

Public Library Use in Oregon

*Results from the 2006
Oregon Population Survey*

*Oregon State Library
March 2007*

Introduction

- Since 1994 the Oregon State Library has participated in the Oregon Population Survey, a biennial survey that measures a variety of socio-economic characteristics of Oregonians.
- The State Library has used the survey to collect data about use of public libraries.
- This presentation includes data about public library use from the four most recent surveys: 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006.

About the Survey

- The Oregon Population Survey is a random telephone survey of Oregon households.
- The base sample is supplemented with an additional sample to collect sufficient data from various racial and ethnic groups.
- A randomly selected adult household member provides information for each member of the household regardless of age.
- The 2006 survey surveyed over 4,000 households and obtained data for over 10,000 individuals.
- The margin of error for most of the data about library use is approximately plus or minus 2%.

Survey Questions

These questions were asked about all members of the sample household:

- Have you, personally, used a public library or library program in the last 30 days? This includes connecting to the library on the Internet.

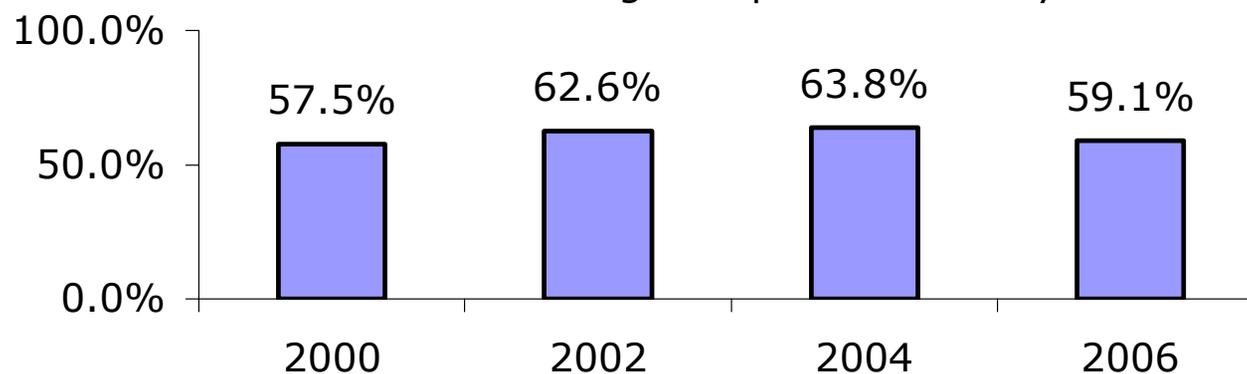
[If the respondent answered “no” to the first question they were asked this follow-up question...]

- Have you, personally, used a public library or library program in the last 12 months?

Public Library Use in the Past Year

Percent of Oregonians Who Used a Public Library in the Past Year

Source: Oregon Population Survey

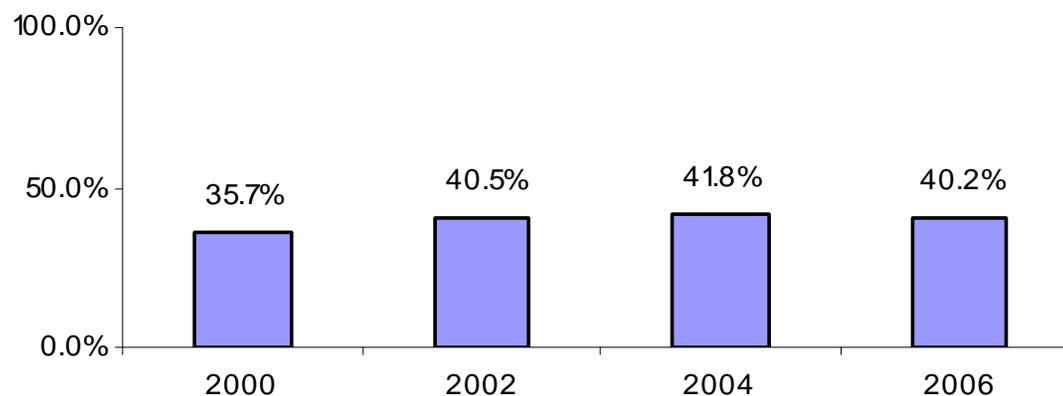


The 2006 survey shows a significant decline in public library use in the past year. The margin of error is plus or minus 1%.

