

Colorado Talking Book Library Patron Satisfaction Survey Report, 2010

June 2011

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A CLOSER LOOK

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by

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**Colorado Talking
Book Library**

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Introduction

The Colorado Talking Book Library (CTBL) provides free library services to Coloradans of all ages who are unable to read standard print materials due to physical, visual, or learning disabilities. CTBL provides recorded books and magazines, Braille materials, large print books, and a small collection of descriptive videos. CTBL serves around 7,000 active individual patrons and 339 organizations.

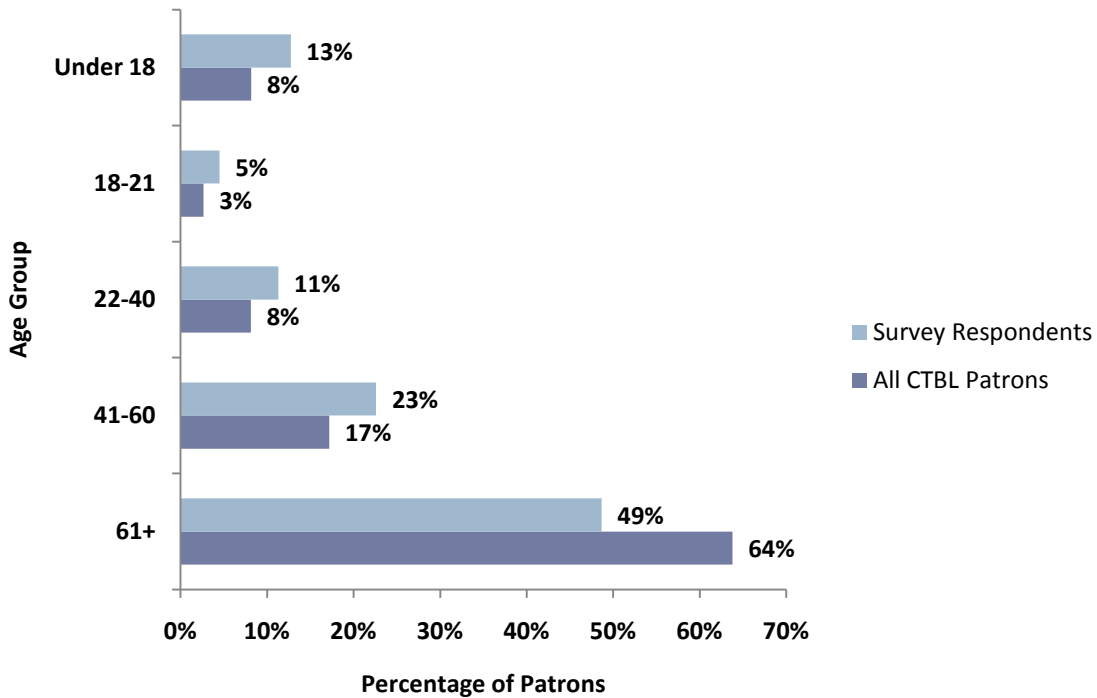
As part of an ongoing effort by CTBL to evaluate its services, the Library Research Service developed a patron survey in summer 2010 which was administered in October of the same year. The survey was designed to help CTBL identify possible strengths and weaknesses and to plan for future services. Since 2004, LRS has commissioned a survey for CTBL four times (approximately every 18 months). The survey was a combination of an outcome-based evaluation and a customer satisfaction questionnaire (see Appendix A).

As in 2008, the 2010 survey was distributed to CTBL patrons in Braille and audio formats in addition to the traditional paper-based format. In a further effort to ensure the sample was representative of CTBL's patrons, administrators again used a sample stratified by age group. This proved to be effective as the responses received by each age group fairly closely reflected the CTBL patron population (see Chart 1).

Of the 2,460 patrons in the sample, 2,005 received the survey on paper. In addition, 381 received audio notification of the survey, either on audio cassette or through the digital playback format, and 74 received survey notification in Braille, asking them to complete the survey online or by phone. Assistance filling out the survey was available at CTBL or by telephone for any patron who requested it.

