

FAST FACTS

Recent Statistics from the
Library Research Service

ED3/110.10/No. 196

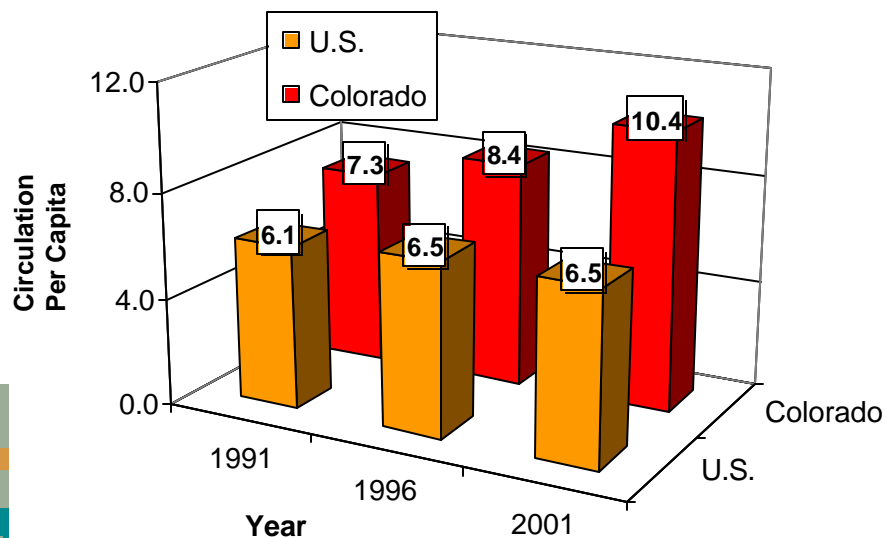
July 22, 2003

Circulation Per Capita for Colorado Public Libraries Continues To Climb While Libraries Nationwide Stagnate, 1991-2001

The good news is that, over the past decade (1991-2001), Coloradans have steadily increased their borrowing of public library materials—books, audio books, videos, DVDs, CDs, etc.—while Americans generally maintained a lower level of reliance on public libraries with very little, if any, change.

- In 1991, the average Coloradan borrowed 7.3 items, compared to 6.1 for the average American.
- In 1996, 8.4 loans were made to the average Coloradan, compared to 6.5 to the average American.
- In 2001, the Colorado average reached an all-time high of 10.4 items, compared to 6.5 for the average American. (Notably, between 1996 and 2001, there was no increase in per capita circulation for public libraries nationwide.)

**Circulation per Capita for
Public Libraries, Colorado & U.S., 1991-2001**



Contact About This Issue

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While Libraries Nationwide Stagnate, 1991-2001

Now, however, Colorado's pre-eminent status as a state with strong public libraries is in jeopardy. The last year in this comparison—and the latest year for which national data are available—was 2001.

The bad news is that, in the second half of 2002, the budget crisis in Colorado's public sector began draining millions of dollars in state and local funding from public libraries. As positive as these statistics are, they are a bittersweet reminder of just how much Coloradans are beginning to lose in quality public library service. With only six months of reduced funding represented for fiscal year 2003 (i.e., the last half of 2002), Colorado's own statistics indicate that, between 2001 and 2002, circulation per capita dropped five percent from 10.4 to 9.9. That's only the beginning...

