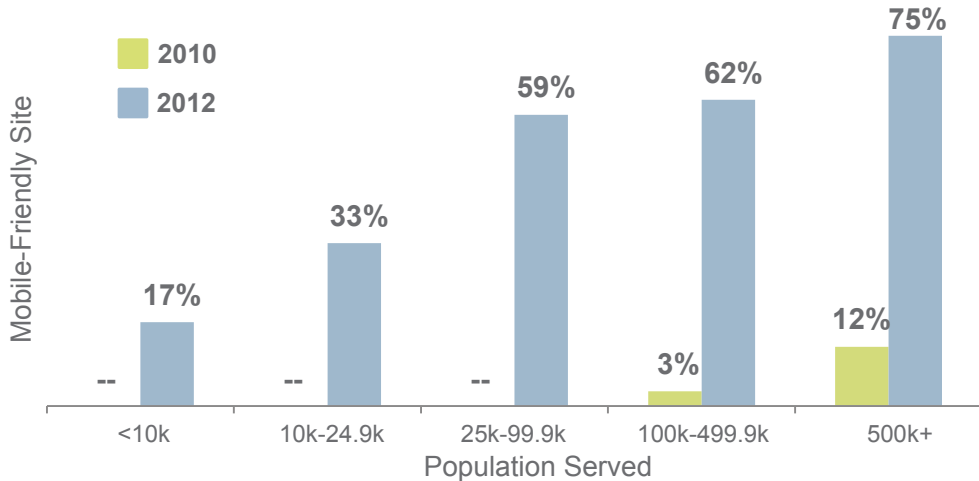# Trends in U.S. Public Library Websites and Social Media Use

In 2008, the Library Research Service launched a longitudinal study to document the use of various web technologies on the websites of public libraries throughout the U.S. The study was repeated in 2010 and 2012, expanding on the 2008 findings by tracking the trends in U.S. public libraries over time as well as by examining new technologies as they emerged. Highlights from the 2012 study are presented below. **Want to know more? Check out the complete report at http://bit.ly/LRS_webtech.**

Top 4 Trends: 2010 to 2012

1: **The percentage of library websites catering to mobile devices increased dramatically.**

Legend: 2010, 2012

Mobile-Friendly Site (y-axis)

Population Served	2010	2012
<10k	--	17%
10k-24.9k	--	33%
25k-99.9k	--	59%
100k-499.9k	3%	62%
500k+	12%	75%

What libraries were included in the study?
A random sample of 584 U.S. public libraries, stratified by population served, were included in the study.

What are web technologies?
Web technologies are virtual tools that enable interactivity with users, such as social networking, virtual reference, RSS feeds, and blogs.

2: **For many of the web technologies, the rate of adoption increased ⊕ for smaller libraries and decreased ⊖ for larger libraries.**

Some web technologies increased in **most libraries**, regardless of size, such as a **ShareThis/AddThis feature**; others, such as an **email newsletter** and **online library card sign up**, held relatively constant; and some, such as **chat reference**, dropped from 2010 to 2012.

Web Technology	Smaller Libraries	Larger Libraries
Online account access	⊕	⊖
Blogs	⊕	⊖
Non-blog RSS feeds	⊕	⊖
Catalog search box on home page	⊕	⊖

3: **Social media continued to grow, but some networks dropped off.**

Facebook increased in libraries of all sizes. In libraries serving less than 10k, it jumped from **18% to 54%.**

Twitter increased in libraries of all sizes. In libraries serving 25k-99.9k, it jumped from **22% to 42%**.

Flickr decreased in libraries of all sizes. In libraries serving 500k+, it dropped from **63% to 42%**.

4: **Text reference grew substantially.**

↑ 231% in libraries serving 500k+
375% in libraries serving 100k-499.9k

↑ 125% in libraries serving 25k-99.9k
250% in libraries serving 10k-24.9k

What social media networks were libraries using?

More than half of all libraries were on **Facebook**. For libraries serving 25k-499.9k, this number jumped to **4 in 5**, and to more than **9 in 10** for libraries serving 500k+.

More than 4 in 5 libraries serving 500k+ and **3 in 5** libraries serving 100k-499.9k were on **Twitter**.

3 in 5 libraries serving 500k+ and **1 in 3** serving 100k-499.9k were on **YouTube**.

31% of libraries serving 500k+ were on **Foursquare**, 23% were on **Pinterest**, and 8% each were on **Google+** and **Tumblr**.

How were libraries catering to mobile devices?

app

m.library.org

Mobile apps were offered by **more than half** of libraries serving 100k+, and **nearly half** of those serving 25k-99.9k.

41% of libraries serving 500k+ had websites with URLs that **redirected to a mobile site** when viewed on a mobile device.

Just **9** libraries had websites that used **responsive design**. This is a trend to keep an eye on in the future.

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