

PUBLIC LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY

LANDSCAPE



As this Study and its predecessor surveys (dating back to 1994) report, U.S. public libraries are investing in a range of technology and Internet services to ensure all people are able to get online, learn to navigate the Internet more effectively and freely use Internet-enabled services and resources that would otherwise be out of financial reach for many families — including homework help, test preparation, audiobooks and more.

The 2009-2010 survey maps this technology landscape — charting progress and outlining the challenges that hamper the provision of robust services that support lifelong learning, workforce development, digital literacy and access to e-government information and services. New data this year indicates that the use of library technology resources was up significantly from just one year ago:

- Most libraries (75.7 percent) report increased use of public access workstations.
- Most libraries (71.1 percent) report an increased use of Wi-Fi.
- Less than half (45.6 percent) report an increased use of electronic resources.
- Some libraries (26.3 percent) report an increased use of training services.

At the same time, however, the percentage of libraries reporting decreased operating hours has tripled. Nearly one-quarter of urban libraries and 14.5 percent of all libraries (up from 7.4 percent and 4.5 percent, respectively) report reducing hours since the prior fiscal year.

The following section presents

select key findings from library outlets (branches) and their implications. The complete set of data tables, as well as findings from previous surveys, is available at <http://www.clib.umd.edu/plinternet/>. This year's survey, which had an 82.4 percent response rate, was completed by respondents between September 7 and November 13, 2009.

Public Access Infrastructure

Public libraries provide substantial public access services and resources across a range of key areas such as wireless (Wi-Fi), public computers and broadband:

Two-thirds of library branches report they are the *only* provider of free public computer and Internet access in their communities.

Overall, public library branches report an average of 14.2 public access workstations, up from 11 last year.

Just over 82 percent of public library branches now offer wireless Internet access, up from 76.4 percent last year.

Seventy-nine percent of all libraries provide connection speeds

of 1.5 Mbps (T1) or higher, up from 70 percent last year.

Patron Training & Internet Services

Beyond Internet access, library staff members play an essential role in boosting their patrons' technology proficiency and digital literacy. Nearly 90 percent of all libraries report providing technology training, including point-of-use technology training, formal classes and online tutorials. Urban libraries (59.2 percent) are most likely to provide formal classes.

Libraries report providing services to job-seekers is the most vital public Internet service they offer, with 90.8 percent of all libraries reporting it is very important or the most important service available. Providing access to government information follows closely, with 87.6 percent of libraries reporting that this service is important or the most important. [New questions](#) in the 2009-2010 survey further explore the support public libraries provide to those seeking employment, including job-specific databases, access to civil service examination materials and résumé software, and partnerships with government and other agencies to provide e-government services. (See page 39.)

Libraries also broker and provide access to a wide range of [Internet resources](#), experiencing double-digit increases in access to these services, including:

- Licensed databases
- Homework resources
- Audio content, such as

podcasts and audiobooks

- Digital reference
- E-books

Thorny Challenges

As the public library funding landscape data reflect, sufficient funding required to maintain and improve library operations — including technology — is endangered. The most severe challenges to providing free public access computing and Internet access at public libraries are:

Cost. Respondents once again indicate that cost is the leading factor affecting their ability to add or replace computers and improve bandwidth. Nearly 59 percent of libraries report they have no replacement schedule, up significantly from 38 percent last year. Of the 40 percent with a schedule, 26.7 percent report they will be unable to maintain the schedule this year.

Buildings. Availability of space is the second most important factor limiting additional computers, followed by the availability of electrical outlets, cabling and other infrastructure.

Staff. By and large, public libraries rely on non-technical staff to support their public access computers and Internet access. This is particularly true for rural public libraries. In fact, 43.7 percent of rural libraries report that the library director provides IT support, com-

pared with 75.3 percent of urban libraries that report system-level IT staff provided IT support.

Keeping workstations in service. As with last year's survey, approximately three quarters of libraries reported that it takes one (26.4 percent), two (23.4 percent) or more than two days (23.8 percent) to get a public access computer back into service when it fails. Most significantly affected are rural libraries, with nearly a third (30 percent) reporting that it could take two or more days to get a computer back into service.

To accommodate the most users possible, libraries also continue to impose time limits (92.3 percent) on patron use of public access computers and add wireless access on top of wired Internet connections (74.8 percent).

Moving Connectivity and Public Access Forward

Although technology use was up in the past year, fewer libraries report insufficient numbers of workstations some or all of the time (73.5 percent, down from 81.2 percent). This was the first improvement in sufficiency in three years, and coincides with an increase in the number of available public access computers (14.2 on average per branch) and in the number of libraries offering Wi-Fi (82.2 percent).

Many public libraries plan to add,

replace or upgrade workstations and make other enhancements to their public access computing and Internet access services in the coming year:

An average 29 percent of libraries anticipate adding public computers or laptops in the coming year, down slightly from 33 percent last year.

Nearly 7 percent of libraries plan to add wireless access within the next year, which would mean about 90 percent of public libraries will offer wireless access by the end of the year.

About 9 percent plan to increase bandwidth in the coming year. Libraries report cost as the key impediment, with 29.5 percent interested in bandwidth improvements but unable to afford them in the coming year.

These data demonstrate that libraries recognize the need to upgrade and replace their public access technology infrastructure. A number of factors, however, such as building limitations, staff availability and expertise, and costs combine to create a challenging environment for public libraries to maintain or enhance their public access services.

As increases in the usage of public library services are reported, there concurrently is decreased funding support for public libraries. That reduced support is adversely affecting the ability of libraries to support, maintain and enhance their public access technologies.

HARDWARE and IT SUPPORT

Each year the survey asks detailed questions about outlet-level public access computing hardware. The responses reveal trends in infrastructure, impacts and corresponding technology-related service. This section describes the numbers and ages of workstations/laptops, hardware replacement and schedules for purchas-

ing additional equipment, ability to maintain replacement schedules and keep hardware in operation, and affecting factors. Comparisons with previous years' studies are noted where significant.

This year, public libraries report:

- Offering an average of 14.2 public access computers (desktop

and laptop) per outlet.

