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CONTENTS	Page No.
Pause & Ponder	2
From Library Shelves to Smartphones: When Students Abandon Printed Books	2
Slow death of libraries	2
'Sit-out-cum-open library' inaugurated in Seppa	3
Made at the Library: Thomas Jefferson's Manual of Parliamentary Practice	3
Organize your home library with these AI tools	4
New study: Libraries cut manual workflow time by 30 to 60% with Academic AI	4
The Mission of Public Libraries	5
Information Literacy and AI: Reflections & Resources from Research Librarians	5
How Libraries Shape AI Literacy on Campus	6
I borrowed my first books in Mumbai. Now, Sydney's libraries are home	6

Pause & Ponder

“Bad libraries build collections, good libraries build services, great libraries build communities.”

– R. David Lankes

****Readers Please Note****

Tap the Title to read the full article

From Library Shelves to Smartphones: When Students Abandon Printed Books



Some book lovers say that despite the joy of touching paper and its distinctive scent, the high cost of books and the difficulty of accessing their favorite titles have led them to turn to e-books. They note that digital versions are accessible anytime and anywhere and are easier to carry. According to these enthusiasts, PDF books have become a popular option for many students and reading enthusiasts.

Most e-book readers are students, who say that accessing these books is easy and fast. They can find their desired book by searching for a word or title on Google or through certain apps, eliminating the need to spend long hours in libraries and invest a lot of time.

Zainab Kamalnia, a student at an online women's university, mainly reads e-books and articles because of their quick and easy access. She says: “One of the main reasons we young people prefer PDF books over print editions is that a PDF is something you can even

have on your phone. Wherever you are, you don't need to carry a heavy book in your backpack, in your hand, or under your arm.”....

Source: [Hasht-e-Subh Daily, 29 mar 2026](#)

Slow death of libraries [Paywall]



The slow fading of public libraries in the digital age is not marked by dramatic closures or burning shelves. It happens quietly — through budget cuts that shrink acquisitions, through buildings repurposed into commercial spaces, through dwindling footfall as screens glow brighter than reading lamps. The loss seems subtle at first. After all, knowledge today appears abundant, searchable, and instant. Yet when community reading spaces disappear, something far deeper than access to books is lost.

Public libraries have long been democratic sanctuaries of learning. In cities and small towns alike, they stand as rare spaces where entry requires neither money nor status. A child preparing for examinations, a retiree rediscovering literature, a job seeker browsing newspapers, a migrant learning a new language — all find equal footing within those quiet walls. When such spaces decline, the idea of knowledge as a shared public good weakens. Learning becomes increasingly privatised, mediated by subscriptions, algorithms, and purchasing power....

Source: *The Hindu*, 29 Mar 2026

'Sit-out-cum-open library' inaugurated in Seppa



SEPPA, 26 Mar: A 'sit-out-cum-open library', the first-of-its-kind public knowledge and community engagement space in East Kameng district, was virtually inaugurated on Thursday by Home Minister Mama Natung.

The inauguration ceremony was held in the presence of Deputy Commissioner Yashaswini B, SP Kamdam Sikom, and Bharat CSR Network director Dr Sajid Saiyed, along with administrative officers, the DDSE, representatives of EKSCWO Seppa unit, representatives of WWO Seppa, and the chairman of Bebo Colony.

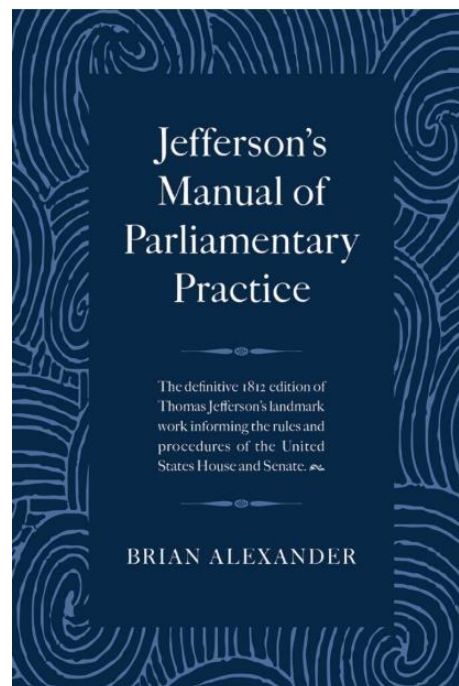
In his address, Natung commended the district administration for conceptualising and executing the unique and impactful initiative. He appreciated the collective efforts involved and urged the people of East Kameng to actively support and safeguard such public assets.

