no longer hold true for net-generation youth. The need for moving on beyond these already-addressed issues into more sophisticated
analyses is established. The Project CATE study is unique in speaking to these gender-related questions in a public library setting. The results draw attention to the public library as a venue for studying informal use of computers and for self-generated information seeking and recreation, as well as home-word-related use, in a gender-neutral environment.”

**Annotation:** This article examines how the public library’s role emerges as society changes and conversely how the library affects change within society. The 2007 study contributes to much research on the net-generation and its evidently narrowing gender gap. It suggests that equal access to computers in the gender-neutral library contributes to this phenomenon. The results of the study provide a roadmap for librarians to continue the trend toward gender-neutral access, making online games available, allowing collaborative usage and creating a friendly space for both homework and play.

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**Database:** LISTA [EBSCO]

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching

**Search String:** trend? And public libraries

Limiter: Scholarly

Limiter: 1995-2010

**Entry 8:**

**Abstract:** “A survey of Sunshine Coast library users indicates that there is a high level of interest in ebooks and e-audiobooks and also that there is strong demand for technologies such as the iPhone, iPad and Amazon’s Kindle. These local trends, mirrored internationally, present public libraries with a challenge to dramatically improve their virtual offerings, or lose relevance in this emerging high growth area. They also have a responsibility to play a leadership educational role in informing their communities about e-readers, content and associated trends.”

**Annotation:** This article adds to the research on e-book usage and the need for a single standard for content. And, it suggests that library response will have an effect on booksellers and rights holders. Public libraries are beginning to think about what ebooks and ebook readers mean for their communities and for library services. Greater demand as well as better access, content and capabilities has increased the format acceptance within public libraries. But, in light of continuing budget issues, public libraries are left to find solutions to bridge the digital divide for their users. This 2010 article provides statistics and representative graphs to make its case. The author has worked extensively in scientific research and holds an MBA.

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**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching

Abstract: “Changes in the social and economic fabric of American life have prompted public libraries to develop services and programs that are more in tune with the needs of individuals and communities. These efforts have uniformly focused on improving quality, although quality is of necessity a moving target. Among the strategies that public libraries have employed to improve their quality and both meet and anticipate new markets are defining the organization’s core values and mission, capitalizing on new user-friendly information technologies, defining the library as a visitor destination, and bringing a customer locus to staff training and development. The importance of partnerships with a wide variety of entities is discussed along with the need to ensure the security of library users as well as their right to privacy. The author also emphasizes the need for more effective public relations and marketing strategies and the importance of listening to the customer as keys to building an organization characterized by exemplary quality.”

Annotation: This 1996 article argues that libraries are trending toward tighter budgets and as a result should re-examine what services they are offering and identify the inputs that go into these services. The author presents a methodology to understand and calculate costs of services. This methodology provides the information needed for strategic planning in response to the changing economic climate and identifies this need by citing reports, models, and studies along with a chapter on cost sharing.

Search String: trend? And public libraries

Limiter: Scholarly

Limiter: 1995-2010

Entry 9:


Abstract: “Changes in the social and economic fabric of American life have prompted public libraries to develop services and programs that are more in tune with the needs of individuals and communities. These efforts have uniformly focused on improving quality, although quality is of necessity a moving target. Among the strategies that public libraries have employed to improve their quality and both meet and anticipate new markets are defining the organization’s core values and mission, capitalizing on new user-friendly information technologies, defining the library as a visitor destination, and bringing a customer locus to staff training and development. The importance of partnerships with a wide variety of entities is discussed along with the need to ensure the security of library users as well as their right to privacy. The author also emphasizes the need for more effective public relations and marketing strategies and the importance of listening to the customer as keys to building an organization characterized by exemplary quality.”

