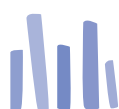


# A Public Space for All

## Use and non-use of public libraries

The public library continues to be one of the most popular of public services, a view shared by library users and non-users alike. Over two thirds of the country's adults (aged 15+) are or have been members of a public library, while 36% have used their public library recently. ■ Despite fears to the contrary, people continue to have a huge appetite for reading, with the borrowing of books being the most popular reason by far for visiting a public library (79%). Library users are benefiting from increases in spending on library stock (66% since 1998) as a remarkable 94% of visitors to a library recently consider their visit to have been successful. ■ This level of satisfaction is also evident from the large number of people who use their public library regularly. 76% of users visit the library at least once a month, while 45% are weekly users. Users' satisfaction is not only about getting a good book: in the user survey of 2002 98% of users rated the help they received from library staff as good or very good. ■ The public library's profile in the community remains high: 82% of non-users (90% of female non-users) know where their public library is. Public libraries provide a wide range of services in addition to lending books, and awareness of these services is reasonably high among non-users. However, it is also clear that many people who have not used the library in recent years are

not fully aware of the various services on offer. Only 50% knew that Internet access is provided; even fewer knew that talking books could be borrowed, while only 15% knew that they could get application forms for things like motor tax and passports at the library. Reading groups and reading promotions are among the most popular activities organised by public libraries and the 62% of non-users who didn't know about them are certainly missing out. These findings suggest that more needs to be done to let the public know what kind of services the modern public library provides. ■ Not all those who would like to use the library can, as 'no time' was the main reason given by members and non-members alike. Indeed, 'better opening hours' was identified by many people as something that would encourage them to get to the library. Non-users also suggested that a better selection of books and more CDs and DVDs would entice them to use the service. ■ Public libraries strive to provide "a space for all" and they do attract a broad cross-section of society. However, it is a cause for concern that non-users are most likely to be in the lower socio-economic brackets: can more be done to target services at these non-users. ■ In general women use libraries more than men (75% vs. 60%) while those in the 35-44 age group, and those over 64, use them slightly more than other age groups.

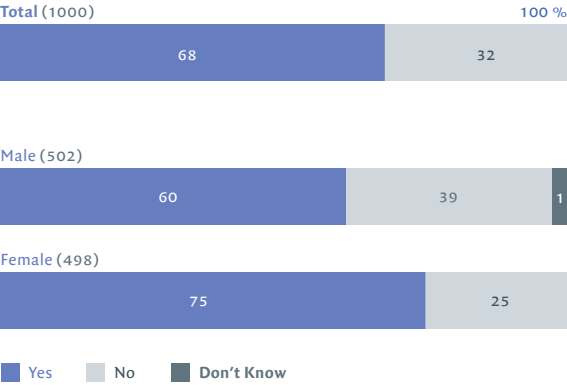


# SURVEY RESULTS 2003

This research was carried out on TNS mrbi's omnibus service, PhoneBus, during December 2003. It was commissioned by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna with funding from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

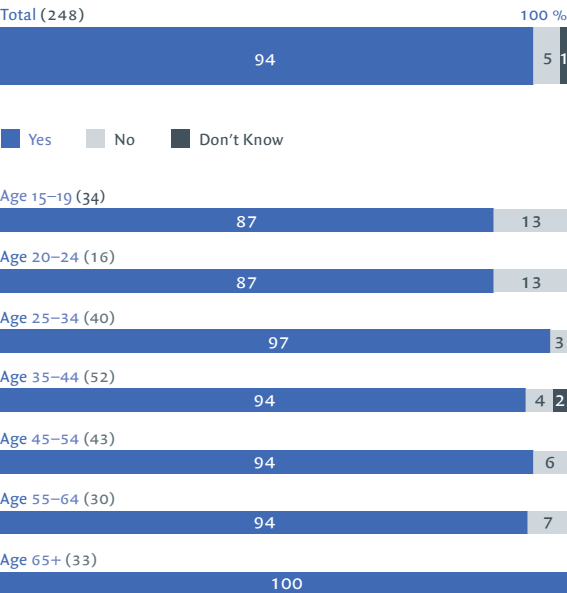
## MEMBERSHIP OF PUBLIC LIBRARY

Base: All respondents



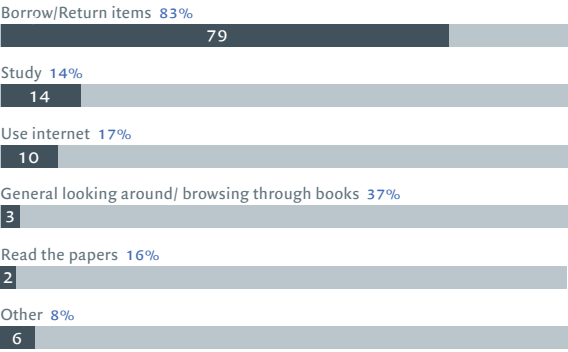
## CONSIDER LAST VISIT SUCCESSFUL

Base: All who have visited a public library recently (248)