He assured of full support to the district administration, and encouraged the development of more such community-oriented initiatives in the district.

The initiative was envisioned by the deputy commissioner, with support from the Bharat CSR Network, and was executed in coordination with the urban development & housing department, Seppa...

Source: *The Arunachal Times*, 26 Mar 2026

Made at the Library: Thomas Jefferson's Manual of Parliamentary Practice



Anyone conducting research with materials from the Rare Book and Special Collections Division will feel the weight of history as they leaf through the pages. Working with Thomas Jefferson's Library, in particular, inspires a unique sensation – these books were once held and read by one of America's Founding Fathers, most are bound in gorgeous leather, they form the basis of today's Library of Congress, and they even have a distinctive smell.

Author and professor of politics Brian Alexander made an extraordinary discovery when studying Jefferson's copy of *A Manual of Parliamentary Practice* here at the Library of Congress, as he will explain when he returns to the Library for a "Made at the Library" event on Friday, April 10th. Beginning at 1:00 that afternoon, Professor Alexander will discuss his groundbreaking book, *Thomas Jefferson's Manual of*

Parliamentary Practice (2025), and will speak about the research process that led to changes in the rules that govern the United States Congress...

Source: [Library of Congress Blogs, 26 Mar 2026](#)

Organize your home library with these AI tools



Managing a home library can be rewarding yet time-consuming. From cataloging books to tracking loans, there's a lot to do.

However, with AI tools, the process becomes a breeze - automating organization, scanning barcodes, generating metadata, and providing smart search features.

In 2026, here's a look at some of the best AI-powered apps and platforms for personal use, turning chaos into a streamlined collection.

Tip 1

Quick cataloging with Libib

Libib is the perfect book catalog app for home users with varied collections, be it of books or music.

It comes with a fast barcode scanner that lets you add items in a jiffy by taking their photos.

The cloud sync feature makes everything available on other devices.

The free version supports five thousand items, while Pro upgrade at \$9 a month offers multiuser access and unlimited libraries.

Tip 2

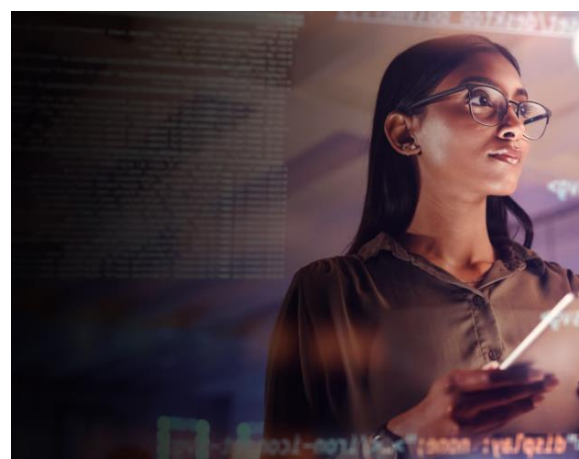
Advanced metadata with Alma's AI assistant

For advanced cataloging needs, Alma's AI Metadata Assistant employs generative AI to suggest detailed descriptions from book titles or content. Although originally designed for professional libraries, its features adapt well to home setups via compatible apps.

This improves search accuracy for your physical and digital books when paired with other tools like Wise.

Source: [NewsBytes, 26 Mar 2026](#)

New study: Libraries cut manual workflow time by 30 to 60% with Academic AI



There is no shortage of conversation about the potential of AI. What has been harder to find is evidence of its real-world impact in libraries. The Academic AI Impact Study, conducted by Emerging Strategy on behalf of Clarivate, aims to address that gap and encourage conversation about what effective adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in library workflows can look like.

The report draws on in-depth interviews with 11 library professionals across eight institutions in North America, Latin America, and the Middle East, examining the impact of AI on two core workflows: course reading list preparation using Leganto Syllabus

Assistant, and metadata creation and cataloguing using Alma AI Metadata Assistant. The findings are based on self-reported time comparisons and workflow analysis...