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**Database:** Library Literature and Information Science (Dialog)

**Method of Searching:** Controlled vocabulary

**Search String:**
- s program planning/de
- s public library?/de
- s s1 and s2

**Entry 10:**


**Abstract:** “A main element of public library service has always been user expectation and reliance on the provision of new collection resources and formats in addition to traditional services. Today this translates to an emphasis on internet services and online provision of information and collections. The focus of this paper is on spoken word material and audio download services, giving an overview of available audio formats and device features. It covers general issues to consider when making decision on audio collections and the strengths and weaknesses of the formats under consideration. Examined are the evolution of audiobooks, emerging technology, and playback devices; service and collection issues; format strengths and weaknesses. Edited version of a paper presented at the Next Chapters conference, State Library of NSW 1-2 May 2009.”
**Annotation:** Library awareness is growing in relation to the new formats of talking books and their players. Libraries are becoming increasingly aware that smart decision making is critical when it involves these services. To illuminate this fact as well as facilitate the librarian, the article covers the strengths and weaknesses of various providers and formats. The author is the home library officer for Burwood Public Library in Sydney NSW and the convener of the New South Wales Home Library Service Working Group. She has worked in public libraries for 19 years and has in particular provided services for seniors and the homebound.

**Search Strategy:** After reading Ebooks and Beyond, I checked the references for the citation and found this article. I then found the full text by entering the title in LISTA.

**Database:** N/A

**Method of Searching:** Footnote chasing

**Search String:** Referenced in:

**Entry 11:**


**Abstract:** “Libraries face an imminent age wave as the baby boomer generation reaches retirement age. Retirees and older people have traditionally been an important target market for libraries. The impact of a greatly increased proportion of them in local communities will be an important
consideration in library planning, facility design, resourcing, marketing strategies, the development of strategic partnerships and staffing. Trends, current research, stakeholders, and recommendations to support strategic planning within the NSW public library network are identified. Highlights of a June 2006 issues paper available from the State Library of NSW at www.sl.nsw.gov.au/pls/publications/pdf/active_engaged_valued.pdf”

**Annotation:** The use of libraries by the elderly is affected by factors like transportation, technology literacy, and awareness of resources. The distinct needs of this population are met through libraries that position themselves as lifelong learning and community centers. The author is a young people and older persons consultant Public Library Services State Library of New South Wales. She references research in her field to support her claim that libraries are changing in response to this “age wave.”

**Search Strategy:** I decided to try a different search string in Dialog, and it paid off. I achieved a different result set with items that I missed in my initial Dialog search.

**Database:** Library Literature and Information Science [Dialog]

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching

**Search String:**
s trend?
s public library?
s current or change or emerging
s s1 and s2 and s3
Entry 12:


Abstract: “This article analyzes longitudinal data from the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) for the 12 years from 1992 to 2004. The statistics demonstrate that library circulation rose faster than population served. Aggregate library income, meanwhile, first declined then rose slowly from their lows in 2003. In the same period, operating expenses rose faster than income, squeezing purchasing power. The article provides more detail for purchase of electronic materials, by type of employees and ‘other’ expense categories. The author concludes with a discussion of the factors that will affect library income in the years immediately after the period studied.”

Annotation: The article uses statistical data to show how public libraries are a “lagging economic indicator.” As the tax revenue grows, so should public library funding. Cuts and competition, however, may have changed the structure of library funding. In response to cuts, libraries cut collection costs and are becoming more aggressive fundraisers. Libraries continue to search for new revenue sources and are being forced to compete with other fundraising bodies. This 2008 article makes good use of statistical data, charts and graphs. The author points to how this decade long trend reveals itself in the grouping of federal dollars into Institute for Museum and Library Services.

Search Strategy: I selected LISTA (Library Information Science & Technology Abstracts) because of its coverage of librarianship and information management. This was an initial search, and I used a keyword and phrase search. I also limited to scholarly articles and to the years 1995-2010 for recent trends.
Abstract: “This article examines competing models of reading that have been available for librarians to use in their discourse and policy making about pleasure reading. Two models, “Reading with a Purpose” and “Only the Best,” developed within public librarianship, while the others developed variously in education, psychology, mass media studies, and sociology. These models have differing stories to tell about the power of the text, the role of the reader, and the effect on the reader of what is read. Who is in charge in these stories of reading? Is reading a receptive process of extracting meaning right there in the text or is it a productive process that involves the reader as a co-creator of meaning? What happens during the reading transaction itself? Is the reader empowered? Or is the reader duped, dumbed down, tranquilized, or deceived? Each model of reading makes its own power claims and each has its own entailments. Some models are more appropriate than others for public libraries now that they are seeking to play a more significant role in the leisure structure. The article uses two types of readers as test cases whose reading tastes have historically been denigrated: the series book reader and the romance reader.”