Public Library Use in the Past Month

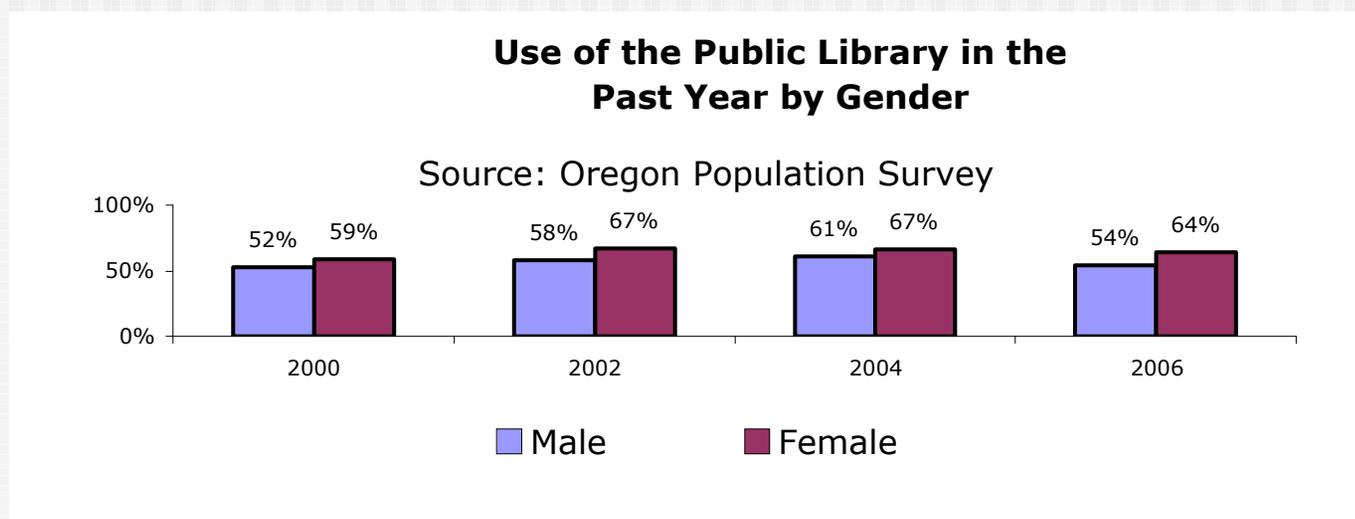
Percent of Oregonians Who Used a Public Library in the Past Month

Source: Oregon Population Survey



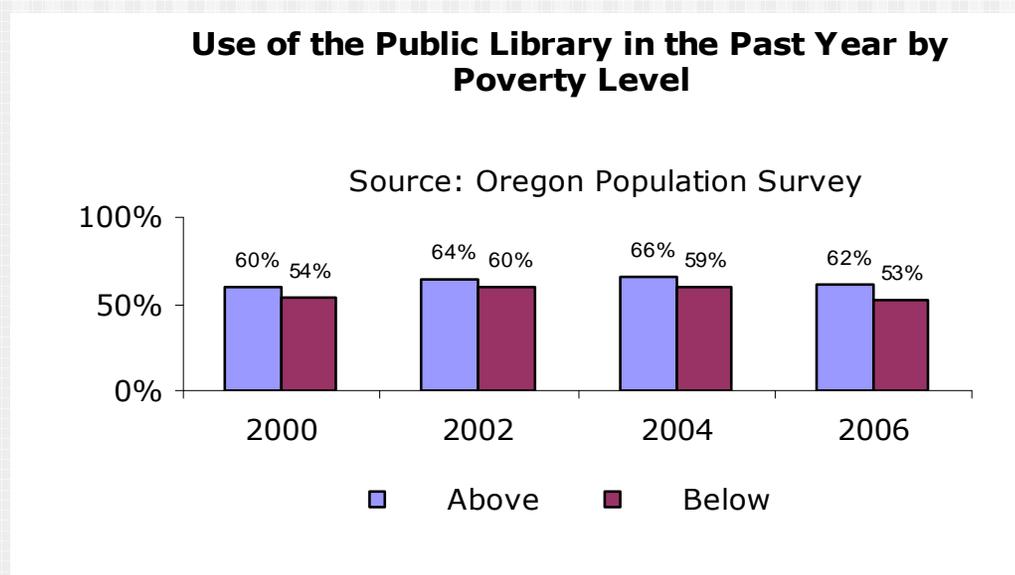
The decline in use in the past month in the 2006 survey is small but significant. The margin of error for this result is plus or minus 1%

Use in the Past Year by Gender



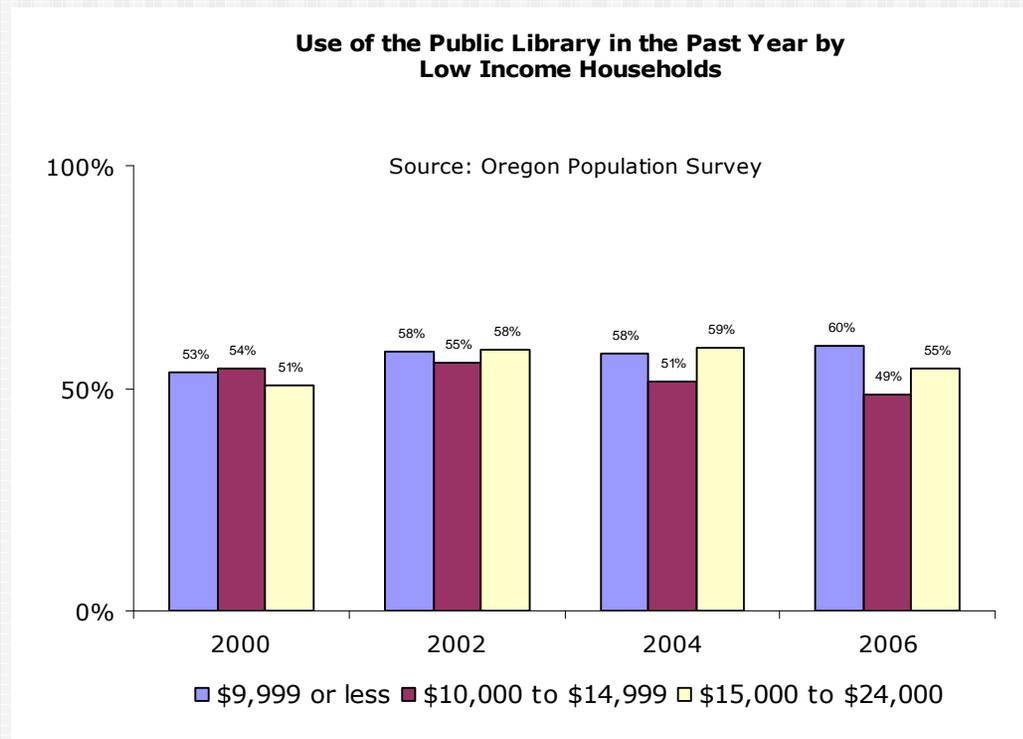
A significant decline in use by men may account for much of the overall decline in use in the 2006 survey.