Source: [Clarivate.com](https://clarivate.com), 24 Mar 2026

The Mission of Public Libraries



Evidence has been steadily mounting of Americans' declining interest in reading. A 2025 study from researchers at the University of Florida and University College London reported that daily reading for pleasure in the United States dropped by more than 40% in the last two decades, with pronounced declines among black, low-income, and rural Americans. This trend has led some to say that America is becoming a "post-literate society," which could lead to the "death of democracy." The question is what to do about it.

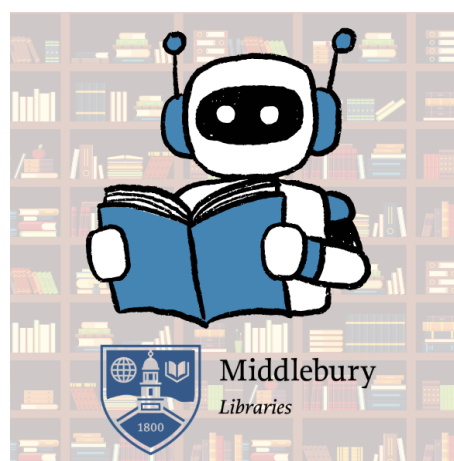
Despite being one of the few public institutions in a position to promote reading culture, public libraries have largely gone unmentioned in this debate. No one would blame libraries exclusively for Americans' giving up on reading; our society is saturated with smartphones and other potent distractions. But when the reading crisis became evident, libraries had one job — and thus far, they've let us down.

Although libraries have shied away from the decline-of-reading debate, they've

staked out a more prominent role in culture-war controversies, including the fracas over "banned books," the meaning of free speech, and the types of reading material appropriate for children. Librarians, one of the most progressive professional groups in America, picked those fights. Their politicization of libraries in the 21st century has been lamentable. A depoliticized public library would be an improvement on the current model, but that alone would not be enough to revive America's reading culture...

Source: [National Affairs](#), Spring 2026

Information Literacy and AI: Reflections & Resources from Research Librarians



As Research Librarians, we strive to provide equitable access to a diversity of sources and perspectives that meets the needs of our academic community. Through instruction, outreach, and documentation, we endeavor to empower our learners to develop lifelong skills in critical thinking and information literacy. Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT and Claude are increasingly embedded within our campus community and affect the ways we teach, learn, and create knowledge. Librarians are committed to providing guidance for engaging with (or choosing not to engage with) AI tools in the

context of academic coursework and research...

Source: [Middlebury Library, 17 Mar 2026](#)

How Libraries Shape AI Literacy on Campus



As institutions grapple with the rise of AI, librarians are helping to define what responsible AI use looks like, especially as faculty wrestle with ill-defined campus policies and uneven student access. Instead of pushing AI use into silos or relying on unmanaged tools, campus libraries are becoming neutral hubs where AI literacy, academic integrity and workforce readiness intersect.

At Bryn Mawr College, for instance, the campus libraries are emerging as AI sandboxes—shared spaces for experimentation and ethical use.

Lauren Dodd, director of collection management, discovery and strategic communication at Bryn Mawr, said the librarian role is evolving from archive expert to leader in AI literacy...

Source: [Inside Higher Ed, 13 Mar 2026](#)

I borrowed my first books in Mumbai. Now, Sydney's libraries are home



The long arm of the library has made a writer of me. This long arm, a composite of many libraries, created the conditions through which a shy reader could continue to live in her head.

I was born and raised in India. It is a country of daily wage earners in makeshift dwellings trying to survive alongside the world's richest individuals ensconced in immovable towers. It is also a country where the practice of circulating knowledge through libraries has a long history.

It ranges from the library at Nalanda University founded in 427CE, over a thousand years before the Bodleian at Oxford, to Radhamani, the “walking library”, who takes books to villagers in rural Kerala. And from nine-year-old Muskan, who started her own library for kids in the slums of Bhopal, to Kavita Saini from Rajasthan, who opened a library for girls not allowed to leave their village.

This tradition of sharing knowledge held in written texts is bound up with aspiration, pleasure and survival...

Source: [The Conversation, 11 Mar 2026](#)

This issue has been compiled by
the Institute for Plasma Research
(IPR) Library, Gandhinagar