Annotation: This article is unique in that it suggests a needed change in library philosophy regarding reading models. It indicates that the trend for public libraries is to strive to be part of a
community’s leisure structure. To do so, the library must trust its readers or better its advisory skills. The author is a professor in the faculty of information and media studies at the University of Western Ontario where she teaches reference, readers’ advisory and reading, and research methods. She is also the author of *Reading Matters* along with other books. She argues that if libraries wish to be part of leisure, there is much at stake when choosing one reading model over another.

**Search Strategy:** I selected LISTA (Library Information Science & Technology Abstracts) because of its coverage of librarianship and information management. This was an initial search, and I used a keyword and phrase search. I also limited to scholarly articles and to the years 1995-2010 for recent trends.

**Database:** LISTA [EBSCO]

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching

**Search String:** trend? And public libraries
Limiter: Scholarly
Limiter: 1995-2010

**Entry 14:**


**Abstract:** “A review of technological and social trends in Victoria and the implication for public libraries; the vision of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Public Libraries and how it seeks to cope with these technological and social trends; the thinking of the Public Libraries Victoria Network in its draft strategic plan for 2009-13; three strategic projects on which the Library Board
of Victoria and the Public Libraries Victoria Network are collaborating and how they help to respond to the changing environment. Reflected on are how these will position public libraries in Victoria for the next few years.”

**Annotation:** The article is an edited version of a presentation at the QPLA/PLA 2009 conference held in Townsville in October, 2009. The presenter is the Chief Executive and State Librarian for the State Library of Victoria. She makes good use of statistics and focuses on the technological and social trends and the implication for public libraries. Her perspective is Australia, and it is telling that all over the globe, reports indicate that public library use is increasing while funding is diminishing.

**Search Strategy:** I selected Library Information & Science Abstracts (LISA) because of the broad range of periodicals (over 440) relating to my subject. I ultimately chose a keyword search because I had greater success using that method with limiters.

**Database:** LISA [EBSCO]

**Method of Searching:** Keyword

**Search String:** trend* and (“public libraries” or “public library”) and (current or change or emerging)  
Limiters: Date range - earliest to current  
Peer reviewed journals only
Entry 15:


Abstract: “The information age has changed libraries of all types and sizes in ways that no one could have predicted. For a rural library, though, changes have been fast and furious and have made a dramatic impact on the very nature of the library and the services the library offers. Rural libraries went from a gathering place for community activities to fully wired information centers in a matter of a few years. The article addresses what these changes mean for reference services—one of the most basic functions of a public library. While people are consuming more information than ever, will the rural library be able to keep up with this demand even with the internet? The article explores reference services in rural public libraries, using examples from libraries in central and northern Illinois, giving consideration to the nature of reference services, how they have changed over time, and how this compares to small libraries in a metropolitan setting.”

Annotation: This article is unique in that it focuses on rural libraries. Not much has been written on rural libraries and how they cope in the information age. The article focuses on how reference services are changing in response to the way people access information. The void in rural libraries lies in training and budgeting. However, the trend in available no-cost electronic resources makes it easier for rural public libraries to make the most of what they have. The author refers to the Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics and the Center for Study of Rural Librarianship to give authority to this 2006 article.

Search Strategy: I selected LISTA (Library Information Science & Technology Abstracts) because of its coverage of librarianship and information management. This was an initial search, and I used a keyword and phrase search. I also limited to scholarly articles and to the years 1995-2010 for recent trends.
Database: LISTA [EBSCO]

Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String: trend? And public libraries
Limiter: Scholarly
Limiter: 1995-2010

Entry 16:


Abstract: “Public libraries cannot succeed by staying behind the curve of service improvement, as recommended by the users and leaders in the Benton Report. Public libraries must take a value-added approach that pioneers the use of new technology.”