Surveys were completed by 805 patrons, representing a response rate of 33 percent, 5 percent more than the 2008 survey, which had a response rate of 28 percent.

Chart 1
Age Distribution of Survey Respondents Compared to All CTBL Patrons



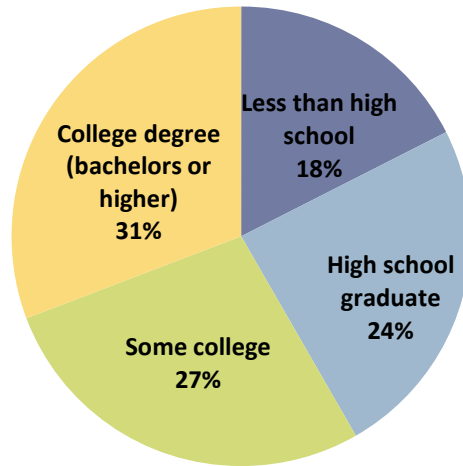
Survey Respondent Demographics

Respondents were asked to provide basic information about their age, education level, and, where applicable, student status.

About half of the survey respondents were 61 years old or older. Nearly a quarter (23%) were ages 41 to 60, 11 percent were 22-40, and 18 percent were 21 or under (see Chart 1). As mentioned in the introduction, the survey was sent to an age-stratified sample of patrons so that the results would be more representative of the CTBL patron population as a whole. The percentage of respondents in each age group is almost identical to the response rates from 2008.

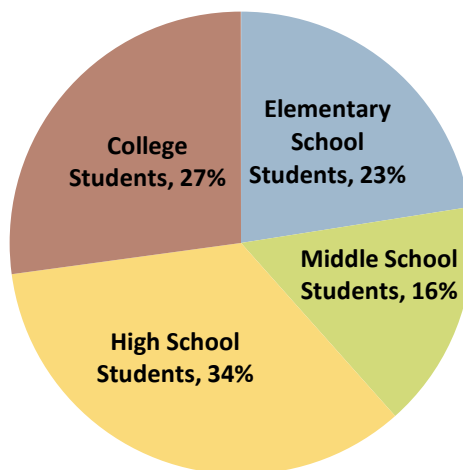
Nearly 1 in 3 (31%) respondents had a college degree; slightly fewer (27%) had some college experience, and about 1 in 4 (24%) were high school graduates, while 18% had less than a high school education (see Chart 2). These percentages for both age and education are quite similar to 2008's survey results.

Chart 2
All Respondents by Highest Education Completed



One in three (33%) respondents identified themselves as students, an increase from the 2008 survey, where 23 percent identified as students. Of the students, 27 percent are currently college students, which is similar to 2008. The number of high school students completing the 2010 survey declined from 40 percent in 2008 to 34 percent, while the number of elementary and middle school students increased to 39 percent from 31 percent in the last survey (see Chart 3).

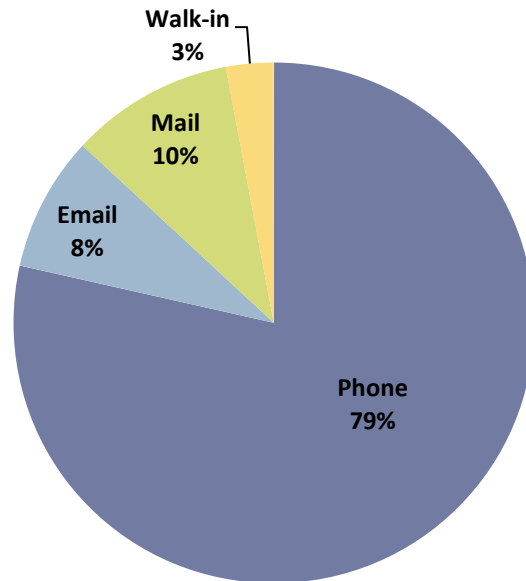
Chart 3
Student Respondents Level of Education