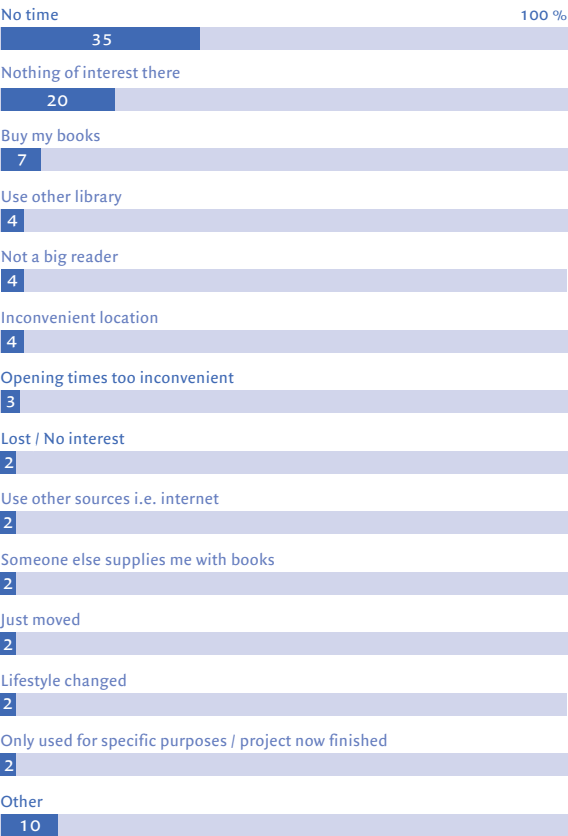
## WHAT THEY DID ON VISIT TO LIBRARY

Base: All who have visited a public library recently (248)  
Figures from PLUS are in blue



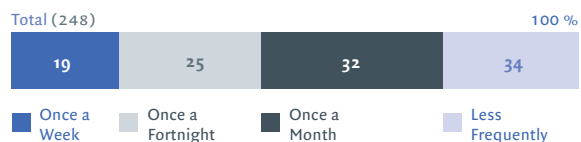
## REASONS FOR STOPPING GOING TO LIBRARY

Base: All who have not visited a public library recently (423)



## FREQUENCY OF VISITING A PUBLIC LIBRARY

Base: All who have visited a public library recently



FREQUENCY	AGE %						
	15-19 (34)	20-24 (16)	25-34 (40)	35-44 (52)	45-54 (43)	55-64 (30)	65+ (33)
Once a Week	26	31	13	23	8	22	15
Once a Fortnight	30	15	21	29	16	24	36
Once a Month	15	21	43	34	44	38	20
Less Frequently	29	32	23	14	20	16	28
Don't Know	—	—	—	—	2	—	—

## AWARENESS OF WHERE PUBLIC LIBRARY IS TO THEIR HOME / PLACE OF WORK

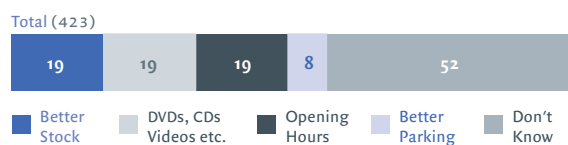
Base: All who are not a member of a public library



RESPONSE	GENDER		AGE %						
	MALE (196)	FEMALE (129)	15-19 (14)	20-24 (26)	25-34 (51)	35-44 (69)	45-54 (58)	55-64 (43)	65+ (44)
Yes	77	90	76	76	74	89	90	83	78
No	22	10	24	24	26	11	10	14	22
Don't know	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—

## WHAT WOULD CONVINCE THEM TO GO BACK TO USING LIBRARY

Base: All who have not visited a public library recently



RESPONSE	GENDER		AGE %						
	MALE (212)	FEMALE (211)	15-19 (70)	20-24 (42)	25-34 (81)	35-44 (66)	45-54 (67)	55-64 (48)	65+ (48)
Better stock	15	23	16	27	17	22	24	15	12
Different stock items for loan – DVDs/CDs/Videos	19	20	45	26	22	8	9	7	8
Change in the opening hours	19	19	18	16	26	25	26	4	3
Better parking	6	10	1	11	12	3	7	14	14
Don't know	53	50	35	47	47	53	52	70	73

# The Public Library

The public library service is one of the most popular services provided by local authorities in Ireland. There are 344 branch libraries and 30 mobile libraries throughout the country, attracting over 12 million visits each year. ■ The public library has something for everyone: further information is available from your local library or by visiting [www.library.ie](http://www.library.ie)