Annotation: This is another article suggesting that libraries must change in response to the digital age and must develop to meet the needs of people within the economic middle-class. The author purports that public libraries must stay ahead of the curve of what users expect. The article indicates that value may be added by saving the patron time, making hours and location more convenient, and making services accurate, consistent, personalized and easy to use. The author suggests that rather than take a reactive role that libraries should be leading the way in technologies. The author is passionate that the library be an active rather than passive body. While the article is dated 1997, the content is still useful in understanding the current direction of public libraries. The article refers to the oft-cited Benton Foundation’s *Buildings, books and bytes: Libraries and communities in the digital age.*
Search Strategy: I selected Dialog because of its sophistication and power as a search tool and for the range of journals and subjects that it covers. I chose Library Literature and Information Science as a database because it has been noted that it assists users with information about current trends and concepts within the realm of library and information science.

Database: Library Literature and Information Science (Dialog)

Method of Searching: Controlled vocabulary

Search String: s program planning/de
            s public library?/de
            s s1 and s2

Entry 17:


Abstract: “The book has made the transition to the digital age; that much is certain. However the jury is still out on what form or forms the book of the future will take and how libraries will adapt. This article is a look at the impact of digital books on public library acquisitions, including available formats, purchasing considerations, functional concerns, terms, pricing and future trends.”

Annotation: This 2008 article points out that innovation is the trend in public libraries and that this trend may be driven as much by the public as by the public library’s desire to be in the technological know. The rapid advancement of e-book technology forces public libraries to take a
hard looks at acquisitions, experimentation and financial concerns. This author reveals the layered complexities of the current technological transitioning by public libraries.

**Search Strategy:** I selected LISTA (Library Information Science & Technology Abstracts) because of its coverage of librarianship and information management. This was an initial search, and I used a keyword and phrase search. I also limited to scholarly articles and to the years 1995-2010 for recent trends.

**Database:** LISTA [EBSCO]

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching

**Search String:** trend? And public libraries
Limiter: Scholarly
Limiter: 1995-2010

**Entry 18:**


**Abstract:** “This paper deals with four significant unanswered questions related to children’s and young adult services in public libraries: 1. How have public library services to children and young adults developed over time? 2. How and why do young people use public libraries? 3. How can we evaluate the effectiveness of public library services for young people? 4. Why should policymakers fund public library services for children and young adults? After reviewing the existing knowledge base that can serve as scaffolding for the needed research, the author suggests strategies for refining and implementing this research agenda.”
**Annotation:** This 2003 article spotlights research on public library services to children and young adults and indicates that more research needs to be done in this field. The article reveals that up to 60 percent of public library users are under the age of eighteen and that public libraries services develop in response to these users. It shows how libraries respond to marketing studies to create programming that attracts and assists youth in reaching their goals. The author remarks that while more programs and services are being offered to youth, more research and thought should be going into what offerings to provide. This article references the Benton report and uses many reputable sources to substantiate her claims.

**Search Strategy:** I selected LISTA (Library Information Science & Technology Abstracts) because of its coverage of librarianship and information management. This was an initial search, and I used a keyword and phrase search. I also limited to scholarly articles and to the years 1995-2010 for recent trends.

**Database:** LISTA [EBSCO]

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching

**Search String:** trend? And public libraries
Limiter: Scholarly
Limiter: 1995-2010

**Entry 19:**


**Abstract:** “The article summarizes the tradition of teen services in public libraries and discusses the more recent incorporation of youth development principles and practices into those services,
with the Public Libraries as Partners in Youth Development project being singled out as a major contributor to current thinking about this issue. The Free Public Library of Philadelphia’s LEAF program, with its after-school employment of Teen Leadership Assistants, is presented as a normative case study in the intentional design and implementation of a teen job program based on youth development principles. Based on the Free Library experience, the author suggests that public libraries can supplement the developmental value of school by considering youth development as integral aspect of any jobs in which teens are employed and that teen job programs be considered an integral part of teen library services.”

