

Minnesota Department of Transportation

# 2013 MnDOT Library Valuation/Return On Investment (ROI) Study Findings



# Introduction

## MnDOT Library undertook a library valuation/return on investment (ROI) study in 2013.

While an abundance of research is available for the ROI of public and academic libraries, practically no valuation studies have been performed on special libraries such as the MnDOT Library. Our study included an extensive literature review, personal interviews with nationally-recognized experts on academic library valuation, and a MnDOT staff survey on library services. The survey was conducted during April 2013; MnDOT staff were encouraged to take the survey, based on their library usage since the 2010 library remodel. Survey results were intentionally anonymous. Of the 4,732 employees at MnDOT at the time, 603 responded to the survey (12.7% response).

Survey results were synthesized along with the library staff's monthly statistical and narrative reports to produce this summary document. Several areas of improvement were identified, including the need for much more outreach, and instructional videos on library services. Survey findings reveal that library users save time, save money, and receive more complete and reliable information than they could find on their own.

As we worked through the process of determining the library's value to MnDOT, it became apparent that the library produces two types of ROI: tangible and intangible. The *Tangible ROI* was calculated from dollars and time saved, and indicated that for every \$1.00 spent on library staff and materials, \$1.90 in benefits were returned to MnDOT.

*Intangible ROI* refers to things we cannot measure, such as the value library-supplied standards and specifications bring to MnDOT's construction projects, or, what is the value of knowledge gained through the reading of materials supplied by the library to MnDOT's projects, initiatives, and decision-making. Based on customer feedback, the Intangible Value returned to MnDOT is significant.

Thank you for your interest in MnDOT Library's valuation. Please contact me with any questions or comments.

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*The mission of MnDOT Library is to advance knowledge with timely, direct, and cost-effective connections to the information system users need to provide the highest-quality transportation system.*



## 2012 MnDOT Library Services — Cost Savings

### Time Saved in Dollars (based on actual library statistics)

Activity	Number of Requests	Value Factor: Average Hours Saved Customer per Request	Customer Average Salary + Benefits per Hour	Cost Savings*
Reference	In-depth Reference 346	x 16	x \$50	= \$277,000
	Quick Reference 1215	x 2	x \$50	= \$122,000
	Literature Searches 571	x 2	x \$50	= \$57,000
<b>Total Reference Savings</b>				<b>\$456,000</b>

Activity	Number of Requests	Value Factor: Average Hours Saved Customer per Request	Customer Average Salary + Benefits per Hour	Cost Savings*
Document Delivery (Requests Filled In-house)	Loans from MnDOT Library 3,799	x 1	x \$50	= \$190,000
	Articles Downloaded/Copied 1,350	x 1	x \$50	= \$68,000
<b>Total Document Delivery Savings</b>				<b>\$258,000</b>

### Dollars Saved (based on actual library statistics)

Activity	Titles Borrowed From Other Libraries	Value Factor: Borrowing Instead of Buying	Cost Savings*
Interlibrary Loans	Journal Articles Borrowed 138	x \$55 (Average Cost to Purchase from Vendor)	= \$8,000
	Book Titles Borrowed 426	x \$125 (Average Cost of Book + Processing)	= \$53,000
<b>Total Interlibrary Loan Savings</b>			<b>\$61,000</b>

Activity	Journal Routing Service vs Individual Article Purchase	Value Factor: 3 Articles/Year x \$55 (Average Cost to Purchase from Vendor)	Cost Savings*
Journal Routing (10,887 Issues)	780 Routees	x \$165	= \$129,000
<b>Total Journal Routing Savings</b>			<b>= \$129,000</b>

<b>Total Cost Savings*</b>		<b>\$904,000</b>
<b>Divided by 2012 MnDOT Library Budget \$476,000</b> Salaries + Benefits \$396,000 + Books & Materials \$80,000		<b>ROI: 1.9</b>

### Tangible Savings

- Cost Savings of Reference = \$456,000
- Cost Savings of Document Delivery = \$258,000
- Cost Savings of Interlibrary Loans = \$61,000
- Cost Savings of Journal Routing = \$129,000

