Change in store? An investigation into the impact of the book superstore environment on use, perceptions and expectations of the public library as a space, place and experience.

A study submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Librarianship at THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD by HELEN CARTWRIGHT

September 2001
Abstract

The chain book superstore is promoted not simply as a place in which to buy books but as a
community resource in which to read, learn and socialise: traits that have in combination
traditionally been the preserve of the public library. This study investigates the impact of the
book superstore environment on use made of public library space and on perceptions and
expectations held about that space. The findings presented are derived from user insights
into the current image and function of the bookstore and the library. The attitudes and
behaviours of individuals using bookstore and library space have been explored through
focus group interviews and through a self-completed user questionnaire placed in book
superstores and central libraries in five UK cities.

The vast majority of individuals taking part in this study make at least some use of both the
book superstore and the public library. Individuals responding from libraries are, however,
found to regard the library environment more positively than do individuals responding from
bookstores; library and bookstore respondents view the bookstore environment in almost
equally positive terms. Close analysis of profiles of library and bookstore image constructed
by users reveals further income- and age-related trends.

Examination of perceived and actual current functions of the bookstore and the library (in
areas suggested in the literature to be points of overlap between them) reveals that
respondents regard their ‘own’ site, be it the library or the bookstore, as a place in which to
linger, to sit and read or rest, and to ‘escape’ to. Libraries are more heavily used to find
information and as places to study or work; the bookstore is found to be more strongly
associated with socialising and ‘casual use’. The library is more widely regarded as a place
for the community than is the bookstore; demographic analysis reveals that age and income
again influence the extent to which each site is actually used by different sectors of the
community.

Stock, comfortable seating and café facilities are the aspects of the library service here most
widely felt to be in need of improvement; it is postulated that the presence of the book
superstore may be contributing to growing demand in these areas. Respondents are
generally found to believe, however, that the library and bookstore should look and feel
different from each other, many regarding the library as inherently educational and
‘informational’, the bookstore as inherently recreational.
It is concluded that, although it may be too early to speak conclusively of ‘impact’ or of transfer of roles from the library to the superstore, clear areas of overlap in function have been identified between the two sites. It is also suggested that there may here be evidence of the beginnings of an income and age related split in use of the bookstore and the library. It is thus recommended that particular attention be paid in the library sector to the attitudes and behaviour of young people and middle-income earners, currently the groups most noticeably increasing their use of the bookstore. It is further recommended that consideration be given to the desired future balance of education and recreation in the image and nature of the public library.
## Contents

*Abstract*  
*List of Figures*  
*Acknowledgements*  

1. Introduction  
   1.1 Background and Context  
   1.2 Aims & Objectives  
   1.3 Report Outline  

2. Methodology  
   2.1 Methodological Approach  
   2.2 Research Methods  
   2.3 Sampling  
   2.4 Data Analysis  
   2.5 Limitations  

3. Image & Impression  
   3.1 Introductory Remarks  
   3.2 Literature Review  
   3.3 Results  
   3.4 Discussion & Summary  

4. A Place for the Community  
   4.1 Introductory Remarks  
   4.2 Literature Review  
   4.3 Results  
   4.4 Discussion & Summary  

Abstract  
List of Figures  
Acknowledgements
5. A Place to Linger 60
   5.1 Introductory Remarks 60
   5.2 Literature Review 60
   5.3 Results 62
   5.4 Summary & Discussion 81

6. Stock & Display 87
   6.1 Introductory Remarks 87
   6.2 Results 87
   6.3 Discussion & Summary 92

7. User-Friendliness 96
   7.1 Introductory Remarks 96
   7.2 Results 96
   7.3 Discussion & Summary 105

8. Desired Futures 109
   8.1 Introductory Remarks 109
   8.2 Results & Discussion 109
   8.3 Summary 125

9. Conclusions & Recommendations 127
   9.1 Key Findings 127
   9.2 Evaluations, Implications, Recommendations 131

Bibliography 134
Appendices 140
# List of Figures

1. Library & bookstore image: all respondents 28
2. Library & bookstore image: bookstore respondents 30
3. Library & bookstore image: library respondents 34
4. Library image: bookstore & library respondents 37
5. Bookstore image: bookstore & library respondents 38
6. Library image: bookstore respondents by age 41
7. Library image: library respondents by income 42
8. Library image: bookstore respondents by income 43
9. The library: a place for the community 50
10. The bookstore: a place for the community 51
11. Gender of respondents by site 53
12. Age of respondents by site 53
13. Occupation of respondents by site 54
14. Income of respondents by site 54
15. Education of respondents by site 55
16. The library: a place to linger 63
17. The bookstore: a place to linger 64
18. Library dwell time 65
19. Bookstore dwell time 65
20. The library: a place to sit and read, or just rest 70
21. The bookstore: a place to sit and read, or just rest 70
22. The library: a place to study or work 72
23. The bookstore: a place to study or work 73
24. The library: a place to find information 74
25. The bookstore: a place to find information 74
26. The library: a place to meet friends/socialise 75
27. The bookstore: a place to meet friends/socialise 75
28. The library: a place I can escape to 79
29. The bookstore: a place I can escape to 80
Acknowledgements

Thanks are due first and foremost to all those individuals in libraries and bookstores who completed a questionnaire and to the members of the six reading groups consulted in this study whose comments and support have greatly enriched both the results of this research project and the experience of undertaking it.

Thanks also to members of library and bookstore staff in York, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham and Nottingham who contributed time, ideas and support to this study.

Thanks to Bob Usherwood for help and support throughout the project, and to Dan Walters for invaluable input in the early stages of this research. Thanks also to friends and family, and to Pete.
1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

It’s a place to meet, eat, drink, romance, discuss, dream, read, write or just hang out. A safe, smoke-free gathering place for kids, teenagers, singles, couples, moms, dads, grandparents and rebels with laptops. There are book groups, discussion groups, support groups. There are speakers, writers, storytellers, musicians, chefs.¹

Welcome, Roxanne Roberts writes, to the ‘new breed of giant bookstore’. You remember bookstores, Roberts asserts: ‘stores where people used to go to buy books’ (1997:C1).

Changes of a ‘dramatic and tumultuous nature’ have been charted in the ‘once sleepy’ sector of book retailing (Pennington, 1997:36; Jardine, 1999). Those changes, it is suggested, have been led by the emergence of the book superstore, a development described in recent years as the ‘most prominent macro trend in the book industry’ (Pennington, 1997:36). Once unknown outside a few large US cities, the book superstore is now, as Raff (2000:1043) notes, a ‘commonplace of the [American] urban and suburban landscape’. Accounting for 15-20% of the US book market in 1999, this figure is expected to rise to 80% by 2003 (Schlesinger, 1999). The superstore is also now an increasingly familiar sight on the British high street. The growth rate of the book superstore in the UK since 1998 has been described as ‘phenomenal’ and is also forecast to continue to increase in coming years (Mintel, 2000).

In addition to being characteristically large (with a typical stock of 125,000 volumes (Pennington, 1997)) the book superstore is defined by the presence of in-store reading space, cafés, events, classes and exhibitions. It is, according to Sanderson (2001), a ‘venue’; a place in which individuals are ‘encouraged to linger – to drink coffee, meet their friends, read magazines, listen to music or to an author reading’

The ‘new philosophy’, Jardine (1999:29) suggests, appears to be ‘“stay all day and who cares if you buy a book”’. The book superstore is, in short, being promoted as a ‘destination’ to be experienced in its own right as least as much as a locus in which to simply make a purchase.

The book superstore can in this respect be regarded as being at the heart of a more general and fundamental shift that has occurred in the nature of high street and ‘mall’ retailing in recent years. For Ritzer (1999) the change is no less than ‘revolutionary’. It has had, he suggests, a ‘profound effect not only on the nature of consumption but also on social life’ (p.x). Ritzer writes of the development of ‘new settings for consumers’, ‘new means of consumption’; such settings, he goes on:

> can be seen as “cathedrals of consumption” – that is, they have an enchanted, sometimes even sacred, religious character for many people. In order to attract ever larger numbers of consumers, such cathedrals of consumption need to offer, or at least appear to offer, increasingly magical, fantastic and enchanted settings in which to consume (p.8).

The book superstore is for Ritzer a prime example of the new means of consumption.

Falk and Campbell (1997) have similarly charted the development of ‘recreational’ or ‘lifestyle’ shopping in which stores have, they suggest, increasingly become ‘experiential realms in themselves, as places for meeting friends, for walking round and just spending time, rather than money’ (p.8). The ‘necessity of purchase – and purchasing necessities’ has only a ‘marginal role’ to play in the habits of the recreational shopper (Falk, 1997:183). Indeed, far from being associated with purchase, the rise of recreational shopping has been directly linked by Carr et al. (1992) to the decline of traditional forms of public space, defined by them as the ‘common ground where people carry out the functional and ritual activities that bind a community’, space that is viewed as an ‘essential counterpart to the more settled places and routines of work and home life’ (p.3). Goldberger (cited by Ritzer, 1999) concurs:

> In a culture that is starved for public experience and that increasingly consumes entertainment in private, stores are functioning more and more as an escape from the personal space of computers and VCRs. Stores entice us with their versions of a public realm, offering a Faustian bargain: step into our commercial world and we will give you the kind of communal experience that’s hard to find this side of Disneyland (p.113).
In considering the ‘re-enchantment of the cathedrals of consumption … [by] their
growing increasingly spectacular’ (p.105), Ritzer too examines this blurring of the
public and private. The disappearance of traditional boundaries between ‘entities’ or
realms is termed ‘implosion’ by Ritzer who, noting that ‘borders between the means
of consumption and other aspects of the social world … have been breached’, again
presents the book superstore as a key site in which such ‘implosions’ are occurring
and in which, he suggests, we have thus ‘witnessed the disappearance of many
distinctions to which people have become accustomed’ (p.132). Support for the
color the concept of the book superstore as an ‘imploded world’ can be found in the work of
Kotler and Armstrong (2001); today’s bookstore, they assert, has become ‘part
bookstore, part library, part living room’ (p.494). Roberts (1997) similarly remarks
that, in their promotion of in-store browsing, the provision of reading, study and
meeting space and the hosting of free literary and educational events, the bookstore
chains have in the past decade ‘culled elements of the neighborhood library’ (p.C1)
and indeed Roberts’s description of the ‘new bookstore’ included at the beginning of
this chapter is perhaps striking in the extent to which traits traditionally associated
with the public library service are here now also ascribed to the book superstore.

Kotler and Armstrong (2001) and Roberts (1997) are not alone in their linking of the
book superstore and the library. Both the US and UK media, bookselling and library
literature is replete with articles and commentaries in which the two sites are
juxtaposed (e.g. Forrest, 2001; Sannwald, 1998; St Lifer, 2001; Coffman, 1998).
Indeed, as far back as 1995, the ASLIB review of the UK public library service
referred to the emergence of the book superstore in the US as a ‘significant
development’ likely to be a ‘harbinger’ of changes in Britain, and to have a
‘substantial impact on libraries’ (ASLIB, 1995:65). Some writers have since gone
further, suggesting that ‘the new players in the business believe that soon they will be
filling the role of the sadly neglected public library system in Britain’ (Buckingham
and Finch, 1998:26) and that ‘the last bastion of social space, the library … is
frequently becoming a victim of spending cuts and is often under-resourced and
under-used. In this situation, the bookshop can fill a gap and provide a place …
people can treat as their own community space’ (Smith, 1999:31).
Whilst sound bites, opinions, observations and predictions regarding the book superstore and the public library are multitudinous, there is currently a lack of research-based evidence as to the actual impact of the book superstore environment on use and perceptions of the public library. Work by Walters indicating that some library users in the US seem to prefer the ambience of their local bookstore and to ‘hang out’ in bookstore space (cited by St Lifer, 2001) has not been matched by any similar research in the UK, leaving a gap which this project seeks to fill. It is here suggested that, with the now rapid growth of the book superstore in this country, such research is both timely and, in a context of still slightly declining library issues (the paucity of the measure as an indication of library use accepted) and static membership (Murphy, 1999; Maynard, 2000), of potentially key importance to the public library sector. It must finally be noted that the emphasis currently being placed on the physical form and presence of the book superstore is ultimately being driven not just by general shifts in retailing culture, but also by pressures from cyberspace. As Jardine (1999) has observed, bookselling has ‘woken-up to find itself on the frontline of the Internet revolution’ (p.28). 5%-15% of US book sales are, she reports, currently being made online, and although figures for Britain are still low, it has been predicted that by 2003, one fifth of UK books will be purchased via the web (Jardine, 1999:28). With supermarkets now too embracing bookselling Jardine notes the book chains are ‘fighting back’ as never before with in-store innovation, facilities, services, design and atmospherics.

### 1.2 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research project is, therefore, to examine the impact of the development and expansion of the high-street book superstore environment on use made of public library space in the UK, and on perceptions and expectations held about that space. ‘Space’ and ‘place’, two commonplace and yet, as Altman and Zube (1989) have noted, somewhat ‘slippery’ terms, are central to the project. Tuan (1977) has remarked that: ‘space and place are basic components of the lived world; we take them for granted. When we think about them, however, they may assume unexpected meanings and raise questions we have not thought to ask’ (p.3).
Thinking about space and place, and answering some of the questions raised by so doing, is a key concern of this research.

In considering the meanings of space and place, Tuan emphasises both the relatedness and essential differences between the two concepts, concluding that ‘what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value’ (p.6). A description of the development of ‘place’ out of ‘space’ is given by Canter (1977) (cited by Sime, 1995:33):

…we have not fully identified the place until we know (a) what behaviour is associated with, or it is anticipated will be housed in, a given locus, (b) what the physical parameters of that setting are, and (c) the descriptions, or conceptions which people hold of that behaviour in that physical environment.

The creation of place is thus a complex psychological process in which built and natural environments become imbued with meaning (Sime, 1995). Of ultimate interest here is the meaning of two ‘built environments’, the public library and the book superstore. Markus (1993) reminds us that buildings are ‘not primarily art, technical or investment objects, but social objects’ (p.xi), each with its own ‘narrative’ (language being for Markus at the core of ‘making, using and understanding buildings’ (p.4)). It is the nature of and relationship between the narratives of the public library and book superstore that this project finally seeks to understand.

Given the interest here in exploring fully the meaning and interplay of the book superstore and public library environments, and thus revealing any impact of the bookstore on use, perceptions and expectations of public library space, the objectives of the research (which fall into two parallel sets) are firstly:

- to examine exactly how users of book superstores feel about and utilise the in-store space and services provided

- to explore how users of bookstore space feel about the public library as a place, environment and ‘experience’ in order to chart any changes or trends in attitudes towards the library
• to identify if users of bookstore space are also users (frequent or otherwise), ex-users or non-users of public library space in order to chart any changes or trends in behaviour associated with the library

• to establish a demographic profile of users of bookstore space.

A complete picture of the current state of the relationship between the sites of the book superstore and public library is drawn by also consulting users of library space on similar issues. The objectives here, in close keeping with those listed above, are namely:

• to examine exactly how library users feel about and utilise library space and services

• to explore how users of libraries feel about the book superstore as a place, environment and ‘experience’ in order to chart any trends in attitudes towards the bookstore

• to identify if users of library space are also users (frequent or otherwise), ex-users or non-users of book superstore space in order to chart any changes or trends in behaviour associated with the bookstore

• to establish a demographic profile of users of library space.

It is suggested that by gathering evidence of this nature rich insights will be afforded into precisely how two sites, recently drawn together in the minds and writings of commentators and observers, are actually used, perceived and experienced ‘on the ground’. Only by gathering such evidence will it then be possible to gauge the extent to which ‘implosion’ or even transfer of role or function between them is real, imagined or desired.
1.3 Report Outline

A full account of the methodology and research instruments brought to bear in this project is given in chapter two. The results of the study are then presented, in conjunction with relevant literature, in six further chapters. An overview of the image and meaning of the public library and book superstore for those participating in the project is provided in chapter three. The following chapters then ‘unpick’ and add ‘flesh’ to these general impressions by isolating and exploring key and emergent themes in more depth. Chapter four considers the library and bookstore as community space, with chapter five further examining in-site behaviour. Chapter six is concerned with issues of stock and display, whilst chapter seven addresses the question of user-friendliness. Having separated out themes in this way the eighth chapter then addresses crucial questions of impact and of desired future developments before general conclusions and recommendations are outlined in chapter nine.
2. Methodology

2.1 Methodological Approach

This project is, in essence, concerned with the stories people tell about public library and book superstore environments. It seeks to illuminate the complex and individual process of the development of a sense of place, to ‘extract’ definitions of that sense of place and to understand how that sense of place influences behaviour. In order to gather rich and meaningful insights into the phenomena of interest, the project is necessarily exploratory, holistic and context-laden. Attitude, perception and experience are the building blocks of the study and ultimately the components of the larger and overarching narrative of place that this project is concerned to construct.

This inherently interpretivist study does not, therefore, attempt to isolate, test and measure pre-determined variables and hypotheses as might be done in more deductive, quantitative research, but instead seeks to build theory inductively and from the ‘ground up’ and to embrace variables and themes as they emerge from the ‘field’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Glazier, 1992). In short, a wholly naturalistic, qualitative approach, in which as Gorman and Clayton (1997:23) note, data are drawn from the ‘context in which events occur in an attempt to describe these occurrences, as a means of determining the process in which events are embedded and the perspectives of those participating in the events’, is adopted throughout, this methodological paradigm being entirely in line with the aims and objectives of the current research project. The qualitative approach allows the voices of the study’s ‘subjects’ to be heard, is led by and is responsive to those voices and can moreover, fully accommodate their true complexity which is finally where the interest of this project lies.
2.2 Research Methods

2.2.1 General Remarks
In selecting and designing instruments to be used to generate and collect data in this project, close attention has been paid to the key aims and objectives of the study and to the inherent strengths and weaknesses of the many and varied methods available to the researcher. As Patton (1987:45) has observed, any overall research design is characterised by strategies and tradeoffs; it is suggested that the three instruments here chosen, the focus group interview, the self-completed questionnaire and the semi-structured interview, are each appropriate for specific facets of the current research, bring something unique to the study, and together form a complementary set of tools that allows as complete a picture as possible to be drawn of the phenomena under investigation. The research, as will be later discussed in more depth, was conducted at book superstores and central libraries in five UK cities.

An initial and wide-ranging literature review, undertaken in the early stages of the project, formed the basis for both the selection and subsequent tailoring of the research instruments utilised. The literature, as has been previously discussed, is a rich source of opinions, sound bites, suggestions, and commentary on public library and bookstore environments in which ‘echoes’ and comparisons between the two types of site are either made directly or are readily identifiable across accounts. In effect, the literature provides a patchwork of themes, questions, keywords and phrases; fragments of ‘stories’ and experiences linking book superstore and public library environments, but (as yet) no research-based evidence from the UK as to the actual impact of the one on the other. The precise function, design and application of each individual research instrument here used to begin to fill that gap, and the literature shaping each instrument, will be described in more detail below.

2.2.2 Focus Group Interviews
Understanding the impact of the book superstore environment on use and perception of the public library as a place and experience necessitates thorough exploration of how users of book superstores and public libraries use and feel about the spaces they inhabit (or choose to avoid). It involves, to re-use Tuan’s words, raising questions
we may not have previously thought to ask, and deals to some extent with concepts that may not be immediately familiar or tangible. The primary qualitative data for this study were, therefore, gathered by utilising a research instrument facilitating reflection, discussion and debate and one which, moreover, allows for the fact that, as Marshall and Rossman (1999:114) have noted, ‘people often need to listen to others’ opinions and understandings in order to form their own’: the focus group interview. The goals of the focus group interview are, as Goldman and McDonald (cited by Drabenstott, 1992) observe, ‘to explore in depth the feelings and beliefs people hold and to learn how these feelings shape overt behavior’ (p.85). The appropriateness of this method of investigation for the current research project is thus clearly apparent.

In addition to providing group members with access to the views of others, the focus group method, as a consequence of the interactions that inevitably occur between participants, lays bare the processes by which opinions are formed and provides an indication of the strength of opinions held, by revealing the willingness (or otherwise) of an individual to defend or revise their views (Morgan, 1988; Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999). In a study concerned to understand the intricacies and nuances involved in the development of a sense of place it is suggested that the focus group, with its capacity to generate such rich data, has a unique and important role to play.

Interviews lasting between fifteen and thirty minutes were held with pre-existing reading or discussion groups at three of the bookstores and four of the libraries involved in the study. The value of using pre-formed groups has been noted by Barbour and Kitzinger (1999); they are, it is suggested, the ‘networks in which people might normally discuss (or evade) the sorts of issues likely to be raised’ (p.9) and can therefore be regarded as somewhat naturalistic. Group size was varied, with participant numbers ranging from three to twelve. In each case the researcher sought to facilitate open and frank discussion by monitoring group dynamics and processes, by establishing a relaxed and non-judgemental atmosphere and by practicing the skills of active listening (particularly reflecting and summarising) (Egan, 1998) to draw out opinions and to maintain the momentum of the ‘debate’ without dictating its course.
It should, however, be noted that the sessions were structured (indeed ‘focused’) by a set of questions designed by the researcher to stimulate and encourage both open-ended discussion and consideration of more specific themes drawn from the literature. In accordance with the recommendations of Krueger (1998), careful attention was paid to sequencing, with introductory questions being followed by transitional and key questions, before closing with concluding questions (see appendix B). Although an interview guide listing questions, themes and prompts was available to the researcher during each session, a conversational and flexible style was maintained at all times. Flexibility was of particular importance given the very different nature of the groups interviewed and the varied amounts of time available for discussion.

In order to begin to understand perceptions and use of book superstore and public library space, participants were first asked to describe their experiences of using and simply ‘being in’ each site and to reflect upon their likes and dislikes of each place. Participants were, in each case, asked to consider the site they were currently in, before then being asked to reflect upon the ‘other’ site, be it the library or the bookstore, it being recognised that some participants might not have any direct experience of the ‘other’ site and that beginning the discussion with a question regarding that site might have alienated group members or caused attention and interest to wane.

Having opened with questions designed to reveal immediate thoughts, feelings, reactions and impressions (data ultimately to be ‘trawled’ for trends within and between the sites of the library and the bookstore and set against personal or company views expressed in the literature, market research and previous studies of use and perceptions of public libraries in the UK) participants were then in effect asked to reflect upon elements of ‘implosion’ between the two sites (Ritzer, 1999). Suggested areas of overlap between the role and nature of public libraries and new book superstores, drawn from the literature, were put to group members for their consideration; participants’ views and reactions to the notion of both the library and the bookstore as a community resource (LIC, 2000b; Miller, 1999; Smith, 1999) and as a place to linger in or escape to (Greenhalgh et al., 1995; LIC, 2000b; Roberts, 1997; Lee (cited by Gregory, 1998)) were sought.
The remaining questions similarly drew the two sites together, interviewees being asked to reflect upon similarities and differences between the library and book superstore spaces and experiences, whether or not the two environments should be similar or different, and whether or not either site could learn anything from the other. Although, as previously indicated, a number of extensive studies of perceptions and use of libraries and, to a lesser extent, of bookstores have been undertaken (ASLIB, 1995; Insight Research, 1999, Mintel, 1999), there is not as yet any UK based research in which the two sites are compared directly as they are in this study. A certain amount of emphasis was placed on such questions in the focus group interviews; it was recognised that, by asking individuals to consider the two sites simultaneously, valuable data regarding the relationship between them (and thus possibly evidence of impact of one on the other) could be collected. It was equally recognised that such questions may not be particularly easy to answer and thus best asked in the social, interactive setting of the focus group, in the presence of a researcher able to offer clarification if required.

Permission to tape record the focus group interviews was granted by participants, thus freeing the researcher to concentrate on observing non-verbal behaviour and the key task of facilitation. The potentially negative impact of the presence of the recorder on the discussion was not, however, overlooked; participants were given a chance to talk ‘off air’ as the recorder was visibly switched off shortly before the end of each discussion.

The role of the focus group in this study was to provide in-depth insights into how two environments are experienced and perceived and to explore views on the relationship between them. Recognising, however, inherent limitations of the method (there may, for example, be a tendency for participants to give socially acceptable answers (Gorman and Clayton, 1997)) and, moreover, the additional interest of this study in obtaining a broader picture of use and opinion of the two spaces, a contrasting method of investigation, the self-completed questionnaire, was also utilised.
2.2.3 The Self-Completed Questionnaire

The primary function of the questionnaire in this project was to enable a number of ‘snapshots’ to be taken. In order to fully investigate the nature of and relationship between the two environments of interest, and to further examine the notion of ‘implosion’ between them, it was regarded as essential that an impression of patterns and frequency of use of the bookstore and the library, and of in situ behaviour, be gained, and that basic demographic details of the users of each space be collected. This demographic data would not only provide some indication of the nature of bookstore and library populations but would also allow any demographically linked behavioural trends to be identified. Interest was here focused on gaining an impression of the demographic characteristics not simply of book buyers and book borrowers as in other previous research (England and Sumison, 1995) but, more generally, of users of bookstore and library space. The questionnaire was also used to glean further data on perceptions and expectations of the bookstore and library. Whilst inevitably more limited than those gathered in the focus groups, these data could, however, also be usefully set against demographic information.

