

# american libraries DIRECT

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## Are books in academic libraries turning to wallpaper?

Dan Cohen writes: “University libraries across the country and around the world are seeing steady, and in many cases precipitous, declines in the use of the books on their shelves. The University of Virginia, an institution that [openly shares](#) detailed library

circulation stats from the prior 20 years, is a good case study. College students there checked out 238,000 books during the school year a decade ago; last year, that number had shrunk to just 60,000. The trend lines are also sliding southward for graduate students and faculty members. I’ve seen my own book usage change over time, and the reasons are complicated.”...



*The Atlantic*, May 26; *University of Virginia Library*

## What are public libraries for?

Schuyler Velasco writes: “The temple of books is changing, as communities like Adams County, Colorado, reevaluate the library’s role in public life. For over a century, that role was to be the main source of information. But now, library patrons need

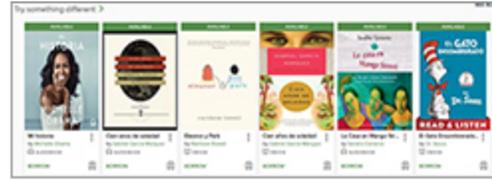
fewer tangible things. Patrons still check out books: Library checkouts in the US dwarfed Amazon book orders as of 2014. But people can also borrow books directly on e-readers, or access them through Spotify-esque subscription services. To survive, public libraries must evolve into something more attuned to modern needs and tailor-made to local communities—with uses so diverse they might look nothing like a library at all.”...



*Experience (Northeastern University)*, May 21

## Sonoma library launches Spanish eReading Room

The Sonoma County (Calif.) Library has created a specialized eReading Room of Spanish-language ebooks and audiobooks. With a library card, county residents can browse digital books sectioned off from the rest of the catalog with all searches filtered and dedicated to Spanish language. The eReading Room concept was inspired by the use of physical spaces in libraries that are designed specifically for Spanish-speaking patrons. Readers can find titles [online](#) or by using the reading app Libby...



*Sonoma (Calif.) Index-Tribune, May 27*

## Kindles now support Traditional Chinese ebooks

On May 23, Amazon issued a [press release](#) announcing that it has added support for Traditional Chinese ebooks on Kindles and Kindle apps. Amazon added a [Traditional Chinese language section](#) to the Kindle store with more than 20,000 titles available. The books are compatible with the Kindle iOS app and Kindle Android app, which includes Fire tablets, and Kindle devices running the latest software. Authors can now publish Kindle ebooks in Traditional Chinese as well using Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing platform....



*The eBook Reader Blog, May 27; Amazon.com, May 23*



## Canadian autism library program seeks funding

The days appear to be numbered for a New Brunswick program that encourages children on the autism spectrum to take part in physical and social activities in a safe space. The organizers of [Sensory Circuits](#), held once a month at the Fredericton (N.B.) Public Library, are searching for funding to save one of the city's few free programs for children on the spectrum. The grant money has dried up, and the final outing takes place on June 1. Rebecca Wurm (right), a pediatric occupational therapist, and Kim MacLean (left), children's library assistant, created the program, which allows parents to drop off their children for one of two 45-minute sessions once a month....



*CBC News, May 26*

## When libraries are second responders

Deborah Fallows writes: “Everyone knows about first responders. I’ve come to think of libraries as playing a crucial role as second responders. In Ferguson, Missouri, the public library [stayed open](#) when the schools were closed after the riots, to offer the kids a safe place and classes taught by volunteers. After the hurricanes in Houston, some library websites were immediately up and running, announcing that they were open for business. After Hurricane Sandy, some libraries in New Jersey became [places of refuge](#). In the Queens (N.Y.) Library’s Far Rockaway branch, librarians set up shop in the parking lot to continue children’s story hours.”...



*The Atlantic: Reporter’s Notebook, May 23; American Libraries, Nov. 10, 2014; The Conversation, Aug. 30, 2017*

## Snakes on a rare book

Abbie Weinberg writes: “‘What is that?’ someone asks, pointing to the corner of one of the books open for display. ‘This? Oh, it’s a book snake. Most useful object in the library!’ I reply. This conversation happens once in nearly every book display I do.



People are *fascinated* by these little objects that are so ubiquitous in a special collection reading room that many of us hardly notice them. Book snakes are designed to hold open books, freeing up a researcher’s hands to take notes, take a picture, or hold a magnifying glass. They come in three basic weights.”...

*The Collation, May 21*

## Preserving black-paper photo albums

Melissa Barker writes: “One obstacle that genealogists might face with photographs are those old black-paper photo albums. They were extremely popular back in the late 1800s and throughout the 1900s. The photographs were either pasted onto the pages or they were inserted with photo corners that are pasted into the album. We have several of these types of black paper photo albums in the Houston County (Tenn.) Archives. It is very important that these types of photo albums be handled with care and preserved properly. The pages are not archival, but you could do much more damage to the photographs trying to remove them than the paper is doing.”...



*The In-Depth Genealogist, May 23*



## Bedtime stories in the digital era

Technology has replaced books at bedtime, with more than a quarter of parents trying to

use home assistants, apps, and voice notes to tell their child a story in the evening. A [study](#) commissioned by children's reading charity BookTrust indicates a growing reliance on digital storytelling. One in four (26%) UK parents said they had tried to use tech such as virtual assistants for bedtime stories. However, 83% said they generally read print books. Bestselling children's author Francesca Simon said there is no substitute for real books, and she is calling on parents to ditch tech and rediscover the joy of the bedtime story by celebrating [Pyjamarama](#) on June 7....



*Shropshire (UK) Star, May 23; BookTrust (UK), May 23*

## 75 suggestions for summer reading

Wherever you go this summer, never, ever forget to bring a book. The *New York Times Book Review* has rounded up some glorious new titles to keep any reader happy, hydrated, and cool: pulse-pounding thrillers, delectable cookbooks, eerie true-crime stories to stand your hair on end. Historical fiction and travel books will help you dream of faraway eras and places. Sports and music fans will find reasons to cheer. New thrillers turn the genre on its head, and books on the great outdoors will satisfy even the most nature-averse. So here's your chance to get away from it all by getting into a book....



*New York Times Book Review, May 23*

## Forgotten web browsers of the 1990s

Matthew Lasar writes: "2019 marks [30 years since Tim Berners-Lee worked at CERN](#) and came up with a little idea known as the World Wide Web. As all of us did a little web browsing this past weekend, we thought resurfacing this piece outlining forgotten web browsers of the 1990s might make all of us even appreciate Internet Explorer today. This story originally ran on October 11, 2011." And let's not forget the [ubiquitous free CDs](#) used to promote AOL and other online service providers....



*Ars Technica, May 26; CERN; O Say Can You See?, May 24*



## 200 things libraries let you check out for free

Julia Glum writes: "The past couple of years have seen [the rise](#) of the [Library of Things](#), a section of each regular library that contains fun, unique items. Seeds, cake pans, audiovisual equipment, and kids' science kits are among the standard offerings, but some towns take it to the next level, allowing patrons to borrow everything from chargers to

bicycles from their unusual library collections. Here's a list of 200 nonbook things libraries in the US lend out for free.”...

*Money*, May 16; *The Guardian (UK)*, Apr. 24; *American Libraries*, June 1, 2017



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