

The Data We Don't Collect: How it Drives Funding Decisions for Libraries

Presented for #RIPL

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EveryLibrary

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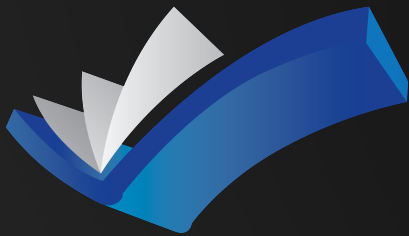
About

EveryLibrary



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Campaigns and Negotiations
Advocacy and Activism



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WHY LEARN FROM POLITICS



HOW VOTERS RELATE TO CANDIDATES

1. Does the candidate share the values that matter most to me (voter), and do they care about people like me? (Shared Values)
2. Can I trust the candidate to represent me faithfully? (Shared Identity)
3. Does the candidate have the personal qualities that lead me to believe that they will do right by my values and interests? (Personal Characteristics)
4. If there is an issue I care about, what is the candidate's stand on it and can I trust them to think about it and make a decision which I would probably make if I had all the information they'll have? (Predictability)

“From Awareness to Funding Says....”

2008 and 2018 Studies



the
data

Voter Attitudes

In 2008 of all voters:

37% would definitely vote yes for the library

37% were likely to vote yes for the library

26% were likely or will definitely vote no

the
data

Voter Attitudes

In 2018 of all voters:

27% will definitely vote yes for the library

31% are likely to yes for the library

42% are likely or will definitely vote no

the voter attitudes data 10 year change

The positive image of the library has increased.
The willingness to vote for it has decreased.

Tier/Segment	% of total population		% of segment that would vote "yes" for libraries		Number of annual library visits		% who rate libraries positively		% who rate librarians positively	
	2008	2018	2008	2018	2008	2018	2008	2018	2008	2018
Super Supporters	7.1%	6.5%	80%	64%	15.9	15.9	71%	80%	72%	73%
Probable Supporters	32.3%	25.6%	47%	36%	19.9	13.6	73%	73%	72%	65%

LIBRARY AS A TRANSFORMATIVE FORCE

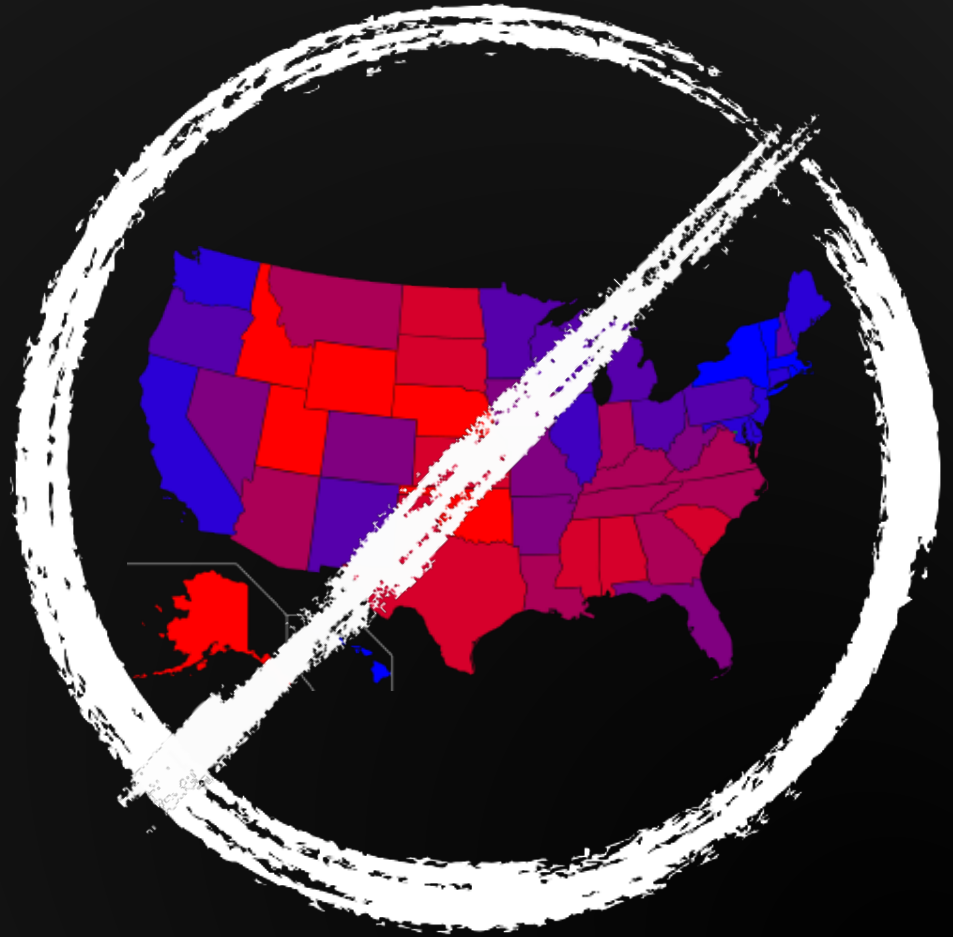
For the target supporters, the library is not perceived as just a provider of practical answers and information; the most committed supporters hold the belief that the library is a transformational force.

