Do People Prefer Online or Physical Libraries?

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The main purpose of this experiment is to determine if current high school students (grades 10-12) prefer to use virtual or physical libraries and which library they actually use more. I define a “physical library” as the traditional library that students use in their high school and can physically enter. I define a “virtual library” as an online library that students have access to in their high school. My hypothesis was that students would prefer the convenience of an online library and would prefer the user experience of a physical library; however, students would overall prefer the physical library. I conducted a series of physical and online surveys conducted at two high schools: NUAMES North (Ogden, UT) and Weber High School (North Ogden, UT). (The online and physical surveys were identical.) Participation was completely optional for the students. I asked a series of teachers if they would distribute the survey in their classes and I asked random students in the school. I received approximately 220 surveys from NUAMES North and 400 surveys from Weber High School. Based on the results, students prefer the physical library to the online library at a five to one ratio. This shows that students tend to do more varied activities at physical libraries than at virtual libraries, which suggests that physical libraries are not only more preferred but have more uses. This also suggests that sex does play a role in what activities you are more likely to do at the library.

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