**Annotation:** This 2009 article is another work by the same author, Virginia Walter. She is an active Emerita professor in the Information Studies Department at UCLA and continues to teach in the areas of library service to children and to do research on trends in service to children and teens. She is well-published and considered an expert in the field. Given the recent trend of public libraries to consider youth development within teen services, Walter proposes that teen job programs be considered another aspect of youth programming.

**Search Strategy:** I selected Library Information & Science Abstracts (LISA) because of the broad range of periodicals (over 440) relating to my subject. I ultimately chose a keyword search because I had greater success using that method with limiters.

**Database:** LISA [EBSCO]

**Method of Searching:** Keyword

**Search String:** trend* and (“public libraries” or “public library”) and (current or change or emerging)

Limiters: Date range - earliest to current

Peer reviewed journals only
Entry 20:


**Abstract:** “Providing quality reference services is more challenging than ever. In addition to traditional print sources, the information professional now has a dazzling array of databases, both free and expensive, readily available. Internet reference service has evolved quickly over the last decade, moving from a place of last resort to a mainstream application. Librarians have responded in many innovative ways to connect their customers with information available on the Internet. However, superior Internet reference service requires substantial investments in equipment that administrators will have to consider. Staff and customer training have become pressing needs. Providing access to appropriate databases and materials will become increasingly challenging.”

**Annotation:** The article shows that database vendors obfuscate the value of service with complex pricing structures and information technologies requiring additional budgeting. Despite this challenge and the large amount of information to search, reference librarians continue to make internet reference services available to their patrons and seek out valuable information sources for their patrons. This 2000 article looks at reference librarianship in public and academic libraries. Its authors include a helping Webliography to assist in the topic.

**Search Strategy:** I selected LISTA (Library Information Science & Technology Abstracts) because of its coverage of librarianship and information management. This was an initial search, and I used a keyword and phrase search. I also limited to scholarly articles and to the years 1995-2010 for recent trends.

**Database:** LISTA [EBSCO]
Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String: trend? And public libraries
Limiter: Scholarly
Limiter: 1995-2010

Conclusion and Personal Statement

Creating this annotated bibliography was a great exercise in searching for information and organizing content. I gained experience using databases that I didn’t even know existed, and I learned that there is this incredible and sometimes difficult resource called the “deep web.” I started out as a true beginner and feel that while I definitely learned much about searching databases and website, I have much more to learn through repeated practice. I can also see in hindsight how I may have conducted my search differently. After finding an article that synopsized general trends, I would have then searched for articles on specific trends. This may have been a good strategy and one that I would consider in the future.

This exercise has definitely made me more aware of the importance of a reference interview and how vital it is to conduct searches that are relevant for the user. I have a new and profound respect for reference librarians who compile annotated bibliographies for patrons. There are so many resources available that knowing which ones to search is a skill and talent unto itself. And, once you have chosen, to be able to use that database or website efficiently requires experience. You’re not done when the search is complete. One still must evaluate the results based on whether or not they meet the user’s needs. While this annotated bibliography served a purpose and I learned a lot about my topic and searching in general, I think it is a unique and greater challenge to create a bibliography that is customized for a patron’s inquiry. Moreover, to find sources that are free of errors, available and have good currency is a skill that will take much time and repeated effort to hone.
My library director took a look at this bibliography, proofread and made a few suggestions. Ultimately she said that she actually learned something about library trends and she requested the full text of several of the articles. That was very fulfilling to me. The greatest gift of this bibliography is that I now know that I can learn how to use databases and other resources. It is no longer overwhelming or intimidating. I am also more excited about the profession and the huge offering of skills that we as librarians have for our patrons and for each other. Librarianship is so much more than most people know, so many skills rolled into one profession: technological, communicative, interpretive, evaluative, organizational, managerial, investigative, creative. And, hopefully this annotated bibliography shows how we are primarily facilitators of information.

Outstanding job on your project. I was impressed with the variety of searching methods you used, ensuring that you only included articles that met our required criteria. You found excellent articles that focused exactly on what was required. Way to go! You have caught on well to this searching business! Your APA style needs some tweaking so I made a deduction. You earned 34 out of 35 points!