ATTITUDE - NOT DEMOGRAPHICS

A crucial and somewhat unexpected finding from the segmentation analysis was that demographics and lifestage were not important constructs in the library supporter segmentation. In fact, demographics are irrelevant to library funding support. The factors that determine residents' willingness to increase their taxes to support their local library are their perceptions and attitudes about the library and the librarian, not their age, gender, education level or household income. Library funding support is an attitude, not a demographic.

the data

political
party
doesn't
matter



the data



card
statistics
don't matter

the data
library use

doesn't
matter



BOTH NOUNS

“The factors that determine residents’ willingness to increase their taxes to support their local library are their perceptions and attitudes about the library *and* the librarian”

Then Where are the Librarians?

(PEW 2016) - Has a librarian EVER visited you at a place other than a library building or bookmobile to share information or provide material to you? Please include any time a librarian may have visited an organization you belong to, a community center, or your workplace.

- Yes, have been visited in some way by a librarian in past 12 months: **7%**
- Yes, this has happened, but not in the past 12 months: **4%**
- No, have never done this: **88%**

EveryLibrary's Thesis on “Funding”

“If the user status of the funder does not matter, then what is driving political decisions to fund libraries is the **perceived impact** of the *librarians* manifest in a **shared-values framework** about the *library*.”

EveryLibrary's Thesis on “Use / Non-Use”

“If the focus of your marketing and messaging is to convince people to become users, you will alienate people who don't want to be users but still value who you are and what you do.”



