Interview Guide for Public Library Staff

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 your Library has been affected by free access to computers and the Internet. Your responses will help us evaluate and improve library computer services in libraries across the country. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes. You can learn more about this project at http://www.depts.washington.edu/imlspac

Staff Alias: Library Code:
Date: Time: Day: Place of Interview:
Length of Interview: Interviewer Name:

Notes:

Questions:

1.   How long have you been working with your library?

2.   How long have you been working with free access to computers and the Internet? What is your role/responsibilities?

3.   What computer and Internet services does your library provide? (include all classes, all ages, on & off the site, current and seasonal services)

4.   Who are its users? (e.g. young kids, students, seniors/retirees, mothers, immigrants, tourists, low income, homeless, business people, other agencies, rehab teens, other)   [civic engagement, eCommerce, education, eGovt, employment, health, social inclusion]

5.   Who else would you like to reach/draw in? What are the challenges in reaching them?

6.   How would you characterize the successes of the public library? How about non-successes/failures?

7.   Are you tracking/recording computer and Internet need/demand? How about resolution/fulfilled need? Do you have any statistics or data?

8.   How have individual users been helped? (civic engagement, eCommerce, education, eGovt, employment, health, social inclusion)

9.   Why is your free access to computers and the Internet important to its users?

10.   What free access to computers and the Internet services do users use most often?

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11.   How often does your average user use the free computers and the Internet?

12.   In what ways have benefits been accrued by users' families? What is your evidence for these observations? (seen families here, users told us, etc)

13.   Have you noticed evidence of indirect computer and Internet users—LIMB (lay information mediary behavior)—people who see/use information on behalf of others without necessarily being asked first? What kinds?

14.   In what ways have benefits been accrued by the community at-large? What is your evidence for these observations?

15.   Do you work with other organizations in the community? If so, how important to you is your relationship with other organizations?

16.   Does your library promote its computer and Internet services in the community? If so, please describe (e.g. posters place outside the library, advertise in local paper, others?)

17.   What factors hindered the development and offering of free access to computers and the Internet?

18.   What challenges/barriers do your computer and Internet users face?

19.   How could free access to computers and the Internet be improved?

20.   How would you like to see free computer and Internet access develop in the future?

21.   What is needed to make this happen? (include advocacy needs)

22.   Other comments?

23.   How does this week differ from other weeks of the year? (Is there anything unusual about people's behavior this week?)

Demographics:

Professional Training:

Years in Profession:

Gender:

Special Attributes (e.g., bilingual):

Special Awards/Recognition:

Positions (e.g., state/national committees, column editor, blogger):

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