- Experiencing a slight improvement in having sufficient computers to meet patron demand.
- Being less likely to have or follow a computer replacement plan.
- Relying on non-IT specialists (public service staff and library directors) to provide the majority of

FIGURE C-1: AVERAGE NUMBER OF PUBLIC ACCESS INTERNET WORKSTATIONS, BY AGE AND METROPOLITAN STATUS

Average Age	Metropolitan Status			Overall
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	
Less than 1 year old	8.1	5.2	3.0	4.6
1 year old	11.1	5.3	2.8	5.1
2 years old	8.6	6.5	3.3	5.3
3 years old	9.3	6.4	3.5	5.5
4 years old	6.8	6.0	2.8	4.6
5 years old	8.5	5.4	3.9	5.1
Overall	25.4	15.8	9.2	14.2

IT support.

More Computers, but Fewer New Ones

Libraries of all sizes report an increase in the number of public access Internet computers available to their communities — 14.2, compared with 11 last year. Several factors may be contributing to this increase: libraries are keeping older computers in service longer to meet increased demand; a greater use of tax-based operating revenue for computer purchases; and the lower per-unit cost of personal computers¹.

Urban libraries continue to lead in the average number of workstations they make available to library patrons — 25.4, compared with 15.8 in suburban and 9.2 in rural libraries (Figure C-1). Although the overall average number of computers has increased (14.2 this year, 11 last year), when averaged for each age category the number actually declined in all but two categories (1 year old and 3 years old). It is troubling that libraries report fewer new computers this year (4.6 workstations less than 1 year old) than last year (5.5 workstations

less than one year old). This decrease may, however, reflect the reduced influx of grant funding (e.g., Opportunity Online hardware grant program sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) that were evident the past two years.

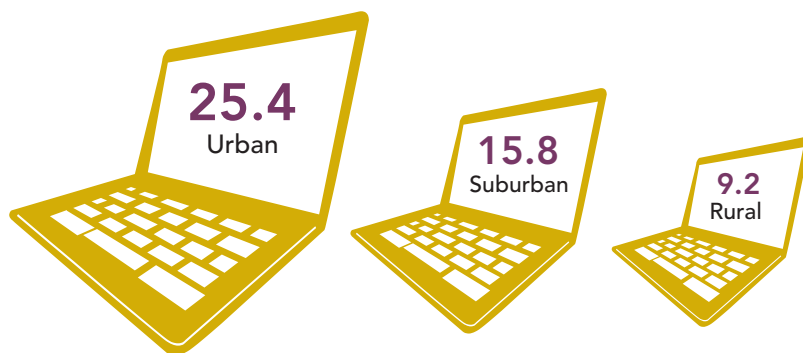
Overall, “other” expenditures, in which technology-related expenditures are a part (along with utilities, programs, etc.), have been significantly affected, with rural libraries and suburban libraries reporting steady losses since FY2008, and urban libraries reporting declines be-

ginning in FY2009. The average percentage changes in [other expenditures](#) reported in FY2009 from FY2010 were double-digit for all libraries, with suburban libraries down 51.3 percent (an average of \$195,395), urban down 29.1 percent (an average of \$283,156), and rural down 59.3 percent (an average of \$2,049).

Fewer libraries provided detail for technology-related expenditures by funding source. For those that did, rural libraries report spending about 11.6 percent less on hardware/software in FY2010, with local/county revenue falling off about 14 percent and suburban libraries reporting more significant declines in local/county funding for hardware/software (-32.5 percent, about \$16,300 on average) and telecommunications (-34.7 percent, about \$9,700 on average). However, urban libraries report an overall increase in spending for technology (up about \$273,000 in FY2010), with increases in all but two funding sources (state and government grants).

Libraries estimate FY2011 technology expenditures will be about the same as FY2010, but fluctuations in local, state and national economies make this questionable.

FIGURE C-2: NUMBER OF PUBLIC ACCESS INTERNET WORKSTATIONS, BY AVERAGE



¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Consumer Price Index Detailed Report Tables Annual Averages 2009, Table 1A. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U.S. city average, by expenditure category and commodity and service group.* <http://www.bls.gov/cpi/cpid09av.pdf> (Last accessed April 7, 2010)

FIGURE C-3: SUFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC ACCESS INTERNET WORKSTATIONS, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

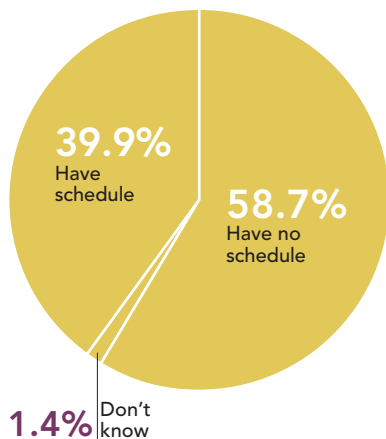
Sufficiency of Public Access Workstations	Metropolitan Status			
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Overall
There are consistently fewer public Internet workstations than patrons who wish to use them throughout a typical day	39.6%	14.6%	13.2%	18.2%
There are fewer public Internet workstations than patrons who wish to use them at different times throughout a typical day	47.1%	58.5%	55.9%	55.3%
There are sufficient public Internet workstations available for patrons who wish to use them during a typical day	13.4%	26.8%	31.0%	26.5%

FIGURE C-4: PUBLIC ACCESS WORKSTATION REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

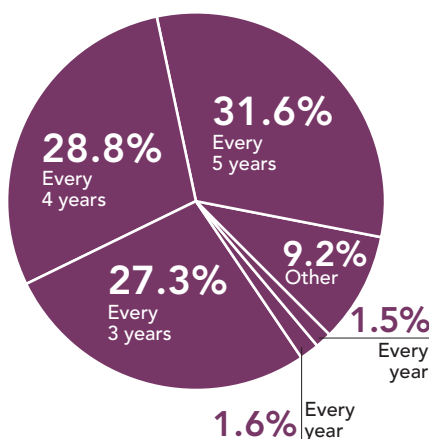
Replacement Schedule	Metropolitan Status			
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Overall
Yes, library has a replacement schedule	58.5%	46.7%	28.3%	39.9%
No (As Needed)	41.0%	52.1%	69.8%	58.7%
Don't know	0.6%	1.3%	1.9%	1.4%

FIGURE C-5:

Public Access Workstation Replacement Procedure



Public Access Workstation Replacement Schedule



Sufficiency Improves Slightly

While 73.5 percent of libraries report having too few workstations to meet patrons' needs (Figure C-3), this is a decrease from last year's survey in which 81.2 percent reported insufficient public computers. This, the first decline in three years, could be the effect of the increased number of workstations at public library outlets reported in Figure C-1, but may also be influenced by maximum Internet access speeds (Figure C-11) and an increase in the availability of wireless Internet access (Figure C-15).