Use in the Past Year by Poverty Level



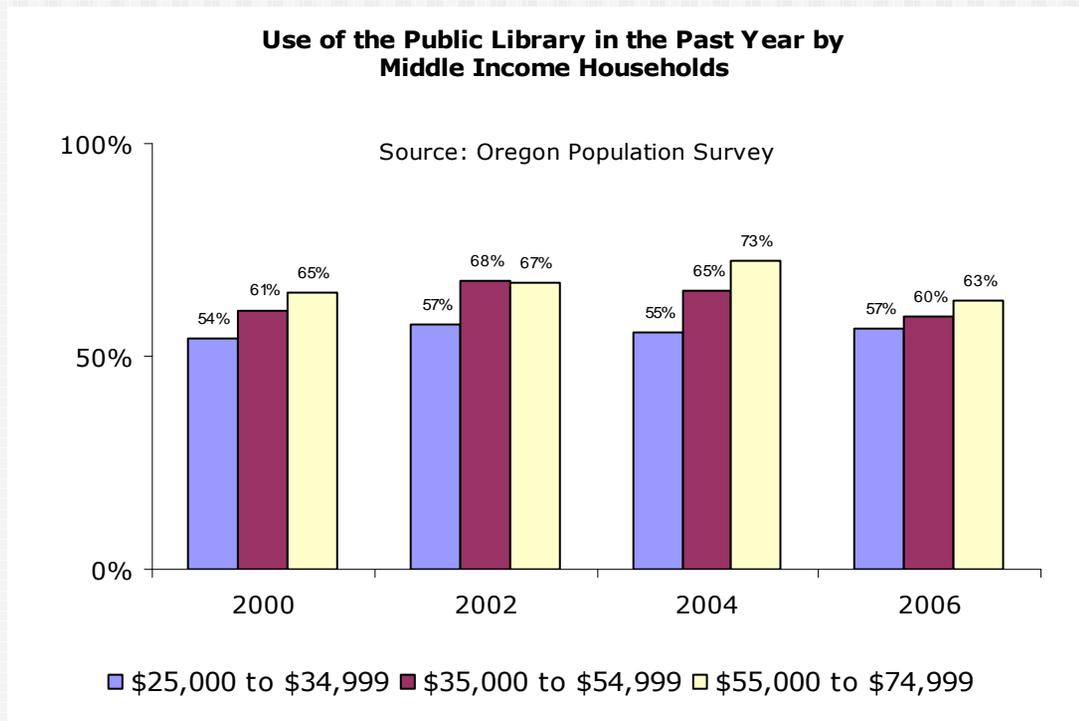
People living in households below the poverty line use public libraries less than those in households above the poverty line.

Use by Income Level



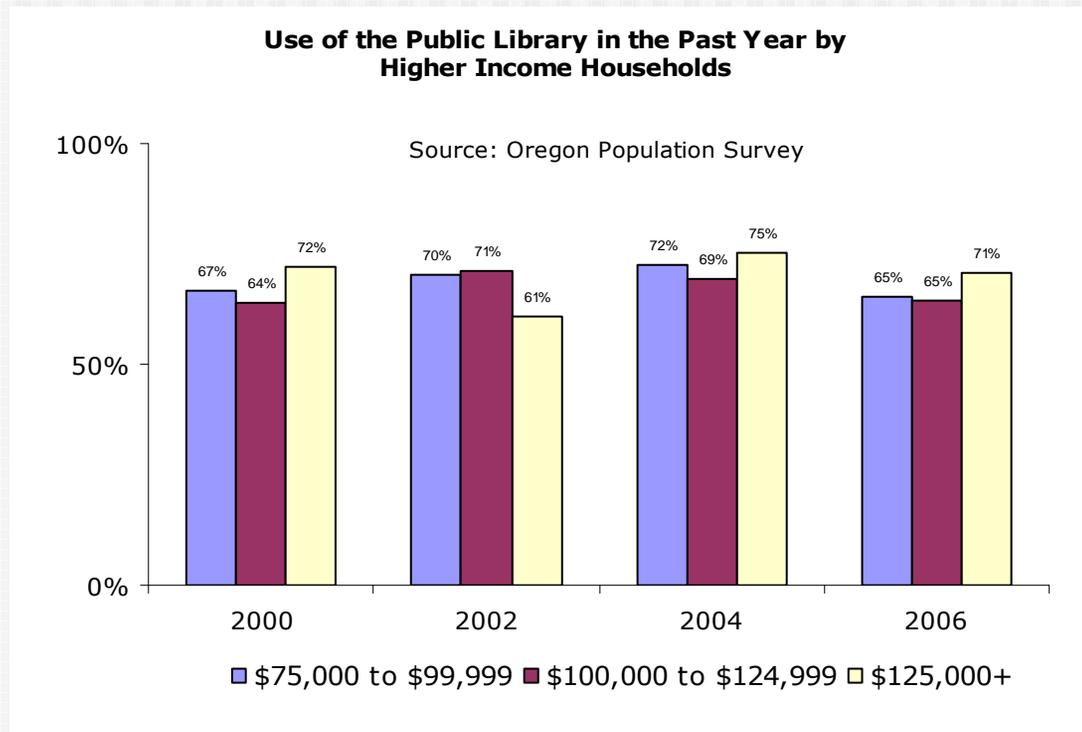
In the 2006 survey, use of the library by people in the lowest income households approximated that by all Oregonians.