### Intangible Savings

- Impact that reading information provided by the Library has on MnDOT's:
  - Projects and initiatives
  - Research
  - Decision making
- Projects on hold until information is received from Library
- Library staff of transportation information experts/trusted agents
- Library public space & WiFi available to Districts, non-CO employees, consultants & others
- Support to MnDOT's future: graduate engineers & surveyors
- Library's contribution to professional transportation information organizations
- Library as national and state award winner
- Value to MnDOT's branding as a transportation leader
- Organized, fully cataloged resources: journals, databases, unique collection
- MnDOT Library website (13,519 unique visitors)

\*Numbers rounded to the nearest 100



## Results-based Services: What Customers Say...

- The multiple sources of data and other resources are wonderful, but the people who make sure that the access to all those resources is most effective and efficient are the true best resource – without them the value of the library drops significantly.
- MnDOT employees are fortunate to have a terrific library with great staff. The collection is broad and deep. Staff are happy to make inter-library loans for hard-to-find materials. The library itself is serene and attractive. The library improves my productivity and the quality of my work.
- Any time that I have needed help finding materials on a topic or a specific item I have always received top notch service in a timely manner. I have found that the amount of information provided by the library has always exceeded my expectations.
- The ability for me to streamline my work by using their expertise is the highest value I have received from this library staff. 1-3 day turnaround. Excellent service to me.
- Having someone in the library help with research has saved me time and helped me significantly in my day to day activities.
- My job in the Office of Materials and Road Research requires that I do literature searches for my research projects. The MnDOT library has been very helpful in finding materials about some of the more obscure subjects I've worked on – particularly information not readily available (to me) on the web. It saves me time and I end up with a more comprehensive set of info to use.
- The library provides assistance on at least 2/3 of the products I deliver. They have saved me so much time and we are so lucky to have the library and its services. Absolutely key to innovation, research based investments, transparency, and promotion of a positive workplace. Keep up the excellent work!
- If I get stuck in a preliminary search for information, I go right down to the library to the professionals. It saves me time, and I trust them. If there is something to be found, they find it. SO nice to have a human person helping me find the information I need. I do think they're kind of the hidden gems at MnDOT though – not everyone knows what they can do that is immediately applicable to our work.
- I receive a number of technical journals and industry magazines through the library's routing service. Having access to the articles and papers from these publications helps me to keep current on a wide range of bridge, materials, and construction related issues and new technologies. I can quickly scan the publications and select those articles that are pertinent to my work, or to the work of others in our office. It's a great service to me and the Bridge Office.

## A Sample of MnDOT Library Customer In-depth Queries:

<b>How do other state DOTs and metro planning organizations organize their pedestrian plans?</b>	<b>I am looking for any information on pedestrian survivability rates when struck by a vehicle based on vehicle speeds.</b>	<b>How can we safely accommodate bicycle transportation?</b>	<b>How do we improve work zone safety?</b>
<b>I need information on the safety aspects of extra tall concrete median barriers.</b>	<b>I need information on elevated bicycle roundabouts.</b>	<b>Can you find me a list of the major employers along I-35E and I-394 for potential MnPASS marketing?</b>	<b>What is the economic value of barge traffic to Minnesota?</b>
<b>What are the safety and traffic impacts of changeable/variable message signs?</b>	<b>Can we use ground penetrating radar to measure variations in overlay thickness?</b>	<b>How can we do a better job of routing snow plows?</b>	<b>What are the impacts of bus only shoulders on traffic congestion and safety?</b>
<b>I need to know more about travel patterns and behavior of visually impaired travelers.</b>	<b>We need information on the environmental impact of treated lumber used in noise walls on the environment</b>	<b>Which plant toxins of poison ivy and Grecian foxglove are carried through the smoke of prescribed burns?</b>	<b>We need information on the design and construction of noise walls.</b>

