

# What Does the Public Say? Analyzing Online News Article Comments About Libraries

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## INTRODUCTION

Does the public see libraries as relevant in this world of shifting demographics and technological advancements?

According to the 2013 Pew Research Center's report:

*"Americans strongly value the role of public libraries in their communities, both for providing access to materials and resources and for promoting literacy and improving the overall quality of life. Most Americans say they have only had positive experiences at public libraries, and value a range of library resources and services."*

(Pew Research Center, December 2013, "How Americans value public libraries in their communities.")

## METHODS

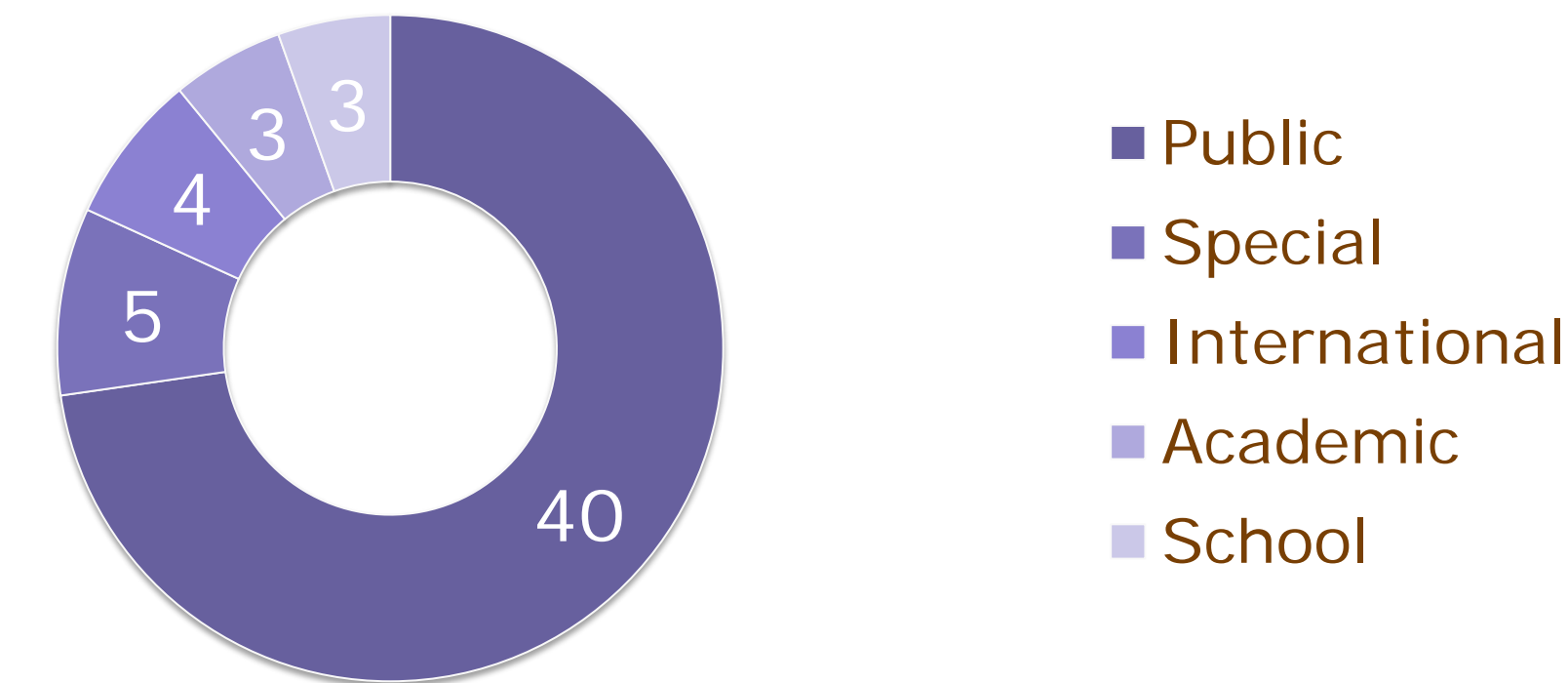
The presenters conducted a content analysis of 693 public comments on 54 news articles about libraries in major national newspapers to view a snapshot of public opinion and perception.

