

## 2009 Trends Report

Alliance Library System staff write an annual Trends Report highlighting the major socioeconomic issues the library community is watching. For the first time, technology doesn't head the list. Rather, in July 2009, the biggest trend is a change in attitude! A "personal renaissance", characterized by integrity, honesty, and self-discipline, is emerging; people are taking charge of their lives, living within their means and are more respectful of the environment and their community. It is no longer "all about me!"



The second trend is the huge impact that the concept of change has had on us. From the election of a new president to the auto, mortgage, and stock market crashes, we have experienced more change as a nation in the past 12 months than in the past 12 years!! What is most interesting is that we are beginning to view change as the driving force that will pull us out of this recession and help us "reimagine" our libraries.

The third trend we explore warms all our hearts and is the fact that, libraries are finally in fashion! In 2008-09, the use of libraries shifted dramatically as the economy declined and people sought cost-effective access to educational and recreational resources. More than 68% of Americans have a library card, and usage increased 10% over 2007. We are needed, and libraries are stepping up to make a difference. From text messaging reference services to helping folks find jobs, libraries across the country are being used more now than ever before. We are finally sexy!

In 2009, technology is still trendy, but it is the *modes* of communication that are hot. By "resetting" our channels of communication, libraries are reaching out to new and diverse customers. From video on our websites to Twitter and Facebook, innovative libraries are searching for new modes of communication to reach new audiences.

So what do these trends mean to the library community?

1. **We need to really listen** to the customers we serve and to give them what they want. If we don't, we may very well be out of business. It's that simple!!
2. **Now is the time to test new services, programs, and methods** of reaching the customer.
3. **We need to ramp-up customer service, and we need to do it NOW.** Each and every employee must take personal responsibility for improving the library experience for the customer. It's all about the customer.

Read the complete ALS 2009 Trends Report at <http://www.alliancelibrarysystem.com/trendsreport2009.pdf> . It's an interesting read.

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