

# The Average Copyright of Colorado School Library Books is (Still) 15 Years Old

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Statistics on Colorado School Library Book Collections (Averages), 2005

School Level/ Enrollment Range	Number of Schools	Volumes per Student	Average Copyright Year	Print Spending per Student
High	826	42.3	1987	\$11.72
Jr High/Middle	242	19.7	1990	\$10.35
Elementary	207	27.9	1992	\$9.33
Combined	199	40.7	1991	\$17.17
2,000 +	16	8.8	1989	\$7.83
1,000-1,999	104	11.0	1988	\$7.45
700-999	126	16.8	1991	\$7.89
500-699	299	20.5	1991	\$8.78
300-499	424	25.4	1991	\$10.03
<300	424	60.4	1991	\$17.18
<b>Total</b>	<b>1474</b>	<b>30.0</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>\$10.84</b>

In 2001, the average copyright of a book collection in Colorado school libraries was 1986—over 15 years old. Although the average copyright has increased to 1991, the age of Colorado school library collections has not. In schools, access to information is essential, but the information students are retrieving is often older than they are.

Consider some of the major events that have occurred since 1991:

- Bill Clinton is elected as the 42<sup>nd</sup> president (1992).
- The World Trade Center is bombed *the first time* (1993).
- Nelson Mandela is inaugurated as South Africa's first black president (1994).
- The Oklahoma City bombing occurs at the Alfred P. Murrah federal building (1995).
- The first version of Java programming language is released (1996).
- Dolly the sheep is the first mammal to be successfully cloned (1997).
- Google is founded (1998).
- The Columbine High School shooting occurs Littleton, Colorado (1999).
- George W. Bush is elected president as the 43<sup>rd</sup> president (2000).
- The World Trade Center is attacked *the second time* (2001).
- Jimmy Carter visits Fidel Castro becoming the first President of the United States to visit Cuba since the 1959 revolution (2002).
- The United States invades Iraq (2003).
- A massive earthquake and tsunami destroys parts of Southeastern Asia (2004).



Even though all these events are recent, students may not be able to read about them in the books their school library provides.

So why are school library books so dated? On average, Colorado school libraries only spent \$10.84 per student in 2005. According to the *School Library Journal*, the national average price of children's and young adult titles (hardback) is \$20.52 which is a \$1.21 (six percent) increase from 2004. Even Colorado school libraries that fair better monetarily—schools in the top 95% spend \$25.39 per pupil—spend only enough to purchase approximately one hardback book per student. The average price of a paperback book is declining, but still cost more (\$18.88 in 2004) than Colorado school libraries' average book expenditures.



Electronic resources have had a major impact on the way children retrieve information, but it should also be noted that print expenditures for Colorado school libraries have been consistent each year (an average of \$6.5 million annually the past five years), while collective spending on electronic resources statewide has steadily declined (from \$2 million in 2000 to less than a million in 2005). Perhaps such expenditures are being covered more often at the district or other consortial levels; however, this decline at least calls into question the commitment to establishing and maintaining electronic resources as substitutes for print.

If the current trend continues, many of the major events occurring now might not be in student's books available from their school library for many years. Consider this: students might not be able to read about the Columbia shuttle explosion until 2017 or Katrina, Rita, and Wilma's hurricane damage to the South until 2019. The combination of out-of-date print materials and low school library expenditures is a cause for concern. Unless schools can find ways to place a higher priority on getting information into the hands of students through their libraries, there seems to be no indication that either will change in the coming years.

Library Research Service. 2005 School Library Survey. Raw data available at:  
[http://www.lrs.org/asp\\_school/stats\\_2005.asp](http://www.lrs.org/asp_school/stats_2005.asp).

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