Use by Income Level



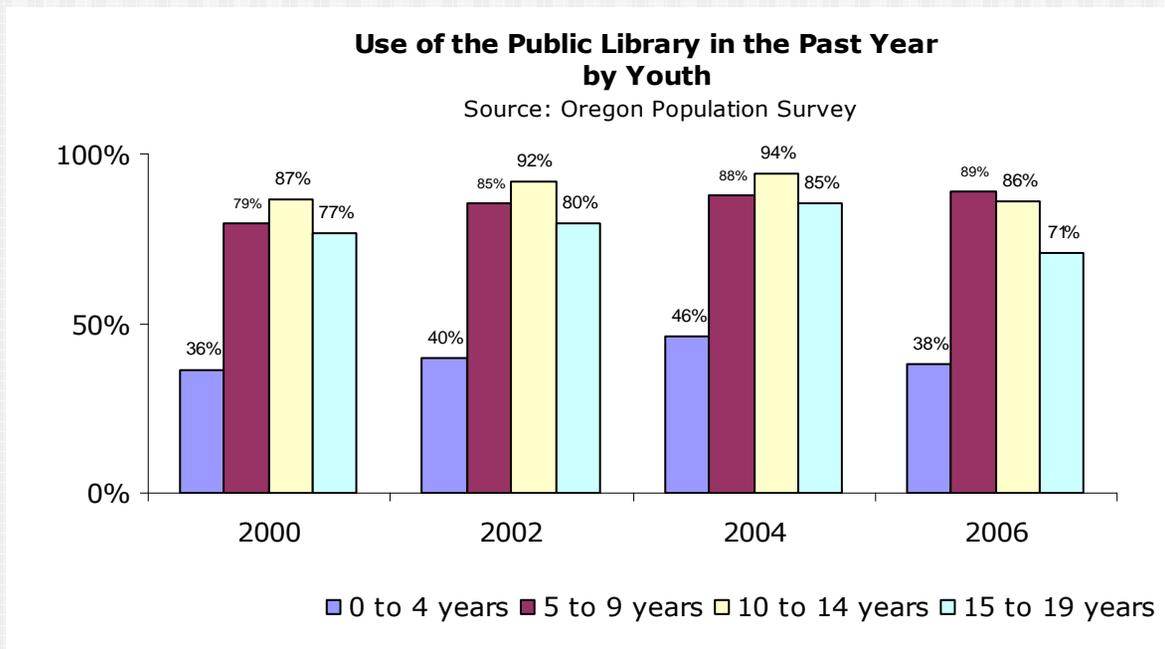
Use of the public library increases with income level.

Use by Income Level



People in the highest income households made the greatest use of the public library in 2006.

Use by Age

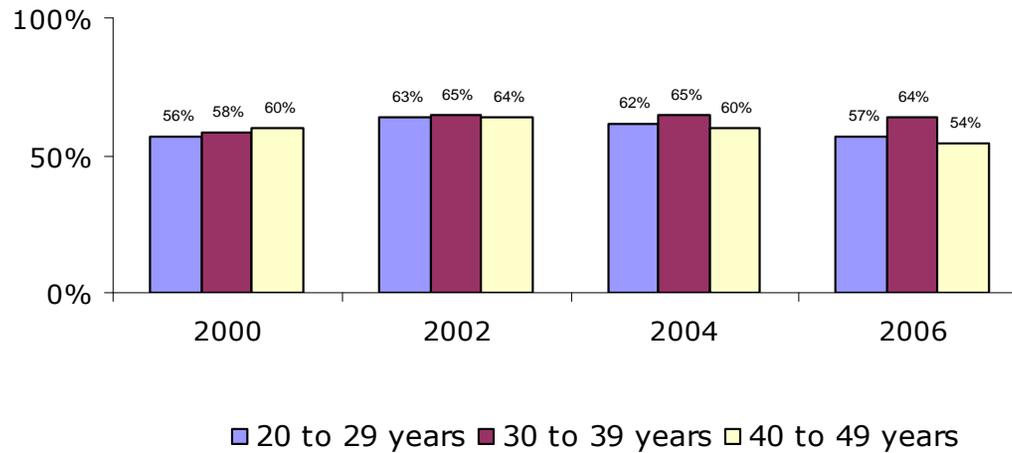


School age children show the highest use of the public library among all age groups. Use by preschoolers still has great potential for growth.

