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‘Power ePatron’ Identified as Key Influencer of Library Website Design

Full details in *Library Journal’s Patron Profiles: Library Websites and Virtual Services*

New York, N.Y. May 3, 2012– As the Internet has rocked our culture, public libraries have responded with strategies to help society trump the digital divide and with services to foster effective use of the web and the many digital innovations it has sparked. Now, *Library Journal*, in partnership with Bowker, has released its third issue of the quarterly publication, *Patron Profiles*, to explore how people use the Internet in libraries and what they want from this key tool as they look for new books and information. Based on trending research among a national sample of more than 2,000 participants, *Patron Profiles: Library Websites and Virtual Services* identifies the characteristics of the “Power ePatron,” those who report visiting their library’s website at least once a week, to help inform what the future of library websites should look like.

"Inside libraries, these national trending surveys allow us to get real insight into how patrons use their libraries, but they also provide guidance on unmet expectations that can help shape effective library services," said Patron Profiles Series Editor Rebecca T. Miller. "Beyond libraries, they illuminate the integral role of libraries in the culture of reading, book buying, and the rapid adoption of new technologies."

“Power ePatrons” are more likely female, tend to be younger (in the 21-40 age group), slightly more affluent and have graduated from college. “Power ePatrons” make substantially greater use of their libraries **both** online and in person than other patrons surveyed.

“Power ePatrons” borrow more media, place more holds and pick up books on hold more often than other patrons. They are avid media consumers—borrowing more books, audio books, ebooks, and movies than other patrons. They are also more likely than other patrons to purchase books based on their online and onsite library activities.

As their name implies, “Power ePatrons” favorite media type is ebooks by a wide margin, followed by music, images, videos, and games. In fact, 25% of “Power ePatrons” have already borrowed ebooks, compared with 11% of the other patrons. When it comes to consuming electronic media, “Power ePatrons” are rapidly moving towards tablet devices, leading other patrons by almost six percent.

“Clearly, there is much room for growth in library website development,” the analysts continued. “The most desirable new features tend to focus on the patron’s need to find and evaluate content, and manage media borrowing. A more distant but intriguing potential is the website’s place as a community resource – not just to facilitate physical meetings and book groups, but to mirror that ideal in the virtual world.”

Patron Profiles is the first national trending survey of public library consumers and explores the relationship between the library and the book and media retail industries.

The first report of Volume 1, *Library Patrons and Ebook Usage* (October 2011) introduced the “Power Patron,” a person whose reading and borrowing activity exceeds the behavior of the overall sample. Power Patrons “set the pace for library use and are a model to study when designing services to foster engagement with the library.” It also identified a strong connection between the borrowing and book purchasing behaviors of library patrons in the retail environment (more than 50 percent of all library users go on to purchase books by an author they were introduced to in the library).

The second report of Volume 1, *Mobile Devices, Mobile Content, and Library Apps* (January 2012) dug deeper into the data to identify library patrons in the 21-40 year-old age group “as heavier than normal consumers of digital content [they] tend to be active patrons who use the library for their own purposes as well as to meet the needs of their children.”

Patron Profiles is powered by Bowker PubTrack™ Consumer and sponsored by ProQuest, Baker & Taylor, Random House, and The Rowman & Littlefield Group. The next report, *Media Consumption and Library Use* will be published in July 2012. Visit www.patronprofiles.com for more information.

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