The questionnaire thus consisted of a number of factual, closed and quantifiable questions relating to frequency and duration of book superstore and public library use, and one question in which respondents were asked to indicate any increase or decrease in their use of both sites. Respondents were also asked to indicate what they did during their visits to bookstores and libraries; ten choices (each of which had been identified in the literature as behaviours taking place in both public libraries and book superstores) were offered, with space provided to add in any unlisted uses of store or library space. This set of questions was designed not only to allow any general trends in the extent of use of each site to be identified but to also test out specific claims made in the literature about what actually happens in each place. Many commentators have, for example, asserted that the book superstore is somewhere to ‘tarry and read’, to learn and to socialise (Raff, 2000; Kreiztman, 1999; Buckingham and Finch, 1998); that, in short, the bookstores seem ‘almost to be trying to serve the same purpose as a library’ (Treneman, 1998). One of the concerns of this study is to explore to what extent such assertions are correct. A further, closely related interest, here satisfied, is to discover to what extent roles and functions traditionally ascribed to libraries still hold good.
The questionnaire also contained two attitude measurement scales for each site. Respondents were, in common with the focus group participants, asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that the library and the bookstore functioned as a community resource, as somewhere to linger or escape to and as a space for children and the family. To obtain a snapshot of the image of the public library and book superstore amongst respondents a ‘semantic differential scale’ (frequently used, as Proctor (1997) notes, in market research to measure attitudes towards the imagery of products and services) was designed for the questionnaire. Word pairs, each relating to aspects of library and bookstore environments and atmospherics were developed for the consideration of respondents by extracting keywords used to describe library and bookstore spaces from the literature and then coding the many words found into fourteen general categories. Although the semantic differential scale can rightly be regarded as somewhat simplistic and reductive, it does allow informative comparisons to be readily made between the image and perception of sites and is thus a useful tool in a study such as this, particularly when linked, as it is here, to demographic data.

Having completed two sets of identical closed questions (one relating to libraries, the other to book superstores) respondents were finally asked to consider a smaller number of open questions. The questions were designed to encourage respondents to describe library and bookstore environments in their own words, to state how, in their opinion, each environment could be made more appealing, and to reflect on whether bookstore and library environments should be similar or different to each other.

Questionnaires were placed in each of the book superstores and libraries involved in the study for interested parties to complete. In order to maximise the response rate the questionnaires were designed to look professional yet unofficial, being printed on bright, coloured paper and folded into an informal leaflet style (see appendix A). The questionnaires were also piloted and a number of small changes made as a consequence to improve the user-friendliness of the survey. Two symmetrical versions of the questionnaire were produced to ensure that library users were asked about libraries before introducing questions about bookstores, and bookstore users
were asked about bookstores before libraries. This was again designed to maximise user-friendliness, interest and engagement.

2.2.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

Although the views of users of public library and bookstore space lie at the heart of this study, a number of semi-structured interviews were also conducted with bookstore and library staff and professionals, such individuals being uniquely placed to offer different and highly relevant perspectives on the issues under investigation. Guides for the library and bookstore interviews were constructed and used by the researcher largely as prompt sheets. Interviewees were questioned in general terms about the type of space offered by their organisations, how that space is created, managed, used and perceived, and strengths and weaknesses of the store or library environment. A more structured approach to the interviewing would, it was felt, have been inappropriate as the individuals consulted occupied somewhat different positions within their organisations and had, therefore, in some cases, quite different areas of expertise. Working from a topic guide it was possible to ensure that, whilst each interviewee was consulted on the same general themes (allowing useful and interesting comparisons to be drawn between each of the discussions), individual interviewees were also able to shed quite new light on the subject under investigation as a direct result of the inherent flexibility of the interviewing style adopted. The consequent challenge for the researcher was, in the words of Mason (1996), ‘to assess, on the spot, the relevance of each part of the interaction to [the] research questions, or to ‘what you really want to know’’ (p.45) and to maintain a focus without being overly prescriptive or leading.

The interviews were again tape recorded with the permission of the interviewee, freeing the researcher to concentrate on the relevance of the issues raised and to note non-verbal behaviour. As before the recorder was visibly switched off slightly before the end of each interview in order to give interviewees an opportunity to speak informally and to end the interview in a relaxed manner.
2.2.5 Concluding Remarks
Three quite distinct methods of data generation and collection are here applied to the question of the impact of the book superstore environment on use and perceptions of the public library. It is suggested that by bringing a number of different methods of investigation to bear on the issues of interest, and moreover, methods from both the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, a more thorough and ultimately more convincing study of the phenomena is made. The varied methods of investigation used here not only produce differing forms of data; they also effectively draw a wider range of voices into the study, a subject considered in more detail below.

2.3 Sampling

2.3.1 Sampling Strategy
Given the concern of this project to achieve detailed insight into attitude, perception and behaviour associated with book superstore and public library environments, a suitably non-probabilistic sampling strategy, facilitating flexible and in-depth study of information-rich cases (Patton, 1987), was adopted. The selection of the population to be studied was guided by the principles of purposive sampling; parties and sites were chosen by the researcher with regard to their capacity to shed light on the topics under investigation (Walliman, 2001).

Ten case study sites - five public libraries and five book superstores - were selected. Individual interviews with members of staff were held at nine of the sites involved in the study; focus group interviews with users were held at three bookstores and three libraries. Whilst individuals of all ages were involved in the focus groups, stratification of the sample as a whole was enhanced by the use of the questionnaire. In order to maximise the ‘reach’ of the project and to thus gather data from the widest possible range of users of bookstore and library space, copies of the self-completed questionnaire were placed in each of the ‘case study’ sites. Questionnaire respondents were in effect ‘self-selected’; purposive sampling is, therefore, used in this study in conjunction with voluntary sampling. It is suggested that the inclusion
of a form of voluntary sampling in the project not only widens the scope of the study but also effectively minimises the impact of any researcher bias as to who might have information to impart on this subject.

Recognising the typically low response rate to this particular research method (Heather and Stone, 1984), five hundred copies of the questionnaire were distributed, fifty copies being left in each of the ten locations involved in the study, with a view to achieving a return of 10%. This was, however, exceeded; 120 questionnaires were completed in all (the final response rate therefore being 24%) with 48 forms being returned from libraries and 72 from bookstores. The demographics of the questionnaire respondents as a whole proved to be varied, with almost all categories in each of the socio-economic dimensions included in the questionnaire being well represented. Further details of the demographic characteristics of respondents are provided in chapter four.

2.3.2 Location of Study

As the book superstore is still primarily a city centre phenomenon the field research for this project was undertaken in five urban areas: Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, York and Leeds. In each city, one superstore branch of either Waterstone’s or Borders, and the central library were selected as the locations for study, full permission being granted by bookstore and library managers at each site.

The two bookstore chains involved in this project, whilst in many ways quite distinct, have both fully embraced the superstore concept, declaring an interest in creating spaces designed not just for the purchase of books, but for browsing, lingering, learning, gathering and relaxing. As Sanderson (2001:26) has noted, both chains have, in their own ways, contributed to the shift towards ‘leisure bookselling’ in the UK.

Waterstone’s, founded in 1982, and now part of HMV Media with over 220 branches across the country (Moss, 2001), is widely recognised for its long-standing interest in store design and ambience (Sanderson, 2001) and is indeed credited with ‘revolutionising book retailing in the UK’ (Gregory, 1998). The company has
furthermore expressed a commitment to remaining at ‘the heart of communities through the UK and Ireland’ (Kneale, in MacLehose and Kneale, 2000). Since the opening of their first ‘lifestyle’ or destination superstore in Glasgow in 1997, complete with internet and intranet facilities, café, events space and ‘coffee stations’ on each of its five floors (Treneman, 1998), a strategy of opening superstores has been pursued with several other branches of Waterstone’s already now refitted and relaunched and with a reported fifteen to twenty planned in all (Dwek, 1998). The company has recently further expressed a commitment to investing heavily in its real estate during the course of the next two to three years (Hines, cited by Sanderson, 2001).

The three branches of Waterstone’s involved in this study can each be regarded as model ‘superstores’. The Manchester Deansgate branch of Waterstone’s, refurbished in 1998, now holds over 150,000 titles, has a coffee shop, browsing areas, a reading room with armchairs, sofas, hard backed chairs and tables, runs author events, seminars and literature courses and has its own Literary Club. The branch emphasises its ‘strong links with the local community’ and offers the long opening hours typically associated with such sites (8.30am-9pm on weekdays, 8.30am-8.30pm on Saturdays and 11am-5pm on Sundays)2. Whilst the opening hours of the Birmingham High Street branch of Waterstone’s are not quite so extensive (the store is open from 9am until 7pm on weekdays and Saturdays, and 11am-5pm on Sundays), the space and facilities offered are similar. Refitted in 1999 the store also holds 150,000 titles, has a coffee shop, ‘book garden’, events space and browsing areas; it is, the company conclude, the ‘perfect natural habitat for book lovers’. The Nottingham Bridlesmith Gate branch, relaunched as a superstore in September 2000 and now holding 90,000 titles across five floors, offers similarly long opening hours, a café, events space, gallery, browsing areas and an online ‘Booksearch’ facility enabling customers to search Waterstone’s web-based catalogue. The store also hosts a number of reading and discussion groups as well as creative writing and storytelling workshops.

2 For details on this and all other branches of Waterstone’s see [http://www.waterstones.co.uk](http://www.waterstones.co.uk) [Accessed July, 2001].
In contrast to Waterstone’s, US-based Borders (the second largest book retailer in the world with over 270 superstores globally (Mintel, 2000)) is a relative newcomer to the UK, opening its first British store in 1998. Borders’ stores have been described as being ‘amongst the first to introduce the idea that a bookshop should be more than just a place to buy books, but should also offer a friendly, convivial environment where customers can relax and socialise … and to read unpaid for books’ (Mintel, 2000:72). The company assert, like Waterstone’s, that ‘being a part of the local community is a very important element of the Borders ethos’; indeed Miller (1999:398) cites the 1996 Borders annual report to shareholders in which it is stated that ‘the management of each Borders location is committed to making its store a community center, entertainment resource and social gathering place’.

The company has an ‘ambitious strategy’ for UK expansion with nine more branches opened since 1998 and with another three planned (Mintel, 2000). Its branches in York and Leeds, studied in this project, display all the features typical of the superstore. Holding between 120,000 and 150,000 volumes, the stores provide reading and events space, cafés and children’s areas, host literary and musical events, run free discussion and writing groups and language classes, and again offer characteristically long opening hours (being open until 9pm or 9.30pm on weekdays and 11am-5pm on Sundays).

The libraries involved in this project have been selected on the grounds of their urban location and physical proximity to a book superstore. It should be noted, however, that the individual sites chosen do differ significantly in their size, age, layout and design. Birmingham Central Library, opened in 1974, is for example one of the largest public libraries in Europe, with over five acres of floor space, a thousand study spaces and a stock of over one million volumes in addition to café facilities, meeting rooms and a theatre. The angular design and concrete finish of the library contrasts sharply with the circular, domed and ‘classical’ appearance of the Central Library building in Manchester, built in 1934 and which again houses a book stock

---

of over one million volumes in addition to meeting rooms, café facilities and a theatre. Nottingham Central Library is unique in this study in that, rather than occupying a purpose built space, the library has, since 1977, been housed in a former department store in Nottingham city centre. Spread over five floors, the library provides study and reading space, meeting rooms and a café, and also incorporates a gallery. The Central Library in Leeds, opened in 1884, retains its Victorian architecture, including ‘terracotta arches, stained glass, … wall tiles, marble columns and vaulted ceilings’\(^5\). Reading, study, leisure and events space and facilities are provided across 4 floors. York Central Library, opened in 1927, holds 145,000 items across two floors and also incorporates an IT suite and children’s area.

Although drawing inter-site comparisons between participating libraries (or bookstores) is not an objective of the current research (interest instead being focused on comparing bookstores and libraries in a more generic manner), the varied nature of the libraries involved in the study is not overlooked and ultimately adds an interesting extra dimension to the project. In addition to effectively introducing a wider range of environmentally related variables into the study, the contrasting forms of the spaces studied may also finally reveal something of the extent to which ‘libraryness’ (understood as a general and commonly held sense of place associated with ‘the library’) exists, and the extent to which attitudes, perceptions and behaviour are determined by specific, or more global and pervasive aspects of the physical environment and atmosphere.

2.4 Data Analysis

In keeping with the inductive nature of the research project, a qualitative approach to data analysis was adopted in which ‘salient themes, recurring ideas or language, and patterns of belief’ (Marshall and Rossman, 1999:154), the ‘clues’ to new concepts and theory (Walliman, 2001), were sought out by the researcher from ‘stories’ told during the course of the study. Data from the focus groups, semi-structured

interviews and open questions included in the questionnaire were ‘cleaned’ by coding responses into both ‘analyst-constructed’ and ‘indigenous typologies’ (Patton, 1987) and then interpreted by exploring emerging relationships between those typologies. It was in this way hoped to reach an awareness and understanding of key elements of the bookstore and library ‘experience’, of interplay between the experiences and any specific areas of impact on use and perception of the public library. Ongoing analysis of the data gathered ensured that emerging concepts and ideas could be further tested in the field.

Basic descriptive statistical analysis of the closed questions and attitude measurement scales developed for the questionnaire was also undertaken and the results used to further interrogate and inform concepts arising from the qualitative data. Descriptive analyses of demographic data enabled the desired ‘snapshots’ of users and use patterns in each site to be drawn and for attitudinal material to be cross-referenced with socio-economic indicators.

2.5 Limitations

A number of both inherent and further practical limitations can be identified in the methodological approach and research instruments used in this study. It must be noted first and foremost that the qualitative approach adopted throughout this work illuminates a complex social phenomenon; it cannot provide, nor does it seek to provide, statistically valid ‘answers’ or globally applicable findings. Depth of insight is here favoured over breadth of insight; respondents and participants in this study speak ultimately for and of themselves and their own experiences at the sites discussed, experiences that may or may not reflect those of individuals beyond the reach of this research. It is noted that those contributing to this research are, in the main, ‘interested parties’: those individuals motivated to pick up and complete a questionnaire or take part in a group discussion. The conclusions of this study can only therefore be valid for those who have taken part in it; the ‘stories’ of a differently selected population may be quite different. The experiences of the individuals taking part in this study may equally mirror wider trends but research of
a somewhat different nature would be required to ‘prove’ that that was the case. Results with a higher validity are therefore for the purposes of this research finally regarded as preferable to results with higher ‘generalisability’. The validity and indeed the overall reliability of the results presented are maximised in this study by using research instruments that counterbalance each other’s limitations. Focus group interviews giving access to rich and detailed views and guided by a researcher, but which may also be prone to consensus and may discourage expression of less socially acceptable opinions, have here been complemented by a less detailed but wholly private self-completed questionnaire.

A number of additional practical limitations can, however, be identified in the precise application of each of these research instruments. The focus group interviews that were held were, for example, varied in both their duration and in the numbers of participants present. Joining pre-existing reading and discussion groups at the end of or during breaks in scheduled meetings (rather than arranging separate meetings as would have been preferable had time and resources allowed) inevitably resulted in a loss of control over the length and exact nature of the interviews. Furthermore, it was not always found to be possible to immediately focus the discussions on the key, but rather intangible topics of interest in this research; questions therefore sometimes had to be re-introduced at later stages of the discussion or re-worded slightly in order to be more meaningful to some participants.

A small number of questionnaires were, in the absence of a researcher, inevitably completed incorrectly in this study; it was also noted that some respondents chose (as might be expected) to answer certain questions but not others. Where relevant, the impact of missing data is noted in the following results sections of this report. More generally (and unexpectedly) it was found that questionnaires produced on yellow paper were less successful in terms of response rate than those produced on green or orange paper; it was observed by library staff that council documentation is also commonly produced on yellow paper, and that this may have made the questionnaires less appealing to passing users. As a greater number of yellow questionnaires were, by coincidence, placed in libraries, this may go some way to explaining the lower number of returns from libraries than from bookstores. It is further noted that suitable locations in which to place the questionnaires within
libraries and bookstores were sometimes limited; in some sites the questionnaires and ‘returns boxes’ were more prominently positioned than in others. Questionnaires were also placed in the lending areas of the central libraries involved in this study but not in reference or study areas; the views of individuals using only those areas of the library are therefore less likely to be represented here.

Throughout the following sections of the report in which the findings of this study are presented and discussed, further consideration is given where appropriate to additional methodological and environmental factors that may have also influenced the results of this research.
3. Image and Impression

3.1 Introductory Remarks

As a first step towards reaching a full and rich understanding of the ‘place’ of the public library and book superstore, consideration is given in this chapter to the overall meaning of these two environments for those individuals involved in this study. Of interest here are the images and impressions that together constitute what Solomon (1996) terms store (or site) ‘gestalt’, and what Martineau (cited by Engel et al., 1995) in 1958 described as ‘store personality’. Store personality is presented by Martineau as ‘the way in which a store is defined in the shopper’s mind, partly by its functional qualities and partly by an aura of psychological attributes’ (p.846). Measuring site personality and image is, Engel et al. (1995) assert, essential, it being ‘the perceptual reality on which consumers rely when making choices’ (p.846). The concept of store personality is here applied to both the public library and bookstore and explored in order to begin to shed light on the narratives of each place.

3.2 Literature Review

Any examination of the literature surrounding the public library and bookstore reveals a plethora of descriptions, representations and commentaries on each site as both a theoretical space and a personalised place. Such literature has informed the shape of the current study and is here briefly reviewed.

Perhaps the most comprehensive recent account of the nature of the public library as a place and ‘experience’ is provided by Greenhalgh et al. (1995). The authors, considering what in effect may be regarded as site ‘personality’, note that ‘most people know what a library is and know that to enter and inhabit that space involves a number of unspoken rules and assumptions’ and thus go on to speak of the ‘libraryness’ of libraries. This quality is, they suggest, ‘historically rich and widely understood’ and that it is furthermore ‘one of the great institutional strengths of the
public library service’ (p.52). In attempting to ‘locate’ libraryness more precisely
Greenhalgh et al. point, amongst other things, to the large-scale presence of books
which ‘evince a quasi-religious or spiritual aura’ (libraries are later described as
‘secular cathedrals’); the ‘rule of silence’ (no longer as strictly maintained as it once
was but which remains, the authors suggest, ‘an unwritten and shared understanding’
that reinforces the notion of the library as a ‘quiet haven in a sea of urban noise’) and
the sense of sanctuary associated with the library, here described as ‘a place where
one may sit, read, browse, sleep and remain unharassed’ in which ‘nobody is judged
and therefore nobody found wanting’ and in which ‘people … of all ages go alone
and spend time without worry’ (p.51-52). The significance of the ‘library as place’
has more recently been asserted by the Library and Information Commission (LIC,
2000b) who characterise the library as ‘a secure risk-free social place that is
welcoming to all, a caring, helpful and supportive place … a civil, respectable and
respectful place … a place to discover and delight in diversity … a meeting place for
individuals and ideas’ and as an ‘accessible and sustainable learning space’ (p.3).

Many of these traits recur in descriptions of the book superstore. They too, for
example, have not only been referred to as ‘cathedrals for the printed word’
(Streitfeld, cited by Ritzer, 1999:8) but have also been characterised as an ‘oasis, a
haven’ in city centres (Lee, cited by Gregory, 1998), as providing a pressure-free,
safe and welcoming environment open to all (Roberts, 1997), a space for ‘education,
fun and interaction’ and a community resource in which ‘locals feel they have a real
stake’ (Smith, 1999; Pennington, 1997).

Alternative representations can, however, be found of both sites. Greenhalgh et al.
(1995) note, for example, that ‘libraryness’ may represent a weakness as well as an
institutional strength. The notion of libraryness may, they remark, be ‘resilient and
self-renewing’ (p.52) but public libraries as a consequence ‘carry with them a heavy
baggage of popular perceptions, misperceptions and mythologies, which it is still
generally difficult for them to escape or dispel’ (p.139). Further examination of the
literature reveals that libraryness may indeed bring with it notions of shabbiness
(Forrest, 2001), discomfort (Raymond, 1996), inconvenience (Cunningham, 2000)
and even destitution (Glancey, 2000). The book superstore has equally been
described as soulless, harsh and overly bright (Packer, 1998), as a place lacking in
expertise (Raymond, 1996) and as a place inherently restricted in its ability to reflect community identities (Miller, 1999).

Complex and contradictory narratives of place therefore surround both the public library and the book superstore. Whilst more structured surveys of library image and atmosphere have been conducted in recent years (ASLIB, 1995; Insight, 1999) there has as yet been no equivalent study of the book superstore, nor anything in which the ‘personalities’ or ‘gestalt’ of the two sites have been compared directly by exploring traits ascribed to each. This project therefore seeks to construct a contemporary profile of the image and personality of each site based on the views of library and bookstore users. It should be noted that participants were asked to outline their image and impression of both sites, regardless of the extent to which each site was actually used by the individual respondent. Whilst, therefore, the results here presented include the views of library respondents who never use book superstores, and bookstore respondents who never use public libraries, the vast majority of those participating in the project (82%) do in fact make at least some use of both sites. The following ‘personalities’ can therefore be regarded as being largely informed by and built on some degree of personal experience of each of the two locations.

3.3 Results

3.3.1 Methods and Questions
The results presented below are based on participants’ responses to and ratings of given environmental and functional characteristics associated with each site in the literature, and on responses to open questions in which library and bookstore users were asked to describe the look and feel of the library and the superstore and to indicate the major difference between the look and feel of the two sites. Snapshot-style profiles, drawn from questionnaire responses to fourteen word-pairs (each pair being concerned with one literature-derived dimension of the library and bookstore experience) are presented graphically and are juxtaposed where appropriate with descriptions of the public library and book superstore provided by questionnaire respondents and focus group participants in their own words and terms.
Dimensions of library and bookstore experience taken from the literature are here tested by asking questionnaire respondents to indicate which word in each pair best describes the public library and book superstore. Respondents were, for example, asked to comment on the comfort of both sites by indicating whether they regarded the library and (at a different point in the questionnaire) the bookstore as ‘very’ or ‘quite’ comfortable, ‘very’ or ‘quite’ uncomfortable, or neutral in terms of comfort (see appendix A). Responses for each dimension examined were converted to numerical data enabling image profiles to be plotted as below.

### 3.3.2 Library & Bookstore Image: All Respondents

Figure 1 presents a general image profile for both the public library and the book superstore based on the combined opinions of library and bookstore questionnaire respondents. In this and in all following image profiles strong agreement with the first listed characteristic of each dimension examined (e.g. ‘uncomfortable’ in the ‘uncomfortable/comfortable’ dimension) is represented by a score of 1; strong agreement with the second listed characteristic (e.g. ‘comfortable’) is represented by a score of 5. Neutral responses are allocated a score of 3, with ‘quite’ responses assigned 2 or 4 as appropriate. The final image profile is achieved by totalling and then averaging the scores.

The general profiles charted in Figure 1 reveal that, of all the dimensions investigated, library and bookstore image are closest in terms of the extent to which each site is perceived as welcoming and helpful. The biggest differences in the images of each site relate to the extent to which they are regarded as commercial (libraries being viewed as much less commercial than the bookstore), modern and up to date (libraries being seen as less modern) and warm, light and airy (libraries again being regarded as noticeably less warm, light and airy than the bookstores). Of the characteristics to which a positive value judgement can be confidently ascribed (‘warm, light and airy’, ‘comfortable’, ‘smart and clean’, ‘welcoming and friendly’, ‘safe’, ‘helpful’, ‘convenient’ and ‘stimulating and inspiring’), bookstores are here viewed more favourably on every dimension. These results must however be treated with some caution, there being a larger number of bookstore respondents than library
respondents in the total sample and it being observed that respondents in this study tend to rate their ‘own’ site more favourably than the ‘other’ site. For this reason further analyses treat bookstore respondents and library respondents as discrete populations to be compared and contrasted.

Whilst the position of the lines on the 1-5 scale in Figure 1 may finally be questionable, the broad similarity between the shape and path of each of the two lines remains instructive. It can be concluded that the public library and the book superstore are at the very least seen as generally similar types of environment in terms of the dimensions here investigated.