The percent of libraries reporting a chronic insufficiency, however, is approximately the same — 18.2 percent this year, compared with 18.8 percent last year. Nearly 40 percent of urban libraries report insufficiency throughout a typical day, up from 37.7 percent last year.

Replacement Schedules

Overall, a majority of public libraries (58.7 percent) have no replacement schedule and replace their workstations as needed (Figure C-4). There continues to be a stark difference among the replacement policy schedules when compared by metropolitan status. The majority of urban libraries (58.5 percent) have an established replacement policy, unlike their suburban and rural counterparts. Despite this disparity, urban libraries saw a 20 percent increase in the proportion without a workstation replacement schedule. Suburban (52.1 percent up from 31 percent last year) and rural libraries (69.8 percent from 49.2 percent last year) each saw similar double-digit increases. These shifts are being interpreted as a response to operating budget reductions.

Of the 39.9 percent of public libraries with a replacement schedule, 26.7 percent report that they do not have the ability to meet the re-

placement schedule. An average of 18.7 public access workstations are scheduled to be replaced within the next year (Figure C-6), with rural libraries reporting the highest number of replacements, followed by urban and suburban libraries. It will be interesting to see how well libraries are able to meet the anticipated replacement schedules, given the current economic constraints.

Of those libraries with a replacement schedule, a majority (87.7 percent) replace workstations between three and five years (Figure C-5). There was very little variation in replacement schedule patterns reported by suburban and rural libraries, but more urban libraries appear to be shifting to a five-year schedule.

As libraries reach the saturation point with the numbers of workstations and laptops they make available for public access computing, and as operating budgets constrict, significantly more libraries are unable to estimate the number of workstations or laptops they will replace. About 53 percent report they will replace (Figure C-6) but do not know how many, compared with 28 percent last year.

Data show libraries report cost (83.5 percent) is an important or the most important factor affecting the decision to replace workstations/laptops in public libraries. While cost remains the most important factor, maintenance (40.3 percent, up from 33.1 percent last year) and availability of technical staff (36 percent) appear to be growing in importance (more detail available in [Figures 14–17](#)).

Plans to Add Computers

The majority of public libraries (62.5 percent) have no plans to add to the total number of public access workstations in the next year (Figure C-7), a slight increase over last year (61 percent). The average number of workstations to be added within the next year is 4.5, up slightly from last year (4.1). Urban

FIGURE C-6: ABILITY TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ACCESS WORKSTATIONS REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

Schedule	Metropolitan Status			Overall
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	
Yes	17.4%	17.1%	25.0%	20.0%
Yes, but the library branch does not know how many workstations/laptops they will replace	55.5%	55.1%	49.8%	53.4%
No	27.1%	27.7%	25.2%	26.7%
Don't know	3.7%	6.4%	8.6%	6.5%
The average number of workstations that the library plans to be replaced within the next year	22.0	10.8	23.1	18.7

FIGURE C-7: PUBLIC ACCESS WORKSTATIONS ADDITION SCHEDULE, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

Addition Schedule	Metropolitan Status			Overall
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	
Yes	14.5%	13.0%	13.1%	13.3%
Yes, but the library branch does not know how many workstations/laptops they will add	17.6%	15.0%	14.9%	15.4%
No	61.9%	63.3%	62.1%	62.5%
Don't know	2.2%	4.1%	3.9%	3.7%
Other	3.8%	4.7%	6.0%	5.2%
The average number of workstations that the library plans to add within the next year	7.9	4.3	3.2	4.5

libraries report plans to add many more workstations (7.9) compared with suburban (4.3) and rural public libraries (3.2). This is an increase from last year, except for

suburban libraries, which report a decline of 1.6 computer additions.

The variation in anticipated growth may be partially explained by the average square footage of

FIGURE C-8: FACTORS AFFECTING ADDING WORKSTATIONS/LAPTOPS

Factors	Overall						Average
	Least Important	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Most Important	Not Applicable	
Availability of Space	5.9%	4.5%	12.7%	19.7%	55.4%	1.7%	4.2
Cost Factors	3.2%	4.1%	11.6%	19.8%	60.0%	1.3%	4.3
Maintenance, upgrade, and general upkeep	13.2%	15.8%	29.5%	23.9%	14.6%	3.0%	3.1
Availability of public service staff to manage the use of the public access computers and users	15.8%	19.5%	27.3%	20.6%	13.3%	3.4%	3.0
Availability of technical staff to install, maintain, and update the public access computers	17.8%	18.6%	24.8%	20.8%	15.2%	2.9%	3.0
Availability of bandwidth to support additional workstations	21.1%	16.2%	18.7%	19.8%	20.3%	3.9%	3.0
Availability of electrical outlets, cabling, or other infrastructure	13.0%	11.4%	18.6%	21.6%	32.5%	3.0%	3.5
Other	8.8%	1.6%	3.8%	2.1%	6.6%	77.1%	2.8

FIGURE C-9: PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTLETS LENGTH OF TIME TO GET COMPUTERS BACK IN SERVICE, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

Length of Time	Metropolitan Status			Overall
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	
Less than one day	13.8%	17.6%	14.5%	15.4%
One day	34.9%	29.0%	21.4%	26.4%
Two days	34.5%	20.9%	21.3%	23.4%
More than two days	14.2%	19.9%	30.0%	23.8%
Don't know	1.4%	2.7%	3.3%	2.8%
Other amount of time	1.3%	9.8%	9.5%	8.2%

FIGURE C-10: SOURCES OF IT SUPPORT PROVIDED TO PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTLETS, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

Source of IT Support	Metropolitan Status			
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Overall
Public service staff	41.3%	39.6%	32.6%	36.6%
Library director	3.7%	26.1%	43.7%	30.7%
Building-based IT staff (IT specialist)	14.7%	14.1%	9.7%	12.1%
System-level IT staff	75.3%	49.2%	35.4%	47.0%
Library consortia or other library organization	7.0%	17.7%	12.5%	13.3%
County/City IT staff	25.7%	18.1%	10.3%	15.7%
State telecommunications network staff	6.4%	2.7%	3.4%	3.7%
State library IT staff	2.2%	3.5%	7.8%	5.4%
Outside vendor/contractor	19.3%	22.7%	35.6%	28.4%
Volunteer(s)	0.7%	4.3%	10.8%	6.8%
Other source	2.5%	5.5%	7.3%	5.9%