Communicating with CTBL

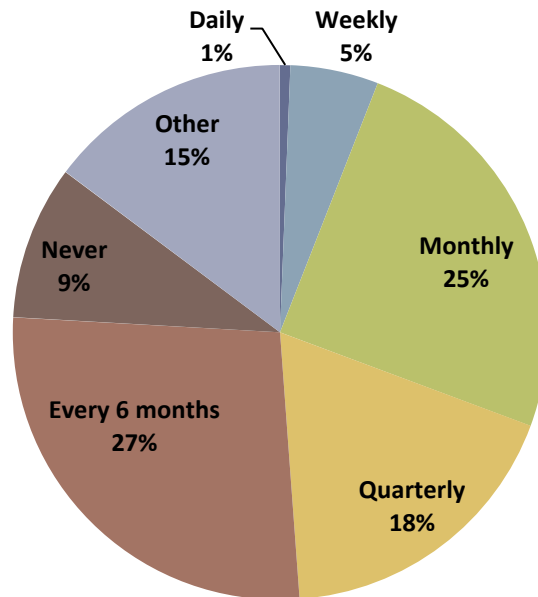
Respondents were asked how frequently and by what means they communicated with CTBL.

Chart 4
Respondents Most Used Method of Communication with CTBL



CTBL patrons overwhelmingly use the telephone to contact library staff, (79%) yet another fact that has remained constant over the past 6 years of CTBL patron satisfaction surveys. Of the respondents who did not select telephone as their primary method of contacting CTBL, 10 percent selected mail, 8 percent preferred email, and 3 percent chose walk-in visits (see Chart 4). There has been virtually no change in how patrons prefer to contact CTBL from the 2008 survey. The percentage of patrons who primarily use email to contact CTBL remained the same from 2008 to 2010, and there was a small increase (3%) in patrons who use the telephone as their primary method of contact, with slightly fewer patrons indicating a preference for walk-in or mail.

Chart 5
Respondents Frequency of Communication with CTBL



Another factor that has not changed much in the 6 years since CTBL began surveying its patrons is how often patrons report contacting the library. Almost half of respondents (43%) contact the library monthly or quarterly, 27 percent contact the library every 6 months, and nearly one in 10 indicate they never contact the library (See Chart 5).

Respondents who chose "other" had the option to write specifically how often they contact CTBL. As with 2008, the two most common responses in this category were about once a year and as needed. Just under 1 in 10 (9%) indicated that they never contact CTBL. There appears to be no consistent reason for this, based on cross-tabulations and an analysis of the comments left by these respondents. Interactions with patrons at CTBL outreach events have revealed that some patrons never contact the library because everything works fine or they "don't want to be a bother."

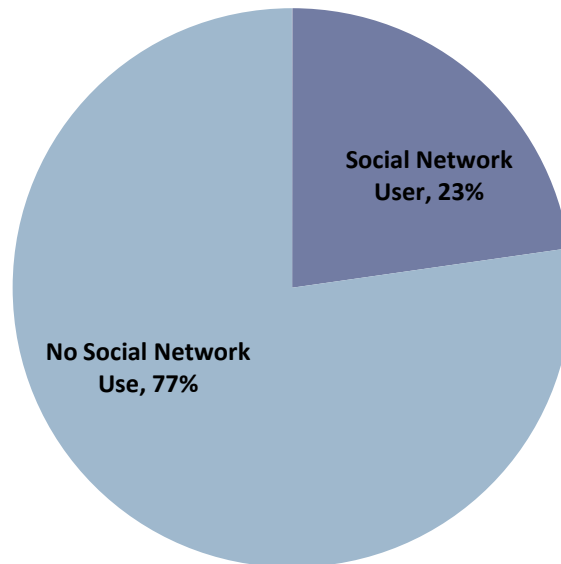
For the 2010 survey, respondents were asked about their social network use. Just under one-fourth of respondents (23%) indicated that they use social networking sites, while 77 percent of respondents do not use social networking sites (See chart 6). Respondents who use social networking sites were asked to identify which sites they use. The vast majority of

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respondents (96%) selected Facebook as their primary social networking site, while a handful of respondents indicated that they also use LinkedIn, MySpace, and Twitter.