3.3.3 Library & Bookstore Image: Bookstore Respondents

Figure 2 charts the image held of public libraries and book superstores by bookstore respondents. It demonstrates that, for this population, bookstores and libraries are regarded as most similar in the extent to which they are helpful and quiet places, and most distinct in terms of the extent to which they are viewed as warm, modern, comfortable, smart, stimulating, recreational, relaxed and commercial, with the bookstore being rated more highly on each of those characteristics. For each of the indisputably positive characteristics included in this study (listed above in 3.3.2) bookstore respondents rate the bookstores more highly than the libraries.

Such patterns are reflected in the descriptions of the look and feel of libraries and bookstores and statements regarding the major difference between the look and feel of the library and bookstore provided by bookstore respondents and bookstore focus group attendees, representative examples of which are presented below in Boxes 1, 2 and 3.

Further analyses reveal that individuals with the most negative perceptions of the public library are also infrequent users of the library and that, amongst the bookstore respondents, the greatest variations in opinion are found in the extent to which libraries are regarded as welcoming or intimidating, and in the extent to which the bookstore is seen as recreational or educational; mixed views are, in other words, apparent in relation to each of these two dimensions of image.
FIGURE 2. LIBRARY & BOOKSTORE IMAGE: BOOKSTORE RESPONDENTS
Box 1.

How would you describe the look and feel of book superstores? (Bookstore respondents)

- Friendly & modern
- Up to date, helpful environment
- Friendly, fresh & clean
- Modern, relaxed, spacious
- Comfortable & relaxed
- Very relaxing & accessible
- Modern, welcoming, a good place to be
- It’s one of these airy, inviting places
- Pleasant ambience; maybe a bit too bright
- Modern, lots of space, light, clean, bright
- Contemporary, stylish, relaxing, calm
- Wicked! I could live here!

Box 2.

How would you describe the look and feel of public libraries? (Bookstore respondents)

- A bit forbidding; inaccessible
- Serious, uptight, studious
- Dull, dirty, dated, dusty
- Brown, dull, tatty; fusty
- Somewhat neglected; a little tired-looking
- Useful; functional; organised
- Pleasant but formal
- Depends; some are great, others tatty
- Well meaning but shabby, restricted, parochial in the bad sense
- Cosy, comfy, peaceful, well-loved
- Old fashioned, uninspiring, boring, under-funded; stuffy
- 1950s; old & quiet
Box 3.

What would you say was the major difference between the look/feel of book superstores and public libraries? (Bookstore respondents)

- [The bookstore] is like a catalyst for a lifestyle: it fuels the imagination. Public libraries stifle, constrain, kill off imagination.
- Libraries never seem to generate any feeling of excitement - [the bookstore] does!
- [The bookstore] is more light & airy & comfortable
- Public libraries are publicly owned and are poor
- The smell of money probably
- Space; [the bookstore] feels open, light, uncluttered; public libraries feel cramped, messy
- [The bookstore]: bustling, fun lively. Libraries: subdued, respectful
- [The bookstore] hasn’t got the dowdy image of a library
- [The bookstore] has money to spend on image; libraries are outdated
- [The bookstore] is hoping to sell you something
- [The bookstore] has a friendlier atmosphere than most public libraries I have visited
- By nature [the bookstore] has to be commercially-geared
- [The bookstore] pleasanter on the whole, but in libraries the books are FREE
- Modern versus dated
- [The bookstore] feels like it’s there to help

3.3.4 Library & Bookstore Image: Library Respondents

The image held of public libraries and book superstores by library respondents is presented in Figure 3. What is perhaps most striking about this chart is the closeness of the image profiles for each site, especially when compared with the profiles held by bookstore users presented in Figure 2. Unlike bookstore users who appear to rate the sites quite differently, library respondents ‘score’ the public library and bookstore much more evenly. Closer comparison of Figures 2 and 3 reveals that whilst the bookstore line is similarly located in both charts, the ‘library line’ has shifted to the right in Figure 3, the implication thus being that library respondents are generally more positive about bookstores than bookstore respondents are about libraries. That said, it must be noted that as not all characteristics here investigated can be classified...
as inherently positive or negative a rightwards shift cannot not be wholly equated with increased enthusiasm or regard for a location.

Extracting the characteristics that can confidently be deemed positive reveals that library respondents perceive the bookstore as warmer, lighter and airier than the library and more comfortable, smart and clean than the library. Library respondents do however view the library as more welcoming, safe, helpful, convenient and stimulating although, as Figure 3 demonstrates, only marginally. Illustrative examples of descriptions of the look and feel of libraries and bookstores, and statements regarding the major difference in the look and feel of the library and bookstore provided by library questionnaire respondents and focus group attendees (descriptions and statements that again mirror the trends outlined above) are presented in Boxes 4, 5 and 6.

Further analyses of the responses of the library population as a unit reveal greatest variation of opinion in the extent to which libraries are perceived as recreational or educational and noisy or quiet. It is also noted that the responses of the library sample are generally much more varied than those provided by the bookstore respondents. A lesser degree of consensus is, in other words, apparent amongst the library respondents.

Box 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would you describe the look and feel of book superstores? (Library respondents)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Bright, interesting, friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Modern, up to date, expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Smart &amp; well laid out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A bit daunting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Overwhelming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wonderful, welcoming, stylish, attractive, stimulating &amp; atmospheric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Smells nice inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tidy &amp; shows where everything is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sales oriented; commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quite classy; tidy, bright, airy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High quality materials to ensure comfort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 5.

How would you describe the look and feel of public libraries? (Library respondents)

- Generally relaxed & friendly
- Welcoming
- A bit down-at-heel but cosy and safe (like my car)
- Lived in (not a bad thing!)
- Most feel dated, a little stuffy sometimes
- Old fashioned, municipal; institutional
- Quite dull and uninteresting
- Stimulating, easy going
- Home from home
- Usually quite imposing
- Quiet, calm, tidy, relaxed
- Comfortable; it feels like a comfortable old shoe
- Cold and uncomfortable; most need a lick of paint
- Wonderful, informative places but they are sometimes tatty and stuffy
- Inspiring
- Bland, cramped, a bit basic

Box 6.

What would you say was the major difference between the look/feel of public libraries and the book superstore? (Library respondents)

- Commercialism
- Amount of money spent on furnishings, lighting.
- Public libraries feel more institutional
- One is commercially led; the other is for the people
- Store has gone to town on interior décor - armchairs etc (decadent luxury of capitalism!)
- Libraries are quieter - less hustle and bustle
- The smell - libraries feel and smell old; [the bookstore] has a new feel.
- One is commercial, the other is not. Bookstores are healthier because their contents have not been read in someone’s loo (disgusting habit!)
- A library is more homely, more for the people
- Noise doesn’t matter in bookstores but it does in the library
- Libraries are welcoming, friendly, reliable - bookstores not
- Libraries look desperately short of money
- [The bookstore] is more stylish, but public libraries need not be too stylish
- Bookstores are more modern, more commercial, more active, fun
3.3.5 Bookstore & Library Image: Bookstore Respondents & Library Respondents

Having compared and contrasted the image of the library and bookstore within ‘sub-populations’ of this study, Figures 4 and 5 provide a graphical representation of perceptions of the bookstore and the library between populations. The charts draw together data that have previously been plotted separately and in doing so reveal clear differences in the extent to which the image of both sites is established and widely understood. Figure 4, for example, in which the image held of the library by library respondents is plotted against the image of the library held by bookstore respondents, whilst again emphasising the generally higher regard in which library respondents hold the public library, also clearly demonstrates that for both library and bookstore users the balance and relationship between the dimensions presented here is stable. The strikingly similar shapes of the two lines effectively reveals a high degree of consensus between both groups regarding the relative weights of each of the fourteen components of image offered for consideration. ‘Libraryness’ does, as Greenhalgh et al. have suggested, seem to exist and be generally understood, even if that same ‘libraryness’ is not always viewed in as positive a light as the bookstore. Figure 5 (in which the image held of the bookstore by bookstore respondents is plotted against the image held of the bookstore by library respondents) demonstrates that, whilst the bookstore environment does in many respects currently seem to be held in generally higher esteem than the library it would make less sense to talk of at this stage of ‘book superstoreness’. The fact that the lines do not mirror each other to quite the same extent as in Figure 4 suggests that bookstore image is as yet not as established as library image. The crossing lines of Figure 5 also demonstrate that the two sub-populations of this study are less polarised in their opinions of the bookstore.
FIGURE 4. LIBRARY IMAGE: BOOKSTORE & LIBRARY RESPONDENTS

- Dark, cold & stuffy/warm, light & airy
- Unfashionable & behind the times/modern & up to date
- Tatty & dirty/smart & clean
- Intimidating/welcoming
- A place in which I do not feel safe/feel safe
- Unhelpful/helpful
- Inconvenient/convenient
- Dull & boring/stimulating & inspiring
- Quiet & calm/noisy & bustling
- Educational/recreational
- Formal/relaxed
- Stylish/functional
- Non-commercial/commercial

BOOKSTORE RESPONDENTS
LIBRARY RESPONDENTS
FIGURE 5. BOOKSTORE IMAGE: BOOKSTORE & LIBRARY RESPONDENTS

- Dark, Cold & Stuffy/Warm, Light & Airy
- Unfashionable & Behind the Times/Modern & Up to Date
- Tatty & Dirty/Smart & Clean
- Intimidating/Welcoming
- A Place in Which I Do Not Feel Safe/Feel Safe
- Unhelpful/Helpful
- Inconvenient/Convenient
- Dull & Boring/Stimulating & Inspiring
- Quiet & Calm/Noisy & Bustling
- Educational/Recreational
- Formal/Relaxed
- Stylish/Functional
- Non-Commercial/Commercial

BOOKSTORE RESPONDENTS
LIBRARY RESPONDENTS

38
3.3.6 Demographically Linked Trends

As basic demographic information was provided by almost all questionnaire respondents, their ratings for each site were further analysed to explore any effects of gender, age, occupation, income and educational qualifications on the image held of the library and book superstore.

It was found that female library respondents rate libraries as significantly more comfortable, welcoming, recreational and functional than do male library respondents, and book superstores as significantly more modern, noisy and recreational than do male library respondents. Female bookstore respondents similarly regard libraries as more comfortable and recreational than male bookstore respondents and are in general more positive about the library environment although the differences here are less marked. Female bookstore respondents also perceive bookstores as more convenient than do male bookstore respondents but generally speaking a greater uniformity in the views of female and male bookstore respondents on bookstores is apparent in comparison with female and male library respondents’ views of libraries, and female and male bookstore respondents’ views on libraries (see appendix C for figures). In conclusion, therefore, female respondents here seem to rate libraries more positively than male respondents; the two gender groups rate bookstores more evenly.

More striking effects can however be seen when library and bookstore image is set against respondent age. Comparing the profiles of each site constructed by those aged between 17 to 29 and those aged over 60 reveals firstly that older library respondents view libraries as significantly smarter, more recreational, more stylish and much more commercial than do younger library respondents. Younger library respondents in turn here rate the library as significantly more welcoming, convenient and safe than do the older library respondents but also see it as more formal. Library respondents in the 17-29 age bracket view book superstores as more modern and safe than older library respondents and also as much more helpful, convenient and recreational. Older library respondents see bookstores as more welcoming, noisy and functional than do younger library respondents. Figures are provided in Appendix C.
Age analysis of this nature reveals secondly that, amongst bookstore respondents, those aged over 60 view public libraries as significantly more convenient, warm, helpful and smart than younger bookstore respondents. Older bookstore respondents also regard the library as more welcoming, safe and comfortable than younger bookstore respondents who themselves see the library as much more functional (rather than stylish) in appearance than do the older respondents. These trends are charted in Figure 6. Bookstore respondents aged over 60 view bookstores as significantly more noisy than younger bookstore respondents. Younger respondents regard book superstores as significantly more relaxed and warm, more modern, functional and smart and also as more stimulating, commercial, recreational and safe than do older bookstore respondents (see appendix C for figures).

Striking effects are also revealed when library and bookstore image is considered in conjunction with the household income of respondents. As shown in Figure 7, library respondents in the lower income brackets (up to £12,000) rate libraries as warmer and more modern, comfortable, smart, welcoming, safe, helpful, convenient and stimulating than library respondents with an income of between £12,000 and £48,000. Lower earners also regard the public library as more relaxed, functional, recreational, noisy and commercial than do those with a higher income. It was found that both income groups were largely matched in their opinions of the book superstore.

Analysis of the views of bookstore respondents in relation to income shows a very similar pattern. Figure 8 demonstrates that bookstore respondents with an income of up to £12,000 regard the library environment much more positively than do bookstore respondents with an income of £12,000-£48,000. It was also again found that income has no real effect on how bookstore respondents rate bookstores. Education and occupation appear to have little impact on library and bookstore image for any of the groups of respondents.
FIGURE 7. LIBRARY IMAGE: LIBRARY RESPONDENTS BY INCOME

DARK, COLD & STUFFY/WARM, LIGHT & AIRY
UNFASHIONABLE & BEHIND THE TIMES/MODERN & UP TO DATE
TATTY & DIRTY/SMART & CLEAN
INTIMIDATING/WELCOMING
A PLACE IN WHICH I DO NOT FEEL SAFE/FEEL SAFE
UNHELPFUL/HELPFUL
INCONVENIENT/CONVENIENT
DULL & BORING/STIMULATING & INSPIRING
QUIET & CALM/NOISY & BUSTLING
EDUCATIONAL/RECREATIONAL
FORMAL/RELAXED
STYLISH/FUNCTIONAL
NON-COMMERCIAL/COMMERCIAL

UP TO £12K - £12-48K
FIGURE 8. LIBRARY IMAGE: BOOKSTORE RESPONDENTS BY INCOME

DARK, COLD & STUFFY/WARM, LIGHT & AIRY
UNFASHIONABLE & BEHIND THE TIMES/MODERN & UP TO DATE
TATTY & DIRTY/SMART & CLEAN
INTIMIDATING/WELCOMING
A PLACE IN WHICH I DO NOT FEEL SAFE/FEEL SAFE
UNHELPFUL/HELPFUL
INCONVENIENT/CONVENIENT
DULL & BORING/STIMULATING & INSPIRING
QUIET & CALM/NOISY & BUSTLING
EDUCATIONAL/RECREATIONAL
FORMAL/RELAXED
STYLISH/FUNCTIONAL
NON-COMMERCIAL/COMMERCIAL

UP TO 12K  12-48K

43
3.4 Discussion and Summary

Although standing as a predominantly descriptive rather than discursive introduction to the meaning and image of the public library and book superstore for those participating in this study, and highlighting issues to be returned to later in more depth, this chapter does however also reveal a number of interesting and significant ‘macro trends’ which are summarised below.

The public library and book superstore have been shown, through the construction of image profiles (or ‘personalities’) for each site, to be perceived as generally similar types of environment. Closer examination of the views of the library and bookstore ‘sub-populations’ however reveals clear differences in opinion.

Whilst bookstore respondents regard both bookstores and libraries as helpful and quiet places, they rate the bookstore more highly on all of the positive environmental and functional characteristics here presented for consideration, suggesting that these individuals concur with Roberts’s (1997) assertion that the book superstore is a safe and welcoming place, and indicating that the stores are viewed by bookstore respondents as appealing and inviting. Libraries are felt by bookstore respondents to be generally less appealing than the bookstore. As previously mentioned, some disagreement with regard to the extent to which libraries are welcoming or intimidating is also apparent within this sub-population, a finding which casts some doubt on the extent to which the library can simply be viewed as a ‘uniquely accessible’ place with an ‘admirably low entry threshold’ (Greenhalgh et al., 1995:90)

A further finding of this study is that infrequent users of libraries amongst the bookstore sample regard libraries more negatively than do more frequent users of libraries, a result that echoes the 1995 ASLIB study in which it was found that occasional and non-users of public libraries held a less positive image of the library than frequent library users (ASLIB, 1995:139).
Library respondents in this project view public libraries in generally more positive terms than do book superstore respondents. Libraries are here perceived to be more welcoming, safe and helpful places than bookstores (characteristics all listed in the LIC’s (2000b) portrayal of the library). It is noticeable, however, that library respondents view book superstores more positively than bookstore respondents view libraries, and that, whilst the effect is only marginal, library respondents also regard the bookstore as warmer, smarter and cleaner, more modern and more comfortable than the public library. Whilst there is here, therefore, nothing amongst the views of library respondents to contradict the conclusion of the 1999 Insight survey that ‘libraries appear to enjoy an extremely favourable image with those who use them’ (Insight, 1999:5) evidence from this project suggests that the bookstore environment is held in largely similar esteem by them. The views of bookstore respondents, who are of course almost all users of the library as well, are (as outlined above) rather more at odds with the conclusion of the Insight survey.

Juxtaposing the profiles of each site held by the two sub-populations in this study reveals that, as previously noted, the image of the library appears to be more widely understood and agreed upon than that of the bookstore about which, as is here shown, there is currently less consensus. The image of the bookstore is however revealed to be broadly more positive than that of the public library.

Finally, a number of demographically linked trends have here been observed. It has firstly been found that female respondents appear to find public libraries more appealing than male respondents. Secondly, age analysis reveals that younger and older respondents in this study have quite different impressions of both the public library and of the book superstore. Whilst the trends are complex, evidence from this project does suggest that younger bookstore respondents in particular view libraries in a more negative light than older respondents in both groups and younger library respondents. Younger respondents in both groups generally have a more positive image of the bookstore than do older respondents. Thirdly it has been noted that library and book superstore respondents with a household income of up to £12,000 regard libraries more positively than higher earners in both sub-populations. Income was not found to influence perception of book superstores.
Both the ‘macro’ trends emphasised here and the ‘micro trends’ presented in
graphical and textual form throughout this section of the report will be returned to
and referred back to in the following chapters, each of which considers a specific
facet of the library and book superstore ‘experience’ in greater depth.
4. A Place for the Community

4.1 Introductory Remarks

This chapter examines the concept of the public library and book superstore as community space. Both sites have, as the following literature review demonstrates, been strongly characterised as a place for the community. In seeking to explore this apparent overlap in the nature and role of the two sites, this study investigates both the extent to which each place is perceived as community space and the extent to which each site actually functions as community space for those users of both types of location involved in this project.

4.2 Literature Review

It is perhaps instructive to begin this examination of library and bookstore as a community resource by briefly reconsidering the notion of public space outlined in the introduction to this report. As noted there, Carr et al. (1992) present public space as ‘an essential counterpart to the more settled places and routines of work and home life’ (p.3), it being, they suggest, the common ground in which the activities that bind a community are carried out (p.xi). The public library has been long and widely recognised as a source of such public space, and thus as inherently and inextricably linked with the idea of ‘community’; Greenhalgh et al. (1995) indeed regard the neutral public territory ‘felt to be held in common ownership’ that is for them provided by the library as one of its ‘pre-eminent values’ (p.12). Further exploration of the literature reveals that it is in fact hard to find a description of what the public library is and what it represents without also finding a reference to community or, more recently, to social inclusion. McGuigan (1996) effectively provides a useful summary of many concurring voices when he writes, ‘the British public library system, developed since the mid-nineteenth century and greatly expanded in the twentieth century … has functioned as a genuinely popular and non-commercial public space for all strata of society, ‘a living room in the city’’ (p.72). Karpf (1999)
similarly argues that libraries create a ‘sense of community’; for St Lifer (2001) one of the library’s ‘seminal roles’ is that of community center [sic]; Greenhalgh et al. (1995) see the library as ‘at the heart of community life almost everywhere’ (p.167). The community role of the public library has furthermore been strongly emphasised in recent years by the current government (cited by the LIC, 2000a) and by the LIC (2000b) as political interest in social inclusion has become more pronounced.

Interest in the idea of community is, however, as Greenhalgh et al. (1995) and Miller (1999) have both noted, not restricted to political spheres. Greenhalgh et al. identify a more general contemporary desire for informal communal and public space in the UK; Miller notes a similar trend in the US, commenting that:

in the face of social conditions that increasingly appear to foster unrootedness, competition and heterogeneity, Americans continue to express a longing for the sense of identity, shared history and common purpose that come from belonging to a communal group (p.385).

Yet, as has been noted again by Greenhalgh et al. and also by Carr (1992), contemporary hankering for community and communal space is accompanied (perhaps indeed created) by a loss of older forms of public life and space. In their place, Carr (1992) and Goss (1993) suggest, are new forms of ‘public’ space provided by retailers for the recreational shopper. Shopping areas, Goss asserts, are now widely promoted as ‘an alternative focus for modern community life’ (p.22).

The book superstore is a prime case in point. Miller (1999), writing of US book retailing notes that ‘the book industry has elaborated a conceptualization of the bookstore which regards it as not just any retail establishment, but as a vital community institution’ (p.386). This trend is not, however, restricted to the US. As noted in chapter two, Borders (UK) state that ‘being a part of the local community is a very important element of the Borders ethos’; Waterstone’s similarly attest to a ‘commitment’ to local communities and to placing the stores ‘at the heart of communities throughout the UK and Ireland’ (Kneale, in MacLehose and Kneale, 2000).

Further evidence from the literature suggests some degree of acceptance for the concept of the bookstore as community space. Roberts (1997), citing an industry spokesperson’s claim that the bookstore chains see themselves as ‘providing the community centers of the future’ writes, for example, that, in the US at least, ‘the future is now’. Robert’s description of bookstore users (‘kids, teenagers, singles, couples, moms, dads, grandparents and rebels with laptops’) is, furthermore, one that effectively presents the bookstore as an inclusive environment of apparently broad appeal. Przybys (2000) similarly comments that the bookstore is ‘another urban location that social-minded Americans have adopted as a surrogate community center’ and again provides anecdotal evidence that the book superstore is a place for all (‘a mother-son kind of place’, ‘a place to browse through a magazine while sprawled across a couch … hear a bedtime story, hold a business meeting, attend a discussion group [or] just hang out with a few friends’). Smith (1999:31) suggests that in the UK now too the book superstore is a ‘neutral venue that people treat as their own community space’, a venue that can, furthermore he remarks, ‘fill a gap’ left by the ‘last bastion of social space’, the public library, which is for Smith in a state of marked decline.

This study seeks to shed light on the actual extent to which the book superstore in the UK is perceived and is functioning as a community resource for the wider population. With interest here focused on possible impacts on the public library, the current nature of the community role of the library is also investigated.

4.3 Results

4.3.1 Methods and Questions
The results presented here are based on data gathered from questionnaire respondents. Attitudes towards the notion of the bookstore and library as a community space have been ‘captured’ and explored by asking respondents in both sites to indicate their level of agreement with the following two statements: ‘Book superstores are a place for the community’; ‘Public libraries are a place for the community’. Actual behaviour is examined using demographic information and data
regarding use patterns of each site supplied by questionnaire respondents to gain an impression of the extent to which bookstore and library spaces are in fact used by different sections of the community.

4.3.2 Attitudes

Figure 9 provides a graphical representation of the extent to which library and bookstore questionnaire respondents agree that the public library is, at least in theory, a place for the community. The high level of support for this statement amongst respondents in both groups is immediately apparent. Indeed a total of 94% of library respondents and 79% of bookstore respondents are found in this study to either agree or strongly agree that the library represents community space. Whilst bookstore respondents are here clearly less supportive of the statement than library respondents, only 12% of bookstore respondents actively disagree that the library is a place for the community.

![Figure 9. The Library: A Place for the Community?](image)

As shown in Figure 10 views on the bookstore as a place for the community (again at least in theory) are much more mixed. 36% of library respondents and 49% of bookstore respondents express some level of agreement with the concept of the bookstore as a community space, with 29% of the library group and 17% of the
bookstore group disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the notion. Respondents therefore tend to agree rather than disagree with the idea of the bookstore as a place for the community. Significant numbers of respondents in both groups do however remain neutral on this issue. Whilst demographically linked trends with regard to attitude cannot be readily identified here further analysis does reveal that twice as many men as women strongly agree that the book superstore represents a community space.

4.3.3 Behaviour
The analyses above, whilst revealing strong support for the notion of the library as a place for the community, and some support for the concept of the bookstore as community space, tell us nothing of the extent to which the whole community does in fact use each site. This is investigated here by thoroughly examining demographic information and data regarding use patterns of each site supplied by questionnaire respondents. It should be noted that although library respondents and bookstore respondents are, for the purposes of this analysis, treated as discrete groups, the vast majority of questionnaire respondents do make at least some use of both sites; only 8% of library respondents never use book superstores and only 10% of bookstore respondents never use public libraries. It should however be further noted that it has
been found in this study that library respondents in general use libraries more frequently than bookstores, and that bookstore respondents in general use bookstores more frequently than libraries. It is suggested, therefore, that whilst recognising a degree of simplification in the approach, it is here (for the purposes of gaining an impression of community use) valid to regard ‘library respondents’ and ‘bookstore respondents’ as distinct populations.