Totals will not equal 100%, as respondents marked all that applied

libraries in the three metropolitan types. The ability of libraries to reallocate space to public computing services depends on the available space. The average square footage of the central library reported in the smallest communities (less than 1,000 residents) was 1,681 in FY2007 and in the largest communities (1 million or more residents) 300,544. Branch size also was proportionally larger in urban communities, with the average branch square footage reported in the smallest communities (450 square feet) being a fraction of that in the largest (13,814 square feet).²

Similar to workstation replacement, the two most important factors influencing the addition of public library workstations continues to be space (75.1 percent) and cost (79.8 percent) (Figure C-8). Other high-

scoring factors affecting workstation additions are availability of electrical outlets, etc. (54 percent); maintenance (38.5 percent); and the availability of technical staff to manage the use of the public access computers and users (36 percent).

Urban libraries (84.2 percent) were slightly more likely than suburban (77.5 percent) and rural libraries (79.8 percent) to report cost as a factor, and availability of space was rated slightly higher by suburban libraries (76.9 percent) than urban (73 percent) and rural (74.6 percent).

Keeping Computers in Service

The length of time it takes for public access computers to get back into service if something goes wrong is presented in Figure C-9. A nearly

equal number of libraries report that it takes one (26.4 percent) or two days (23.4 percent) to get computers up and running again. And nearly as many libraries report that it takes more than two days (23.8 percent). The ability of libraries to get computers back in service in less than one day (15.4 percent) decreased slightly since last year (16.7 percent).

Rural libraries are significantly more likely to require more than two days (30 percent) than urban (14.2 percent) and suburban (19.9 percent) libraries.

This disparity aligns with the lack of dedicated IT support reported by rural libraries — rural libraries rely more on library directors (43.7 percent) and outside vendors/contractors (35.6 percent), whereas urban and suburban libraries rely more on expert system-

2 Institute of Museum and Library Services. *Public Libraries Survey: Fiscal Year 2007*. Washington DC: IMLS, 2009. Table 28A.

level IT staff (75.3 percent and 49.2 percent, respectively) (Figure C-10).

Non-IT specialists continue to provide the majority of public library IT support services (67.3 percent), although this is down from 73.5 last year. In urban (41.3 percent) and suburban (39.6 percent) libraries, public service staff members are

providing most of this support, while rural libraries depend more on their directors (43.7 percent). The metropolitan variation has much to do with overall staffing in rural libraries compared with larger suburban and urban libraries. Outside vendors are another important source of support (28.4 percent), particularly for rural

libraries (35.6 percent).

Conclusion

Overall, public libraries report surprising success in maintaining and even increasing their public access computing presence during a time of greater use by their communities and continuing economic uncertainty.

CONNECTIVITY

As job training programs, distance education and even government officials (e.g., President Obama) increasingly rely on streaming media

and Web-delivered videos to reach communities across the country, public libraries are working to keep pace with patron demand by making

improvements in their Internet connection speeds.

In 2009-2010, public libraries report:

- An ongoing increase in speeds greater than 1.5 Mbps (or roughly the bandwidth needed to watch a high-definition training video).
- A dramatic difference between urban (57 percent) and rural (17.7 percent) libraries with fiber optic public access Internet connections.
- Growing ubiquity of wireless access (82.2 percent, up from 76.4 one year ago).
- Despite a growing interest in improving bandwidth, being unable to afford the upgrade (29.5 percent compared to 22.9 percent last year).

FIGURE C-11: PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTLETS MAXIMUM SPEED OF PUBLIC ACCESS INTERNET SERVICES, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

Maximum Speed	Metropolitan Status			Overall
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	
Less than 256 kbps	*	1.0%	3.6%	2.3%
257 kbps-768 kbps	1.9%	5.0%	8.5%	6.1%
769 kbps-1.4 Mbps	2.1%	5.8%	8.3%	6.4%
1.5 Mbps (T1)	15.8%	25.8%	32.6%	27.4%
1.6 Mbps-3.0 Mbps	11.0%	8.4%	12.9%	11.0%
3.1 Mbps-6.0 Mbps	10.1%	9.9%	10.2%	10.1%
6.1 Mbps-10 Mbps	19.0%	15.9%	7.4%	12.3%
10.0-20.0 Mbps	16.4%	9.2%	3.7%	7.8%
20.1-30.0 Mbps	2.3%	1.2%	*	1.2%
30.1-40.0 Mbps	3.6%	1.3%	*	1.4%
Greater than 40 Mbps	14.8%	9.5%	4.5%	8.0%
Don't know	2.2%	6.9%	6.8%	6.0%

Key: * : Insufficient data to report (<1%)

Connection Speeds Improve

The percentage of libraries offering speeds greater than 1.5 Mbps (T1) is steadily increasing (Figure C-11). In the current survey, 51.8 percent of libraries report connection speeds greater than 1.5 Mbps, compared to 44.5 percent last year. These changes point to an overall gradual improvement in connectivity when combined with a decline in the percentage of libraries reporting connection speeds of less than 1.5 Mbps (14.8 percent this year compared with 21.9 percent last year). Further, the percentage of libraries reporting greater-than-10 Mbps connection

speeds has increased to 18.4 percent from 12.3 percent reported last year. Some urban and suburban libraries report connection speeds greater than 40 Mbps (14.8 percent and 9.5 percent, respectively).

For rural library outlets, a nearly 9 percent increase in maximum connection speeds of 1.5 Mbps (T1) is reported — 32.6 percent, up from 23.8 reported last year. Coupled with a 10 percent decrease in connection speeds below 1.5 Mbps (20.4 percent this year, from 31 percent last year), rural libraries are particularly showing modest improvements in connection speeds.

In contrast to the gradual improvements noted above, data indicate most public library outlets (74.6 percent) did not increase their connection speeds in the past year. Urban outlets (33.3 percent) are most likely to have increased access speeds, and rural outlets are the least likely at 19.1 percent (more detail available in [Figure 35](#)). However, a percentage of libraries across all metropolitan status categories made improvements than had planned to do so, based on what was reported last year.

