

→ Fast Facts

→ Data transfer speed record

Researchers in Germany have broken the world record for the fastest data transfer speed over a single fiber optic cable. Using a “fast Fourier transform” to generate 325 separate colors of light in a laser beam, scientists at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology transferred data at 26 terabits per second. That is equivalent to more than 700 high definition DVDs per second or the ability to transmit 400 million telephone calls at the same time on a single laser beam. The achievement suggests that high-speed optical signal processing could be the answer for meeting the needs of future energy-efficient communication.

“World Record in Ultra-Rapid Data Transmission,” Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, May 23, 2011, www.kit.edu/visit/pi_2011_6977.php (retrieved June 6, 2011).

→ Academic Library Computer Technology Benchmarks

A recent study of academic library computer technology practices found 62 percent of the college libraries sampled maintain their own IT department separate from that of the college IT Department. 34.5 percent of libraries sampled have made provisions for access to library resources through smart phones. The mean number of personal computers purchased in the 2010–11 academic year by the colleges in the sample was 18.6. Just over 10 percent of planned acquisitions were for Apple computers—less than 1 percent for community colleges but more than 20 percent for research universities. The mean expenditure for personal computers and workstations in Carnegie level 1 or 2 research institutions in the past year was \$27,415.

Academic Library Computer Technology Benchmarks, edited by Primary Research Group, New York: Primary Research Group, 2011.

→ The Oprah effect

The Nielsen Company looked at increased sales of Oprah’s Book Club selections from the past ten years. Counting only Oprah trade paperback editions (not hardcover or other editions), the top seller was Eckhart Tolle’s *A New Earth* at 3.37 million units sold. Other tops sellers were James Frey’s *A Million Little Pieces* (2.7 million), *Night* by Elie Wiesel (2 million), Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* (1.385 million), and *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel García Márquez (817,000).

“The Oprah Effect: Closing the Book on Oprah’s Book Club,” Nielsen Wire, May 20, 2011, <http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/consumer/the-oprah-effect-closing-the-book-on-oprahs-book-club> (retrieved June 2, 2011).

→ Library funding

A recent survey of 1,201 library managers and professionals from across North America found that, while a number of libraries cut offerings and froze staff salaries, most feel the worst of the economic downturn may be over. Fewer libraries anticipate that they will be facing cutbacks in 2011 than in 2010. Typical annual budgets currently fall in the range of \$800,000 to \$3 million, with academic and federal or state agency libraries on the high end of the scale. The average annual budget of a large academic library system with multiple branches and facilities was \$3,350,142. The single biggest action taken to respond to budget cuts was to cut spending on subscriptions.

Joseph McKendrick, “Funding and Priorities: The Library Resource Guide Benchmark Study on 2011 Library Spending Plans,” Information Today, Inc., www.libraryresource.com/Downloads/Download.aspx?IssueID=2585 (retrieved May 23, 2011).

Gary Pattillo is reference librarian at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, e-mail: pattillo@email.unc.edu