Figures 11 to 15 show the demographic characteristics of library and bookstore respondents (values do not always total 100% as a consequence of data being missing from some questionnaires). These charts demonstrate that whilst library and bookstore populations are virtually identical in educational terms, a slightly more even age and gender distribution is evident in the bookstore sample (fewer men and a smaller number of under 19s and over 70s being present in the library population). Analysis of occupation amongst each population reveals similar representation of each occupational category in each site, with the exception of the unemployed who are much more highly represented in the library sample than in the bookstore sample (17% of library respondents, as opposed to 3% of bookstore respondents being unemployed). Perhaps ultimately more striking, however, are the differences in the income characteristics of the two groups. 63% of the library population here studied have a household income of up to £17,999, with 16% earning between £18,000 and £35,999 and 9% having an income of over £36,000. The incomes of bookstore respondents are more evenly spread with 26% of this population having an income of up to £17,999, 16% earning between £18,000 and £35,999 and 26% having an income in excess of £36,000.

It is noted that 60% of library respondents and 57% of bookstore respondents were here found to be educated to degree level or equivalent (see Figure 15). Although comparable figures are not readily available for bookstore users, previous surveys of library users have indicated a greater spread in the educational qualifications of library users. It is postulated that this figure may reveal more about to whom the questionnaire appealed than it does about the educational make up of library and bookstore populations in general.
FIGURE 13. OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS BY SITE

FIGURE 14. INCOME OF RESPONDENTS BY SITE
In order to identify any current trends in the extent of library and bookstore use, all questionnaire respondents were also asked to indicate if their use of public libraries and book superstores had increased, decreased or stayed about the same over the course of the past year. It has here been found that of bookstore respondents, 54% have increased their use of the bookstore and 21% have increased their use of the library. 13% have decreased their use of the bookstore, with 26% decreasing their use of the library. A significantly higher percentage of bookstore respondents have therefore increased their use of the bookstore than have increased their use of the library. Twice as many bookstore respondents have decreased their library use than have decreased their use of book superstore.

Amongst the library population it is found that 38% of respondents have increased their use of the library, with 17% of library respondents increasing their use of bookstores. 8.3% of library respondents have decreased their use of libraries, with 27% decreasing their use of the bookstore. A significantly higher percentage of library respondents have therefore increased their use of the library than have increased their use of the bookstore, although it is noted that the increase in use of
both sites is somewhat more similar here than in the bookstore population. A much
higher percentage of library respondents have also decreased their use of the
bookstore than have decreased their use of the library, it being noted here that the
decreases in use of both sites are less similar than those charted amongst bookstore
users. Library respondents’ decrease in library use is marginally less marked than
bookstore respondents’ decrease in bookstore use.

Within the general and largely balanced picture of use of each site outlined above,
interesting demographically linked trends can be observed. The results of this study
indicate that a large proportion of respondents with incomes of up to £12,000 are
currently increasing their use of libraries. Very few individuals in this income
bracket are decreasing their use of libraries, and only a relatively small number are
increasing their use of book superstores. A large proportion of middle-income
earners are, in contrast, increasing their use of book superstores and are also
currently decreasing their use of libraries to a greater extent than any of the other
income brackets. The results of this study reveal that a large proportion of
individuals with a household income of £18,000 to £36,000 are greatly increasing
their use of the bookstore whilst a large proportion of individuals with an income of
between £12,000 and £36,000 are decreasing their use of the library (see appendix D
for figures).

Of the various employment and age groups it has been found that it is students (of all
ages) and those aged 17 to 24 who are increasing their use of bookstores most
dramatically. Unlike middle-income earners however, students and those aged
between 17 and 24 are not also largely decreasing their use of public libraries.
Library use amongst these (probably overlapping) groups is in fact increasing, but to
a lesser degree than the increase in their bookstore use (figures are again supplied in
appendix D). Educational qualifications and gender do not appear to have any
identifiable impact on increased or decreased use of either site.

---

8 Further reference was made to perceived income-related differences in the users of each site by
library respondents in answers to open questions included in the questionnaire. One library
respondent stated, for example, that ‘[the bookstore] is for people who can afford books; libraries are
for people who cannot’; another library respondent described the look and feel of the library as
‘offering hope to poor people’.

56
4.4 Discussion and Summary

A number of key conclusions regarding the contemporary meaning and function of the public library and book superstore can be drawn as a result of examining the extent to which each site is currently recognised and is serving as community space.

Overwhelming support for the notion that the public library is a place for the community is found amongst respondents in this study, a finding that, in reflecting earlier research by Totterdell and Bird (1976) and ASLIB (1995), suggests that the presence of the book superstore is not impacting upon this aspect of library image. Strength of support for the bookstore itself as community space is here found to be noticeably weaker. It is, however, interesting to note (at this early stage in the life of the superstore) the low degree of hostility amongst respondents towards the concept of a store as a place for the community.

Whilst more difficult to interpret, it is also interesting to note that significantly higher numbers of men than women strongly agree that the bookstore represents community space, especially in light of the more even gender balance in the bookstore respondents compared with the library respondents, and the earlier finding that women in general appear to view libraries more positively than men (see chapter three). In discussing this and all other demographically linked findings it should be reiterated that the demographic results of this project tell us first and foremost about the characteristics of those individuals interested in completing a questionnaire rather than the characteristics of bookstore and library users as a whole. Conclusions must therefore remain tentative. It is, however, possible to suggest that higher numbers of men may be present in the bookstore than in the library. It can, alternatively, at the very least be concluded that male bookstore users appear to be keener to express an opinion than male library users. (Lack of interest in expressing an opinion may of course be indicative of either satisfaction or disengagement). These findings can be further set against previous research which has documented that libraries are used by

---

9 In their 1976 survey of public library effectiveness Totterdell and Bird found strong support amongst all categories of respondent for the statement, ‘It would be a great loss to the community of there were no public library’ (p.93). In the 1995 ASLIB survey respondents, asked to consider functions of the public library, rated the community dimension of the service as the third most important of thirteen given roles of the library.
a marginally higher percentage of women than men (ASLIB, 1995; Insight, 1999; CIPFA PLUS Archive, 1999, cited by Bohme and Spiller, 1999) and can also be compared with the findings of surveys of book buyers in which women have repeatedly been found to be heavier book buyers than men (Mintel, 2000; England and Sumison, 1995). The results of this project may indicate that whilst women might indeed purchase more books than men, a similar percentage of men and women appear to use bookstore space. Women are in this study more ‘present’ in the library than men, either physically, or in terms of opinions expressed.

Further examination of the characteristics of those using library and bookstore space suggests that both sites are patronised by all age groups, with some peaks and troughs being apparent within this general pattern (and it being recognised that under 16s are, as a consequence of the nature of the questionnaire, likely to be under-represented in this study). Most striking here perhaps is the near absence of those aged between 17 and 19 in the library sub-population, especially when compared with the numbers of 17 to 19 year olds present in the bookstore population. Although adding in those aged between 20 and 24 reveals that a very similar percentage of 17 to 24 year olds are currently present in each site (17% of library respondents and 19% of bookstore respondents fall between these ages) it has been found that, during the last year, bookstore use has increased most dramatically amongst this age segment of the population. Bookstore respondents aged between 17 and 29 have, as has been previously noted, also been found to view the library environment in relatively negative terms (see Figure 6).

Perhaps more significant still are the differences identified in this study in the income levels of respondents in each site. It would seem that, whilst the household income of respondents does not appear to influence perception of the bookstore and library as a place for the community, it does influence the extent to which each site is actually used. Although it would be inaccurate to speak of a direct split in library and bookstore use by income (each income bracket being represented in each site) a much higher percentage of library respondents than bookstore respondents have here been found to have a household income of under £12,000. Indeed use of library space appears to fall off directly as income increases beyond £12,000. Bookstore respondents are somewhat more evenly spread in terms of their income, with use of
in-store space declining either side of a peak of £24-35,999. These results tie in with patterns here identified of changing use of the two sites. As previously noted large numbers of those earning up to £12,000 are currently increasing their use of libraries; middle-income earners are in contrast increasing their use of bookstores and also decreasing their use of public libraries.

The results of this study finally suggest therefore that although some differences seem to be apparent in the perceptions of men and women with regard to the community status of each site, and that gender and age (or, more precisely, youth) may have a bearing on use of each site, it is income that ultimately appears to most significantly influence if not attitude (i.e. the tendency of individuals to ‘buy’ the notion of each site as a community space), then certainly behaviour. Higher earners have here been found to be much more prevalent in the bookstore population than in the library population and to be increasing their use of the bookstore. Lower earners have been found to be much more prevalent in the library population than in the bookstore population and to be increasing their use of the library.

Examining the demographic characteristics of library and bookstore respondents in this way takes us part way to understanding the contemporary role of each site. To understand more fully the relationship between the public library and book superstore it is necessary to look beyond who uses each place to explore how each place is currently being used, a subject taken up in the next chapter.
5. A Place to Linger

5.1 Introductory Remarks

At the centre of any study of the impact of the book superstore environment on use and perceptions of public library space must lie a thorough consideration of in-site behaviour and the behaviours that are currently associated with each site by users and non-users alike. In this section of the report three key areas of potential behaviour-related ‘implosion’ are examined, each of which has again been drawn from the literature. The superstore and library have both been described as places in which to linger, to socialise and to ‘escape’; these broad themes are here investigated together and discussed in conjunction with related issues emerging during the course of the research.

5.2 Literature Review

‘Not so long ago’, Sanderson (2001) writes, bookshops were ‘places you visited when you wanted to buy a book’. ‘Nowadays, of course’, she goes on, ‘things are different’ (p.26). In detailing exactly how things are different Sanderson essentially identifies the three core topics of this chapter. Bookstores in the UK have, she suggests, become ‘venues where customers are encouraged to linger – to drink coffee, meet their friends, read magazines, listen to music or to an author reading’ (p.26). Sanderson is, in this assertion, just one voice amongst many. Those within the industry have described the superstore as a comfortable, pressure-free environment in which to ‘explore, read, listen and discover’10 as an ‘essential part of [customers’] lives, for education, fun and interaction with society around them’ (Smith, 1999:31). For Lee (cited by Gregory, 1998) the bookstore serves simply as ‘an oasis, a haven’.

Observers from outside book retailing have similarly noted new roles for the bookstore. Pennington (1997), writing of US trends, notes that it is ‘not unusual to see customers lying down on couches or slouched in a chair, as they would be at home’ and suggests, like Smith, that book superstores ‘provide information … entertain … help pass the time [and] provide a place to meet friends’ (p.39). For Roberts (1997) the bookstore is ‘fun [and] educational’. ‘Best of all’, she writes, ‘it costs nothing to walk through the door. No one forces you to buy so much as a cup of coffee. Unlike the past … you can sit for hours reading any book that catches your fancy’. In the UK too the superstore has been described as a place ‘to sit, browse, read magazines (supplied free in some), and socialise, imbibing caffeine and culture in roughly equal measure’ (Moss, 1998). Kreitzman (1999) adds that here the bookstore has become a social club. ‘Why not’ he goes on, ‘when we are living in an age in which all the retailing nostrums are being turned on their head’ (p.36).

This view is supported by commentators such as Goss (1993) and Lewis and Bridger (2000) who have similarly labelled shopping areas, and more specifically, book superstores, as new ‘liminal’ or ‘third places’, places which are ‘neither home nor work, neither completely private nor entirely public’ and which, they suggest, hold great appeal for the ‘New Consumer’ who has ‘only the haziest concept of the public ‘sphere’. Sites such as the bookstore, they suggest, reflect the desire of ‘new consumers’ to ‘combine consumption with socialization’ (p.121-122).

Yet again in these characterisations of the superstore we see a combination of traits that have traditionally been the preserve of the public library, a set of traits that indeed echo the very founding aims of the library service. Muddiman and Black (1993) note, for example, that one of the library’s original roles was to provide a refuge and haven for ‘spiritually drained citizens of industrial society’ from the ‘noise and hurry of urban living’ (p.18-19). Greenhalgh et al., writing in 1995, describe the library as still a ‘quiet haven in a sea of urban noise’ (p.51). For Landry (1993:7) it remains a ‘safe and comfortable haven’; for the LIC (2000b) it continues to be a ‘place of sanctuary’ (p.3). Greenhalgh (1993) notes the capacity of library

11 Lewis and Bridger (writing of US trends) argue that the desire to combine consumption with socialisation is ‘in part a reflection of our loss of public spaces in towns and cities. Not long ago there were numerous places; including the main street, union halls, market squares, gas stores and libraries, where people could meet friends, share the latest news and exchange gossip. Today many have been privatized and so removed from the public domain’ (p.121).
ambience to induce ‘a sense of time standing still’; the library itself, she suggests, remains a place ‘with a hard-to-leave atmosphere’ (p.9).

A site of recreation and education in 1850 (Snape, 1992), the library continues to be described in these terms, being characterised as both a ‘vibrant hub of community life’ (LIC, 2000a) and as a ‘street-corner university’ (Smith, cited by the LIC, 2000a); as a ‘secure risk-free social place’ and a ‘space for learning’ (LIC, 2000b). Landry (1993:6) also draws attention to the library’s ‘collective function’ in ‘providing a place for people to meet or just be together’ as well as its role as an educator but also goes on to conclude that ‘being alone [in the library] and using the library in an incidental and unharassed way’ may ultimately be its ‘key strength’ (p.11). Greenhalgh (1993) similarly asserts that the library remains essentially a ‘public private place’ (p.12).

Whilst behaviour and use of facilities in public libraries have been subject to measurement (ASLIB, 1995; Insight, 1999; Book Marketing Ltd., 1997), in-store behaviour has not been similarly assessed, nor have patterns of library and bookstore behaviour (and behaviours associated with each site) been directly compared. The actual extent of ‘implosion’ between the sites in those areas listed above therefore remains untested. This study (guided although not wholly led by the literature) therefore examines behaviours in each site in order to further illuminate the nature of the contemporary relationship between the bookstore and public library.

5.3 Results

5.3.1 Methods and Questions
Data from a wide range of sources is here drawn together to form a detailed picture of ‘in-site’ behaviour in both the bookstore and the library. The views and stated actions of questionnaire respondents are set against and considered with the views and actions of focus group participants. Opinions and behaviours are therefore both quantified to give a general overall impression of use of each site and examined in
more depth via the qualitative focus group data to gain rich insights into the attitudes and acts of library and bookstore users.

5.3.2 A Place to Linger
As an initial step towards understanding use of library and bookstore environments questionnaire respondents were asked quite simply to what extent they would agree that the library and the bookstore was ‘somewhere I like to linger’. As Figures 16 and 17 show respondents clearly view their ‘own’ site (be it the library or bookstore) as a place in which they like to linger, with views being much more mixed on lingering in the ‘other’ site. 39% of bookstore respondents disagreed that the library was a place in which they liked to linger; fewer library respondents (17%) disagreed that the bookstore was a place in which they would feel happy to linger. Further analysis reveals only one further trend of significance; of the bookstore respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed that the library was a place in which they liked to linger, 85% were found to be under 45, despite only 63% of the whole bookstore sample falling into this age category.
To enable a snapshot of actual ‘dwell time’ in each site to be taken, questionnaire respondents were also asked to indicate how long their visits to the library and bookstore usually last. The results, presented in Figure 18 and 19, reveal that, within a quite balanced overall picture of time typically spent in each location, it is noticeable that, despite 52% of library respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the bookstore is a place in which they like to linger, only a very small percentage of library respondents (4%) actually tend to stay in the bookstore for more than one hour. Similarly, although 45% of bookstore respondents agree or strongly agree that the library is a place in which they like to linger, only 14% of respondents’ visits to the library typically last for more than one hour. Average visits of more than two hours are relatively rare in each site with only 10% of library respondents normally spending this amount of time in the library and 6% of bookstore respondents generally spending this long in the bookstore.
Focus group interviews undertaken in both public libraries and bookstores shed further light on lingering and dwell time in each site. Perhaps not surprisingly, a strong link between lingering and physical comfort was found. As one bookstore user, commenting on the recently re-launched superstore, remarked,

…it’s airier – it was always very stacked before – very stacked – it was very claustrophobic. There are more public areas – it’s very wide and open. I think it’s good to have this kind of space where people can just sit down and relax – it’s a way of making you stay here longer.
Other bookstore participants similarly mentioned environmental characteristics but, as shown below, also noted the positive impact of the actual facilities provided in store. Library environments and facilities were viewed by almost all bookstore users as less conducive to lingering than bookstore environments. This does not however, as also shown below, necessarily stop bookstore respondents using library space, a finding that reflects questionnaire results regarding dwell time.

...I think the café makes a difference. A big difference. You can come here and just relax. In [name of town] we've got a newish library - it's got a seating area with a vending machine, but even that isn't, you know, it isn't the same...

...I mean, the fact that it's got loos and things like that - I mean, the public libraries don't. Well, not all of them. These things are important to those of us who are older!

...SOFAS! That's what I like. Sofas and coffee shops. I find these places and think 'aaah - coffee shop'!

...I think libraries are usually very constraining. The space is usually, not very, I mean there's plenty of space here. Libraries are usually quite crowded in. And our central library - it's too hot in there, much too hot in there. And it's pokey. But they're so constrained for funds aren't they. I still go to the library although it's not a very pleasant place to be in.

Participants of the focus groups held in libraries were generally less forthcoming about library environments than about book superstore environments. In considering the bookstore, library users referred to aspects of psychological as well as physical comfort:
[Person 1]...you can just walk all over the place [in the bookstore] and I don’t like people pressurising me. Nobody bothers you - you can spend as long as you like - and I like that.

[Person 2]...I agree with you about the lack of pressure - there’s no sales staff walking by seeing what you’re doing.

...I do like [the bookstore] because it’s so huge, and whenever I’ve got nothing to do at lunchtimes I’ll wander round and generally look on the shelves, pick books up, flick through them, no one’s bothering me even though I’m not buying.

It is further noted here that only two questionnaire respondents out of a total of 120 (one library respondent and one bookstore respondent) identified ‘pressure to buy’ in bookstores as the major difference between the look and feel of the library and the bookstore. It was commented that ‘there is no pressure to buy in public libraries’ (bookstore respondent) and that ‘public libraries don’t care if you are there to browse or not whereas sales assistants pounce on you to buy something [in the bookstore]’ (library respondent). In contrast, however, another library respondent described the bookstore as ‘open [and] welcoming to those who can’t afford to buy books but nonetheless enjoy books and browsing’.

Where library users did discuss library and bookstore environments as a group, interesting differences in both the nature of experiences in each site and the character of the visit to each site emerged. Library trips for the participants quoted below appear to be more clearly defined than visits to the bookstore. Similar views were expressed by library and bookstore questionnaire respondents, and by bookstore discussion group members; their individual comments are also given below:
[Person 1] ...I was just going to say I feel more like I can linger in the bookshops that in the library. In the library I come in and find what I want and go.

[Person 2]...Yes, it’s looking at those rows. I mean, I get cross-eyed, whereas somehow the display in bookshops is...

[Person 1]...well there’s a warmer feeling there. A cosier feeling. I mean, the white walls here and the finish - it’s not as appealing...

[Person 3]...Isn’t it interesting actually; what do you feel when you go into a bookshop - what do you feel when you go into a library. It’s a totally different ballgame.

[Person 2]...I’m going in for pleasure to [the bookstore]. I’m going in on a much more focused reason into a library.

[Person 3]...Purposeful.

[Person 2]...Yes, I’m returning a book, I’m getting out a talking book, I’m not proposing to spend a great deal of time in there because I don’t think of libraries - I suppose I’m sort of thinking old style really - whereas bookshops now have taken on a different character and so if I have a half hour I might browse round [the bookstore], go to the coffee shop.

[Person 3]...Right, kill time.

...well here you can browse and browse and browse and people don’t interfere with you. When I get to go to the library, because I like libraries as well, I think if I’ve got some time in the city centre I’ll nip in and I’ll have made some notes about some things I’ll have heard about and I’ll think ‘oh, I wonder if they’ve got this’. And I might find something that’s on my list... [Bookstore group participant]

...the times that I’ve chosen to go to the library have been when I’ve actually wanted information about something rather than just coming to have a look, so I tend to use it for functional reasons [Bookstore group participant]
...a library needs to be systematic in organisation - serendipity is great in [the bookstore]. I come [to the bookstore] for different reasons... [Bookstore respondent]

The bookstores are consciously trying to keep you here whereas with a library you feel as if you want to leave after you’ve chosen your books. It’s easier to ‘lose’ yourself in the bookstore [Library respondent]

...the library is geared at letting you find something in particular - it’s particularly useful for research [Bookstore respondent]

... I go to the library often but not to linger [Library respondent].

To further investigate in-site behaviour and, more particularly, ‘lingering’, questionnaire respondents in both types of location were asked to indicate if they ‘often’, ‘sometimes’ or ‘never’ used public libraries and book superstores to ‘sit and read or just rest’; to ‘study or work’; and to ‘find information’ (all behaviours which have been ascribed to each site in the literature). Full results are provided in Figures 20 to 25.

It is here noted that both the bookstore and library are sites in which respondents sit and read, or just rest. Bookstore respondents are somewhat more likely to sit, read or rest in the bookstore than library respondents are in the library (78% of bookstore respondents often or sometimes using the store for this purpose, against 62% of library respondents using the library for this purpose). Bookstore respondents are more likely to sit, read or rest in the library (44% doing this often or sometimes) than library users are to sit, read or rest in the bookstore (31% of library respondents indicating this use of the bookstore). Almost 60% of library respondents never sit, read or rest in the bookstore, with only approximately 40% of bookstore respondents never using the library in this way.
The comments of focus group participants largely support the quantitative findings relating to in-store reading given above. Library and bookstore users both expressed enthusiasm for sitting and reading in the bookstore. Whilst a small number of library users remarked that they didn’t sit and read in the bookstore, and one bookstore user was openly hostile to in-store reading (‘I don’t like it! I don’t like anyone to have
fingered my books before I get hold of them!), almost all participants understood that in-store reading was ‘allowed’ and regarded it positively:

...it's a great place to come. I work on the outskirts of town and I've been doing evening classes in town and it's a great place to come to read a book off the shelves or your own book with coffee between work and evening classes [Bookstore user]

...I think the comfortable chairs at [the bookstore] are wonderful. You do feel you genuinely can sit and browse whether you have any intention of buying or not [Library user]

...I think it's the way they have the sofas laid out. You're actually encouraged to flick through and read - and that feels like part of the whole experience [Bookstore user].

It is further noted that only two questionnaire respondents (one library respondent and one bookstore respondent) cited unease in handling books and other material as the major difference in the look and feel of the library and bookstore (‘feel restricted handling the stock’ (library respondent); ‘in a library I feel I can handle the books as I read them. Could not do this in a store; doesn’t feel right’ (bookstore respondent)).

In two of the three focus group interviews held with library users, discussion of reading in the bookstore led to reflections on a perceived lack of similar reading areas in the library. One participant simply stated that in his local library, ‘well, there's nowhere to sit’. In a different group library users commented that in their library:
[Person 1]...there are only those hard backed chairs...

[Person 2]...There's nowhere to plonk yourself down and spread yourself out...

[Person 3]...No, just those tables, but they're sort of the type for the man who reads the newspaper.

A less balanced picture emerges when the figures for studying and working in each site are examined, with the library clearly retaining this function for both groups of respondents. 67% of library respondents and 49% of bookstore respondents often or sometimes study or work in the library; no library respondents and 24% of bookstore respondents indicated that they often or sometimes studied or worked in the bookstore. It is here found that 75% of bookstore respondents and 81% of library respondents stated that they never study or work in the bookstore. A similar percentage of library respondents often or sometimes use the library to sit, read or rest as use the library to study or work (62% and 67% respectively); a much higher percentage of bookstore respondents use the bookstore to sit and read than use the bookstore to study or work (78% and 24% respectively).
Lack of enthusiasm for studying or working in the bookstore, here charted amongst questionnaire respondents, was echoed by ambivalence amongst some bookstore managers towards the acceptability of this behaviour. Although all managers consulted were very positive about encouraging in-store reading, only one was equally enthusiastic about in-store studying (‘Fantastic! And really we try and have as many areas as we can for people to do that’). More typical was a view that studying was acceptable only if books were not damaged. One manager remarked that the bookstore was ‘not like a library where you can do that’. He went on, however, to note that, ‘having said that with the spaces we’ve got you might think you’re allowed to. We’re not going to put signs up saying don’t do it or anything like that’.