A breakdown of social network users by age revealed a generational component to the use of social networking, with the majority of social network users in the 18-21 and 22-40 age groups. Crosstabs were also run on social network use and method of communication to see what sort of relationships might exist; interestingly, social network users still primarily use the telephone (73%) as their main method of contacting CTBL, with 15 percent using email, around 10 percent using mail, and 2 percent indicating walk-in as their primary methods of communication.

Chart 6
Social Network Use,
Percentage of Respondents in 2010



Digital Downloads and Readers Advisors

In addition questions about communication frequency and methods, respondents were also asked to indicate whether they were aware that CTBL provides digital downloads of audio books and that CTBL has readers

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advisors to assist patrons. Just under two-thirds of respondents were aware of the digital downloads (61%), while 38 percent were not aware and 1 percent did not answer the question. Awareness of the digital downloads was reflected in the comments left by respondents, ranging from praise for the digital format to requests for more assistance in using the digital downloads. Over two-thirds of respondents were aware that CTBL has readers advisors, with 68 percent selecting "yes." Almost one-third of respondents (31%) indicated they were not aware of this service, and 1 percent skipped the question.

Benefits of Use

Respondents were asked how CTBL is valuable to them, and were able to select all that applied from a list of values/categories including: read for pleasure, learned more about a personal interest, found information needed for school, and helped me stay connected to my community, among others.

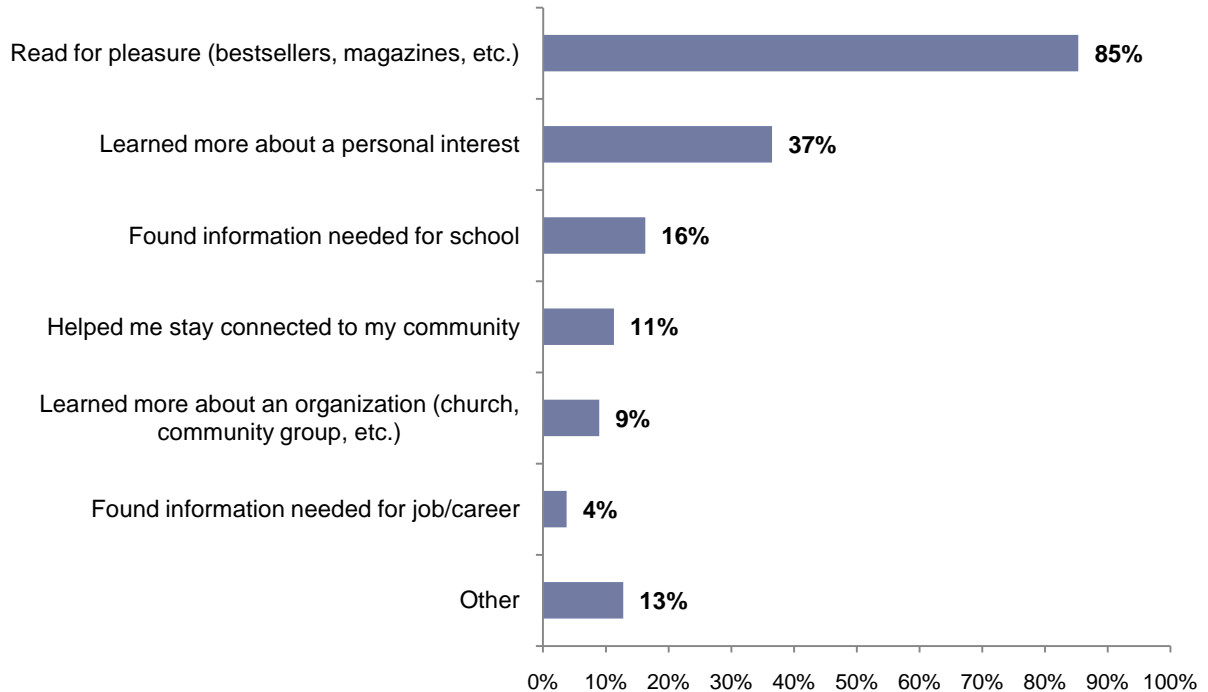
By far, reading for pleasure is the most frequently valued outcome of CTBL service, with more than eight out of ten (85%) survey respondents selecting it. Several comments reflected this, as they frequently mentioned how much of a gift it is to just be able to read with the assistance of CTBL services (See Chart 7). More than one in three patrons (37%) reported that they learned more about a personal interest using CTBL services.

