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 Library IT Staff

(**Note:** This may be someone who works for the city, not the library directly or he/she may be part-time, or in a large library where there may be a whole department dedicated to IT)

"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 accross 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: 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? Full-time?

2.   How long have you been working with free access to computers and the Internet? What are your roles/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.   How popular are the following computer applications? (high, medium, low)
    a. Email
    b. Chat
    c. Music
    d. Games
    e. Internet browsing
    f. Word processing, spreadsheets, PowerPoint
    g. Voice over IP (VoIP)
    h. Webcam
    i. Movies
    j. Other_____

5.   How popular are the following Internet uses? (high, medium, low)
   a. Blogs
   b. Social networking sites
   c. E-government services
   d. Education
   e. Specialized databases (jobs, health, agriculture)
   f. Remittances, banking (eCommerce)
   g. Other_____

6.   How many people use the computer and Internet services each month? What other data do you have on Internet use?

7.   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]

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

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

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

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

13.   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?)

14.   Have you noticed evidence of indirect computer and Internet users—LIMB (lay mediary information behavior)—people who see/use information on behalf of others without necessarily being asked first? What kinds? (**Prompt:** What is your typical example/story?)

15.   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?)

16.   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?

17.   What factors hinder 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?

Demographics:

Professional Training:

Years in Profession:

Gender:

Special Attributes (e.g., bilingual):

Special Awards/Recognition:

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