Use by Age

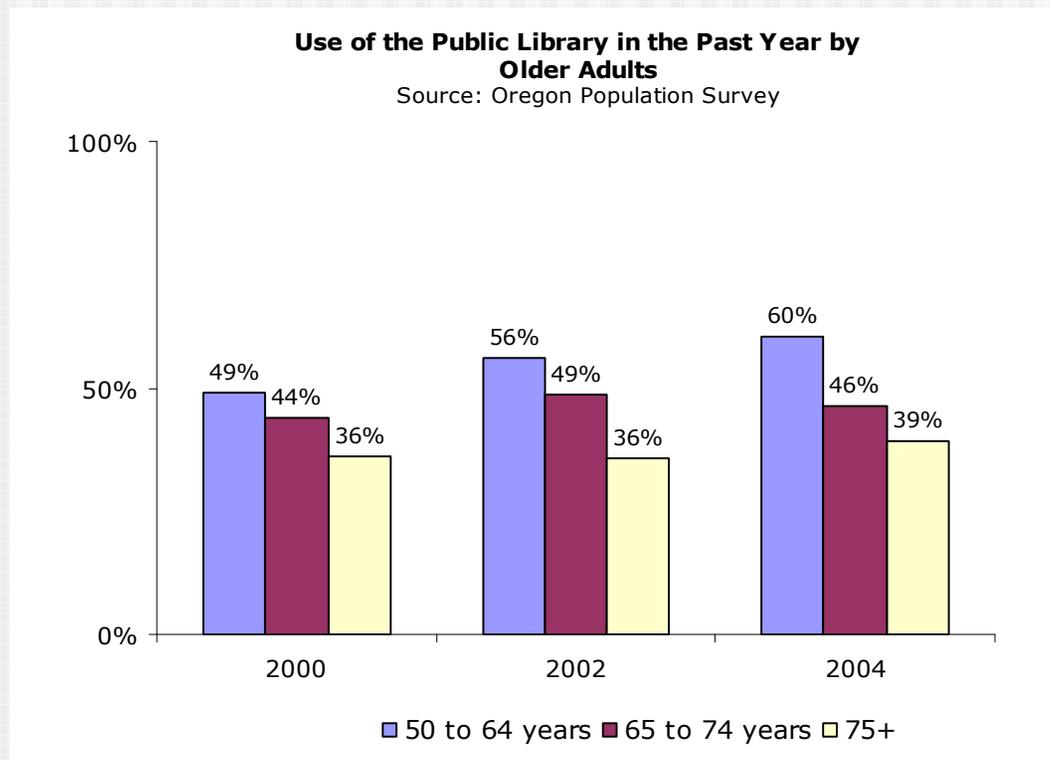
Use of the Public Library in the Past Year by Younger Adults

Source: Oregon Population Survey



Use among younger adults is greater than use by older adults.

Use by Age

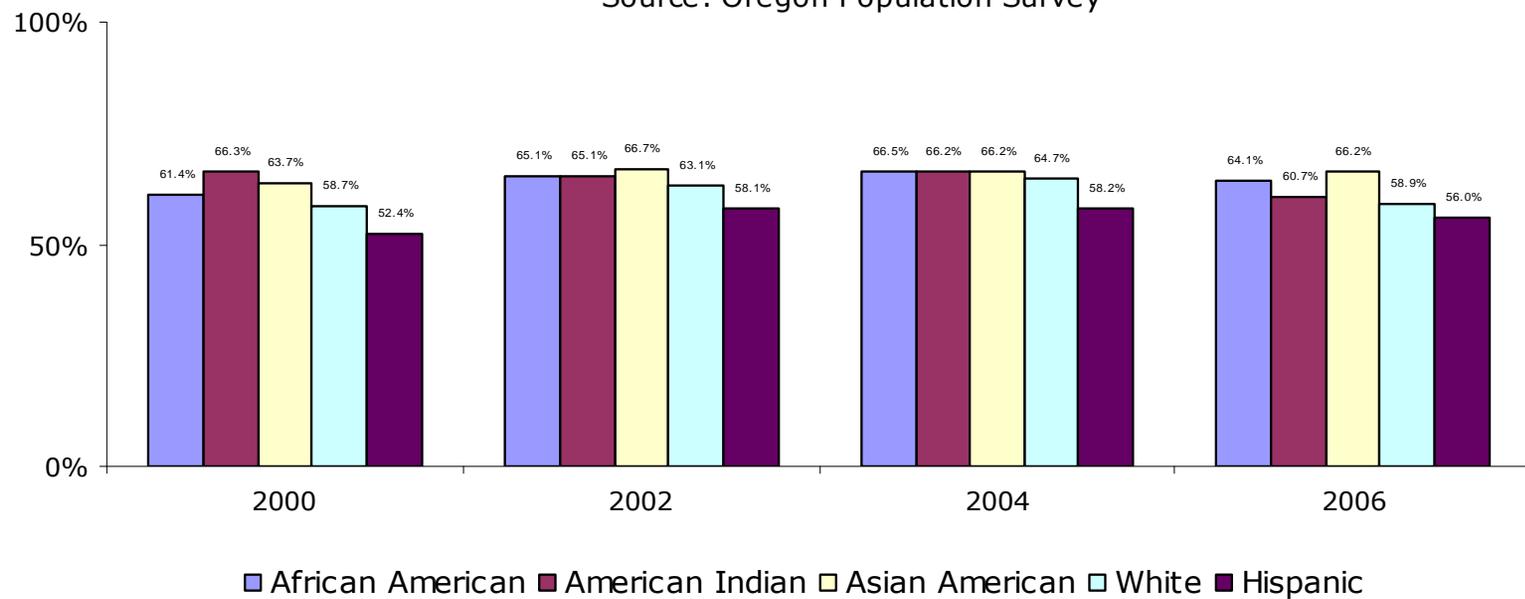


Public library use drops off significantly among older Oregonians.