"Thank you for all you have ever provided me. Without your services I would have never learned all I have about the world and the things I have a passion for in life."

Finding information for school was the third most selected value of CTBL (16%), which is the same as 2008. This may reflect the increase in survey responses of school aged patrons in the 2008 and 2010 survey. In the 2006 survey, only 7% of respondents valued finding information for school.

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Chart 7
Percentage of Respondents Indicating Selected Outcomes of CTBL Services



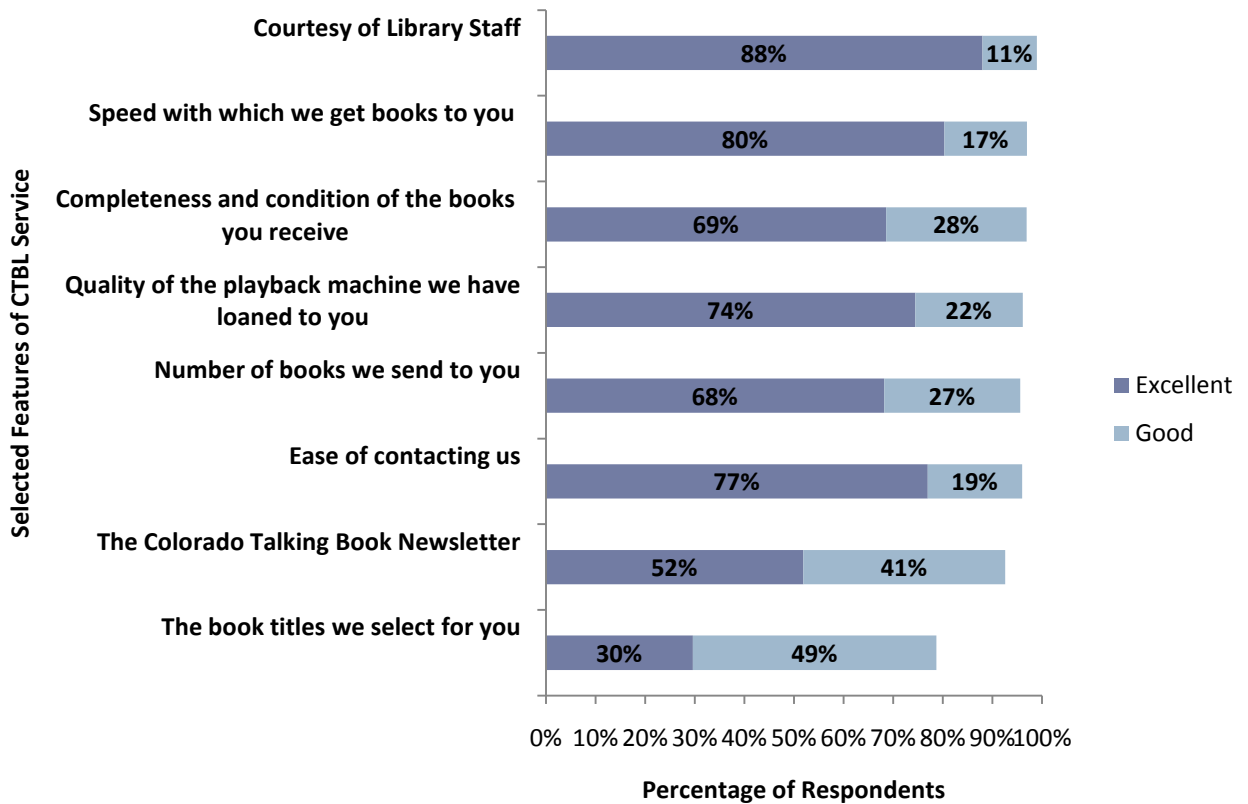
For those that selected "other," comments mentioned that CTBL was valuable in getting through school, helping keep their sanity or sense of connection or purpose while losing their sight, and keeping their mind active.