everylibrary
Building Voter Support For Libraries

COME BACK AROUND TO VOTERS AND CANDIDATES

1.Shared Values Framework

2.Shared Identity

3.Personal Characteristics, and 4. Predictability

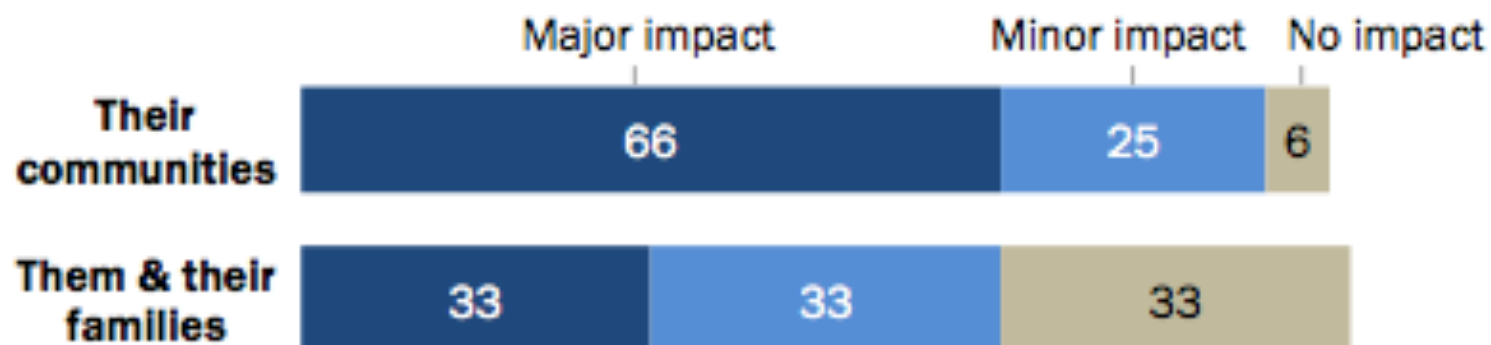
-The Political Brain, p. 140

VALUES: PEW 2016 – Q.15

	A lot	Some	Not too much	Nothing at all	(VOL.) DK
a. Helping spark creativity among young people	49	31	10	3	7
b. Promoting a sense of community among different groups within your local area	38	35	14	6	7
c. Creating educational opportunity for people of all ages	58	29	5	3	5
d. Providing a trusted place for people to learn about new technologies	47	32	9	4	8
e. Serving as a gathering place for addressing challenges in your local community	29	36	16	8	10
f. Providing a safe place for people to spend time	69	20	3	3	4

People think closing their local public libraries would hurt communities

% of U.S. adults ages 16 and older who say closing their local libraries would have the following impacts on ...



Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 4, 2016.
"Libraries 2016"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Survey the Non-User's Belief System

And are they willing to pay for it?



EveryLibrary's Thesis on Surveys and Polls

“You have to ask non-users about their personal value system or you will never understand how to build support for the funding it takes to enact that value system in your community.”

DIFFERENT QUESTIONS

Users

- Did you personally benefit...?
- Did your own life change...?
- What do you think about [service or feature]?

Non-Users

- What matters to you?
- Does this thing we do matter to you?
- Are you willing to pay for it?

Finding Non-Users

Where and how you proctor your survey is (just) as important as what you ask...



SURFACING



WRITING A BETTER BOOK

- change the way you do community surveys
- ask questions about staff and not just institutions
- ask questions to non-users as much as you ask users
- non-users have a perception of value but no current experience

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Get out of the library

Go to their homes

Go door to-door

Go to a lobby

Go to unusual
places

Locations where
non-majority or
non-privileged
populations are

Asking about Political Participation

Voter status as opposed to user status

Enfranchised as opposed to civically engaged



Political Participation

Key Questions We Need:

- Voted in the 2018 Midterms?
- Voted in the last local election?
- Likely to vote in the 2020 presidential election?
- Has there been a library referendum/measure in your community in the last 5 years?
- Did you vote in favor of or against the library referendum, ballot initiative or bond measure?

Political Participation

OCLC Generic Ballot Question (S5):

“Now we’d like you to think ahead to the next election and assume that you are at the ballot box and ready to cast your vote. If there was a referendum, ballot initiative or bond measure for your local public library on the ballot, how do you think you would vote?”

Talking about Doubt is to Talk about Trust

Asking questions that “surface” doubts about the library leadership and its strategic direction



Direction?

Key Questions:

- Do you feel that things in [locality] are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten seriously off on the wrong track?

Right | Wrong | Don't Know

- Do you approve or disapprove of the job that the [LIBRARY] is doing?

Strongly Approve -> Strongly Disapprove

Trust?

Key Questions:

- I trust the [unit of government] to properly manage my tax dollars.

Strongly Agree -> Strongly Disagree | Don't Know | RTA

- Do you approve or disapprove of the job that the [LIBRARY] is doing?

Strongly Approve -> Strongly Disapprove

Cross Tabs

Direction Questions

- Needs by location
 - Main and Branches
- Non-Users and Users
 - Frequency
 - Nature of Use
 - Household but not personal
- ID'd Demographic

Post-Loss Doubt

Q - Why would someone oppose the project?

Answers:

- Overspent last time
- Poor planning
- Already adequate (building)
- Bad leadership
- Doesn't benefit enough people
- Poor library management
- Didn't see the (outcome)

What's the Tolerance for Taxes Today

Is there a local climate where we can discuss new taxes for the library?



Frame for Question

“Let me read you statements that some people may make opposing the proposal to [increase / renew / somehow change] the tax levy / funding for [library] from [describe].”

Tolerance for Tax

Q- When thinking about the proposed project...

Answers:

- Too many tax questions (on ballots/referendum)
- Taxes too high already
- Asking too much
- Project is too expensive
- Library users should pay for it
- Private / donors should pay

'Features' Questions

- Reduce waste first
- Cut excessive pay and benefits
- Families are already struggling
- Not the right project – other bigger issues
- We don't need libraries, everything is on the internet

Perception of the Librarians

We have to ask about the other noun....



