

Adult Fiction Heads List In Demand for Books

A survey of public opinion about libraries, recently conducted by the Missouri State Library in a geographic distribution of local news media around the state, has revealed some interesting facts about library users.

Out of more than 4,000 questionnaires returned, 58 per cent came from persons in the 30-50 age group. The largest single group of library users replying were in the \$3000-\$6000 income bracket. Fourteen per cent of respondents said they never used library service and 23 per cent had not visited a library in a year or more. Yet 42 per cent said they agreed that "one should read widely available in the areas studied as indicated by the fact that 92 per cent had libraries in or near their towns. Largest demand for library material was in adult fiction, followed in decreasing percentages for nonfiction, children's books, newspapers, magazines, films and art reproductions.

To the question, "Should libraries be expanded?" 74 per cent replied "yes" with ten per cent opposed.

In appraising the detailed findings from the study, Charles O'Halloran, state librarian, said, "While some of the replies tend to verify previously known facts about library usage, a survey of this kind--conducted through media rather than through the library itself--presents a current and objective picture of how, and the extent to which, people are using public libraries in Missouri. It helps to reveal who today's library users are and what their needs are. This sort of information helps us keep libraries in gear with current values and needs."