Library and bookstore respondents also use the library more than the bookstore to find information. 92% of library respondents and 74% of bookstore respondents often or sometimes use the public library to find information. Whilst the figures for those finding information at the bookstore is lower in both groups, it is interesting to note that a similar percentage of library and bookstore respondents are currently using the bookstore for this purpose, with 68% of bookstore respondents and 63% of library respondents often or sometimes using the bookstore to find information. It is further noted that only a marginally higher percentage of bookstore users (74%) often or sometimes use the library for information as often or sometimes use the bookstore for informational purposes (68%).
5.3.3 A Place to Socialise

In order to gauge the extent to which each site is currently functioning as a social centre questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate if they ‘often’, ‘sometimes’ or ‘never’ used the library and bookstore to ‘meet friends/socialise’. Although this appears not to be a prime use of either site, as with lingering it was here found that respondents much prefer to socialise in their ‘own’ environment (i.e. the environment responded from).

This trend is shown in Figures 26 and 27. It has also been found however that, although numbers are low, library respondents are twice as likely to meet friends and socialise in the bookstore than bookstore respondents are to meet friends and socialise in the library. The bookstore therefore appears (in this study at least) to be more strongly associated with the idea of socialising than the library.
A further insight into the social dimension of each location is gleaned by closely examining responses to a question regarding attendance at events held at each site. Neither the bookstore nor the library appears at the current time to be more strongly associated with events per se. It has been found here however that, although numbers are again low and must therefore be interpreted with care, all of those often attending events at the library were here found to be over 45; 83% of those often attending events at bookstores were found to be under 34.

Focus group findings add weight to the suggestion that the bookstore is currently perceived as a more recreational and social site than the library. Although participants were not directly asked to comment on the social nature of each site interesting views
on this subject did emerge during the course of the discussions. Asked in very general terms to share experiences of using bookstores and libraries, one library user remarked:

...I love libraries. I think they’re marvellous, right? But I’m aware that I don’t use them half as much as I used to. I used to meet people in the library; I used to meet half of [name of town] down the library and now I don’t. Libraries often seem empty.

The comments of a library user in a different focus group effectively illustrate that, even where the library is serving as a vital meeting place, users still may not regard socialising as a key facet of ‘libraryness’:

...Well, like this afternoon [at the reading group] – I’m not thinking of it as a library. I’m thinking of it as a group of friends – somewhere to meet – where would we go if the library weren’t here, to read poetry?

Bookstore users appear to both recognise and value the social dimension of the bookstore:

...it’s nice to just sit around and listen to people talking about books – that’s the best thing about it.

...bookshops are having to work on establishing relationships with people – so they’ve got cafés now, and places to sit. You can relax with coffee and enjoy the atmosphere. It works as a social space.

I think the reading room [in the bookstore] a great asset. Can meet a friend here for coffee [Questionnaire respondent]

I often recommend [the bookstore] as a place to visit in the evenings (e.g. by visitors, people new to the city] as it is one of the new places in [the city] that has not been overtaken by the ‘pub culture’ [Questionnaire respondent]
Some bookstore users also appear to regard the library in quite opposite terms:

...I don’t go into libraries very often. I did as a child, but you still have this view of, like, silence - don’t make too much noise or whatever. So it’s much nicer to be somewhere where there doesn’t have to be complete silence - and other people browsing and chatting and passing comment when you pick up a book is actually quite a nice part of the whole experience.

...coming to a bookshop is a bit different from going to a library. Well, if you went to a library for a reading group you’d have to whisper all the time!

...[the bookstore] is a great place to spend time in... I read, write postcards etc, which I could do in the library but here I feel I’m on holiday and totally pleasing myself!

The extract below from one focus group interview in which bookstore users discussed the differences between library and bookstore environments further demonstrates that, for some bookstore users at least, the concept of a library reading group remains alien.

[Person 1]...well you obviously wouldn’t be talking in a library would you! it’s a totally different environment.
[Person 2]...We do! Yes, we do. I mean, I remember when I was a kid you hardly dare breathe in a library but now you can have little conversations.
[Person 1]... But not a discussion group!
[Person 2]...We do!! We have a discussion group. We go to one. We belong to one!
[Person 1]...In the middle of the library?
[Persons 2&3]...Yes!!
[Person 1]...You mean you have a separate room?
[Person 2]...No! The [branch] library’s about this big [indicating a small size]
[Person 4]...I don't think they do it in the big library, the main library though do they?

[Person 5]...I don't think they’d be so accommodating on the discussion in their library would they, that’s how I feel anyway.

[Person 1]...Well I’m sure they wouldn’t!!

One library questionnaire respondent similarly noted when describing the major difference in the look and feel of the library and bookstore that ‘noise doesn’t matter in bookstores but it does in libraries’.

A final comment from one bookstore user on her daughter’s use of the library and superstore again suggests a perceived split in site function and nature in terms of recreation and education:

...she goes to the library a lot, and that’s work. She goes for college work. But here [the bookstore] - it’s fun. You know, I think that for her that’s the difference. If you were asking a 17 year old that uses a library and a bookshop, the bookshop is fun and nice and you have a look at the books, you might buy one, you go and have a hot chocolate and sit with your mates and chat your socks off. Whereas when she goes to the library it’s solid work – she gets up in the reference section and she can use the computer and that’s the difference. And I think it’s a different atmosphere isn’t it.

5.3.3 A Place in Which to Escape

To shed light on the third element of in-site behaviour of interest in this project, questionnaire respondents were asked to what extent they agreed that the public library and book superstore was ‘somewhere I can escape to’. A break down of the results for the library and for the bookstore is provided in Figures 28 and 29. 69% of library respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the library was a place in which they could escape, with only 8% of library respondents disagreeing with
the statement. No one amongst the library sample strongly disagreed with the statement. Bookstore respondents were however less supportive. Only 38% of bookstore respondents agreed or strongly agreed the library was somewhere they could escape to; a higher percentage of bookstore respondents (42%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Reflecting patterns often seen in this study, bookstore respondents were much more supportive of the notion of the bookstore as a place in which they could escape, with 76% of bookstore respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. Library respondents were again less likely to regard the bookstore as somewhere they could escape to, with only 36% displaying some level of agreement with the statement. In contrast to the more overtly negative reaction of bookstore respondents to library space in this matter, library respondents here were more likely to be neutral than to disagree that the bookstore was a place they could escape to.
The comments of focus group participants and responses given to open questions included in the questionnaire confirmed that both the public library and book superstore are, at least for some of their users, indeed perceived as havens, emotionally restorative sites and even spiritually charged spaces. A sample of user comments is provided in Box 7.

**Box 7.**

**Somewhere I can escape to**

The Library:
My spiritual home [library respondent]
Inspiring [library respondent]
Home from home [library respondent]
Inspiring, enthusing [library respondent]
An escape from the noisy modern world [library respondent]

The Bookstore:
Place to be if in dire need to uplift mood [bookstore respondent]
A wonderful world of tranquility and calm [bookstore respondent]
Wonderful place to escape to [bookstore respondent]
Provides a haven from the bustle of a busy life [bookstore respondent]
My second home [bookstore respondent]
You can go and have a bite somewhere and then come here and just relax [bookstore respondent]
5.4 Discussion and Summary

From a complex raft of figures and thoughts relating to three broad (and related) aspects of behaviour in and associated with the library and bookstore, a number of key trends can be identified and conclusions drawn.

It has been found that both libraries and superstores are places in which their ‘own’ respondents like to linger. Opinions are more mixed on lingering in the ‘other’ site, with bookstore respondents here viewing libraries more negatively than library respondents view bookstores. A striking age effect has been identified with 85% of bookstore respondents who disagree or strongly disagree that the library is a place in which they like to linger being found to be under 45, a result which ties in with the earlier finding that younger bookstore respondents perceive the library more negatively than other respondents (see Figure 6).

Examining ‘dwell time’ in each site reveals that, despite showing some support for the notion of the bookstore as a place to linger, only very small numbers of library respondents in fact typically spend more than one hour in the bookstore. Amongst bookstore respondents it is similarly found that although almost half of bookstore respondents claim the library is a place in which they like to linger, less than 15% of bookstore respondents normally spend over one hour in the library. A certain degree of care must, however, be taken when comparing these two sets of results. Respondents may regard either site as a place in which they like to linger but may be prevented from doing so by factors beyond their control. ‘Lingering’ may for many respondents also ‘begin’ in much less than one hour. Figures on dwell time at best demonstrate general similarity in use of the two sites. Longer visits to the library are, perhaps not surprisingly, still more common than longer visits to the bookstore. It is interesting in the context of this study to note however that almost 30% of bookstore respondents typically spend more than one hour in the store, a result that suggests significant numbers of store users are indeed using the space to do something other than locate and purchase known items of stock.
Focus group interviewees in both sites were in general found to regard the bookstore environment as physically and psychologically comfortable. Some participants of library and bookstore discussion groups regarded bookstore space as more comfortable and conducive to lingering than library space, a finding reflected in the comfort ‘ratings’ ascribed to each site by questionnaire respondents. As shown in Figures 2 and 3, the bookstore was rated as more comfortable than the library by both groups of respondents. The comments of focus group participants and questionnaire respondents also suggest that, for some users at least, the library is perceived as a place for focused activity rather than for lingering, a finding that echoes the Insight survey (Insight, 1999) in which it was found that only 11% of those consulted had ‘popped in’ to the library without any clearly defined objective (p.11).

Further exploration of in-site behaviour has revealed that whilst both the bookstore and library are currently functioning as sites in which to read, bookstore respondents are more likely to ‘sit and read, or just rest’ in bookstores than library respondents are to sit and read or rest in libraries. 78% of bookstore respondents often or sometimes read in store; 22% never read in store. 62% of library respondents often or sometimes read in the library, with 38% never sitting and reading. Whilst this may be related to environmental characteristics or behavioural associations, it may more simply be a function of the fact that bookstore users can only remove books from the store once they have been paid for! It is clear, however, from questionnaire and focus group data that, for whatever reason, a strong culture of bookstore reading does exist.

Focus group evidence from library users further suggests casual reading in the library may be impeded, or perceived to be impeded by a lack of facilities. Previous research has similarly found low levels of ‘casual’ reading within the library. Whilst figures are not available for fiction reading, one recent study has found that only approximately 10% of library users read newspapers or magazines within the library (Book Marketing Ltd., 1998, cited by Bohme and Spiller, 1999). An earlier study similarly found that only 13% of those sampled had read magazines or newspapers during their visit to the library (CIPFA Plus Archive for 1997, cited by Bohme and Spiller, 1999).
A clearer picture is revealed when studying or working in each site is examined. The library retains this function for both sets of respondents, with 67% of library respondents and 49% of bookstore respondents stating they used the library sometimes or often as a place in which to study or work. Focus group data further suggests the library is strongly associated with this type of activity. These findings are in line with the results of a 1995 survey of users at one UK central library in which it was found that 54% of respondents used the library for educational and study purposes (cited by Bohme and Spiller, 1999), but also clearly suggest an increase in the extent to which the library is being used for such purposes. Whilst it can be proposed that this apparent increase is in keeping with recent government drives to emphasise the educational role of the library and its function as a ‘street-corner university’ (Smith, cited by the LIC, 2000a), it must also be recognised that those studying and working in the library may alternatively have been more predisposed to complete a questionnaire. Further research is, therefore, required to substantiate this finding.\textsuperscript{12}

It has here been found that library respondents do not use the bookstore at all as a place in which to study or work. The figures for bookstore respondents are also low. With, however, almost a quarter of bookstore respondents stating that they often or sometimes studied or worked in the bookstore it would be inaccurate to regard this behaviour as rare. Although it is only possible to speculate on this matter, it may be that in-store study is at this time held back by the policies of some superstores. There may equally be little interest in studying or working in the bookstore. Questionnaire data presented in chapter one has indicated that, although both sites are perceived as relatively quiet spaces and that differences in the perceptions of the two sites are sometimes slight, the library is consistently regarded as a quieter and calmer place than the bookstore. The library has in this project also been found to be consistently viewed by both groups of respondents as a more educational space than the bookstore, which is seen as more strongly recreational.

\textsuperscript{12} A future centred on education has also been proposed for the public library by Greenhalgh et al. They conclude their review of the UK public library by stating: ‘time and again we have drawn analogies between the very best of the Open University model and the long-standing achievement of the public library, and have consistently argued for a much closer relationship. The future is educational, education will be a life-long process … will the British public library system … be able to rise to these challenges? Or will it allow the tides of historical change to sweep over it and consign it to oblivion?’ (p. 167).
Exploring the extent to which each site is used to find information similarly reveals the key role of the library in this area. 92% of library respondents and 74% of bookstore respondents were here found to often or sometimes use the library to find information. When set against previous research this result again appears to indicate an increase in the extent to which the library is being used for informational purposes. In the 1995 survey of central library users referred to above (cited by Bohme and Spiller, 1999) it was noted that 44% of respondents said they were ‘looking for information’. It was further noted there that this figure had doubled since 1992. A 1997 survey found that 22% of library users sought information during their visits to the public library (CIPFA PLUS Archive for 1997, cited by Bohme and Spiller, 1999) whilst the 1999 Insight survey revealed that 24% of the library users consulted had come to the library in search of information (Insight, 1999).

Although these results are clearly not directly comparable to the findings of this study, they do at least provide an indication of the extent to which libraries have been used for and perceived as sites in which to find information in the recent past. The results of this project would seem to suggest a continued and rapid rise in this role of the library since 1999, with further research again being required to substantiate this. It does however, seem possible to at least confidently conclude that a significant shift has occurred since 1976 when Totterdell and Bird found that between only 1% and 2% of library users visited the library for information (p.47), and 1982 when Stoakley was able to write,

> Ask the average person in the street what a public library does and he will invariably answer that it loans books. Some will recognize that libraries also provide facilities for research and study but few will regard them as an information service (p.46).

Interestingly, it has here been found that whilst the library is most heavily used for information, the bookstore also appears to function as an information resource for many respondents. An almost equal number of bookstore respondents state that they often or sometimes use the library to find information (74%) as use the bookstore to find information (68%). Significant numbers of library respondents (63%) also appear to be using the bookstore to find information. It can, therefore, be concluded
that as Pennington (1997) and Smith (1999) have suggested, the book superstore does indeed seem to serve this purpose for many individuals.

Neither site currently appears to have a strong social function for either group of respondent. Those respondents who do socialise or meet friends in the places examined here largely choose to do so in their ‘own’ site. It has, however, been noted that, although numbers are low, library respondents are twice as likely to socialise in the bookstore as bookstore respondents are to socialise or meet friends in the library. If this result is considered in conjunction with the current project’s findings that the library is viewed by all respondents as a more educational and quiet space than the library, it is possible to suggest that the bookstore may at this time be perceived as and perhaps functioning as more of a social space than the library. It is interesting to note that where the library is serving as a meeting place, this appears for some at least to not be viewed as a true part of the library’s role. It is also interesting to note that, whilst numbers are again small, an age split has been identified between those who often attend bookstore events (who are almost exclusively under 34) and those who often attend library events (who are all over 45); it may be, therefore, that younger people are even more likely to associate the bookstore with socialising and recreation than the library.

It has finally here been found that both sites do indeed seem to represent spaces respondents feel they ‘can escape to’, with ‘own’ sites again being favoured, and with bookstore respondents again being somewhat less likely to regard the library as a place to escape to than library respondents are to regard the bookstore as a place to escape to. Demographic trends cannot here be identified; it can therefore only be concluded that the ‘haven’ function does indeed appear to be an area of overlap or ‘implosion’ between the two sites.

Evidence presented in this chapter suggests that respondents regard at least their ‘own’ site as a place in which to linger, as somewhere to sit and read and as somewhere they can escape to. Libraries have a stronger informational role for both groups, although considerable numbers of respondents from both sites do make use of the bookstore to find information. Libraries are much more heavily used as a place to study or work; bookstores appear to be somewhat more closely associated
with socialising and ‘casual use’ than are libraries amongst the individuals consulted in this study. If, therefore, there is a split (or developing split) in the function and perceived function of the two sites, it would appear to be in the area of leisure/recreation and education/information, a topic returned to in the next section of this report in which matters of stock and display are discussed.
6. Stock and Display

6.1 Introductory Remarks

Previous chapters in this report have explored the attitudes and behaviours of questionnaire respondents and focus group participants in relation to broad but still, to some extent, given aspects of the public library and book superstore experience as derived from the literature. Of equal, if not greater, importance to this project are wholly emergent issues; those raised by respondents as a consequence of simply juxtaposing the two sites and providing space for thought and consideration. Two such emergent (and related) issues, stock and display, are examined below. In contrast to previous chapters, and in accordance with the nature of the data itself and the research process, this section of the report begins not with literature but with the voices and opinions of users. These opinions and attitudes are then later discussed in relation to previous research and commentary. The results presented here, drawn from questionnaires and focus groups, are based on responses to general questions in which those taking part in the study were asked to describe the look and feel of each site, and to identify the major difference in the look and feel of the bookstore and the library as currently experienced.

6.2 Results

6.2.1 Stock

Stock is both a recurrent and complex theme in this study, frequently mentioned and frequently an area of diverse opinion; within this diversity certain trends can, however, be identified.

A small number of both bookstore and library users have here been found to be critical of the stock held by the book superstores and, in particular, of perceived recent reduction in variety of items held. One bookstore respondent noted, for example, that "choices are the same as in other stores which is uninspiring";
another remarked on a perceived shift away from a ‘policy of stocking minority interest books’. One library respondent commented that ‘they assume everyone wants the latest bestseller’ with another remarking:

...having destroyed good, small, character bookshops which depended upon giving a good, reliable service, large bookstores are now reducing their stock range.

Respondents from both sites were generally, however, found to be positive about the nature and range of the items held in the stores as the quotes from questionnaires and focus groups given below demonstrate:

...it’s the atmosphere, but it’s the choice as well. That’s a big thing.  
[Bookstore respondent]

...if I’m looking for a book that’s more obscure or unusual I tend to go to [the bookstore] - they do have a wide variety [Library respondent]

...books are up-to-date, lots of variety, modern [Bookstore respondent]

...plenty of choice [Bookstore respondent]

...one has to admire [the bookstore’s] range [Bookstore respondent]

...varied choice [Library respondent]

...an improvement on old-style bookshops, i.e. more stock [Library respondent]

...you can get whatever book; there are only some obscure educational books I haven’t been able to get [Bookstore respondent].
Views on public library stock were again found to be varied. Respondents from both sites commented positively on the range, extent and archival nature of public library stock:

...public libraries have a wealth of out-of-print works [Bookstore user]

...[libraries are] repositories of knowledge, opening up the world to everyone [Bookstore respondent]

...[libraries are] full of knowledge [Library respondent].

More frequently expressed, however, (again by respondents and focus group participants from both sites) were the views that the public library lacks up-to-date and new material and has only a limited range:

...I don’t think they’re really encouraging people to go. They say they’re supplying the demand – that people want love stories and westerns and they don’t really want anything else – so they’re supplying demand. But I mean, you’re not creating demand. [Library respondent]

...well the library, it won’t have the type of books I want to read as opposed to here. I think they keep mainly hardbacks – I suppose they last longer [Bookstore respondent]

...most [libraries] need a lick of paint and newer stock [Library respondent]

...[bookstores] have more current items to peruse [Library respondent]

...the most up-to-date books are hard to obtain [Bookstore respondent]

...the times I have been to the library to research a particular thing I find I have a better library at home [Bookstore respondent]
...libraries rarely have the current books I want to read available; were it not for that fact I would rarely go to a bookshop [Library respondent]

...books are desirable things in book superstores and old dinosaurs in libraries [Bookstore respondent]

...according to my husband all the non-fiction was printed before 1950! [Bookstore respondent]

These opinions were echoed in interactions between members of library and bookstore focus groups where discussions turned to the subject of stock:

Library focus group:
[Person 1]...Also, there’s a feeling of being at the cutting edge when you go into a bookshop...
[Person 2]... True, true
[Person 1]...Whereas libraries, they’re established aren’t they
[Person 2]... They’re not going to have the latest thing
[Person 1]... They might, but they’re not going to have quite as many as [the bookstore]
[Person 2]... No, nothing like.

Bookstore focus group:
[Person 1]... I have 2 nephews - they’re in the States - 14 and 8 - and one of their favourite outings is a Saturday morning [the bookstore]. They’re down on the floor, they can read books, they can browse, they’ll be there three, four, five hours.
[Person 2]... And that’s the function that libraries used to have - coming upon something by chance. And now they have such a small, limited selection of books. It’s sad really.
Both library and bookstore focus group participants did, however, note the library’s capacity and willingness to obtain items known to users, noting that, ‘the library, perhaps their position is that if we haven’t got it we have this network, we can get it from somewhere else for you’ [bookstore respondent]; ‘if I ever request books I always get them so I’m very impressed by that’ [library respondent]; ‘the library has actually bought books my husband wanted if they didn’t have them’ [bookstore respondent].

6.2.2 Display
Although comments on book display were made less frequently than those on stock, this was still a theme regularly mentioned by questionnaire respondents and focus group participants when describing the two sites and considering the major differences between them. As will be further explored in chapter eight it was also an issue that featured prominently when respondents were asked to state how they felt libraries and bookstores could be made more appealing to them.

It is here noted that whilst the presentation of book material in bookstores was subject to criticism by some respondents (‘those tables with the piles of books – it all adds to the confusion – it’s so untidy’ [library respondent], ‘looks cluttered’ [library respondent], ‘too many promotions – blatantly commercial’ [library respondent]); attitudes expressed towards bookstore display were, in the main, positive. Library respondents, although focusing on the subject less frequently than bookstore respondents, noted, for example, that book displays in the stores are ‘bright [and] interesting’ and ‘colourful [and] appealing’.

Bookstore respondents, more vociferous on the matters of both promotional displays and general presentation of material, commented that ‘superstores ‘market’ books much more effectively [than libraries] and encourage me to try new authors’ (this being the major difference between the look and feel of the library and superstore for this respondent), that the bookstores have ‘better’, and ‘very attractive’ displays and that they are ‘more geared to the prominent display of a selection of recommended
reads’. It was similarly noted by one respondent that the bookstore ‘inspires the person to read and look about’. Another bookstore respondent stated more bluntly that the major difference between the look and feel of the two sites was for him ‘about 50 years in the way they market themselves’. Comments were also made by bookstore respondents on ease of browsing, with one individual describing the look and feel of the bookstore as one that ‘encourages browsing’ and another remarking that the store is a ‘welcoming place to browse’. It was further noted by a participant of a bookstore focus group that books in libraries ‘don’t seem as accessible as they are here’.

Library displays (and general display of stock) were on the whole referred to much less frequently and in less positive terms than bookstore display. Indeed few positive remarks on library display were made. One library respondent cited display of books as the major difference in the look and feel of the two sites, noting that ‘libraries have old shelving and spinal storage’. Another, in describing the look and feel of the library, wrote simply, ‘unprofessionally displayed’. A library focus group participant (previously cited in chapter five) remarked that ‘looking at those rows – I mean, I get cross eyed’ and indeed only one voice in defence of library display was heard amongst focus group participants, this individual commenting that in her local library ‘they’ve got a lot of displays up – they have bestsellers on the tables – and display different types of books to encourage people to try things’.

6.3 Discussion and Summary

Both stock and display are issues that, as noted above, will be returned to in a later chapter concerned with desired improvements to each site where further data on this topic will be introduced. It can, however, be concluded here that this brief overview of these two related subjects demonstrates not only that thoughts on stock and display are engendered by juxtaposing the public library and book superstore, but also that certain strengths and weaknesses appear to be generally attributed to each
site, with, of course, a small number of individually held exceptions to these patterns being identifiable within the whole sample. It is clearly not possible to quantify the emergent and therefore more randomly expressed views examined here to the same degree as has been attempted with other aspects of this study. Weight and voracity of opinion must therefore be considered instead.

Whilst a few are critical of bookstore stock, most who commented on the subject in this study did so in positive terms, noting both the range of the stock and its up-to-date nature. Those who chose to comment on library stock in the main expressed concerns about the variety and age of the stock held (although the ability of the library to obtain requested items was well recognised and appreciated by a number of respondents in each site).

These findings are reflected in the wider library and bookstore literature on the subject. Although a certain amount of debate has taken place in recent times regarding the quality and nature of the stock of book superstores (Ezard, 2000; MacLehose & Kneale, 2000; Thorpe, 2000), most observers are enthusiastic about the volume and range of items held in the stores (Pennington, 1997; Gregory, 1998; Treneman, 1998; Jardine, 1999; Raff, 2000). Additional survey data on user opinions of bookstore stock are not, however, readily available.

