

3 MORE AMAZING FACTS ABOUT LIBRARIES

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/578801/library-facts>

1. Library books can be full of surprises (and covered in them, too). If you're wondering how dirty library books can become after passing through many hands, the answer is: pretty dirty. But don't worry, because while there have been plenty of instances in history where people feared that books spread disease, there's never been a documented case of anyone catching anything from a library book.

2. A dirty book is mostly dangerous to the book itself. The only danger a dirty book poses is to the book itself, as dust can trap moisture that can damage pages. That's why the Boston Public Library has a machine dubbed the Depulvera that acts like a miniature car wash for books, using a conveyor system to blast dirt from volumes.

3. Those late fees for unreturned items can add up. Libraries in larger cities can accrue millions in unpaid penalties. In 2016, the San Jose Public Library reported \$6.8 million in delinquent fees, with 39 percent of members owing money. Some places will refer debts to collection agencies if a patron exceeds \$10 in charges.

Then again, not all libraries institute late fees. In an attempt to get back lost books and encourage residents to visit more often, New York's public library systems announced in October 2021 that they would be eliminating all late fees—a move which subsequently boosted visitor rates and resulted in thousands of overdue or lost items being returned.