REMINDER

“The factors that determine residents’ willingness to increase their taxes to support their local library are their perceptions and attitudes about the library *and* the librarian”

'Librarian' Questions

“From Awareness to Funding” 2018 Deck

- S9. In this section, you'll see a list of words and phrases that may or may not be an important trait for librarians to have.

23 traits or characteristics (S10_)

'Librarian' Questions

- s10_a Knowledgeable about my community
- s10_b Someone you'd go to with a question before going to the Internet
- s10_c Can research topics better than you can do alone on the Internet
- s10_d More of an expert in technology than anyone else
- s10_e Knows better than anyone else what music and movies kids would love
- s10_f Really understands how to engage kids with computers and technology
- s10_g Well known in the community
- s10_h Works closely with local politicians and community leaders to get public library funding and support
- s10_i Understands the community's needs and how to address them through the public library
- s10_j Works closely with other community leaders to find ways to better the community
- s10_k Able to access information through technology in ways that ordinary people can't do
- s10_l Has excellent computer skills
- s10_m Able to help non-English speaking patrons
- s10_n Friendly and approachable
- s10_o True advocate for lifelong learning
- s10_p Expert at connecting people to needed information and resources
- s10_q Makes the library a place for fun and creativity
- s10_r Knows what books children would love
- s10_s Recommends books, music, movies, websites and other online information sources that you don't know about
- s10_t Teaches me how to find trustworthy information and materials
- s10_u Reaches out to ALL members of the community to make sure they know the library is open to them
- s10_v Works closely with parents and caregivers so they can support children's learning
- s10_w Is someone I can relate to

Anticipate Opposition

It is either about compassion for populations
or pride in the place we call home



Populations

Unemployed and Job Seekers

Pre-K

Students

Teens

Families

At-Risk Children and Youth

Seniors and Isolated

Veterans and Returning Service Members

Homeless and At-Risk

Sources of Compassion

Please tell me how 'convincing' each statement is as a reason to vote for the tax....

Q – [Our Library] provides a [key feature or service] for a [specific at-risk population]. New / renewed tax funding will help ensure that [population succeeds statement].

Very Convincing -> Not at All Convincing

Sources of Compassion

Please tell me how 'convincing' each statement is as a reason to vote for the tax....

Q – [Library] is current closed [evenings/weekends] and have limited [evenings/weekends] hours. New / renewed tax funding would expand hours to allow [at-risk or key population] to access the library's [programs/collections/services] throughout the week.

Very Convincing -> Not at All Convincing

Sources of Compassion

Please tell me how 'convincing' each statement is as a reason to vote for the tax....

Q – [Service shortfall for a population statement.]
[Library] is the only place in [locality] that works with [population]. New / renewed funding will provide addition library resources or staff dedicated to supporting [population] to [address problem].

Very Convincing -> Not at All Convincing

Pride of Place

Main Street / Home Town

Tourism / Unique Draw

Arts and Culture

Best in the Area

Schools

Sports

Amenities

Your Third-Place Reasons

“Thriving, Interesting and Prosperous”

Sources of Pride

Please tell me how 'convincing' each statement is as a reason to vote for the tax....

Q – Other communities like [Eagleton and Shelbyville] dedicated [X times] as much funding per resident / overall than does [Library]. [Locality] should invest more in its library so that [community] remains an attractive place to live and work.

Very Convincing -> Not at All Convincing

Sources of Pride

Please tell me how 'convincing' each statement is as a reason to vote for the tax....

Q – [Library] is a community resource and gathering place that hosts [# of visits/people/events] each month. [Locality] needs to maintain and support this valuable [service/feature].

Very Convincing -> Not at All Convincing

Sources of Pride

Please tell me how 'convincing' each statement is as a reason to vote for the tax....

Q – [Locality's Library] is a valuable community resource that....