Library stock has been found to be viewed critically by users in previous recent research (Insight, 1999\textsuperscript{13}) and a general decline in per capita book spend by libraries between 1987 and 1997 has indeed been clearly documented (Bohme and Spiller, 1999:5). Kinnell and Shepherd have in addition argued (as a consequence of surveying library selection policies) that ‘laudable aims of widening stock provision and encouraging more adventurous reading by users’ have not been translated into the practicalities of actual book selection (1998:35), whilst Walters (1995), in an article on the library and bookstore as reading centres, has similarly called for librarians to ‘reverse a trend which is quietly happening by default: the reduction in coverage of quality, challenging, alternative, contemporary fiction’ (p.23). Evidence

\textsuperscript{13}The 1999 Insight survey noted that ‘the greatest problem is lack of new stock. Fiction readers complain of the non-availability or long waiting times for the new titles they are anxious to borrow. Both fiction and non-fiction readers complain of a lack of interesting new titles; non-fiction readers may find some old stock is out-of-date and obsolete’ (p.7).
presented in this chapter would appear to suggest that the public library is valued as a ‘repository’ and not presently viewed as a ready source of contemporary fiction, a finding which again adds weight to the developing picture of the library being perceived as more of an information and education centre than as a site for leisure and recreation. The issue of stock will be further discussed in chapter eight.

It has here been noticeable that bookstore respondents, considering the library and the store, focused on the role of the bookstore in promoting previously unknown material and on the browser-friendly design of the stores. Those library respondents choosing to remark on library display noted certain weaknesses and, although the small numbers involved here render any talk of a ‘trend’ impossible (perhaps even unhelpful) it is interesting in the context of this project to observe that where library display was defended it was described in terms more typically associated with bookstore display techniques.

The general bookstore literature and interviews conducted here with bookstore staff do in fact reveal that an ever-increasing emphasis is being placed on book display. All bookstore managers consulted in this study remarked that display is becoming more and more important; Sanderson similarly characterises book display as ‘an increasing preoccupation for many retailers’ (2001:28). Codrescu notes a shift away from ‘severely alphabetized … books [sitting] primly on floor-to-ceiling shelves neither friendly nor gaudy’ to displays of books that ‘do their best to attract’ (1999:64) and Kinnell and Shepherd have observed that ‘one of the obvious successes of the book world lies … in the way in which the look of bookshops has changed to make stock more accessible and to let the books sell themselves’ (1998:93).

It is noted that bookshop style display techniques have been adopted in a recent reading promotion scheme developed for libraries by Branching Out. The ‘unclassified’ project is described as ‘a new approach to developing audiences for contemporary writing in main town libraries’. Face-on and table-top display is employed in a direct attempt to attract (amongst others) ‘confident readers who are frustrated by not finding what they want as easily as at Waterstone’s’, ‘People who have stopped borrowing fiction from the public library because they think it has no new books’ and ‘people who use the library for study and reference purposes but walk past the fiction shelves’. For details see http://www.branching-out.net/unclassified [accessed 5/6/01].
Alternative forms of book display have, as Kinnell and Shepherd again note, also long been used in some libraries and the positive impact of such display techniques on issue figures has been well documented (Greenhalgh et al., 1995; Kinnell and Shepherd, 1998; Phelan, 1993; Goodall, 1989). The results of this project strongly suggest, however, that effective display and promotion of new or previously unknown titles is at this time actively perceived to be a strength of the bookstore. Libraries are either not generally associated with display, or are criticised for the quality of their displays and book layout. Kinnell and Shepherd suggest that ‘most of the promotion undertaken by public libraries in recent years has been concerned with promotion of services rather than one of their basic products: books and reading’ (1998:12), an assertion that may go some way to explaining the findings of this study.

Before further examining the subjects of stock and display in the final chapter of this report, emergent issues relating to aspects of the user-friendliness of both the library and bookstore are briefly considered in chapter seven.
7. User-Friendliness

7.1 Introductory Remarks

As in chapter six, this section of the report is again concerned with emergent issues. Two areas of user opinion and comment are here brought together under a general heading of user-friendliness. Views relating to way-finding (and ‘item-finding’) and staff in both the public library and book superstore are briefly considered in turn. Results are again, in accordance with the nature of the data and research process, followed rather than preceded by the relevant literature. The findings presented below are extracted from both questionnaire responses and the transcripts of focus group interviews.

7.2 Results

7.2.1 Way-Finding

The subject of way-finding and of locating items within each site is one that has been mentioned frequently in this study by respondents from the library and bookstore, and around which a range of views are apparent within each ‘sub-population’. Respondents are, however, found (perhaps not surprisingly) to regard their ‘own’ site as more user-friendly than the ‘other’ site.

Bookstore respondents are almost unanimous in their praise for store layout and regard items as generally easy to find. Asked to describe the look and feel of the bookstore, a number of bookstore respondents focused on this aspect of the environment, commenting:

…the books are referenced very clearly and neatly

…well set-out
Bookstore focus group participants were similarly positive, with one individual noting the value of in-store access to bookstore Internet sites containing stock information:

...I quite like it as well that they’ve got the PCs around – you can just go online and do it yourself rather than having to go to the desk.

Where individual dissatisfaction with way-finding in the bookstore was expressed in focus group interviews this was greeted with surprise by the other participants, indicative in itself of a more generally held perception that stores are user-friendly in this respect:

[Person 1]...and it’s very easy to find what you want.

[Person 2]...Do you think it is? Oh I don’t! I think it’s terrible to find what you want!

[Person 1]...Do you? Oh, right. Why? Do you mean the categories?

[Person 2]...Well, the way they’ve arranged the novels. I think it’s fairly atrocious.

[Person 3]...Do you?

Library respondents were found to be much more mixed in their opinion of way-finding in the bookstore. As mentioned in chapter six, some library respondents described the store as ‘cluttered’ and ‘untidy’. Another felt the bookstore had ‘confused shelving’ and one focus group participant also recounted problems in using the store:
...I thought [the bookstore] was a little bit overwhelming. I have two specific sections – one is poetry and I'm a great reader of travel writing so I go to those sections. But there's too much. I got in the middle and sort of thought, 'I can't do with this' so I just went out. And the sections - you can't rely on them being in the same place! They move them when you're not looking.

Some library respondents were, however, satisfied with way-finding, describing the look and feel of the bookstore as ‘tidy and shows where everything is’, ‘tidier than libraries’, and ‘well laid out’.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, library respondents were more positive about layout and the ease of locating items in the library: the look and feel of libraries was described by several questionnaire respondents as, ‘well laid out’ and ‘well organised’. There were, however, a number of individuals who, in focus groups, expressed difficulty in finding items within the library:

...sometimes I do get lost trying to find some things - and having to ask a million people before you can find something

...I haven't [used the central library] for many many years. I once did but again, I'm showing my age and being old fashioned but everything's gone computerised and screens and things - and that's off-putting. I'm wrong I know but I don't want to know about it. I like to be able to go and look whereas now I think in the main library don't you have to type something on to the machine? I'd rather look for them as you used to. The main library used to have a card index - it isn't there now - I suppose you could look things up on the computer but when you don't know how you feel stupid. You can look things up if you know how to [Branch library user].
In another library focus group both the library and bookstore were noted to be difficult to use:

[Person 1]…I use [the bookstore]. It’s very large. I think some bookshops and libraries as well can be very intimidating if you don’t know exactly what you’re looking for or where you’re going. I know people who come in here [the library] who can’t find anything. I’ve been coming for years so I know where everything is but I think it’s not maybe as well laid out as it could be. It’s much easier with the computer system but knowing which floor to go on, or knowing if you’re going to find the book in language or literature - if you go up there which shelf it’s going to be on - unless you’re aware of the way they classify the books.

[Person 2]…This building has huge limitations doesn’t it.

[Person 3]…I’d been coming for years before I realised there was a general readers’ library. And it seems quite arbitrary which books are there and which are upstairs.

[Person 1]…It’s the same in bookshops. Because [the bookstore] is so enormous isn’t it - sometimes I’ve had difficulty finding things in there.

Bookstore respondents and focus group participants had similarly mixed views on the library as a space to ‘navigate’. Whilst some regarded the library as ‘organised’, others saw it as ‘a bit forbidding with all the indices and other paraphernalia’ and ‘inaccessible’ or ‘disguised’. Focus group participants further expressed difficulty with way-finding and item-finding:

…you can’t really see when you go in what they’ve actually got so like, I think I went in to borrow CDs or something, and that’s kind of like hidden right at the back. If you didn’t know it was there you couldn’t tell as you walk in.
...I think the library, for the space it has, does very, very well but I do wish they had, shall we say, were a bit more user-friendly – that there was a bit more you could do for yourself. They haven’t even got a card index – I mean, going back 40 years my local library – we had a card index that the public could use to find things.

Bookstore respondents (although not library respondents) also finally noted the impact of signage in both sites:

[Person 1]...I mean, the libraries that I use could be better at advertising what services are offered – that if the book isn’t on the shelf there is a chance of being able to ask them to get it – that type of thing.

[Person 2]...And how you do it.

[Person 1]...Exactly. Whereas here, the service about books that have gone out of print – I got one once – it was as simple as asking about a book.

[Person 3]...It hurts, doesn’t it – it hurts to think capitalism provides the service.

...I like the fact that there’s a sign at reception [in the bookstore] - it more or less says – it’s right there – it says, ‘come and ask a question’. It’s right there – you don’t have to get very far in ... if I’m having hesitation about going in somewhere, the fact that I don’t have to get very far before I can ask that question – it’s inviting. You don’t have to klutz around not knowing what you’re doing with everybody knowing that you don’t know what you’re doing!

7.2.2 Staff

A second dimension of user-friendliness, also often referred to by both library and bookstore questionnaire respondents and focus group members when considering the look and feel of each site, is that of staff. Strong and contrasting opinions were expressed on this subject, with respondents again typically being more positive about the staff in their ‘own’ site.
A number of bookstore respondents, in describing the look and feel of the bookstore, noted staff-related characteristics, terming the store ‘friendly’, ‘helpful’ and ‘professional’. It was also noted by one respondent that the bookstore had ‘casual but very efficient and helpful staff’; another remarked on the ‘feeling of American quality customer service’. More striking, however, were the staff-related comments provided by bookstore respondents when asked to state the major difference between the look and feel of the bookstore and the library, comments that are listed in Box 8 below.

Box 8.

What would you say was the major difference between the look and feel of the book superstore and the public library? [Bookstore respondents]

- I expect more of a service from a bookshop because I’m paying for it up front!
- Money, customer care, speed of response, lack of librarians
- [The bookstore is] More relaxed
- [The bookstore] is welcoming
- [The bookstore] is more modernised and customer focused
- Libraries need to lose some traditions – [the bookstore] is customer-oriented
- In public libraries more of the people (staff not included) [italics added] actually look like they’re interested in reading
- Service
- [The bookstore] feels like it’s there to help. Libraries: like you are incidental and a bit of a nuisance
- The bookstore has a friendlier atmosphere than public libraries I have visited

Only one library respondent noted staff characteristics when describing the look and feel of the bookstore (‘better motivated staff than old-style bookshops’); two library respondents were strongly critical of bookstore staff when describing the major difference between the library and bookstore:

...libraries are welcoming, helpful and reliable: [the bookstore] not.
...libraries: staff are qualified and experienced. Stores: the staff seem more interested in gossip with colleagues.

A library focus group participant similarly remarked, ‘staff in bookstores, last week they were selling shoes, or oranges or whatever - they’re not professional. It’s all much more short term. They’re not very knowledgeable about the contents of the bookshop’, a view that was echoed by one bookstore user who commented ‘I don’t think any of these big superstores really know their books; they don’t know the stock - not like they used to’. This was not, however, a view generally shared by bookstore focus group members, as the comments below indicate:

...the staff are quite helpful, if you come in and say, ‘I want a book’ they are very helpful, or you want advice, especially on something like children’s books. I’m buying for my grandsons now so I don’t know what the current favourites are, but I can give them a subject and they’ll find a book.

...I love [the bookstore] in [name of city]. I go there thinking, ‘well, I know I’ll get good advice’

Further comments relating to the helpfulness of bookstore staff were also made in bookstore and library focus groups:

[Person 1]...they’re very helpful - I must say that. Always in our experience very very helpful.

[Person 2]...very respectful to older people.

[Person 1]...And interested - they’ll look further.

[Person 2]...I think the young staff actually are very very respectful to what I call the older generation - it doesn’t matter what you ask them, they’ll go to any lengths to try and get what you want [Bookstore respondents].
...the people who work here are usually very helpful and very enthusiastic [Bookstore respondent]

...if you go and ask they’ll point you in the right direction or take you to the shelves [Library respondent].

Library respondents, as suggested above, were noticeably more positive about library staff, with ‘welcoming’ and ‘friendly’ featuring prominently in library respondents’ descriptions of the look and feel of libraries. In their descriptions of the look and feel of libraries, bookstore respondents went only as far as ‘well meaning’ and otherwise used terms such as ‘uptight’, ‘unwelcoming’, ‘unhelpful’ and ‘negative outlook’. Where the subject of library staff was raised by focus group participants mixed views were also apparent. Perhaps not unexpectedly, members of bookstore discussion groups were more openly critical of the approachability, enthusiasm and general helpfulness of library staff than were members of library discussion groups:

...you hardly dare speak to the person behind the desk, let alone anything else [Bookstore respondent]

...I think, thinking about it, the staff in the library – certainly in the two I use mainly near where I work aren’t as helpful as in here [the bookstore]

...the library [reading group] I go to - I don’t look forward to it. We’ve got to criticise the librarian, I’m afraid. She doesn’t read the book, she often sits at the table with you and she’s doing some other work and yet she’s given time to sit with us ... a lot of the local librarians seem to me to very much lack imagination and often they seem to lack a real interest in reading and books [Bookstore respondent].
Reading promotion as an aspect of the job of the librarian was also raised in another bookstore focus group. One respondent expressed a belief that library staff were not paid for running reading groups and in fact held groups in their own time, a view that went uncontested by other members of the group:

[Person 1]...Libraries could do a lot more but it comes down to resources.
[Person 2]...It does, that's it.
[Person 1]...It comes down to having the staff - there's no reason why you couldn't do author talks in libraries.
[Person 3]...Well, there's been reading groups using [the library] - it's just that it's small scale - there isn't the level of publicity about it. I suppose it relies on people giving up their time and goodwill doesn't it ... I don't think they get paid for it at the libraries.

One further and final dimension of staffing in the bookstore and library, that of morale, was raised by a member of a library discussion group:

[Person 1]...I think what I have noticed particularly here is a low morale amongst the library people. I don't think it's quite so noticeable in bookshops: if there is a low morale, I don't think it's quite so noticeable
[Person 2]...Library people have been through four years at university - it's extremely difficult to get a job in a library
[Person 1]...But they're, I've noticed that there seems to be a low morale amongst most of the staff here - because, go and ask them what they think about working here, 'what would you like to see', and I'm sure they'd all be able to tell you.
7.3 Discussion and Summary

Brought together in this chapter are views and opinions relating to user-friendliness raised by respondents when considering both the look and feel of the bookstore and the library, and the major difference in the look and feel of each site. It has been found that way-finding and staff are both subjects that significant numbers of respondents chose to focus on when asked to contemplate or describe the ‘look and feel’ of the two environments. As might be expected, neutral thoughts are here rare; clearly those individuals raising these subjects do so because they regard them as key (positive or negative) determinants of the bookstore and library atmosphere and experience. Although it is again not possible (nor perhaps desirable) to ‘quantify’ the findings presented in this section of the report in any formal way, trends can, nonetheless, be suggested as a consequence of reviewing the results as a whole.

Almost all bookstore respondents who referred to way-finding and, more particularly, ‘item-finding’, in the bookstore actively regarded this as a positive feature of the store experience. Library respondents were more mixed in their opinions of this aspect of store user-friendliness, a finding which more closely reflects the results of a Mintel survey of a randomly selected section of the UK population in which it was concluded that ‘finding your way to the right book is one of the biggest issues for book buyers, and retail designs are not helping enough’ (Mintel, 1999:200). It is possible to suggest therefore that, as library respondents have been found in this study to be generally less frequent users of the bookstore than bookstore respondents, ‘way-finding’ may (as might be expected) be a key determinant of the extent to which and frequency with which the bookstore is used. Bookstore respondents, generally less frequent users of the library than library respondents, are more overtly critical of way- and item-finding in the library than library respondents, a finding which further suggests that this dimension of user-friendliness may play a central role in determining extent and frequency of use of both sites.
Although library respondents have here been found to be more positive about way-finding and item-finding in libraries than have bookstore respondents, they are, taken as a whole, more critical of their ‘own’ site than bookstore respondents are of their ‘own’ site in this respect. It is noted here that a number of library focus group members remarked that they found it easier to locate material at branch and local libraries than at the central library. Several respondents also mentioned cataloguing systems. Some welcomed the greater self-sufficiency afforded by the availability of on-line catalogues but also identified problems with still actually locating items on the shelves, particularly for those less familiar with classification schemes. For others the on-line catalogue was a barrier to library use and was actually perceived as a loss of ‘self-sufficiency’ for the user (‘...don’t you have to type something onto the machine? I’d rather look for [books] as you used to’). These findings echo those of the Insight survey although it should be noted that those library users who here mentioned way-finding were found to be mixed in their opinions, rather than wholly negative; for some library was ‘well laid out’ and ‘well organised’.

Only one bookstore respondent stated that library ‘indices’ were off-putting, with another expressing a desire for greater such services in the library. Indeed bookstore respondents on the whole here referred more frequently to issues of poor library layout and signage than to library catalogues and classification systems, systems that, traditionally absent from bookstores, have recently been introduced into branches of some stores; further research would be required to more thoroughly investigate user reactions to this developing area of apparent ‘implosion’ between the sites.

Views on bookstore and library staff have again been found to be mixed in this study with respondents typically regarding staff in their ‘own’ site much more positively than staff in the ‘other’ site. Bookstore staff are described by bookstore respondents

---

15 The 1999 Insight survey of library users concluded: ‘most library users … have some degrees of difficulty in locating the books they want. Library classification systems are imperfectly understood; changing them causes still greater confusion’ (p.7).
16 An on-line ‘BookSearch’ facility is available in some branches of Waterstone’s. Customers can search the stock by author, title, keyword or publisher. The system indicates if the item is available in store, in a nearby branch or in any UK branch. Further classification is not added. Items not in stock can be ordered via the system. This development reflects a recommendation of the Mintel report on retail store design (Mintel, 1999) in which it was concluded, ‘if visitors to public libraries are allowed to do their own catalogue searches on computer, why should not bookshop customers be trusted to do the same?’ (p.200).
as helpful, professional and enthusiastic; a significant number of bookstore respondents also focused on staff attributes and customer service when describing the major difference between the look and feel of the bookstore and library, rating bookstore staff and service more favourably than library staff and service. Those library respondents who chose to comment on bookstore staff, whilst not numerous, were strongly critical of bookstore staff and regarded library staff as far superior in terms of reliability, helpfulness and expertise. Other library respondents described the library (and thus in effect its staff) as ‘welcoming’ and ‘friendly’. It is noticeable that bookstore respondents, more obviously critical of library staff, doubted not the expertise of library staff but commented instead on a perceived lack of enthusiasm and customer care skills. Where library respondents did note a difference between library and bookstore staff in the favour of bookstore staff, in the area of morale, a certain sympathy for library staff was also apparent.

The findings of this study are in line with the results of earlier research conducted by Insight in so far as it was found that library users were very positive about the helpfulness, approachability and ‘research skills’ of library staff (Insight, 1999:30). Frequent and occasional users of libraries were also found in the ASLIB survey to be in support of the statement that librarians were friendly and helpful (ASLIB, 1995). There is, however, a lack of previous research in which users have been asked to consider libraries and bookstores (and from which comments on staff have been gathered) or in which user opinions of bookstore staff have been examined and against which the results presented above can be set. It can here simply be noted, therefore, that bookstore respondents choosing to comment on staff (found here of course to also be sometime users of public libraries) appear to view library staff less favourably than bookstore staff when the sites are juxtaposed, particularly in terms of enthusiasm and customer care; the smaller number of library respondents here choosing to remark on bookstore staff (sometime bookstore users) seem particularly doubtful of the expertise of store staff. Further and more systematic research is again clearly required to further investigate these possible trends in user opinion. It is however noted here that relative skill levels in bookstores and libraries have received some attention in the literature (Worpole noting in 1993 a relative re-skilling of the bookshop and de-skilling of the library in terms of educational qualifications of staff).
and knowledge of fiction) as have levels of enthusiasm for and interest in books and reading amongst library and bookstore staff (Kinnell and Shepherd, 1998).

Staffing in both the library and bookstore will be given further consideration in the following and final results chapter in which a broad range of issues relating to impact and future developments in each site are explored.
8. Desired Futures

8.1 Introductory Remarks

Having examined individual facets of the public library and bookstore experience in the preceding chapters of this report, those facets and the two sites themselves are here pulled together in an exploration of user-desired future developments in each site, and of responses to overt ‘juxtaposition’ of the store and library. In order to further investigate any impact of the book superstore on use, perceptions and expectations of the library, questionnaire respondents and focus group participants were asked to state how both the library and bookstore could be made more appealing to them, such views effectively being a potentially rich source of data on ‘implosion’ and the extent to which ‘implosion’ may be desired. Questionnaire respondents were also asked to state if they felt the library and superstore should look and feel different from one another, the answers to which shed further light on perceptions of each site and which can be interestingly set against those regarding desired change in each location. Responses to both sets of questions are outlined below and are then summarised and discussed with reference to earlier cited findings and the remarks of library and bookstore staff consulted during the course of this study.

8.2 Results & Discussion

8.2.1 Desired Changes

A More Appealing Book Superstore

In considering desired changes to the book superstore attention is firstly given to the views of bookstore respondents (found in this study to be generally more frequent users of the bookstore than are library respondents) before then examining changes suggested by library respondents.
Although a number of bookstore respondents here focused on financial aspects of the store experience, with 7% of respondents identifying lower prices and better offers as the factors that would for them make the bookstore more appealing, the vast majority of respondents referred instead to elements of store ambience, facilities and service. 7% of respondents desired a quieter store; 15% of respondents expressed a wish for more comfortable seating and reading space; 5% mentioned improvements to and expansion of café facilities; 5% requested a larger book stock and 2% wished to see a greater variety in the stock held. 10% of respondents referred to staffing (5 individuals wished to see more staff; 2 wished to see friendlier staff) and 7% desired more events and activities. 13% of respondents stated that no changes at all were required. A sample of user comments is provided in Box 9.

Box 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would make the book superstore more appealing to you? (Bookstore respondents)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Better offers on books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Even less noise!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Elimination of obtrusive music in any section (but then I am an old music lover!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More chairs &amp; tables &amp; sofas around the store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More comfortable areas to read, quiet room, cosier café</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More leather seats for greater comfort, stationery and pens to jot down reminders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Go back to squishy armchairs and more of ‘em!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More stock, more sofas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More book recommendations attached to display books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Friendlier staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More children’s events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More lunchtime events and free events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Doesn’t need anything changing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It’s fine as it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nothing; changes likely to detract</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Library respondents were much more likely than bookstore respondents to indicate a desire for cheaper books and lower prices with 21% of this population referring to finances. Significant numbers of respondents did still however refer to in-store facilities, with 17% of respondents requesting more seating and 8% expressing a wish for improved way-finding. 4% of respondents mentioned improvements in stock, and 4% identified a need for friendlier and more helpful members of staff. 10% of library respondents answered that nothing would make the store more appealing. A sample of comments is again provided in Box 10. Suggestions made by only one or two respondents are also represented to reflect the greater heterogeneity of opinion apparent amongst library respondents.

**Box 10.**

| What would make the book superstore more appealing to you? (Library respondents) |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| • Cheaper books   | • Book prices    | • Cheaper prices  | • If books weren’t so expensive | • More seating   | • More seating facilities | • Places to sit down |
| • Access to a computer showing 1) location of books in stock, 2) books in print | • Bookfinders that customers can use themselves | • Friendly and helpful staff | • Nothing in particular | • Ability to borrow books, magazines etc, rather like a library | • A sign ‘browsers welcome’, ‘inspection copies’, ‘students sit, read, rest, write’; ‘budding poets corner’; ‘use our seats, paper, pens’ | • Display copies of books to flick through |

111
A More Appealing Library

In examining user opinions on the changes that might for them render the library a more appealing place, the views of library respondents (generally more frequent users of the library than the bookstore respondents in this study) are explored before then considering those of bookstore respondents.

The two most frequently mentioned areas for improvement or change in the library amongst library respondents were stock and seating. 25% of library respondents stated that a greater availability and number of up-to-date books would make the library more appealing to them with further analysis revealing that 92% of those for whom this was an area of desired change were female. A desire for comfortable seating areas (or greater availability of comfortable seating areas), particularly in lending sections of libraries, was expressed by 17% of library respondents. Between 5% and 10% of library respondents wished to see improvements to display, café and toilet facilities, opening hours, lighting and ‘item-finding’. 6% of library respondents felt that there was nothing that would make the library more appealing to them. As before a sample of user comments is provided in Box 11.