Type and Source of Internet Access

Data show the predominant type of connection for libraries is a leased line (40.8 percent), which is a type of high-speed Internet connection using frame relay and a dedicated line, and includes ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network), T1, cable modem and DSL (Digital Subscriber Line). Other connection types include:

- DSL (25.4 percent)
- Cable (22.9 percent)
- Satellite (1.2 percent)
- Wireless (13.9 percent)
- Other (17.2 percent)

The total will not equal 100 percent because a library may use mul-

FIGURE C-12: BANDWIDTH SPEEDS OVER TIME

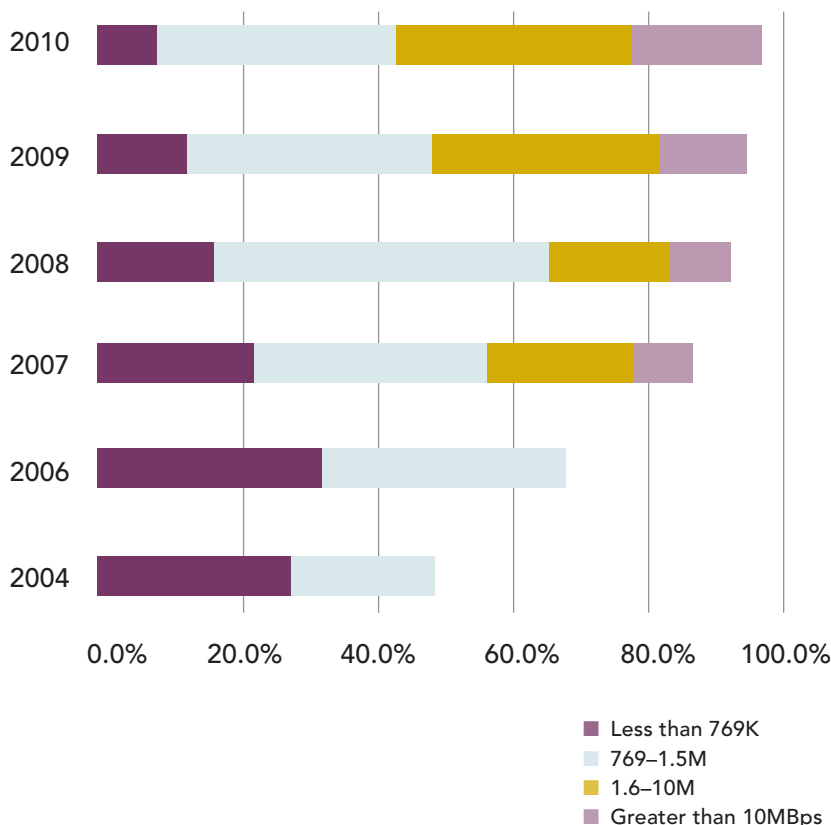


FIGURE C-13: AVAILABILITY OF FIBER OPTIC PUBLIC ACCESS INTERNET CONNECTION AT PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTLETS, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

Fiber Optic Public Access Internet Connection	Metropolitan Status			
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Overall
Yes, the connection is fiber optic	57.1%	35.7%	17.7%	30.7%
No, the connection is not fiber optic	40.5%	52.4%	62.3%	55.1%
Don't know	2.4%	11.9%	20.0%	14.2%

Key: * Insufficient data to report (<1%)

iple types of Internet connections. Of libraries that report a connection type as “other,” most cite fiber optic connections. New this year, the survey also specifically asked whether the library outlet’s public access Internet connection was fiber optic.

Thirty-one percent of libraries report this is the case (Figure C-13).

A majority (57.1 percent) of urban library outlets offer a fiber optic connection (as at least one connection from among multiple connection types), with 35.7 percent of

FIGURE C-14: PUBLIC ACCESS WIRELESS INTERNET CONNECTIVITY IN PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTLETS, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

Availability of Public Access Wireless Internet Services	Metropolitan Status			
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Overall
Currently available for public use when the library is open and closed	60.9%	62.4%	60.4%	61.2%
Currently available for public use only when library is open	26.6%	24.9%	16.1%	21.0%
Not currently available, but there are plans to make it available within the next year	5.7%	5.5%	8.0%	6.8%
Not currently available and no plans to make it available within the next year	6.0%	6.9%	15.0%	10.6%

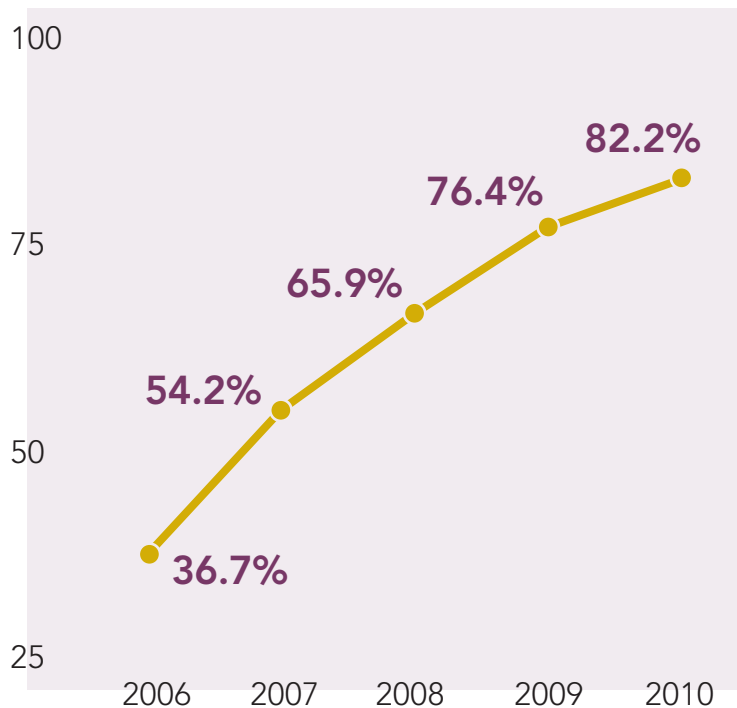
cial Internet service providers (ISP) as their source of Internet connection (61.2 percent). Regardless of metropolitan status, the majority of libraries report that the source of their connection is an ISP: 59.6 percent of urban, 56.7 percent of suburban and 65 percent of rural libraries. State networks are the second greatest source of Internet connection in public libraries, with 19.6 percent of urban, 25.3 percent of suburban and 29.1 percent of rural libraries reporting this type of connection (more detail available in [Figures 31–34](#)).