"You are my social connection, my educational connection, my connection to Colorado. Because of this library I have learned soooo much. You have saved my sanity. You allow me to reach around the world. My main method of communication is the phone, and you let me do that. Your circulation policies are more lenient. I love my library."

Satisfaction Levels

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with multiple features of CTBL services (See Chart 8).

Chart 8
Percentage of Respondents Rating Selected Features of CTBL Service as Excellent or Good



At least 79 percent of respondents rated each category excellent or good (see Chart 8). Respondents had the highest satisfaction with courtesy of library staff (88% excellent ratings) and speed with which we get books to you (80% excellent ratings). The two categories with the lowest percentage of excellent ratings were the Colorado Talking Book Newsletter (52%) and the book titles we select for you (30%). While the book titles we select for you was also the lowest category in 2008, with 85 percent rating title selection as "good" or "excellent," satisfaction has declined for this feature to 79 percent rating it as "good" or "excellent," with the rating for "excellent" dropping almost 10 percentage points from 2008 (39% in 2008 to 30% in 2010). Satisfaction with the newsletter is also down slightly from 2008, with 93 percent of patrons rating the newsletter as "good" or "excellent" in 2010 compared to 95 percent in 2008. Although satisfaction with the newsletter has declined slightly overall, the "excellent" rating for the newsletter increased from 49 percent in 2008 to 52 percent in 2010.

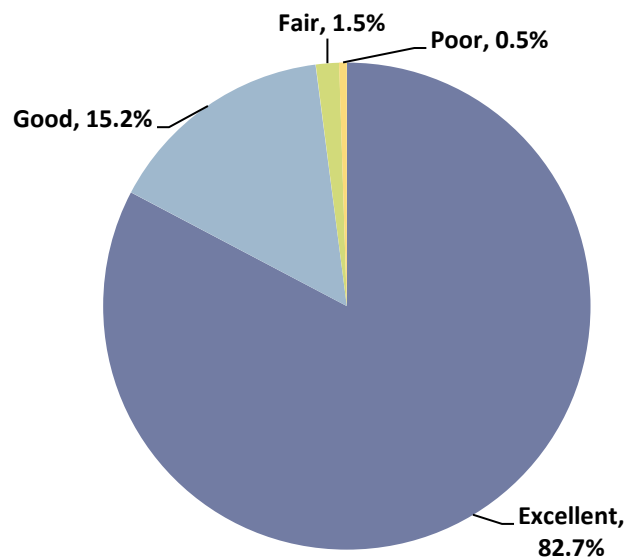
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Two other categories also saw changes in the ratings from 2008 - quality of the playback machine we have loaned to you and completeness and condition of the books you receive - experiencing a dramatic increase in the number of respondents that rated these features as "excellent." Almost three-quarters of respondents rated the quality of the playback machine as "excellent" (74%) in 2010 compared to 44 percent in 2008, while the "excellent" ratings for the completeness of the books increased to 69 percent in 2010 from 57 percent in 2008. These changes are likely due to the rollout of new digital talking book players that started in September 2009. Many of the comments left by respondents referred to the improvement in the digital machines over the older cassette players.

Overall Satisfaction

The next question asked respondents to indicate their overall satisfaction level with CTBL services. More than 4 out of 5 respondents (82.7%) found CTBL service to be "excellent" overall and 15.2 percent described it as "good" (see Chart 14). Around 2 percent of the responses said "fair" and "poor," a slight increase from the last survey.