---

**Box 11. What would make the public library more appealing to you? (Library respondents)**

- More modern books
- Newer books
- More copies of recent releases
- More stock on popular titles
- More recent book titles
- More comfortable seats
- More seating, including in lending areas, not just reference sections
- Seats in lending library
- More casual seating - sofas, comfy chairs
- A CAFÉ!!! Or a coffee machine and lots of sofas.
- Maybe a coffee bar or more events
- If there was a better café that stayed open later
- I would love to see the library open later
- Longer opening hours, more modern books, more comfortable seating
- Better displays
- More displays of covers, not spines
- Lighter and bright
- Easier to find things on your own
- Easier cataloguing/classification of non-fiction
- Nothing, they’re fine as they are
Bookstore respondents similarly identified stock as a key area for improvement in the library with 29% of bookstore respondents stating that more up-to-date stock and greater variation of stock would make the library more appealing to them. A wish for more extensive café facilities in libraries was expressed by 17% of bookstore respondents, with 15% of bookstore respondents perceiving a need for more approachable and friendly staff. Approximately 10% of bookstore respondents expressed a desire to see improved lighting, extended opening hours, greater availability of comfortable seating, and signage and catalogues to ease item- and way-finding. 3% of bookstore respondents stated that nothing was required to render the library more appealing to them. Once again a sample of user suggestions are given in Box 12.

**Box 12.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would make the public library more appealing to you? (Bookstore respondents)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• More up-to-date books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More up-to-date literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More new books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Better selection of books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A better range of books would certainly attract me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Faster access to newer books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A higher proportion of up-to-date books in non-fiction areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Better opening hours, facilities (e.g. coffee), more space, better choice of books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coffee shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sofas, coffee, helpful staff, an idiot's guide to finding what you want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Café</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Less officious staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More enthusiastic staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More helpful staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Friendlier assistants &amp; better signage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More evening opening, coffee bar, more new books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comfy chairs, better opening hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comfier chairs, greater investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More self-help facilities, e.g. catalogues, where to find subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• [Bookstore] strategy has worked well; light/airy, coffee bar helps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Discussion**

Although many of the percentages listed above in relation to desired change in the store and library appear low, it should be noted that, in contrast to other studies in which improvements and change to the public library and bookstore have been examined (Book Marketing Ltd, 1997; Mintel, 1999) respondents were here not asked to select from a given list of options but were simply presented with an open-ended question; pre-judgement of the significant issues was thus avoided, with the inevitable consequence that greater variation in answers was apparent. That recognised, it is striking that such a recurrence of themes (as indicated above) was evident amongst this population of bookstore and library respondents. Clearly, areas for improvement to each site suggested by respondents towards the end of a questionnaire regarding the bookstore and the library experience are likely to be different to those that might be identified by respondents in a randomly selected sample, or in a broader study of desired change to either site; as this study is, however, concerned with the direct interplay of these two sites it is suggested that the results do reveal interesting trends, at least for this group of users.

Satisfaction with the bookstore has here been found to be noticeably higher than satisfaction with the library amongst bookstore respondents and marginally higher than satisfaction with the library amongst library respondents. Whilst it can be suggested that this finding may be indicative of a greater and more widely felt sense of ownership and control of the library service, it is still notable that 27% of all respondents actually specified that change was not required in the bookstore or that nothing would make the bookstore more appealing to them. (Those respondents for whom ‘nothing’ meant ‘nothing at all could make this site appealing to me’ have, of course, been treated separately and are not included in this statistic).

It is also striking that many bookstore respondents identified elements of the store environment when suggesting areas for change and improvement, a finding which may further suggest that the bookstore does serve as a ‘destination’ for those individuals and is not simply a site for purchase. Whilst 24% of bookstore respondents mentioned either prices, staff and stock (traits perhaps more associated with purchasing), 34% referred instead to either noise levels, seating, café facilities
or events. Library respondents, in contrast, appear to be more concerned to see improvements to purchase-related aspects of the store.\textsuperscript{17}

Although difficult to interpret due to low numbers it is interesting to note that 7\% of bookstore respondents wished for a quieter store (a traditional trait of libraryness?); this aspect of the store environment was not mentioned at all by library respondents. Demand for in-store seating is also apparent amongst bookstore respondents (15\% of those respondents raising this issue), and amongst library respondents (17\% specifying a need for more in-store seating), a finding which may be indicative of a general acceptance and enjoyment of reading, or at least ‘lingering’, in the bookstore. A 1999 survey by Mintel similarly found that 19\% of respondents selected the incorporation of seating areas as a change they would like to see in the bookstore (Mintel, 1999).

A smaller percentage of bookstore respondents (10\%) identified comfortable seating as something they would like to see more of in the library (library lending areas perhaps not being as widely perceived as places in which to linger amongst this sub-population) whilst an equal number of library respondents wished to see greater availability of comfortable seating in the library as in the bookstore (a finding which reflects earlier cited comments from library users regarding a perceived lack of comfortable seating in the library).

Care must of course be taken when talking of ‘impact’ (bookstores clearly not having a monopoly on the sofa, and ‘easy chairs’ long being a feature of some libraries); however, with comfortable seating not even given as an option in previous studies of desired improvements to libraries here examined (ASLIB, 1995; Book Marketing Ltd., 1997), (indicative perhaps of a perception that such facilities were not desired in libraries at all) and the sofa and armchair being defining characteristics of the book superstore, it is possible to suggest that the bookstore may be contributing to a growing demand for readily available comfortable social space in which reading and lingering is promoted. (It may equally be, of course, that demand may have pre-

\textsuperscript{17} Library respondents were found to be more likely to refer to traits associated with purchase than with store environment; a total of 39\% noted either lower prices, way-finding, stock and staff; only 17\% noted in-store seating. Other aspects of store environment and activities were not referred to.
dated the arrival of the book superstore and was simply not measured). Whilst concerns regarding the management of such a space have been expressed frequently amongst librarians during this study, the one library in this study that was found to have added leather sofas to their contemporary fiction area (referred to by the librarian as ‘a browsy, comfy area’, ‘the Waterstone’s of [the city] library’) did not report any particular problems resulting from the provision of such a space.

Café facilities similarly feature prominently in library improvements suggested by library respondents and, more particularly, by bookstore respondents taking part in this study. Whilst care is also required here when discussing ‘impact’ (café or refreshment facilities again long being present in some libraries) the book superstore is again, perhaps unlike the public library at this time, strongly associated with café facilities; the results of this study suggest that significant demand for greater such facilities in libraries is currently present amongst respondents, demand that may indeed be currently being created or increased by bookstore café culture and facilities. It is further noted that a number of respondents have in this study specifically referred to the appeal of refreshment and café facilities being located in close proximity to books, a feature again typical of the bookstore.

Growing demand for refreshment facilities in US libraries has been recently identified by MacLeod who in 1998 remarked, ‘I feel confident in predicting that, by the year 2010, every public library in the world will have a coffee bar’. Considering why libraries should ‘bother’ with the coffee bar, MacLeod observes, ‘it’s a great service. People enjoy it. It gives them another reason to spend time in the library … coffee bars in libraries are helping to create a different sense of place’ (p.97). Coffman (1998) and Raymond (1998) have more directly expressed their belief the public library can in this respect learn from the bookstore. Commentators such as Trelease (2000) have gone further:

…granted, it’s taken half a millennium, but finally someone (the merchant) is publicly conceding our dirty little secret: we humans like to sit comfortably – even slouch – when we read and we love to nibble and sip while we slouch and read.

Trelease asks if librarians and educators are watching; Snape (1992), in a historical review of the recreational and leisure tradition of the public library similarly suggests that, in an era in which a professional image based on information management has
been promoted, public libraries might now ‘gain rather than lose by exploiting more fully their leisure potential’ (p.197). Evidence from this study suggests that there may indeed be user demand for more leisure-related spaces within the library.

Although way-finding in the bookstore is regarded as an area for improvement by library respondents, staffing in the library seen as an area for improvement by bookstore respondents and opening hours and lighting mentioned by a number of respondents from both sites as elements of the library requiring change, a final and most notable finding here is that relating to library stock. 25% of library respondents and 29% of bookstore respondents stated that more up-to-date stock would make the library more appealing to them. Whilst it is true that this statistic has arisen from a study in which the book superstore and library are compared directly, and that previously cited evidence suggests that the bookstore appears to be regarded as a more ready source of contemporary fiction than the library, it is hard to here link the existence of the superstore with this result in any conclusive way. Indeed demand for a greater range of books in libraries was identified amongst 19% of library users in a survey pre-dating the arrival of the superstore; demand for more ‘up-to-date’ stock was unfortunately not measured (Book Marketing Ltd., 1997). It can simply be postulated therefore that the nature of bookstore stock may at this time be contributing to an apparently developing image of library stock as being rather narrow and out-dated18.

8.2.2 Desired Implosion?

As a final step in this exploration of the current meaning and image of the book superstore and public library (and ultimately of the relationship between the two sites) consideration is given to the responses of users to the question, ‘Should public libraries and book superstores look and feel different from each other?’ Attitudes and behaviours relating to certain distinct facets of the library and bookstore experience have in the rest of this study been used to piece together a contemporary

---

18 It is here noted that Greenhalgh et al. remarked in 1995 (before the arrival of the superstore in the UK) that the ‘quality’ chain bookshops had then ‘espoused the cause of modern literary fiction with a vengeance, making the public library look even more behind the times than ever’ (p.82). Whilst it may be assumed that the superstores have similarly continued to promote contemporary fiction, views relating specifically to the impact of superstore stock on the image of public library stock are not readily available.
picture of both sites; that picture is here added to by drawing the two sites closely together and investigating user reactions to this ‘verbal implosion’.

Reactions to this statement can in fact be easily summarised, most falling clearly into one of two camps. 45% of bookstore respondents felt that libraries and bookstores should look and feel different to one another; 37% of bookstore respondents felt they should look and feel the same. Library respondents were less supportive of ‘implosion’ with 54% clearly stating that the two sites should look and feel different, and 23% stating that they should look the same. What this quantification of responses hides, however, is a further rich source of interesting and important data regarding the image and meaning of each site. Befitting the nature of this study, it ends therefore with the voices and ‘stories’ of respondents in a brief exploration of their explanations as to why the library and bookstore should look and feel different or the same. In these explanations themes touched upon throughout the study are brought sharply into focus.

**The Views of Bookstore Respondents**

Attention is firstly given here to the thoughts of those bookstore respondents who felt the library and bookstore should look and feel different from each other. A number of core beliefs regarding each site are revealed in the responses offered by these individuals. Most noticeable perhaps is the belief that the library and bookstore should look and feel different because one is concerned with education and information, the other more with recreation and relaxation:

...Yes, of course. Public libraries are meant for serious work. [the bookstore] is a place to hang out, relax, browse subjects and shelves

...Yes. Bookstores are to browse, libraries are to research

...Yes, bookstores are visited for recreation and to purchase educational material whereas one spends time in libraries referring to material and studying and gaining information about local events.
Reference to the educational and informational role of the library or recreational role of the bookstore was also made in a number of additional responses although here other characterisations of each site were also sometimes introduced:

...Yes. Shops sell, libraries educate and inform

...Yes - library for reference and study, [the bookstore] to purchase

...Yes, [the bookstore] is more for personal reading (recreation)

...I suppose libraries should feel more staid, as I feel they are more about learning than bookshops which seem to me to be more about throwaway, consumerist information consumption

...Bookshops should be more relaxed

...Public libraries should focus on reference material and local information of public service nature, not commercial aspects as appropriate for book superstores.

A number of bookstore respondents further noted a need for the library to be quieter than the bookstore (‘Yes, libraries are places of quiet’; ‘I think it is important that libraries are quiet places (for respite etc)’).

Other respondents who stated the library and bookstore should look and feel different focused instead on aspects of community and commerciality:

...Yes, they have different objectives - one to sell books - the other to provide a community service
...Yes, [the bookstore] is trying to sell books; libraries are to provide a public service and should spend money primarily on books rather than accoutrements

...Yes, one is a business, the other a public service

whilst others finally stated that the library and bookstore should remain different in their look and feel because they serve different people:

...Yes, they are different in their market

...Yes, [the bookstore] sells books and libraries lend them - libraries fulfil a need for the people in the community who can't afford books

...Yes, for different people's tastes.

Of the bookstore respondents who answered ‘no’ to the question of whether or not the library and bookstore should look and feel different, many of those who explained why they felt this way stated that both sites should have the same basic aims of promoting books and reading:

...No - both should make you want to read

...No, both should aim to make books exciting and appealing

...Not necessarily. We need to encourage book reading

...No. Book experiences should be fun no matter where.
Others more generally viewed bookstore ambience as successful and appealing and expressed a desire to see a similar atmosphere in the public library:

...No. It would be wonderful if libraries could be sufficiently well-funded to ‘feel’ like a [book superstore].

...No, [the bookstore’s] strategy has worked well.

...No, public libraries should be more like book superstores in terms of atmosphere, comfy chairs, open lots!

...No. Everyone should aspire to the same high standards. As it is, [the bookstore] is probably providing the service a modern library should provide for everyone who can’t afford to buy books.

...No, I’m a socialist, champagne socialist I’ll admit, but I want champagne for everyone. Kruger, to be exact.

...No! Libraries supposedly for the ‘public’ but out of tune with public’s changing needs. Better with children’s section – why not adults?

The Views of Library Respondents
A higher percentage of library respondents than bookstore respondents felt that the library and bookstore should look and feel different from each other. Although a few library respondents here referred to perceived educational/informational and recreational differences between the sites (‘I look to the library for information, reference books etc’; ‘Libraries are better for reference/study’; ‘Libraries are mainly for information’; ‘Library is for research’), more emphasised the commerciality of the bookstore, a trait not wished for in the library nor here associated with the library service:
...Yes. The one is a place with commercial aims, the other has social and educational priorities.

...Yes, they have two mainly different functions – library is **ours** to serve a community, bookshop is **theirs** to make a profit.

...Yes. The public library belongs to all of us and should serve our needs. [The bookstore] has to make a profit.

...Yes, different. Libraries should never sell things.

...Yes, a library is a public amenity, the other a commercial enterprise solely for profit.

...Yes, it is inevitable, because books tend to be borrowed by people who can’t afford to buy from bookshops. Libraries don’t need to be commercial; bookstores can’t afford not to be.

Other library respondents referred more overtly to issues of accessibility, stating that the library and bookstore should look and feel different because ‘libraries are the universities we can all visit’, and because ‘a library is where everyone can get hold of a book’. As seen amongst bookstore respondents, a small number of library respondents also felt the two sites should look and feel different as they served different populations: ‘they’re used by and aimed at different customers’. Further comments included references to function (‘libraries are for trying new things’; ‘libraries should offer basic services and cover areas of low popularity and areas not having commercial coverage’) and atmosphere (‘libraries should be more relaxed’; ‘libraries should be more welcoming and inviting’).
The fewer respondents who stated that the library and bookstore should not look and feel different emphasised a number of different issues in their explanations. Some again suggested that the two sites had similar aims and should therefore not be different (‘No, both have the same goal: to sell reading’; ‘No, because they both have a purpose: encourage love of books and other forms of information’; ‘Given that the books should be the most important things then probably not’); another respondent suggested both sites have a similar nature (‘Not necessarily – both are businesses aimed to serve the public’). A number of other more general ‘no’ responses were given:

...The function of the two is different (one is commercial, the other is a service) but I don’t see why they should look and feel different

...No, not really. It’s what works that counts

...No. Libraries and bookstores should be equally stylish and modern

...I don’t think there is any reason why they should have to. Libraries seem to suffer from under-funding and as they are not trying to make a profit don’t seem as concerned with their image or atmosphere.

Discussion
As demonstrated by the user comments above, a wide range of views on many aspects of the library and bookstore ‘experience’ and on the meaning of the library and bookstore have here been accessed by this single question regarding the look and feel of each site. ‘Juxtaposing’ the sites in this way has produced data that both support and add to earlier cited findings of this study. Looking beyond the statistic described here that clearly indicates that more respondents in this study believe that the library and bookstore should look and feel different to each other than believe that the library and bookstore should look and feel the same, reveals again that respondents in both sites perceive there to be an educational/recreational split
between the library and the bookstore (for further supporting data on this subject see, for example, Figures 2 and 3). When, however, this result is compared with that cited in 8.2.1 regarding the introduction of seating and café facilities into libraries it becomes less easy to conclude confidently that users desire a library centred around education and information; it may be that a more educative and informational space is simply perceived or expected. Focus group evidence from this study further suggests that more extensive refreshment and comfortable seating facilities may indeed be desired by library users but may also not necessarily be something that is immediately thought of in association with the library. In a number of discussions held during the course of this study participants in both sites at times responded with both surprise and pleasure when conversation turned to the notion of the library sofa or coffee bar. Indeed one library user who remarked that a library sofa would not be desirable (‘no, no, I don’t really think so’) then added, ‘I’d be there all day’.

Further research is clearly required to more thoroughly examine this possible tension between user expectations and desires.

Evidence has also been found here that the book superstore and the library are both viewed as having a potentially important role to play in reader development and book promotion by a number of respondents in both sites. The bookstore has, as previously outlined, been found here to be particularly associated with effective display and promotion of material at the present time (see 6.2.2). It is also noted that, although not widely expressed, a number of respondents asserted a belief that the library and bookstore are for ‘different types of people’; some library and bookstore respondents specified that libraries were for low income groups, a finding that links in with the income-related patterns of use and changes in use of each site detailed in 4.3. More strongly asserted however, particularly by library respondents, was that the library was ‘for all’, a result that reflects the findings of other questions in this study relating to the perceived community role of the library (see 4.3). Library respondents also made many references to the non-commercial nature of the library, an aspect not so frequently mentioned by bookstore respondents. Interestingly, however, library respondents were, earlier in this study, found to regard the library as significantly more commercial than did bookstore respondents when the sites were presented separately (see Figure 4). It may be, therefore, that the
library is ‘defended’ as non-commercial, but perhaps not so rigidly viewed as wholly non-commercial in different, less specific contexts.

8.3 Summary

This chapter has examined user-desired futures for the public library and book superstore. It has been found that whilst library respondents appear to be concerned to see purchase-related changes at the bookstore, bookstore respondents express greater interest in changes relating to store environment. Both groups, however, wish to see greater provision of in-store seating; library respondents in particular also wish to see greater provision of comfortable seating in the library. Library and bookstore respondents further state that café facilities and stock that is more up-to-date would render the library more appealing to them. It is suggested that, although it is very difficult to speak conclusively of ‘impact’, the presence and image of the superstore may be contributing to a growing desire for more extensive library seating and café facilities; it may also be contributing to an seemingly growing perception that library stock is narrow or dated.

Exploring user responses to the question of whether or not the public library and book superstore should look and feel different from each other reveals that most respondents here state that the sites should be distinct. It further reveals additional supporting data relating to a previously seen educational/recreational split between the image of the two sites, and to perceptions of whom each site is believed to be ‘for’. Whilst more respondents assert the community nature of the library, some respondents from both groups do also express a belief that the library is primarily for those who cannot afford to buy books. It is also found that a number of respondents in both groups regard the library and the bookstore as having a key role to play in reading and book promotion.

As a result of referring back to previously cited data on similar subjects it is finally suggested that certain inconsistencies between the two sets of data presented in this chapter may indicate that user desires for future developments are influenced by
current expectations, and that the close juxtaposition of the library and bookstore in this question may in effect engender different reactions from those reactions seen earlier in the study where the same subjects were examined in a broader context.

Having looked forward to ‘desired futures’, attention is now, in the next and final chapter of this report, turned back to review and summarise the findings of the study.
9. Conclusions

9.1 Key Findings

This study has sought to explore the impact of ‘in-store’ changes that have recently occurred in book retailing on use, perceptions and expectations of the public library in the UK. It has in effect sought to begin to understand whether or not change may be ‘in store’ for the public library as a consequence of the development and spread of the book superstore. As demonstrated throughout this report, direct parallels between the book superstore and the public library have been drawn repeatedly in the literature; numerous further areas of apparent overlap in the role and function of the two sites can also be readily identified. This study adds research-based evidence to those existing ‘sound bites’; the attitudes and behaviour of those currently using each site have been explored in order to determine the extent to which ‘implosion’ or even transfer of role and function between the sites may be real or desired by users ‘on the ground’.

It has been found by the examination of user-constructed image profiles for each site that the book superstore and the public library are judged (at least by the criteria presented in this study) to be generally similar types of environment. It has also been found that whilst the library currently has a more widely recognised and stable image than the book superstore amongst both library and bookstore respondents, library respondents hold a noticeably more positive image of the library environment than do bookstore respondents. For library and bookstore respondents the bookstore has a similarly positive image although, as might be expected, bookstore respondents view the bookstore in marginally more favourable terms than do library respondents. The images held of the library and bookstore environment by library respondents have been shown to be similarly positive; the images held of the library and bookstore environment by bookstore respondents are more distinct with the library being viewed in a significantly less positive light than the bookstore.
Female respondents and respondents with a household income of up to £12,000 have been found to regard the library in more positive terms than male respondents and those with a higher household income. Younger respondents have been found to hold a more positive image of the bookstore than older respondents. Younger bookstore respondents have also been shown to have a noticeably negative view of the library environment.

The library is widely and strongly regarded as a place for the community. Support for the bookstore as a community space is less marked; respondents are, however, neutral rather than hostile to the concept of the store as a community resource. Male respondents have been found to be twice as likely as female respondents to agree that the bookstore is a place for the community. Examining the demographic profiles of those individuals responding from each site in order to determine the extent to which each location is currently functioning as space ‘for all’ suggests that male respondents and those aged between 17-19 are more ‘present’ in the bookstore than in the library (either actually or in the extent to which these groups express an opinion regarding each site). Low-income earners have been found to be much more ‘present’ in the library than in the bookstore. It has also been found that those aged between 17 and 29 are the age group who have most significantly increased their use of the bookstore during the last year; individuals in this age bracket are also increasing their use of the library but to a lesser degree.

Stronger trends in change in use of each site over the last year are apparent amongst the different income groups. Those with a lower household income are currently increasing their use of the library and only slightly increasing their use of the bookstore. Middle-income earners are currently decreasing their use of the library and increasing their use of the bookstore. It is concluded that although income does not appear to influence perceptions of each site as a community space it does appear to influence the extent to which each site is actually used. The library and bookstore may therefore each be acting as ‘community’ space for two ‘communities’ largely (although not wholly) separable by income.
Further light has been shed on the question of the community function of each location and on the current meaning of the bookstore and public library by exploring the behaviours taking place in each site. Respondents have been found to agree more strongly that their ‘own’ site is a place in which they like to linger than the ‘other’ site, be it the library or the bookstore. Bookstore respondents have been found, however, to be less likely to regard the library as a place in which they like to linger than library respondents are to regard the bookstore as a place in which they like to linger. Younger bookstore respondents have again been found to be particularly unlikely to regard the library as a place in which to linger. Studying ‘dwell time’ in each site reveals that longer visits are still more common in the library than in the bookstore; more than a quarter of bookstore respondents have, however, been found to typically spend more than one hour in the store. Focus group data suggests that library visits tend to be more defined and functional in nature than bookstore visits.

The library and bookstore are both spaces in which their ‘own’ respondents choose to sit and read, or just rest. Bookstore respondents have been found to sit and read, or just rest in bookstores more than library respondents sit and read, or just rest in libraries. A perception that libraries lack comfortable seating has been evident in some focus group discussions. The library has also been found to be used much more frequently than the bookstore as a place to study or work, and to be more frequently used than the bookstore to find information. It is noted that these uses of the library appear to be increasing when data from this study is compared with that gathered in previous years. It is further noted, however, that a quarter of bookstore respondents report making some use of the bookstore to study or work, and that two-thirds of bookstore and library respondents state that they often or sometimes use the bookstore to find information. The bookstore is also found to be used somewhat more frequently than the library as a place to socialise or meet friends. Both sites serve as somewhere to ‘escape to’ for their ‘own’ respondents.

It is concluded that there are clearly overlaps in the ways the bookstore and library are being used at this time. It is further concluded that there also appears to be a key distinction in the way each site is used and in the behaviours currently associated with each site. The results of this study suggest that the library is more widely used
and seen as a place for study and information seeking, with the bookstore being more widely used and seen as a place for recreation and socialising.

Verbal juxtaposition of the library and book superstore has been found here to generate thought and discussion on the topics of stock and display. Whilst mixed views are apparent on the merits of bookstore stock most respondents choosing to raise this issue refer to bookstore stock in positive terms. Library stock (where mentioned) is valued for its archival nature but also frequently perceived as either dated or narrow. On the subject of the display of materials bookstores were criticised by a small number of library respondents; most respondents have, however, been found to be enthusiastic about bookstore display. Unlike the bookstore, libraries are not found to be strongly associated with effective book display and promotion.