## What MnDOT Library Customers Recommend

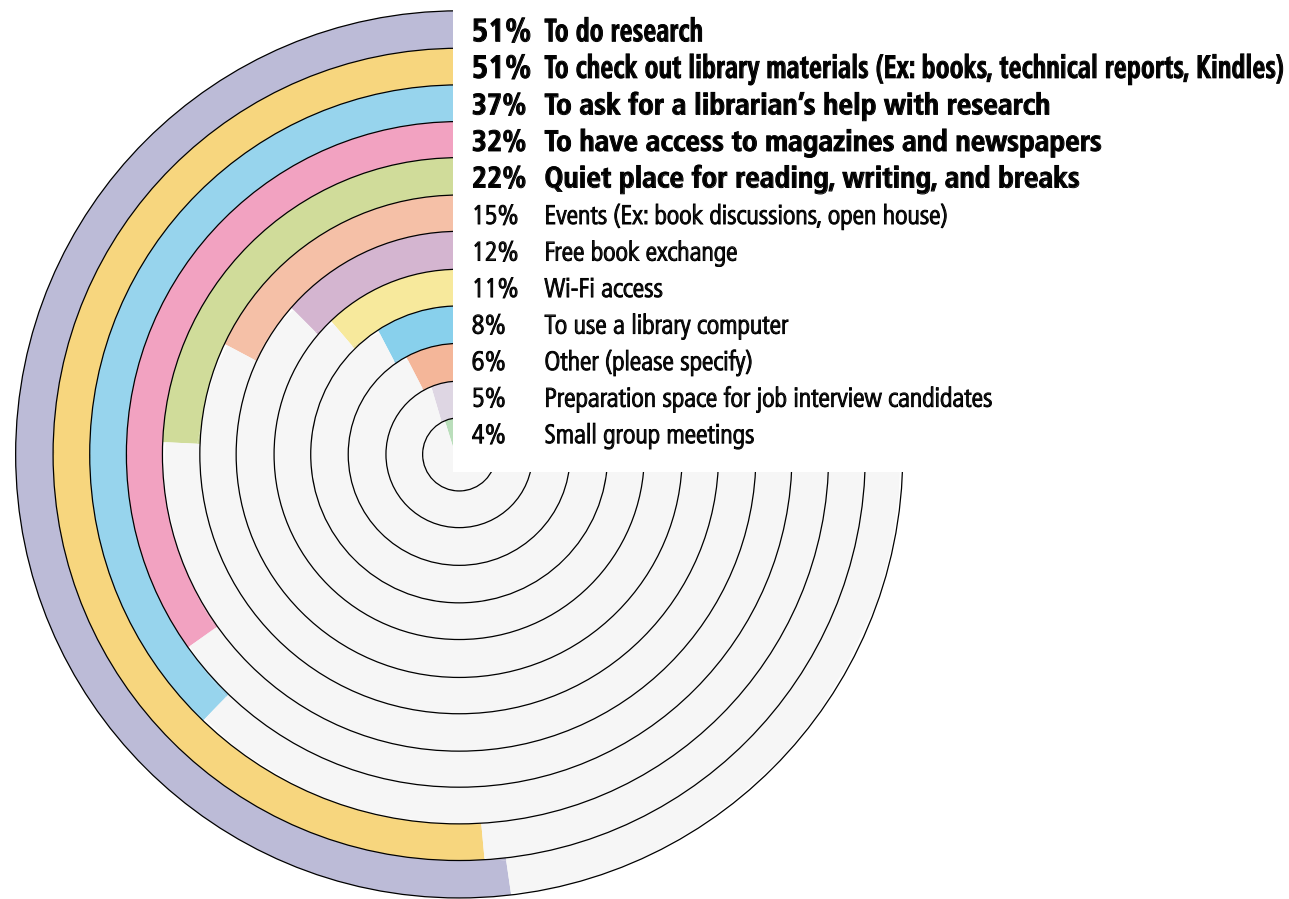
- I'd like to see a short list of things that MnDOT librarians can do for you that are easier to imagine using. Real world examples. Like, "looking for national examples of xyz? We can help!" Or something like that. Rather than "we have this many magazines." I think people will use the library more if they can visualize themselves actually using the services for their job.
- Use recommendations of our excellent library staff to help plan for the future
- Much more outreach, outreach to Districts
- Clarify availability of electronic resources
- Information sessions
- Video about library services and online catalog system
- More materials: PE exam, tutorial books on software, legal materials
- Ability to access ASTM Standards online
- A less complicated Library catalog system
- Longer checkout times, improve WiFi access (too many restrictions), better online request form