Use by Race and Ethnicity

Use of the Public Library in the Past Year by Race/Ethnicity

Source: Oregon Population Survey

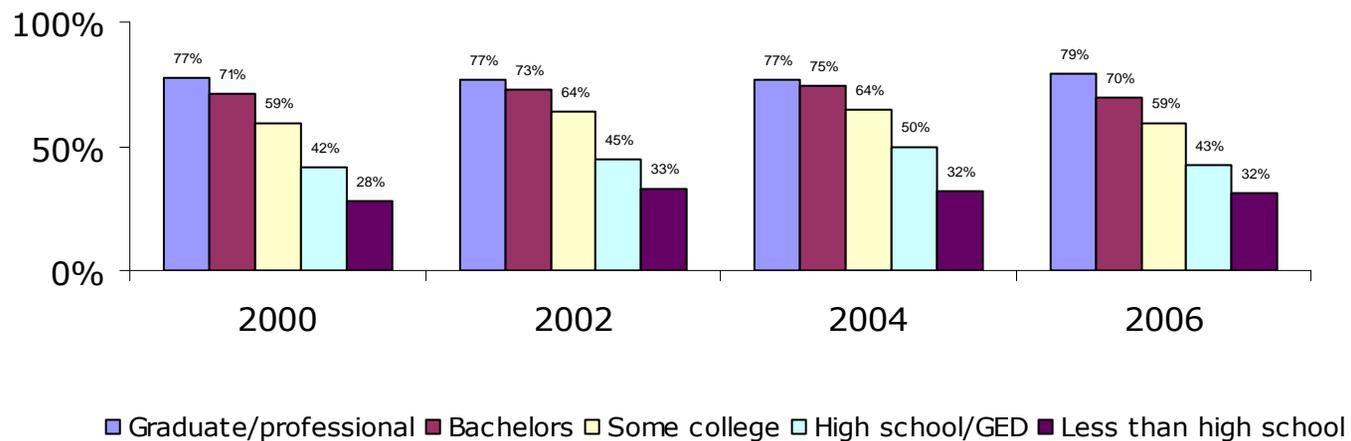


With the exception of Hispanics, library use does not vary a great deal by race and ethnicity.

Use by Education Level

Use of the Public Library in the Past Year by Education Level

Source: Oregon Population Survey

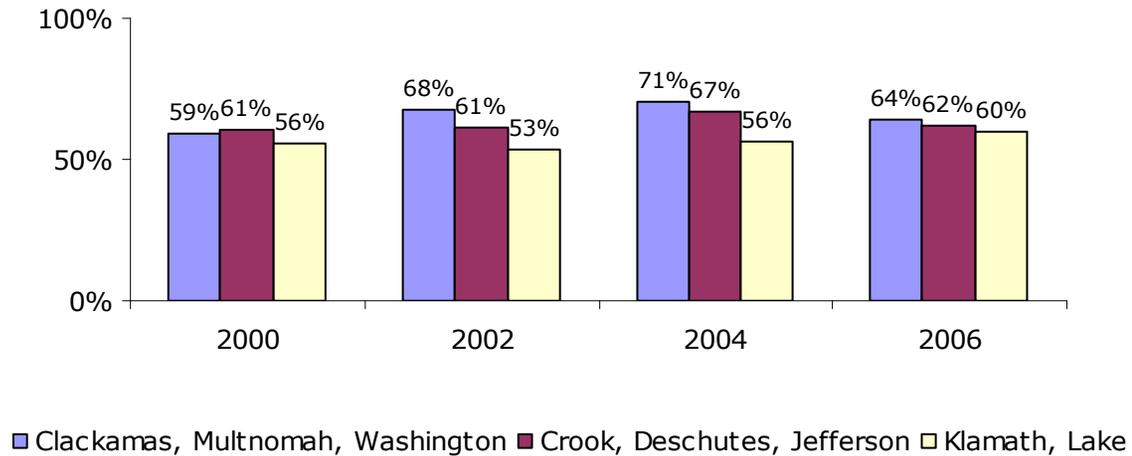


Use of the public library increases significantly with education level.

Use by Region

Use of the Public Library in the Past Year by Region (Top Three)

Source: Oregon Population Survey

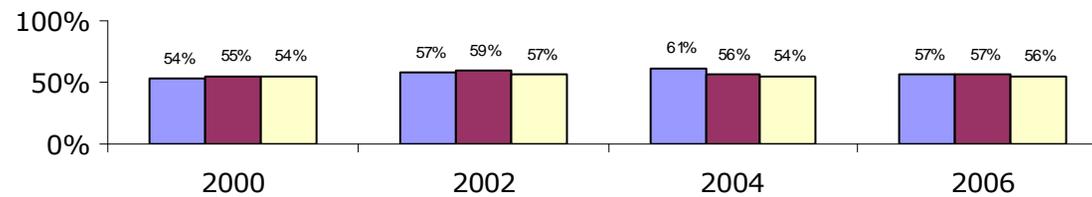


Metro area libraries show the greatest use in recent surveys. All of the top three regions have libraries providing county-wide library service.

