

the LIBRARY of THINGS

Libraries loaning “stuff” isn’t a new concept. Framed paintings were available for checkout at the Newark (N.J.) Public Library back in 1904. “Libraries were sharing before sharing was cool,” says Miguel Figueroa, director of the American Library Association’s Center for the Future of Libraries. As the sharing economy continues to swell, nontraditional collections become more pervasive, community-specific, and imaginative. Here are some of our favorite unusual items circulating at libraries in North America.

- 1 American Girl dolls** Port Townsend (Wash.) Public Library
- 2 Bubble machines** Hillsboro (Oreg.) Public Library
- 3 Sewing machines** Sacramento (Calif.) Public Library
- 4 Mounted animals** Alaska Resources Library and Information Services, University of Alaska Anchorage
- 5 Floppy drives** Montana State University Library in Bozeman
- 6 Dog activity kit** Wilkinson Public Library in Telluride, Colorado
- 7 Croquet sets** Mesa (Ariz.) Public Library
- 8 Video projector** Denver Public Library
- 9 Science experiment kits** Denton (Tex.) Public Library
- 10 Fishing equipment** Grand Rapids (Minn.) Area Library
- 11 Bird-watching kits** Shirley M. Wright Memorial Library in Trempealeau, Wisconsin
- 12 Santa suits** Bolivar County (Miss.) Library System
- 13 Microscopes** Ann Arbor (Mich.) District Library
- 14 Fondue set** Temple Terrace (Fla.) Public Library
- 15 Snowshoes** McArthur Public Library in Biddeford, Maine
- 16 Roomba vacuuming robot** Reading (Mass.) Public Library
- 17 Apple picker** Island Free Library in Block Island, Rhode Island
- 18 Umbrellas** Yale Law Library in New Haven, Connecticut

Recently featured in *American Libraries*

- A Canning equipment** South Sioux City (Neb.) Public Library (*AL*, Nov./Dec. 2016, p. 18)
- B Musical instruments** Parkdale branch of the Toronto Public Library (*AL*, June 2016, p. 6)
- C Bicycles** Stark County District Library in Canton, Ohio (*The Scoop*, Sept. 8, 2016)

More than ever,
libraries are offering
nontraditional items
for checkout

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