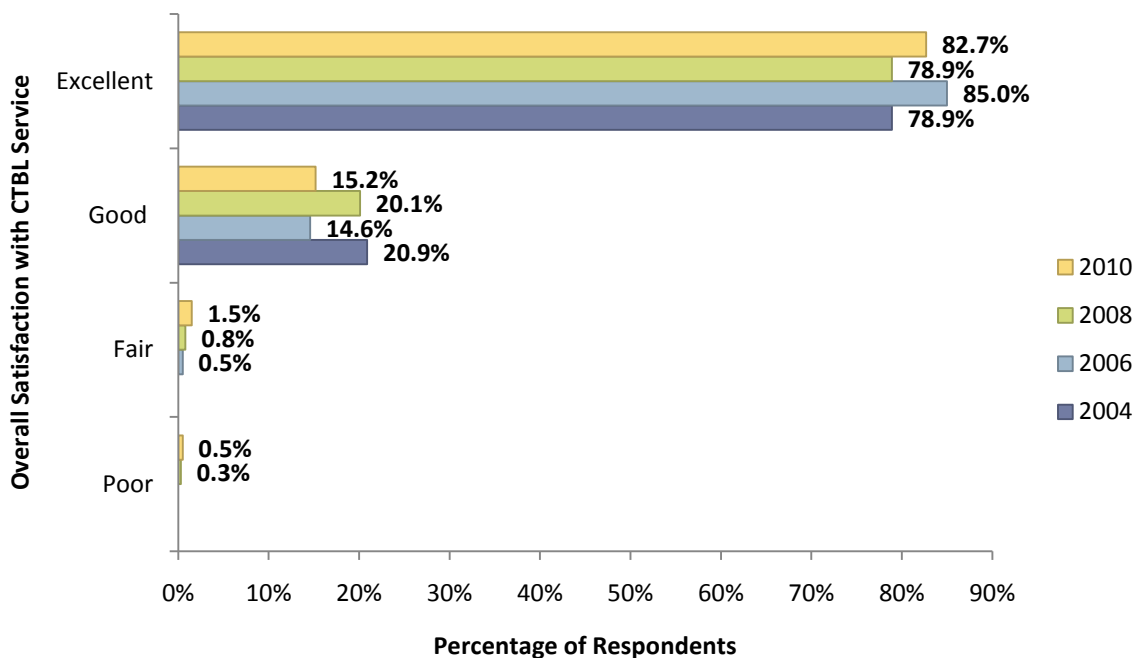
Chart 9
Respondents Overall Satisfaction with CTBL Services 2010



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Overall, the satisfaction level of CTBL patrons has held fairly steady over the years (see Chart 10). The percentage of patrons who have rated CTBL services as "excellent" has fluctuated somewhat between a high of 85 percent in 2006 to just below 80 percent in 2004 and 2008. There has been a similar fluctuation of about 5 percent in "good" ratings over the four surveys. At no time have more than 2 percent of patrons rated overall satisfaction with CTBL as "fair" or "poor."

Chart 10
Respondents Overall Satisfaction with CTBL Services Over Time



Additional Services

184 people responded to the question *Are there any additional services you think CTBL should offer?* Several respondents wrote that they would like to see more digital downloads available, more tech support from the CTBL staff—especially in learning to use digital media—and more DVDs and descriptive movies. Some also wrote that they were receiving too many books, that they wanted more age-appropriate selections for children, and that they received book series titles out of order.

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Comments

Respondents were also asked to share any additional comments about CTBL and the services it provides at the end of the survey. The major themes running throughout these 460 comments included gratitude for CTBL's services and appreciation for its staff. Several respondents noted that Colorado's Talking Book Library services are superior to those of other states' talking book libraries that they have utilized, and many emphasized the superiority of CTBL's new digital machines over the old tape machines. (Comments were included in the report to the Director but have been excluded from the Closer Look report to protect patron and staff privacy)

Conclusion

Overall, CTBL patrons were very satisfied with the services the library provides, with 98 percent of patrons rating overall library service quality as either "excellent" (83%) or "good" (15%). CTBL has conducted 4 patron satisfaction surveys over the past 6 years, and respondents have been consistent in their satisfaction over the years, indicating a sustained level of excellence in library services. The transition from tape players to new digital playback machines was a great service improvement, according to patron comments.