Juxtaposition of the sites has also been found to give rise to observations regarding the user-friendliness of the bookstore and library, particularly in terms of way-finding and staff. Respondents are more positive about way-finding in their ‘own’ sites and it has consequently been suggested that way-finding may be a key determinant of how frequently each site is used. The views on staff expressed in this study demonstrate that library staff are held in relatively lower regard by bookstore respondents than by library respondents. It is noted that whilst some library respondents seem to doubt the expertise and experience of bookstore staff, some bookstore respondents appear in contrast to be critical of the customer care skills and enthusiasm of library staff.

It has further been found that, asked to state how each site could be made more appealing to them, bookstore respondents tend to focus on environmental rather than purchase-related facets of the bookstore; library respondents are much more likely to mention features of the store associated with locating and buying books. Both sets of respondents wish to see greater availability of comfortable seating in-store; library respondents (and, to a lesser degree, bookstore respondents) also wish to see greater availability of comfortable seating in the library. Library respondents and bookstore respondents both express a strong desire for more up-to-date library stock. Bookstore respondents further request improvements to café facilities and staff in libraries. It is suggested that, although it may not at this stage be possible to speak of
‘impact’ in these areas, the book superstore may be contributing to an apparently growing demand for seating and café facilities in the library, and may also be adding to an apparently widening perception of library stock as narrow and outmoded.

It is finally noted that, asked whether or not the book superstore and public library should look and feel different from each other, most respondents answer that the two sites should look and feel different. Explanations of those answers effectively add weight to trends perceived earlier in this study. A number of respondents in each site emphasise the educational and informational role of the library and the recreational role and nature of the bookstore; some respondents note the community role of the library whilst others perceive the library and bookstore as places primarily ‘for’ different income groups; both sites are found to be regarded as having a strong role to play in the promotion of books and reading.

9.2 Evaluation, Implications and Recommendations

Given the limited scope and brevity of this study it can do no more than at this stage simply contribute a step towards understanding the current relationship between the book superstore and the public library and to highlight areas of potential impact for further research. It is suggested that the evidence presented in this report provides justification for a more wide-ranging and thorough investigation of all of the topics covered here. It is further suggested that if the book superstore continues to expand and develop as expected (Mintel, 2000) the case for conducting an expanded version of this study in one or two years’ time would be clear.

There are clearly voices missing from this study, particularly those of children, younger teenagers and non-users of each site whose opinions and beliefs may be crucial in fully understanding the impact of the superstore. The voices of library and bookstore staff are similarly under-represented here, space not being available to systematically incorporate the insights of those providing library and bookstore services. It must also be noted that the voices which are present in this study belong to interested parties: individuals motivated to either pick up and complete a
questionnaire or contribute to a focus group discussion. A ‘population’ selected in a different manner may shed quite different light on the topics explored here. There would also be good reason, in an expanded version of this study, to treat bookstore respondents and library respondents as a single population and to consider individual frequencies of use of each site in much more detail. Bookstore respondents and library respondents have by necessity been treated as distinct populations throughout this study; behaviour ‘on the ground’ is inevitably (as has been noted previously) somewhat simplified in this approach.

The comments and views gathered here do nevertheless suggest a need for more detailed and thorough investigation of the ‘emergent’ issues of stock, display, way-finding and staff. Additional further research is also required to explore and substantiate the demographically linked trends identified in this study (particularly those relating to age and income) and to determine the strength (or otherwise) of the educational/recreational split that has here seemed apparent between the images of the library and bookstore.

The need for further and more extensive research accepted, this study demonstrates that the book superstore appears to be for many respondents more than simply a space in which to purchase books. Some support is evident for the notion of the book superstore as a place for the community. The bookstore is further perceived and is functioning for some as a place in which to linger, read or rest and ‘escape’. For fewer respondents it is also a place in which to find information, to socialise and to study or work. The bookstore is also regarded by some to have a significant role to play in reading promotion. There are, therefore, clear areas of overlap with roles and functions that have, in combination, traditionally been the preserve of the public library. These functions have not been lost from the public library and it is perhaps ultimately too early therefore to speak conclusively of impact or transfer of roles between the library and book superstore. What this study suggests however is that, in order to retain a library service that is used by all, particular attention should be paid in the library sector to the attitudes and behaviour of young people and middle-income earners. It further suggests consideration be given to the balance of education/information and recreation that is desired in the future image and nature of
the public library: it is posited that the book superstore may yet become more strongly regarded as a leisure destination of choice for some readers.

The last words in this study are, as is only appropriate, those of a focus group participant noted to be both an enthusiastic user of both the bookstore and the public library. Her comments clearly cannot represent the views of all of those in this study nor are they intended to do so. What they provide is a crystallisation of many of the complex views expressed by users throughout this research and a neat summary of the current nature of the library and bookstore ‘experience’ and the meaning of these two places for many who have taken part in this research:

...you can come in [to the bookstore], and we always feel very comfortable and very relaxed in here. It’s somewhere you can come in and really look forward to coming to and enjoy coming into the store ... and well, our library’s very good isn’t it. And it’s a very important information point as well, I feel, in our area – and it’s a big part of the community as well. It’s very important.
Bibliography


Appendices
Appendix A. Self-Completed Questionnaires

Reduced size text of the library and bookstore self-completed questionnaire and samples of originals.
Libraries and Bookshops: Your Thoughts...

Please add any further comments here:

Please take a few moments to share your thoughts on public libraries and book ‘superstores’ such as Watersstone’s & Borders. Even if you do not use book ‘superstores’, please carry on! We are interested in your views.

This questionnaire will take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Answer as many questions as you wish to, or are able to. Completed questionnaires should be placed in the box in the library by 12TH JULY.

This research is being carried out by a student at the University of Sheffield as part of an MA dissertation.
1. About how often, on average, do you visit a public library? (Circle 1 option)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>(\text{Several times a week})</th>
<th>(\text{Once a week})</th>
<th>(\text{2-3 times a month})</th>
<th>(\text{Monthly})</th>
<th>(\text{Less often})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. About how long does your visit usually last? (Circle 1 option)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>(\text{Up to 10 minutes})</th>
<th>(\text{11-30 minutes})</th>
<th>(\text{31 minutes - 1 hour})</th>
<th>(\text{1-2 hours})</th>
<th>(\text{More than 2 hours})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3. During the last year, has the total amount of time you spend at public libraries increased, decreased or stayed about the same? (Circle 1 option)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>(\text{Increased})</th>
<th>(\text{Decreased})</th>
<th>(\text{Stayed about the same})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. At what times do you normally visit public libraries? (Circle 1 or 2 options)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Weekdays 9am-5.30pm</th>
<th>Saturdays 9am-5.30pm</th>
<th>Sundays</th>
<th>Evenings 5.30pm onwards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. What do you do during your visits to public libraries? For each option please tick if this is something you do often, just sometimes, or if it is something you have never done.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Borrow books/other material</td>
<td>Sit and read or just rest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browse shelves</td>
<td>Study or work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend events</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View exhibitions</td>
<td>Meet friends/socialise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the café</td>
<td>Find information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If ‘other’ please specify:

6. Which of these words or phrases do you think best describes public libraries? Place an ‘X’ in one box on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Very</th>
<th>Quite</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Quite</th>
<th>Very</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm, light &amp; airy</td>
<td>Dark, cold &amp; stuffy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern &amp; up-to-date</td>
<td>Unfashionable &amp; behind the times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart &amp; clean</td>
<td>Tatty &amp; dirty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidating</td>
<td>Welcoming &amp; friendly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A safe place to be</td>
<td>A place in which I do not feel safe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noisy &amp; bustling</td>
<td>Quiet &amp; calm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful</td>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Educational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenient</td>
<td>Convenient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional</td>
<td>Stylish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dull &amp; Boring</td>
<td>Stimulating &amp; Inspiring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>Non-commercial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What other words would you use to describe public libraries?

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please tick)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a place for the community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>somewhere I like to linger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>somewhere I can escape to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultured places</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good places for children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLEASE TURN OVER
8. About how often, if at all, do you visit a book superstore like Waterstone’s or Borders? (Circle 1 option)

- Several times a week
- Once a week
- 2-3 times a month
- Monthly
- Less often

Do not use bookshops of this nature (Please go to No. 12)

9. About how long does your visit usually last? (Circle 1 option)

- Up to 10 minutes
- 11 – 30 minutes
- 31 minutes – 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- More than 2 hours

10. During the last year, has the total amount of time you spend at book superstores increased, decreased, or stayed about the same? (Circle 1 option)

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed about the same

11. At what times do you normally visit book superstores? (Circle 1 or 2 options)

- Weekdays 9am-5.30pm
- Saturdays 9am-5.30pm
- Sundays 11am-5pm
- Evenings 5.30pm onwards

12. If you do not currently go into book superstores like Waterstone’s and Borders please specify why.

Now Please Answer Questions 14-22

13. What do you do during your visits to book superstores? For each option please tick if this is something you do often, just sometimes, or if it is something you have never done.

- Buy books/other material
- Sit and read or just rest
- Study or work
- Attend events
- Listen to music
- View exhibitions
- Meet friends/socialise
- Use the café
- Find information

If ‘other’ please specify:

14. Which of these words or phrases do you think best describes bookstores like Waterstone’s and Borders?

Place an ‘X’ in one box on each line.

- Warm, light & airy
- Dark, cold & stuffy
- Modern & up-to-date
- Unfashionable & behind the times
- Comfortable
- Uncomfortable
- Smart & clean
- Tatty & dirty
- Intimidating
- Welcoming & friendly
- A safe place to be
- A place in which I do not feel safe
- Noisy & bustling
- Quiet & calm
- Unhelpful
- Helpful
- Inconvenient
- Convenient
- Recreational
- Educational
- Relaxed
- Formal
- Functional
- Stylish
- Dull & Boring
- Stimulating & Inspiring
- Commercial
- Non-commercial

What other words would you use to describe book superstores?

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please tick one box on each line)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book superstores like Waterstone’s &amp; Borders are:</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a place for the community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>somewhere I like to linger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>somewhere I can escape to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultured places</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good places for children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ATMOSPHERE AND DESIGN OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND BOOK SUPERSTORES, EVEN IF YOU DO NOT GO TO BOOKSHOPS LIKE WATERSTONE’S AND BORDERS. IF YOU REQUIRE MORE SPACE, PLEASE USE THE BACK OF THE FORM.

16. How would you describe the look and feel of public libraries?

17. What would make public libraries more appealing to you?

18. How would you describe the look and feel of book superstores like Waterstones and Borders?

19. What would make book superstores like Waterstone’s and Borders more appealing to you?

20. Should public libraries and book superstores like Waterstone’s and Borders look and feel different from each other? Please explain your answer.

21. What would you say was the major difference between the look and feel of public libraries and the look and feel of book superstores like Waterstone’s and Borders?

21. About You. Please circle one box in each line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 or under</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Main Occupation</td>
<td>In paid employment</td>
<td>Looking after home or family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Qualifications</td>
<td>Degree or equivalent professional qualification</td>
<td>Higher Education below degree level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Household Income</td>
<td>£5,999 or less</td>
<td>£6,000-£11,999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. Do you have children under 16? Yes No

THANK YOU! PLEASE PLACE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE BOX IN THE LIBRARY BY 10th JULY

If you would be prepared to talk in more detail about issues raised in this questionnaire please leave contact details:
NAME: ___________________________ TELEPHONE NO: ___________________________
Bookshops and Libraries: Your Thoughts...

Please add any further comments here:

Please take a few moments to share your thoughts on book ‘superstores’ such as Borders and public libraries. Even if you do not use public libraries, please carry on! We are interested in your views.

This questionnaire should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Answer as many questions as you wish to, or are able to. Completed questionnaires should be placed in the box in Borders by 9th July.

This research is being carried out by a student at the University of Sheffield as part of an MA dissertation.
1. About how often, on average, do you visit a branch of Borders? (Circle one option)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>2-3 times a month</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Less often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Several times a week</td>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>11-30 minutes</td>
<td>31 minutes – 1 hour</td>
<td>1 – 2 hours</td>
<td>More than 2 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. About how long does your visit usually last? (Circle one option)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Up to 10 minutes</th>
<th>11-30 minutes</th>
<th>31 minutes – 1 hour</th>
<th>1 – 2 hours</th>
<th>More than 2 hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekdays 9am-5.30pm</td>
<td>Saturdays 9am-5.30pm</td>
<td>Sundays 11am-5pm</td>
<td>Evenings 5.30pm onwards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. During the last year, has the total amount of time you spend at Borders increased, decreased or stayed about the same? (Circle one option)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increased</th>
<th>Decreased</th>
<th>Stayed about the same</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. At what times do you normally visit Borders? (Circle one or two options)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekdays 9am-5.30pm</th>
<th>Saturdays 9am-5.30pm</th>
<th>Sundays 11am-5pm</th>
<th>Evenings 5.30pm onwards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. What do you do during your visits to Borders? For each option please tick if this is something you do often, just sometimes, or if it is something you have never done.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buy books/other material</td>
<td>Sit and read or just rest</td>
<td>Listen to music</td>
<td>Study or work</td>
<td>Meet friends/socialise</td>
<td>Find information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browse shelves</td>
<td>Relax</td>
<td>Attended events</td>
<td>View exhibitions</td>
<td>Use the café</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend events</td>
<td>View exhibitions</td>
<td>Use the café</td>
<td>If ‘other’ please specify:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Which of these words or phrases do you think best describes Borders? Place an ‘X’ in one box on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very</th>
<th>Quite</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Quite</th>
<th>Very</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm, light &amp; airy</td>
<td>Dark, cold &amp; stuffy</td>
<td>Modern &amp; up-to-date</td>
<td>Unfashionable &amp; behind the times</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart &amp; clean</td>
<td>Tatty &amp; dirty</td>
<td>Intimidating</td>
<td>Welcoming &amp; friendly</td>
<td>A safe place to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noisy &amp; bustling</td>
<td>Quiet &amp; calm</td>
<td>Unhelpful</td>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenient</td>
<td>Convenient</td>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Functional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dull &amp; Boring</td>
<td>Stimulating &amp; Inspiring</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>Non-commercial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What other words would you use to describe Borders?

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please tick one box on each line)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Borders is:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a place for the community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>somewhere I like to linger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a good place to escape to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a cultural place</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a place for children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLEASE TURN OVER
PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT PUBLIC LIBRARIES, EVEN IF YOU DO NOT CURRENTLY USE A PUBLIC LIBRARY, OR HAVE NEVER USED A PUBLIC LIBRARY.

8. About how often, if at all, do you visit a public library? (Circle one option)
   - Several times a week
   - Once a week
   - 2-3 times a month
   - Monthly
   - Less often
   - Do not currently use a public library (Please go to No. 12)

9. About how long does your visit usually last? (Circle one option)
   - Up to 10 minutes
   - 11-30 minutes
   - 31 minutes – 1 hour
   - 1-2 hours
   - More than 2 hours

10. During the last year, has the *total* amount of time you spend at public libraries increased, decreased or stayed about the same? (Circle one option)

11. At what times do you normally visit public libraries? (Circle one or two options)
   - Weekdays
   - Saturdays
   - Sundays
   - Evenings

12. If you do not currently use a public library:
   a) please specify why.
   b) have you used a public library in the past? Please specify when.

    Now Please Answer Questions 14-22

13. What do you do during your visits to public libraries? For each option please tick if this is something you do often, just sometimes, or if it is something you have never done.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th></th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Borrow books/other material</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browse shelves</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View exhibitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the café</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If ‘other’ please specify:

14. Which of these words or phrases do you think best describes public libraries? Place an ‘X’ in one box on each line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Very</th>
<th>Quite</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Quite</th>
<th>Very</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm, light &amp; airy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern &amp; up-to-date</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart &amp; clean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A safe place to be</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noisy &amp; bustling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dull &amp; Boring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What other words would you use to describe public libraries?

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please tick one box on each line)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public libraries are:</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a place for the community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>somewhere I like to linger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>somewhere I can escape to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultured places</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good places for children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ATMOSPHERE AND DESIGN OF BOOK SUPERSTORES AND LIBRARIES, EVEN IF YOU DO NOT CURRENTLY USE A PUBLIC LIBRARY, OR HAVE NEVER USED A PUBLIC LIBRARY.

IF YOU REQUIRE MORE SPACE, PLEASE USE THE BACK OF THE FORM

16. How would you describe the look and feel of Borders?

17. What would make Borders more appealing to you?

18. How would you describe the look and feel of public libraries?

19. What would make public libraries more appealing to you?

20. Should book superstores like Borders and public libraries look and feel different from each other? Please explain your answer.

21. What would you say was the major difference between the look and feel of book superstores like Borders and the look and feel of public libraries?

22. About You. Please circle one box in each line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your Age</td>
<td>16 or under</td>
<td>17-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Main Occupation</td>
<td>In paid employment</td>
<td>Looking after home or family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Household Income</td>
<td>£5,999 or less</td>
<td>£6,000 - £11,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Qualifications</td>
<td>Degree or equivalent professional qualification</td>
<td>Higher Education below degree level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have children under 16?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THANK YOU! PLEASE PLACE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE BOX IN BORDERS BY 9th JULY

If you would be prepared to talk in more detail about issues raised in this questionnaire please leave contact details: NAME: __________________________ TELEPHONE NO: __________________________

B/Y
Sample Questionnaires
Appendix B. Focus Group Questions & Topic Guide

NB: Possible prompts are included in italics. Focus group participants were asked to discuss their ‘own’ site before then considering the ‘other’ site (see questions 1 & 2).

- Opening remarks to include: introductions, nature of the research, ‘housekeeping’ details such as time available for discussion etc.

- Questions/Topics:

1. Tell me about your experiences of using and being in the public library/book superstore. What do you like about it?
   
   What do you dislike about it [as a place]?
   
   [look and feel; atmosphere and ambience]

2. Tell me about your experiences of using and just being in [name of book superstore]/the public library. What do you like about it?
   
   What do you dislike about it [as a place]?
   
   [look and feel; atmosphere and ambience]

   [Possible follow-up questions: the nicest thing? worst thing? what do you enjoy about being in each place? What puts you off?] 

3. How would you describe the library and bookshop experience to a friend?

4. Both libraries and bookstores have been described as places to linger, to escape to, as places for the community. What do you think about those ideas?
5. In what ways are libraries and bookstores similar and different from each other in terms of the environment and experience that they offer?

6. Do you think libraries and bookshops should look and feel the same, and offer the same kind of environment, or should they be different?

7. What do you think libraries and bookstores can learn from each other?

8. What would make libraries and bookstores more appealing to you? [May not be asked if already covered in previous questions]

[Possible follow-up question: Are they a place for you? Or a place for others?]

9. What else would you like/is there anything else you’d like to say about public libraries and book superstores?

- Closing remarks and thanks.
### Appendix C. Image Related Data

#### Library & Bookstore Image by Gender

**Library Image: Library Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Environment (1 / 5)</th>
<th>Female Respondents</th>
<th>Male Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dark, cold &amp; stuffy / Warm, light &amp; airy</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfashionable &amp; behind the times / Modern &amp; up-to-date</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable / Comfortable</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatty &amp; dirty / Smart &amp; clean</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidating / Welcoming</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place in which I do not feel safe / feel safe</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful / helpful</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenient / Convenient</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dull &amp; boring / Stimulating &amp; Inspiring</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet &amp; calm / Noisy &amp; bustling</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational / Recreational</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal / Relaxed</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylish / Functional</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-commercial / Commercial</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Library Image: Bookstore Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Environment (1 / 5)</th>
<th>Female Respondents</th>
<th>Male Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dark, cold &amp; stuffy / Warm, light &amp; airy</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfashionable &amp; behind the times / Modern &amp; up-to-date</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable / Comfortable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatty &amp; dirty / Smart &amp; clean</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidating / Welcoming</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place in which I do not feel safe / feel safe</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful / helpful</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenient / Convenient</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dull &amp; boring / Stimulating &amp; Inspiring</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet &amp; calm / Noisy &amp; bustling</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational / Recreational</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal / Relaxed</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylish / Functional</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-commercial / Commercial</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Bookstore Image: Bookstore Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Environment (1 / 5)</th>
<th>Female Respondents</th>
<th>Male Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dark, cold &amp; stuffy / Warm, light &amp; airy</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfashionable &amp; behind the times / Modern &amp; up-to-date</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable / Comfortable</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatty &amp; dirty / Smart &amp; clean</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidating / Welcoming</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place in which I do not feel safe / feel safe</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful / helpful</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenient / Convenient</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dull &amp; boring / Stimulating &amp; Inspiring</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet &amp; calm / Noisy &amp; bustling</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational / Recreational</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal / Relaxed</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylish / Functional</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-commercial / Commercial</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Bookstore Image: Library Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Environment (1 / 5)</th>
<th>Female Respondents</th>
<th>Male Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dark, cold &amp; stuffy / Warm, light &amp; airy</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfashionable &amp; behind the times / Modern &amp; up-to-date</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable / Comfortable</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatty &amp; dirty / Smart &amp; clean</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidating / Welcoming</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place in which I do not feel safe / feel safe</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful / helpful</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenient / Convenient</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dull &amp; boring / Stimulating &amp; Inspiring</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet &amp; calm / Noisy &amp; bustling</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational / Recreational</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal / Relaxed</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylish / Functional</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-commercial / Commercial</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Library & Bookstore Image by Age

### Library Image: Library Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Environment (1 / 5)</th>
<th>AGES 17-29</th>
<th>AGES 60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dark, cold &amp; stuffy / Warm, light &amp; airy</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfashionable &amp; behind the times / Modern &amp; up-to-date</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable / Comfortable</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatty &amp; dirty / Smart &amp; clean</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidating / Welcoming</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place in which I do not feel safe / feel safe</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful / helpful</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenient / Convenient</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dull &amp; boring / Stimulating &amp; Inspiring</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet &amp; calm / Noisy &amp; bustling</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational / Recreational</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal / Relaxed</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylish / Functional</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-commercial / Commercial</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Bookstore Image: Library Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Environment (1 / 5)</th>
<th>AGES 17-29</th>
<th>AGES 60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dark, cold &amp; stuffy / Warm, light &amp; airy</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfashionable &amp; behind the times / Modern &amp; up-to-date</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable / Comfortable</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatty &amp; dirty / Smart &amp; clean</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidating / Welcoming</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place in which I do not feel safe / feel safe</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful / helpful</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenient / Convenient</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dull &amp; boring / Stimulating &amp; Inspiring</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet &amp; calm / Noisy &amp; bustling</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational / Recreational</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal / Relaxed</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylish / Functional</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-commercial / Commercial</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Dimensions of Environment (1 / 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AGES 17-29</th>
<th>AGES 60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dark, cold &amp; stuffy / Warm, light &amp; airy</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfashionable &amp; behind the times / Modern &amp; up-to-date</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable / Comfortable</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatty &amp; dirty / Smart &amp; clean</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidating / Welcoming</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place in which I do not feel safe / feel safe</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful / helpful</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenient / Convenient</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dull &amp; boring / Stimulating &amp; Inspiring</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet &amp; calm / Noisy &amp; bustling</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational / Recreational</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal / Relaxed</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylish / Functional</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-commercial / Commercial</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D. Data Relating to Changing Use of Each Site

Use of Libraries: Library & Bookstore Respondents

* Indicates a result considered not to be significant as a consequence of low numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Group</th>
<th>% Respondents Increasing Use of Libraries</th>
<th>% Respondents Decreasing Use of Libraries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students (of any age)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In paid employment</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking after home/family</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>40*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 16 and under</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>100*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 17-19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 20-24</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 25-29</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 30-34</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 25-44</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 45-59</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 60-69</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 70+</td>
<td>25*</td>
<td>50*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income to £5,999</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income £6,000-11,999</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income £12,000-17,999</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income £18,000-23,999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income £24,000-35,999</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income £36,000-47,999</td>
<td>33*</td>
<td>0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income £48,000-71,999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income £72,000+</td>
<td>75*</td>
<td>0*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use of Bookstores: Bookstore & Library Respondents

* Indicates a result considered not to be significant as a consequence of low numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Group</th>
<th>% Respondents Increasing Use of Bookstores</th>
<th>% Respondents Decreasing Use of Bookstores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students (of any age)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In paid employment</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking after home/family</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>40*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 16 and under</td>
<td>33*</td>
<td>33*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 17-19</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 20-24</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 25-29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 30-34</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 25-44</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 45-59</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 60-69</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 70+</td>
<td>25*</td>
<td>0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income to £5,999</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income £6,000-11,999</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income £12,000-17,999</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income £18,000-23,999</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income £24,000-35,999</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income £36,000-47,999</td>
<td>50*</td>
<td>17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income £48,000-71,999</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income £72,000+</td>
<td>20*</td>
<td>0*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>