Four newspapers selected based on total digital circulation and regional interest. Circulation data from Alliance for Audited Media, March 2013, "Top 25 U.S. Daily Newspaper Digital Editions."

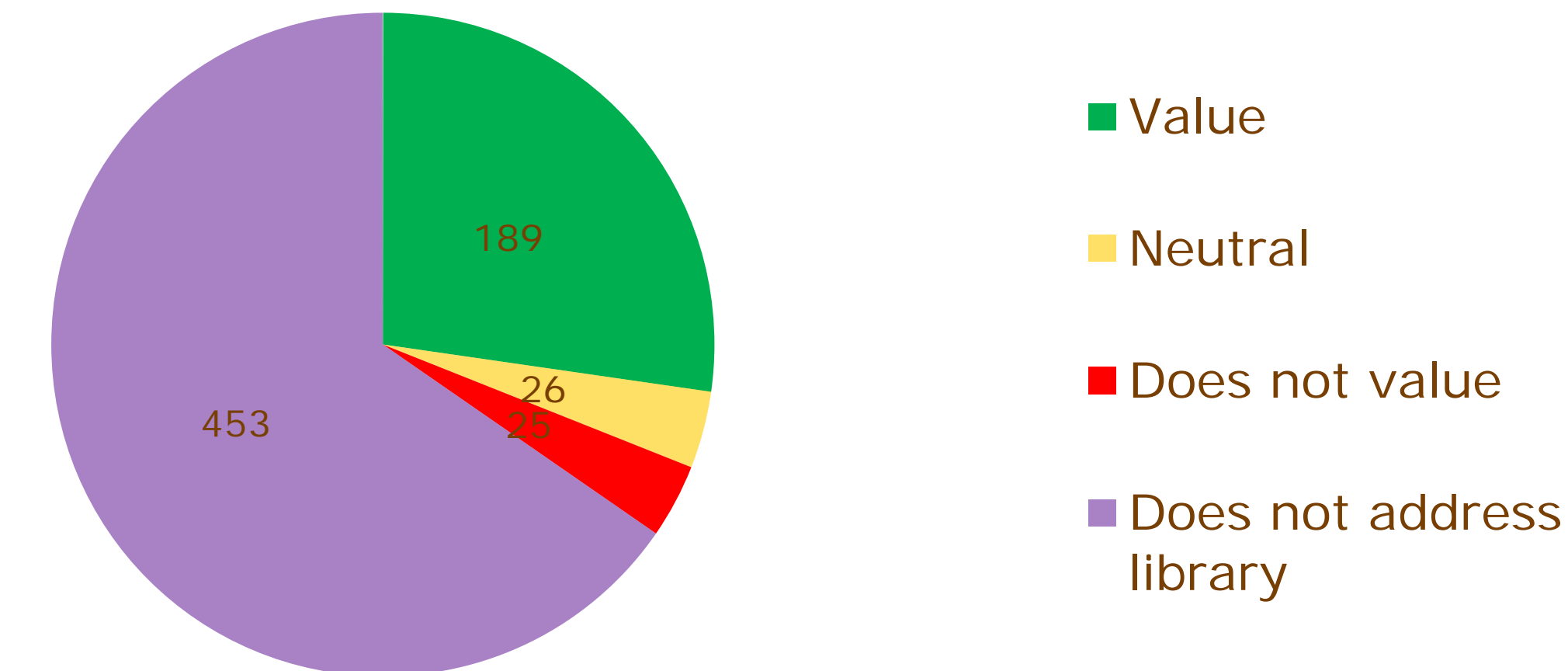
Search criteria:  
[libraries] + July 2013-July 2014