Use by Region

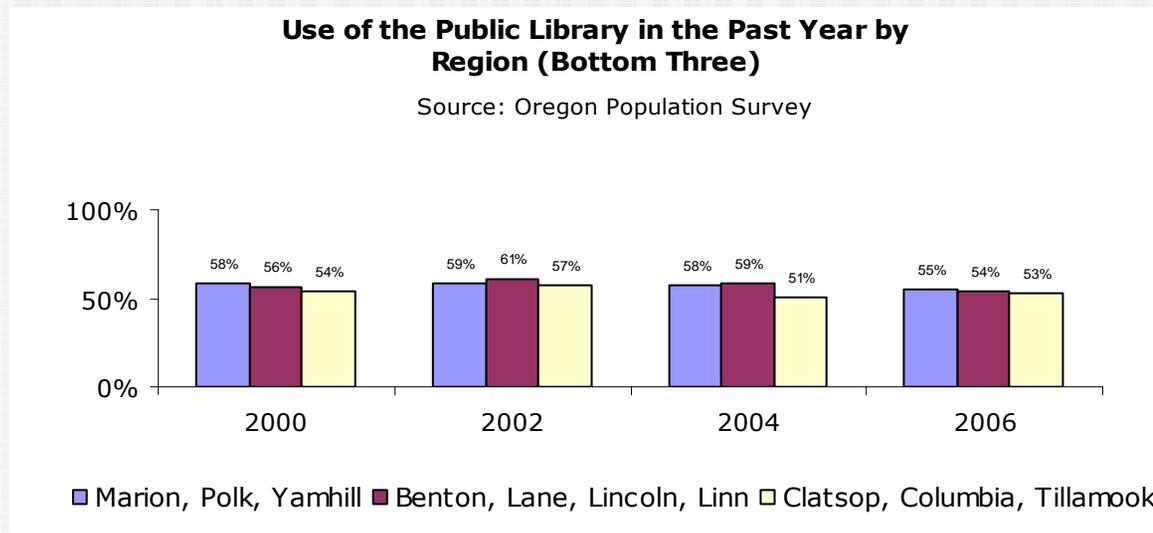
Use of the Public Library in the Past Year by Region (Middle Three)

Source: Oregon Population Survey



- Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine
- Gilliam, Hood River, Sherman, Wasco, Wheeler
- Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa

Use by Region

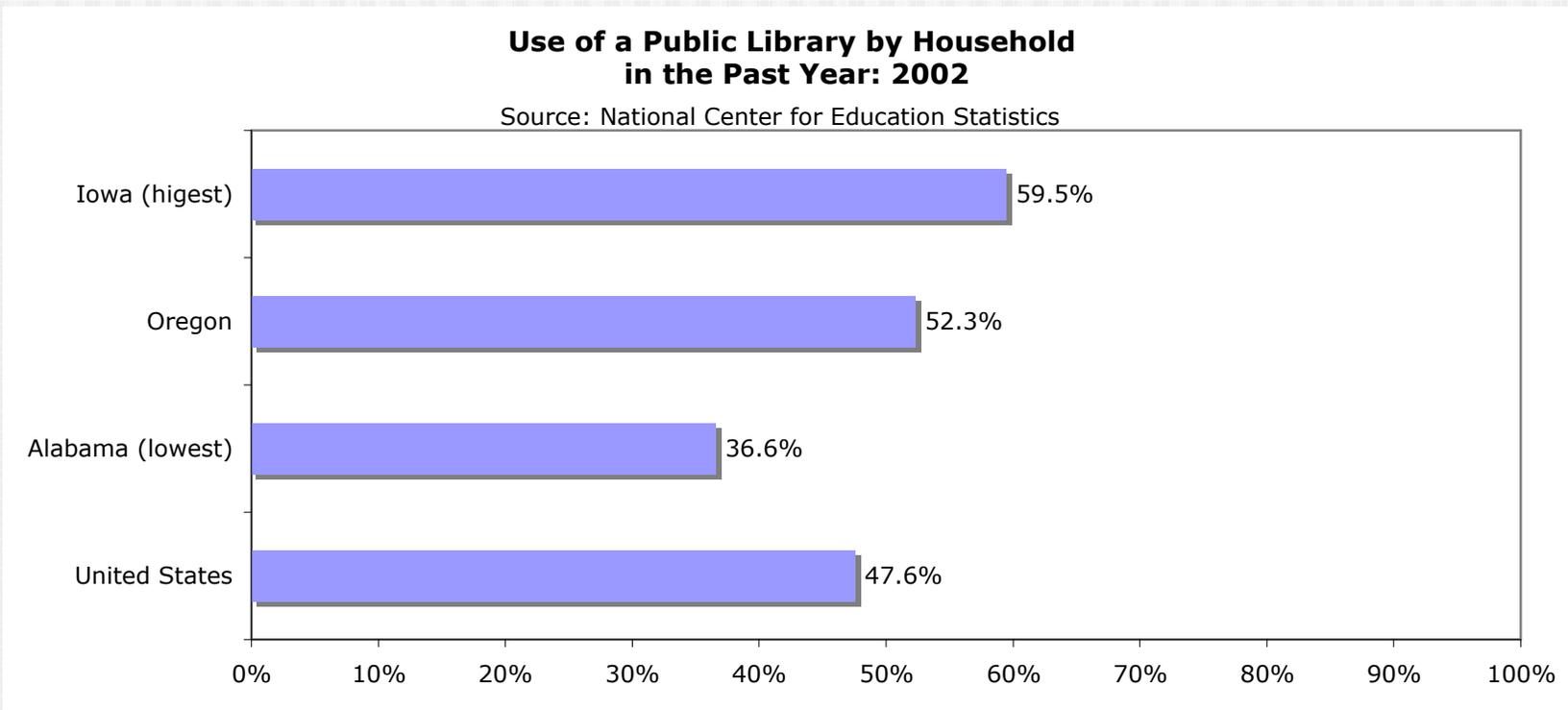


The regions showing the lowest use have the bulk of the “unserved” population in the state.