## Partners/Collaborators/ Networks Add Value by Sharing Information Resources and Connecting Experts

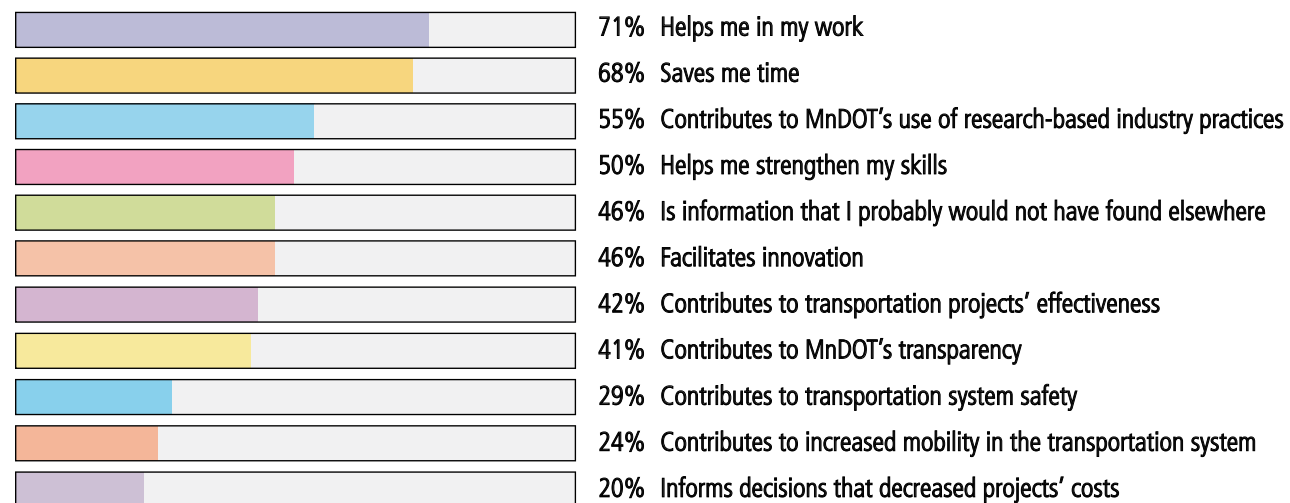
- Special Libraries Association Transportation Division
- Transportation Library Connectivity and Development Pooled Fund Study TPF-5 (237)
- Midwest Transportation Knowledge Network
- Minnesota Transportation Libraries
- National Transportation Library
- Special Libraries Association Minnesota Chapter
- Minitex
- OCLC
- MnPALS (Project for Automated Library Systems)
- Capitol Area Library Consortium

*"I do think they're kind of the hidden gems at MnDOT..."*

## What Are Your Main Reasons for Using MnDOT Library?\*



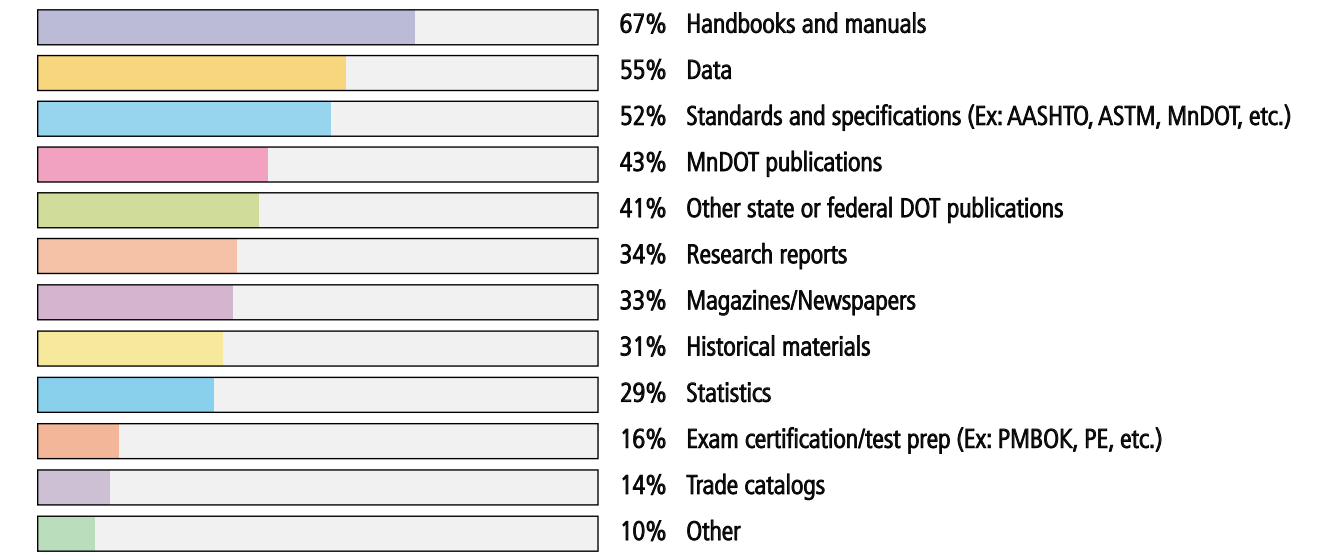
## Information Provided by MnDOT Library\* ...