Wireless Access Nears Ubiquity

Public libraries continue to increase wireless (Wi-Fi) access, with 82.2 percent of libraries offering wireless connections to their patrons, up from 76.4 percent in 2008–2009 (Figure C-14). Wireless access in rural libraries has shown modest growth, up 6 percent to 76.5 percent from last year. The percentage of rural libraries that do not provide wireless access and have no plans to make it available saw a corresponding decrease, down to 10.6 percent from 14.4 percent last year. The District of Columbia, Rhode Island and Arizona libraries this year report 100 percent of their libraries provide Wi-Fi access, and another 15 states report more than 90 percent of libraries offer wireless ([see summary data](#)).

Data show this wireless access frequently is added to existing desktop Internet connections. Overall, 79.3 percent of libraries report that the Internet connection is shared (with 23.2 percent using bandwidth management techniques), up slightly from 74.8 percent (and 24.9 percent with management) last year. Fewer

C-15: PUBLIC LIBRARY WIRELESS AVAILABILITY, 2006-2010



suburban outlets and 17.7 percent of rural outlets also offering fiber connections. Overall, 55.1 percent of libraries report they do not offer fiber optic connections in their out-

lets currently; of these, rural outlets (62.3 percent) represent the largest percentage.

Data also show the highest percentage of libraries report commer-

libraries, of all sizes, report separate connections or bandwidth management. This may reflect the lack of IT staff reported by public libraries, with 36.6 percent relying on public services staff to support IT and 30.7 percent (rising to 43.7 percent for rural libraries) relying on the library director to support IT (see Figure C-10). The potential impact of this on Internet traffic may be sluggish response time at certain points in the day unless the Internet speed also is increased.

Adequacy of Internet Connections Improves

Although libraries report increases in connection speeds, 45 percent also indicate those speeds are insufficient to meet patron needs some or all of the time (Figure C-16). This is a notable improvement from last year, when 60 percent of libraries reported insufficient connection speeds some or all of the time. Adequate connection speeds are reported by 54.4 percent of public libraries, with urban libraries reporting the greatest improvement (47.6 percent compared with 28.6 percent last year). Suburban (57.9 percent) and rural (54.3 percent) libraries also report double-digit improvements.

Plans to Improve Bandwidth

The extent to which library outlets can increase their connection speeds to meet demand is presented in Figure C-17. Cost, rather than availability of higher-speed connections, hampers more libraries this year. Close to one-third (29.5 percent) of all libraries report an interest in increasing bandwidth, although they cannot currently afford to do so, up from 22.9 percent one year ago. Libraries of all sizes report this was the case, with urban libraries most affected (32.9 percent, compared with 22.1 percent

FIGURE C-16: ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTLETS PUBLIC ACCESS INTERNET CONNECTION, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

Adequacy of Public Access Internet Connection	Metropolitan Status			
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Overall
The connection speed is insufficient to meet patron needs	18.5%	13.3%	14.4%	14.7%
The connection speed is sufficient to meet patron needs at some times	33.7%	28.4%	30.6%	30.4%
The connection speed is sufficient to meet patron needs at all times	47.6%	57.9%	54.3%	54.4%
Don't know	*	*	*	*

Key: * Insufficient data to report (<1%)

FIGURE C-17: POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTLETS' PUBLIC ACCESS INTERNET CONNECTION, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

Increasing Adequacy of Connections	Metropolitan Status			
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Overall
No, the connection speed is already at the maximum level available	8.8%	18.8%	26.4%	20.7%
No, there is no interest in increasing the speed of public access Internet connection	10.6%	13.9%	12.0%	12.4%
Yes, there is interest in increasing the outlet's bandwidth, but the library cannot currently afford to	32.9%	27.0%	30.1%	29.5%
Yes, and there are plans in place to increase the bandwidth within the next year	16.4%	8.9%	5.5%	8.5%
It is possible to increase the speed; however, there are no plans in place to increase the bandwidth within the next year	22.4%	18.2%	12.4%	16.1%
There is interest but the outlet lacks the technical knowledge to increase the bandwidth in the library	*	*	1.5%	1.0%
Other	6.7%	7.7%	4.9%	6.2%
Don't know	2.1%	4.8%	7.2%	5.5%

Key: * Insufficient data to report (<1%)

last year).

Perhaps for the same reason, fewer libraries plan to increase bandwidth in the coming year — 8.5 percent, compared with 13 percent last year. Ten percent fewer urban libraries plan to improve Internet connection speeds. These responses correlate to a decline in library buying power, as a majority (56.4 percent) of public libraries report flat or decreased operating budgets in FY2010, up from just over 40 percent in FY2009.

Slightly more than 20 percent of all libraries, and 26.4 percent of rural libraries, report they already are at the maximum speed available, down from 26 percent and 30.9 percent, respectively, last year.

Conclusion

The race to improve access speeds to keep up with more complex Internet applications and services continues. Quantitative and qualitative data from rural libraries suggest

even remote locations are beginning to have the option of purchasing higher Internet speeds. Twenty percent of rural libraries report speeds less than 1.5 Mbps, down from 31 percent one year ago.

Of some concern, however, is the growing number of libraries reporting a shared public desktop and wireless Internet connection without bandwidth management, a potential issue as more patrons bring mobile devices onto the library network.

INTERNET SERVICES AND TRAINING

A wide range of Internet services and resources are provided to library patrons — inside the library and remotely through many public library Web sites. In addition to providing downloadable media, virtual reference and specialized databases that support research and career development, library staff also help computer users gain the technology and digital literacy skills they need to succeed online.

In 2009-2010, public libraries report:

- Providing services to job-seekers is the most important Internet service they offer (90.8 percent).
- Providing formal or informal technology training to library patrons (89.1 percent).
- Classes in general computer skills and general Internet use are the most common offered overall, with growth in nearly every training category — including classes related to online job-seeking and career-related information (up 16 percent), social networking (up 16 percent) and safe online practices (up 11 percent).
- Internet-based services — including e-books and homework help — are becoming more prevalent

and often are available to library card holders 24/7 through the library's Web site.