Very Convincing -> Not at All Convincing

Intractable Voters

These 2 question that should boil it all down to sugar



The Harstad Question

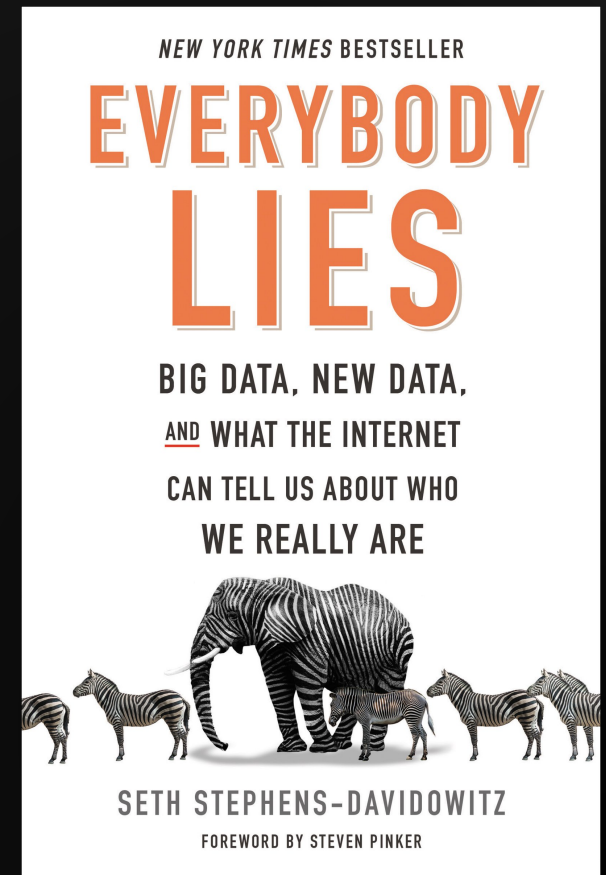
Which ONE if any of the cutbacks listed below *troubles you the most*?

- Reduced programs for [population]?
- Reduced collections for [topic/population]?
- Reduced hours or close on [nights/weekends]?
- Layoffs or fewer staff?
- [another one you are contemplating]?
- **None are troubling.**

What Do Your Neighbors Think?

“Everybody Lies: Big Data, New Data, and What the Internet Can Tell Us About Who We Really Are”

- By Seth Stephens-Davidowitz



Third-Party Question Decks


Reference Points about Belief Systems and Behaviors from
PEW and OCLC



PEW 2016 “Libraries”

SEPTEMBER 9, 2016

Libraries 2016

Pew Research Center 

Trends in visiting public libraries have steadied, and many Americans have high expectations for what their local libraries should offer

BY JOHN B. HARRIGAN

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/09/09/libraries-2016/>

OCLC 2018 “From Awareness to Funding...”

Research Panel Survey Questions

A companion to the OCLC Research report:

From Awareness to Funding: Voter Perceptions and Support of Public Libraries in 2018

Both the report and the supplement are available online at:

oclc.org/awareness2018.



Working on the Problem Together

EveryLibrary Institute research partnerships



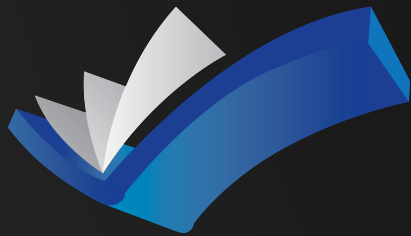
Working with

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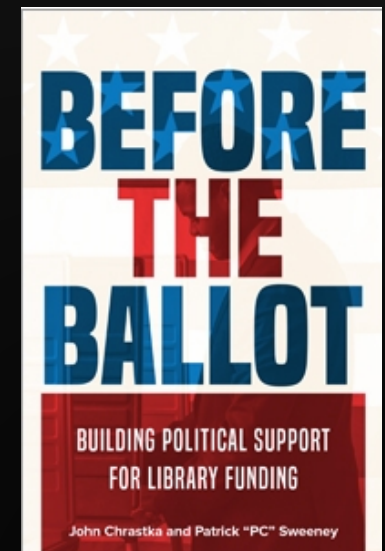
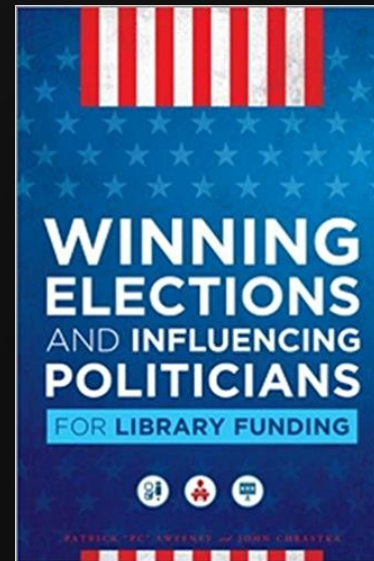
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