

Interview Guide for Public Library Users

Understanding the Impact of Free Access to Computers and the Internet in Public Libraries

“Hello! My name is [name]. I’m working with a research project being conducted by the University of Washington’s Information School and sponsored by the US government’s Institute for Museum and Library Services. We’re interested in finding out how you and your family use your public library. In particular, we want to know about how you use the library’s computers, website, electronic databases, Internet connections and related services, and how they may have helped you in your life. Your responses will help us evaluate and improve library computer services in libraries all over the country. You can learn more about this project at <http://www.depts.washington.edu/imlspac>.

As a small token of our appreciation, we will give you \$20 when we are finished. We very much appreciate you taking the time to help us with this important study.”

User Aliases:

Date:

Time:

Day:

Length of Interview:

Library Code:

Place of Interview:

Interviewer Name:

Notes:

Questions:

1. How did you learn about the library’s computers, websites and training? I’m going to refer to this broadly free access to computers and the Internet for the rest of our interview if that’s okay.

2. What do you use the computers and the Internet for? Why? When did you start using? How often? How does it fit with your routine? (itemize each form of use) [civic engagement, education, eGovernment, eCommerce, employment, health, social inclusion]

3. Do you have access to a computer or the Internet anywhere else besides the library? Where?

4. If, yes, why do you still come to the library?

5. Which computer and Internet activities/courses have you taken or tried at the public library?

6. What else do you do when you come here to use computers and the Internet? (e.g., meet up with others, etc)

7. What did you learn/gain because of the free computer and Internet services? (ask for each activity s/he participated in; want a specific story or incident) [civic engagement, education, eGovernment, eCommerce, employment, health, social inclusion]

8. Are there any things you can do now or have accomplished that you could not have done before?

9. Is free computer and Internet access an important resource for you? How so/how not?

10. Have you used the Library's computers and the Internet to look up information on behalf of others? Why? (Lay information mediary behavior—LIMB)

11. Have other people used the Library's computers and the Internet to look up information for you? Why? (LIMB—lay information mediary behavior)

12. How has your family benefited, if at all, because of free access to computers and the Internet? [civic engagement, education, eGovernment, eCommerce, employment, health, social inclusion]

13. How has your community benefitted, if at all, because of free access to computers and the Internet? [civic engagement, education, eGovernment, eCommerce, employment, health, social inclusion]

14. Are other the people you meet at the library computers helpful for you? [Good Samaritans]

15. Does anything make it difficult or prevent you from using the free computers and the Internet? (e.g MySpace, YouTube, CD, DVD, etc.)

16. Is there anything you wanted to do via computers and the Internet that you couldn't do? Find information, learn a skill, etc.?

17. What role have library staff played in how you use/benefit from free access to computers and the Internet?

18. Does the physical setting/place itself make a difference to how you experience or use the computers and the Internet?

19. How could the free computers and the Internet be made better?

20. For how much longer will you use the free computers and the Internet? Why?

21. Have you recommended the free computers and the Internet to other people? If so, to whom (not asking for personal names here, just relationship types, e.g., friends, family)

22. Have you used the computers and the Internet on behalf of other people? If so, to whom (not asking for personal names here, just relationship types, e.g., friends, family)

23. Has anyone used the free computers and the Internet for you on your behalf? If so, to whom (not asking for personal names here, just relationship types, e.g., friends, family)

24. If free access to computers and the Internet were not available at your library, how would it affect you?

25. Is there any other way you might use the free computers and the Internet or the library website that we have not asked about?

26. Does today's visit differ from your typical visits to the library?

Demographic Questions

27. What is your age?
28. What is your race/ethnicity?
29. Is English your first language?
30. What is your zip code?
31. What is the highest level of education you've completed?
32. How many people are in your household?
33. Can you estimate your family income before taxes? Or your best estimate?
34. What is the gender and age of each person in your household?
35. What is your current job? (or most current job—if unemployed)