Libraries report that services for job-seekers and access to government information and services remain among the most important public Internet services provided to the community, followed by education resources and databases for

and services is either very important or most important, rising in importance by nearly 27 percent from last year.

- Nearly 76 percent report providing education resources and databases for K-12 students is either very important or most important, down slightly from 79 percent last year.

While urban, suburban and rural libraries all ranked these services within their top five, some variation can be found by community type:

- Nearly 94 percent of urban, 93.5 percent of suburban and 87.7 percent of rural libraries report that services to job-seekers are either very important or most important.
- About 89 percent of suburban, 88.5 percent of rural, and 82 percent of urban libraries report that access to government information and services is either very important or most important.
- Almost 82 percent of urban, 77.1 percent of suburban and 72.8 percent of rural libraries report that education resources and databases for K-12 students are either very important or most important.

Supporting adult/continuing

“We’re tackling the unemployment line one step at a time. It’s a small step in light of the challenges, but how else can you approach it?”
asked a Tennessee library staffer.

K-12 students (Figure C-18).

- Nearly 91 percent report that services to job-seekers are either very important or most important, rising in importance by nearly 25 percent from last year.
- Almost 88 percent report that access to government information

FIGURE C-18: THE MOST IMPORTANT INTERNET SERVICES OFFERED TO THE COMMUNITY

Services	Overall						Average
	Least Important	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Most Important	Not Applicable	
The library provides services to job-seekers	1.0%	1.3%	6.6%	17.2%	73.6%	0.3%	4.6
The library provides information for economic development (e.g., start a business, seek business opportunities)	2.6%	7.9%	26.0%	27.6%	35.3%	0.7%	3.9
The library provides access to government information and services(e.g., unemployment benefits, tax, forms, Medicare information or paying traffic tickets)	1.1%	1.4%	9.5%	24.4%	63.2%	0.3%	4.5
The library provides computer and Internet skills training	3.6%	9.1%	23.0%	26.0%	34.1%	4.3%	3.8
The library provides education resources and databases for K-12 students	2.0%	4.9%	16.6%	30.0%	45.9%	0.7%	4.1
The library provides education resources and databases for students in higher education	2.7%	8.3%	21.2%	31.4%	35.5%	0.8%	3.9
The library provides education resources and databases for home-schooling	2.6%	6.1%	20.4%	29.3%	40.6%	1.0%	4.0
The library provides education resources and databases for adult/ continuing education students	1.8%	5.0%	18.8%	32.5%	41.1%	0.9%	4.1
The library provides information for college applicants	2.4%	7.7%	27.5%	29.5%	32.8%	0%	3.8
The library provides information about the community	3.1%	8.5%	22.8%	28.4%	36.7%	0.4%	3.9
The library provides information about databases regarding investments	8.2%	17.2%	31.7%	22.0%	19.8%	1.0%	3.3
The library provides services to immigrant populations	11.5%	15.5%	23.8%	19.2%	26.2%	3.8%	3.3
Other	4.5%	1.1%	3.4%	14.3%	33.3%	43.4%	4.3

education also ranked high for all libraries. Urban libraries were most likely to report that providing computer and Internet skills training is among the most important services (72.8 percent), while more suburban (70.8 percent) and rural libraries (70.8 percent) report providing education resources and databases for home-school-

ing is either very or most important (more detailed information by metropolitan status is available in [Figures 41–43](#)).

Libraries Assist with Patron Technology Training

The patron training and technical assistance required to support the

use of these services has increased with the overall rise in library use during the current economic downturn. Almost 90 percent of all libraries provide formal or informal training and assistance, which is detailed in Figure C-19. The number of public library outlets that offer formal technology training classes increased slightly (2 percent) from

FIGURE C-19: PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTLETS OFFERING FORMAL OR INFORMAL TECHNOLOGY TRAINING, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

Training Availability	Metropolitan Status			
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Overall
Offers formal technology training classes	59.2%	43.9%	24.2%	37.0%
Offers one-on-one technology training sessions by appointment	20.6%	25.0%	23.4%	23.5%
Offers informal point-of-use assistance	75.3%	77.4%	76.6%	76.6%
Offers online training material	29.6%	23.3%	17.7%	21.7%
Does not offer any technology training	4.2%	10.1%	13.8%	10.9%

dramatically, with 27.4 percent of libraries now offering this training, up from 11.2 percent last year. Training related to safe online practices, such as safeguarding personal information, also grew significantly from the year before, with rural and suburban libraries (36.9 and 37.1 percent) more likely than their urban counterparts (33.8 percent) to provide these classes. Overall, 11 percent more libraries provide training in this area as privacy issues grow.

Libraries Expand Offerings of Online, Downloadable Resources

More libraries report they offer a range of Internet-based services – often remotely via the library website, as well as onsite in the library (Figure C-21). Licensed databases, which take in a range of online collections from practice tests to business journals to full-text newspaper and magazine articles otherwise unavailable to the public without paying a fee, continue to be the most commonly provided Internet resource. Urban (88.1 percent onsite, 84.9 percent remote) libraries were somewhat more likely than suburban (77.8 percent onsite, 81.4 percent remote) and much more likely than rural (64.7 percent onsite, 65.8 percent remote) libraries to offer licensed database access services onsite and remotely.

Double-digit improvements in the provision of online homework help, audio content, virtual reference and e-books are apparent this year, as compared with last year.

A significant majority (63.5 percent) of libraries provide homework help service remotely, as well as onsite (67.1 percent). Urban (73.8 percent remotely and 74.7 percent onsite) and suburban (72.5 percent remotely and 70.9 percent onsite) libraries were

last year. Urban libraries (59.2 percent) make up the majority, up 6.7 percent from last year; 43.9 percent of suburban and 24.2 percent of rural libraries provide formal training, neither reporting much growth from last year.

New this year is data about the number of libraries that offer patrons one-on-one technology training by appointment. About one-quarter (23.5 percent) of all libraries provide this dedicated technology assistance, with suburban (25 percent) and rural libraries (23.4 percent) more likely to offer this service. Lastly, one in five libraries (21.7 percent) report they offer online technology training materials.

For libraries offering formal training (Figure C-20), general computer skills classes are the most common (93.4 percent compared with 91.3 percent last year), followed by general Internet use (91.7 percent compared with 92.8 percent last year).