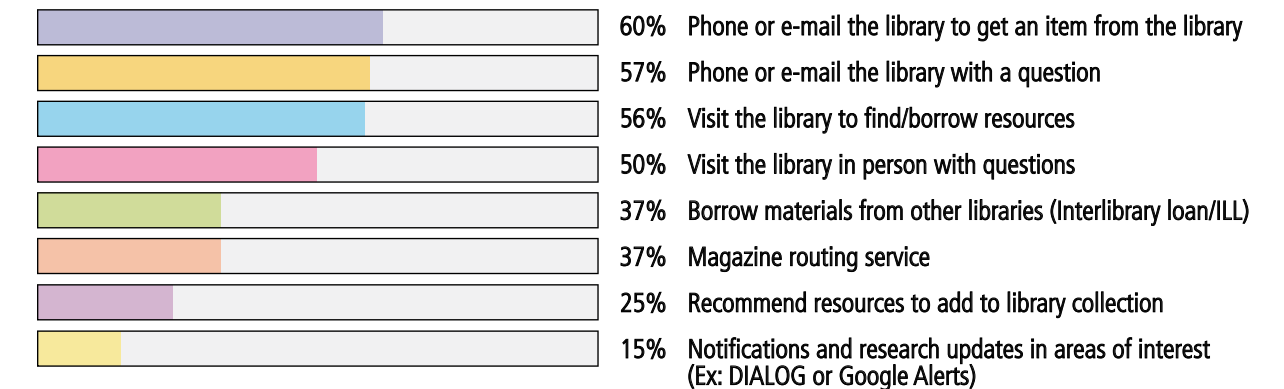
\*Multiple responses were allowed

## What Services Do Customers Use?\*

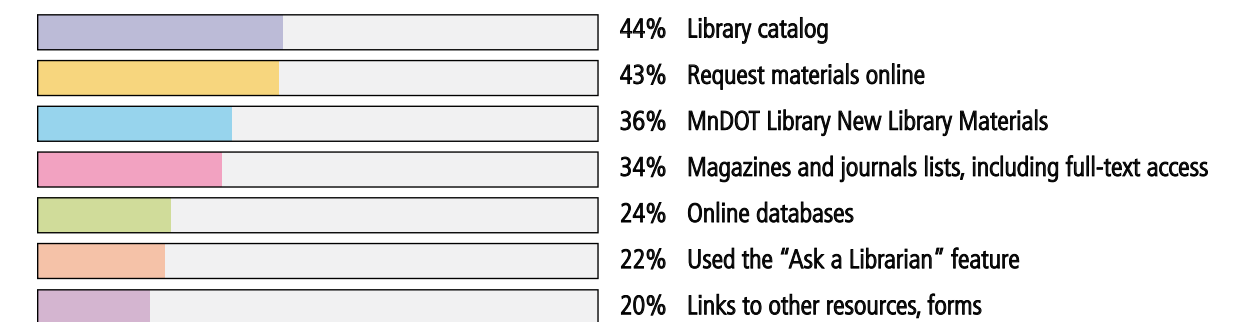
### What Information Resources Do You Need and/or Use in Your Work?