## LIBRARY TYPES COVERED (# OF ARTICLES)



## DOES COMMENTER VALUE THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY?



## NOTABLE QUOTES

I have to wonder if the people who say libraries have not done a good job in keeping up with technology have visited one recently? ("Do People Need Libraries in the Digital Age?" WSJ)

Libraries are dinosaurs. They should all be turned into community centers or sold off. ("Photographer checks out US public libraries' function, form" SF Chronicle)

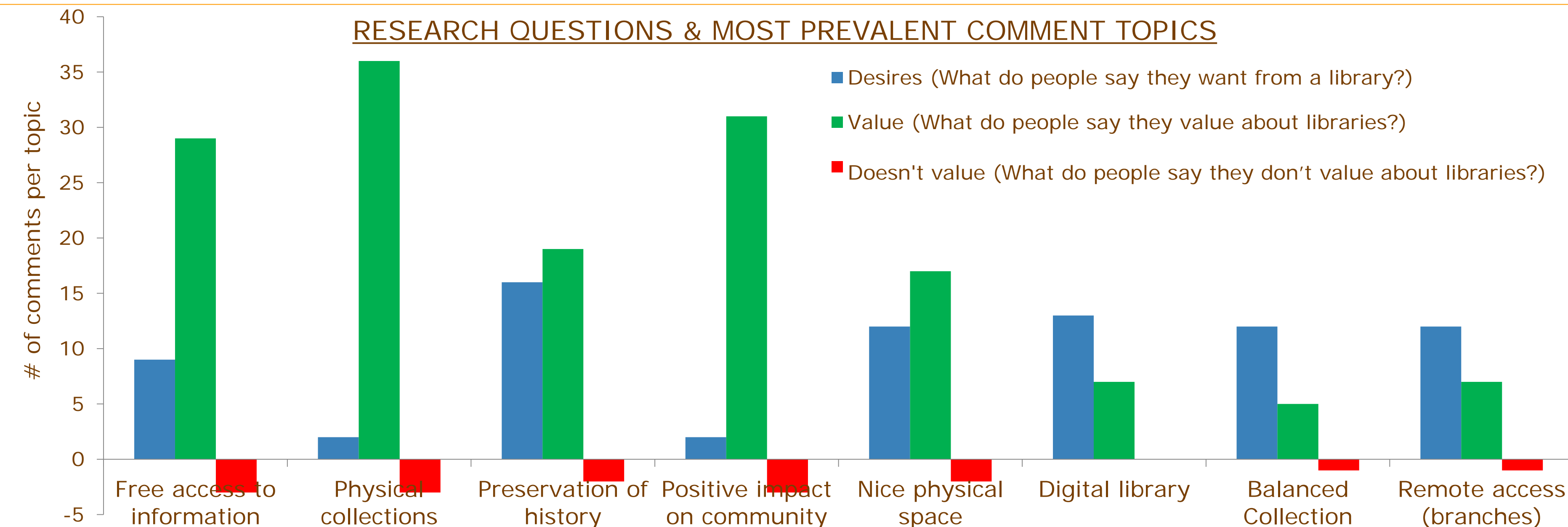
A few times per week, I will leave the office, turn my phone off and head for our public library. An hour in library...with ancient and modern authors, is the best respite in the world. You can't be relaxed chasing Google. ("Do People Need Libraries in the Digital Age?" WSJ)

Glad all that dough went to fix up libraries... Most people can Google for anything they'd find in a reference library and read books downloaded to their Kindles or iPads...Next, let's spend millions of taxpayer dollars fixing up public telephone booths. Welcome back to the 20th Century. ("North Beach library's opening marks end of \$200 million program" SF Chronicle)

Since Carnegie, libraries are in cahoots to inform the public for free. ("Got Wi-Fi? Some libraries now lending hotspots" USA Today)

Dare I ask: If guns are allowed in public libraries in Seattle, must they be used with silencers? ("The Gun Report: November 5, 2013" NYT)

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS & MOST PREVALENT COMMENT TOPICS



## ARTICLES WITH MORE THAN 100 COMMENTS

