

Institute of Museum and Library Services

University of Washington Information School

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

Interview Guide for Public Library Administrator

“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 computer and Internet access. Your responses will help us evaluate and improve library computer services in libraries all over the country. Information about you is confidential except as provided by law. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes. You can learn more about this project at <http://www.depts.washington.edu/imlspac>.

Staff Alias:

Date:

Time:

Day:

Length of Interview:

Library Code:

Place of Interview:

Interviewer Name:

Notes:

Questions:

1. How long have you been with your library?
2. What is your role/responsibilities?
3. How long has your library been offering free access to computers and the Internet? How did this come about? Why were the services started?
4. What computer and Internet services does your library provide?
5. What is your free computer and Internet service’s role in your community? What is its niche? (**Prompt:** What is your elevator speech?)
6. What organizations do you interact with in the community around free computer and Internet access? How important to you is your relationship with other organizations? (**Probe:** How about city Hall?)
7. How 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?)
8. Who knows about your free access to computers and the Internet services? How?

9. Who are its users? (e.g. young kids, students, seniors/retirees, mothers, immigrants, tourists, low income, homeless, business people, other agencies, rehab teens, other) [Domain areas: civic engagement, eCommerce, education, eGovt, employment, health, social inclusion]
10. Who else would you like to reach/draw in? What are the challenges in reaching them?
11. How have individual users been helped by the library's free computers & Internet service? What is your evidence for these observations? (**Prompt:** What is your typical example/story?)
12. In what ways have benefits been accrued by users' families as a result of the library's free computer & Internet service? What is your evidence for these observations? (seen families here, users told us, etc) (**Prompt:** What is your typical example/story?)
13. Have you noticed evidence of indirect computers and the Internet users—LIMB (lay information mediary behavior)—people who see/use information on behalf of others without necessarily being asked first? What kinds? (**Prompt:** What is your typical example/story?)
14. In what ways have benefits been accrued by the community at-large as a result of the library's free computer & Internet service? What is your evidence for these observations? (**Prompt:** What is your typical example/story?)
15. What challenges/barriers do your computer and Internet users face?
16. Are you tracking/recording free access to computers and the Internet needs/demands? How about resolution/fulfilled need? Do you have any statistics or data?
17. How would you characterize the successes of the Library's free computer & Internet services? How about challenges/failures?
18. Why is your free access to computers and the Internet important to policy and decision makers?
19. Is there a strategic plan for the library? City? County?
20. What portion of your budget goes to supporting free access to computers and the Internet? What effect has this had on other expenditures?
21. What resources are used to support your computers and Internet services (inhouse, external agency, contract)
22. What factors hindered the development and offerings of free access to computers and the Internet?
23. What is your personal vision for improving the free access to computers and the Internet in your library?
24. What is your longterm vision for improving free access to computers and the Internet?

25. What is needed to make this happen with the internal library world?
26. What is needed to make this happen with the external world, especially policy and decision makers, funding agencies?
27. Other comments?

Demographics:

Professional Training:

Years in Profession:

Gender:

Special Attributes (e.g., bilingual):

Special Awards/Recognition:

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