Comparison to National Data

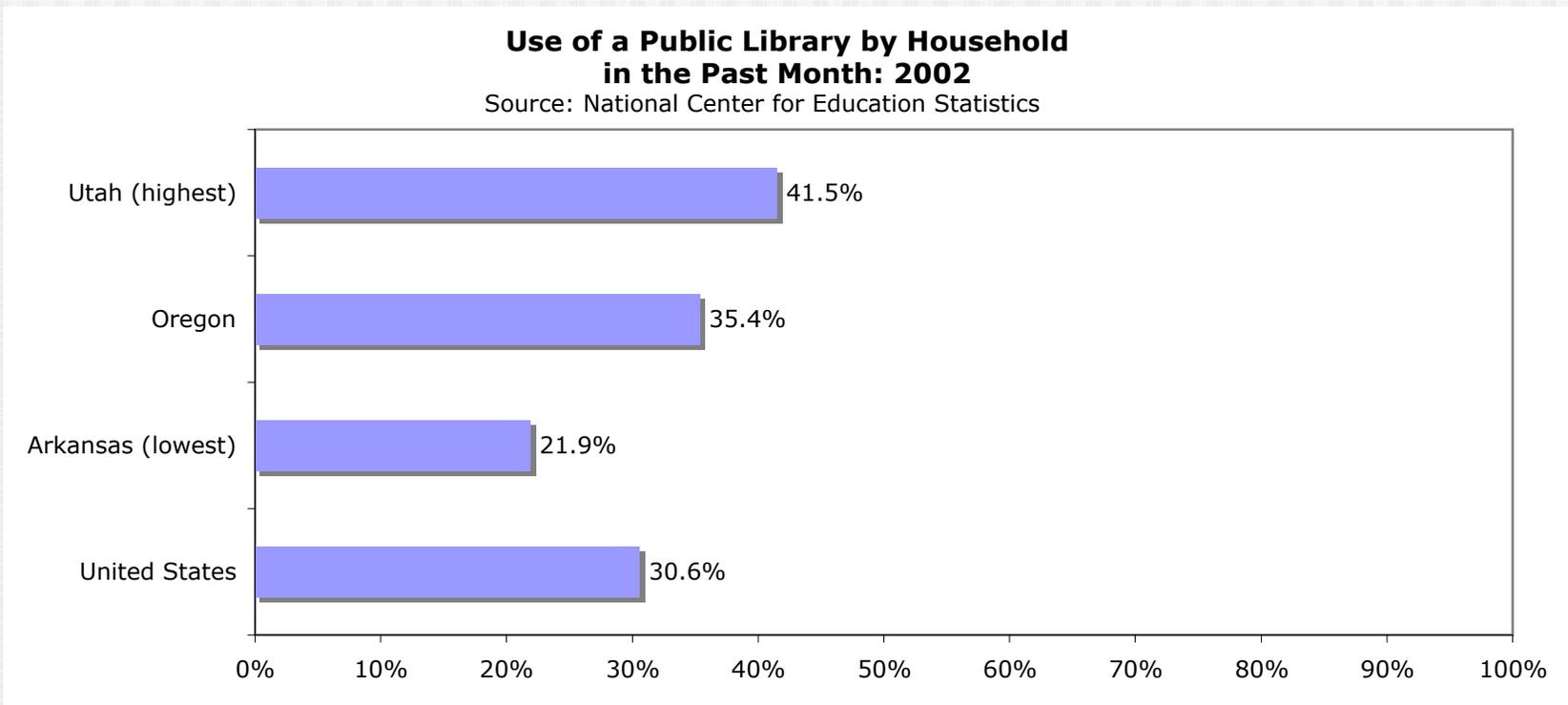
- In 2002 the National Center for Education Statistics worked with the Census Bureau to conduct a household survey of public library use.
- Respondents were asked whether anyone in the household had used a public library or a bookmobile in the past month or past year.
- The national survey reports on public library use by households and not individuals, so it is not possible to make a direct comparison to the Oregon Population Survey results.
- However, the national survey does include data for Oregon that is presented in the following slides.
- The slides show the states recording the highest use by household and the lowest use, plus the data for Oregon and the U.S. as a whole.

Use in the Past Year



There is nearly a ten point difference between this result for Oregon households (52.3%) and that in the 2002 Oregon Population Survey for individuals (62.6%). The difference might be explained by the difference in the wording of the question or the smaller sample size in the national survey.

Use in the Past Month



Again we see a significant difference between this result for households and the result for individuals in the 2002 Oregon Population Survey (40.5%).

Acknowledgement

The State Library would like to thank Toshihiko Murata of Northwest Survey and Data Services for his analysis of the Oregon Population Survey results.