The demographics of respondents in terms of age, gender, education level, and student status have not changed much over the years, nor have the ways in which patrons communicate with the library; the majority of CTBL patrons are over the age of 40 and prefer to use the telephone to contact CTBL staff.

Survey respondents did identify a few potential areas for library improvement in their comments, namely increased technology assistance with digital media and more communication regarding how many and what kind of books they are receiving.

The CTBL Patron survey is unique in that most of its respondents do in fact provide their contact information and indicate that they are available for further comment. CTBL may want to take advantage of its patrons'

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willingness to communicate by conducting qualitative follow-up interviews with a smaller sample of its service population. With such a high standard of excellence consistently met over the past 6 years, CTBL's opportunities for improvement may be subtle and only extractable through these in-depth conversations. Another option may be to refine the comments sections to ask patrons to explain why they rated CTBL service as they did and ask patrons for specifics on what would, for example, move a rating of "good" to "excellent."

Literature reviews indicate that other libraries that have conducted these more in-depth follow-up studies after initial surveys have found surprising results that go beyond survey comments and suggest new areas of service improvements. CTBL may want to consider such an approach with future surveys to push more patron ratings from "good" to "excellent" and identify new ways of reaching out to Coloradans with disabilities.

COLORADO TALKING BOOK LIBRARY
2010 BIENNIAL EVALUATION SURVEY

Please help us evaluate the services you receive from the Colorado Talking Book Library by filling out this form and returning it to the Library Research Service before December 1, 2010. If you would like to fill out the survey via the Internet, go to <http://www.LRS.org/ctbl>. If you would like assistance filling out the survey, please call the library directly at (303) 727-9277, or long distance (toll free) at 1-800-685-2136.

1. How frequently do you communicate with staff at the library, including by phone, e-mail, mail, or walk-in? Mark one (X).

- Daily Weekly Monthly Quarterly
 About every 6 months Never
 Other - Please specify _____

2. What is your regular/most used method of communicating with the library? Mark one (X).

- Phone E-mail Mail Walk-in

3. Did you know CTBL provides digital download of audio books?

- Yes No

4. Did you know CTBL has readers advisors to assist you?

- Yes No

5. Do you use social networking sites on the Internet (for example: Facebook or Twitter)?

- Yes → Go to Question #6 No → Go to Question #7

6. If you answered yes to Question #5, which social networking sites do you use? Mark all that apply (X):

- Bebo Facebook LinkedIn
MySpace
 Twitter Other-Please specify _____

7. How has the library service been valuable to you?
Mark all that apply (X):

- Read for pleasure (bestsellers, magazine, etc.)
- Learned more about a personal interest
- Found information needed for school
- Found information needed for job/career
- Learned more about an organization (church, community group, etc.)
- Helped me stay connected to my community
- Other - Please specify _____

8. Please rate your satisfaction with each of the following aspects of our service:

Speed with which we get books to you

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

Completeness and condition of the books you receive

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

The number of books we send to you

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

The book titles we select for you

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

Ease of contacting us

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

Courtesy of library staff

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

The Colorado Talking Book Library newsletter

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

Quality of the playback machine we have loaned you

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

9. Overall, how would you describe the quality of service you receive from the Colorado Talking Book Library? Mark one (X).

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

10. Are there any additional services you think CTBL should offer? Please describe below:

Demographics

The following information will help us to better understand who uses our library, so that we can improve the quality of our services to everyone.

11. What city do you live in?

12. What is your gender?

- Male Female

13. What is your age group?

- 1-5 6-12 13-17 18-21

- 22-40 41-60 61+

14. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 Less than high school High school graduate
 Some college College degree (bachelor's or higher)
15. If you are currently a student, what level are you in?
 Preschool Elementary School Middle School
 High School College Not applicable
 Other - Please specify _____

Optional Information:

16. Name: _____

17. Phone number: _____

18. May we call you? Yes No

19. Please feel free to share your comments about the Colorado Talking Book Library and the services we provide.

Please use the enclosed envelope to return via mail to Library Research Service.

Thank you for participating in this survey. We appreciate your comments.