### Library Services Used by Customers:



### Online Services Used by Customers on MnDOT Library's Website:



\*Multiple responses were allowed

"The library provides assistance on at least 2/3 of the products I deliver..."

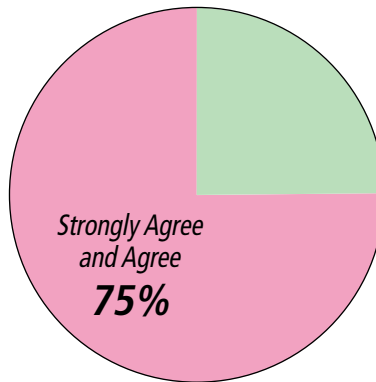


# Indicate Your Agreement With the Following Statements:

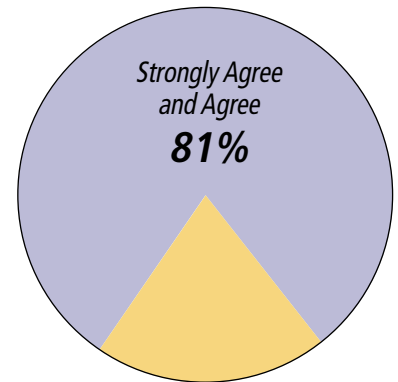
*In general, how would you rate the help you have received from MnDOT Library staff since the library remodel in 2010?*



*Service provided by MnDOT Library exceeds my expectations.*

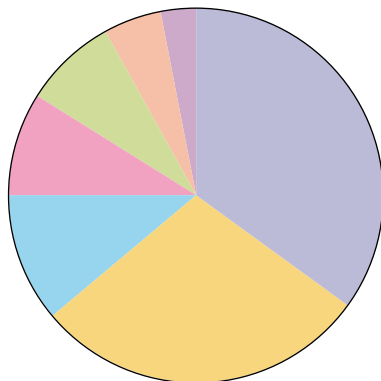


*I would refer colleagues to MnDOT Library to find resources or research assistance for their work.*

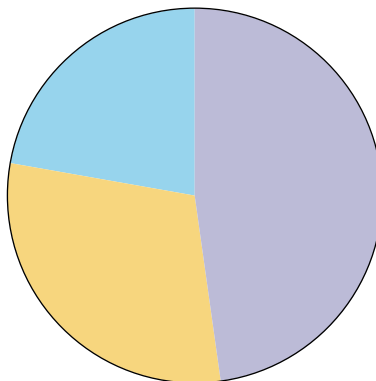


## Who are MnDOT Library Customers?

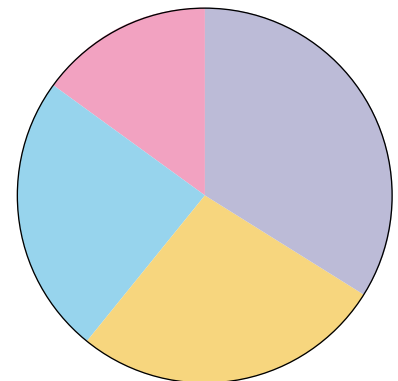
*In which division do you work?*



*In what physical office or district do you work?*



*How long have you worked for MnDOT?*



- 35% Operations
  - 29% Engineering Services
  - 11% Modal Planning & Program Management
  - 9% Employee & Corporate Services
  - 8% Policy, Safety & Strategic Initiatives
  - 5% Commissioner's Office
  - 3% State Aid
- (includes Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner/Chief Engineer, Transportation Ombudsman, Communications, Customer Relations, Audit, Government Affairs, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Counsel, Chief Risk Officer)

- 48% Central Office
  - 30% Districts 1-8
  - 22% Metro District
- (includes Aeronautics, Arden Hills Training Center, Bridge Office, Ft. Snelling, Materials and Road Research, MnROAD, St. Croix River Crossing Office, Traffic Safety & Technology)
- (not including metro)
- (includes RTMC, Electronic Communications)

- 34% 20 or more years
- 27% 10-19 years
- 24% 2-9 years
- 15% Less than 2 years

Access more information on this study at [www.MnDOT.gov/library](http://www.MnDOT.gov/library)