Slightly more libraries (81 percent, compared with 76.9 percent last year) report training patrons on general online/Web searching and general software use classes (75.5 percent, compared with 70.5 percent last year). The percentage of libraries offering classes on accessing online job-seeking and career-related information grew to 42.8 percent, from 26.9 percent last year. More than half of all urban libraries provide this training.

Training on how to access online government information continues to be more common in urban libraries (38.7 percent) and showed some growth from last year (35.4 percent). Suburban (29.1 percent, compared with 19 percent last year) and rural (25.4 percent compared with 22.9 percent last year) libraries also showed increased availability of formal training to access online government information.

Social networking training (referred to as Web 2.0 last year) grew

FIGURE C-20: FORMAL TECHNOLOGY TRAINING CLASSES OFFERED BY PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTLETS, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS*

Technology Training Classes	Metropolitan Status			
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Overall
General computer skills (e.g., how to use mouse, keyboard, printing)	95.0%	92.5%	93.1%	93.4%
General software use (e.g., word processing, spreadsheets, presentation)	75.1%	77.9%	72.8%	75.5%
General Internet use (e.g., set up e-mail, Web browsing)	86.5%	95.0%	92.1%	91.7%
General online/Web searching (e.g., using Google, Yahoo, others)	76.3%	84.0%	81.4%	81.0%
Using library's Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC)	49.3%	54.6%	46.0%	50.4%
Using online databases (e.g., commercial databases to search and find content)	53.3%	54.3%	48.6%	52.2%
Safe online practices (e.g., not divulging personal information)	33.8%	37.1%	36.9%	36.1%
Accessing online government information (e.g., Medicare, taxes, how to complete forms)	38.7%	29.1%	25.4%	30.6%
Accessing online job-seeking and career-related information	51.7%	43.8%	33.7%	42.8%
Accessing online medical information (e.g., health literacy)	20.7%	22.7%	20.5%	21.4%
Accessing online investment information	15.8%	11.4%	9.9%	12.1%
Accessing genealogy information	34.6%	41.3%	39.9%	39.0%
Accessing consumer information (e.g., product value, safety, reliability, warranty information)	21.0%	25.0%	18.2%	21.7%
Digital photography, software and online applications (e.g., Photoshop, Flickr)	20.5%	26.9%	25.0%	24.6%
Social Networking (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, blogging, RSS)	31.9%	28.5%	22.1%	27.4%
Other technology-based training classes	14.6%	4.6%	5.1%	7.5%

*Note: Data in this figure is from the subset of libraries that report they offer formal technology classes (Figure C-19)

equally likely to provide either type of access than were rural libraries (54.4 percent remotely and 61.6 percent onsite). About 12 percent of libraries do not offer homework help, compared with 23 percent last year.

A majority (55.6 percent) of libraries provide audio content

(e.g., audiobooks or podcasts) remotely. Urban and suburban libraries were as much as 20 percent to 30 percent more likely to support audio content remote access than were rural libraries. Just over 17.5 percent of all libraries do not yet offer audio content, compared with 27.1 percent last year.

Digital/virtual reference is the fourth most common Internet-based service provided; more libraries report providing this service remotely (57.8 percent) than onsite (46.2 percent). About 27.7 percent do not provide the service, compared with 37.6 percent last year.

FIGURE C-21: ONLINE RESOURCES AND SERVICES THAT THE LIBRARY MAKES AVAILABLE TO PATRONS

	Overall			
	Does Not Offer Service	Offers Service in Library	Offers Service from Outside the Library (e.g., via the Web)	Provides Limited Access
<i>Resources</i>				
Digital reference/virtual reference	27.7%	46.2%	57.8%	3.1%
Licensed databases	5.0%	73.3%	74.5%	2.6%
E-books	34.1%	41.6%	55.6%	2.4%
Web/business conferencing (e.g., Skype, WebEx)	86.9%	6.7%	5.2%	3.2%
Online instructional courses/tutorials	43.0%	40.6%	37.9%	2.7%
Homework help	11.8%	67.1%	63.5%	2.6%
Audio content (e.g., streaming video, video clips, other)	17.5%	60.1%	55.6%	2.0%
Video content (e.g., streaming video, video clips, other)	36.7%	47.1%	37.6%	3.6%
Digitized special collections (e.g., letters, postcards, documents, other)	53.5%	33.4%	34.5%	2.2%
Library social networking (e.g., blogs, Flixster, Goodreads)	41.4%	40.2%	40.9%	3.0%
Online book clubs	65.0%	22.4%	27.0%	2.2%
<i>Services</i>				
Allow patrons to access and store content on USB or other portable devices/drives (e.g., iPods, MP3 players, flash drives, other)	8.4%	88.8%	—	4.1%
Allow patrons to connect digital cameras and manipulate content	32.4%	62.1%	—	6.5%
Allow patrons to burn compact discs/DVDs	43.7%	51.8%	—	4.8%
Provide access to recreational gaming consoles, software or Web sites	29.1%	64.1%	—	9.0%

As with digital reference, e-book service is more often provided remotely (55.6 percent) than onsite (41.6 percent). Approximately one-third (34.1 percent) of libraries report that they do not provide e-books, compared to 44.6 percent

last year.

It is increasingly common for libraries to allow patrons to access and store content on USBs, MP3s and other devices, connect digital cameras, burn CDs or DVDs, and also provide access to gaming con-

soles, software or Web sites (Figure C-21).

This is the first year the survey asked libraries if a service was available onsite or remotely to try to ascertain the range of library-brokered resources available to the

“We view these classes as basic literacy. In today’s world, it’s tough to do anything if you don’t know basic word processing and basic Web use,” said one suburban Arizona library director.

community even when the building is closed. Because libraries could mark all that apply, percentages do not equal 100 percent (more detailed information by metropolitan status available in [Figures 47–49](#)).

The factors that libraries report prevent them from either providing specific services or that require limiting access to certain services are presented in Figure C-22. The largest percentage of libraries report they cannot afford to purchase and/or support such services — 62.2 percent, up from 58.9 percent reported last year. Library policies re-

FIGURE C-22: FACTORS PREVENTING ACCESS TO (OR LIMITED ACCESS TO) SERVICES, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

	Metropolitan Status			
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Overall
Computer hardware/software on public Internet workstations will not support service(s)	40.4%	41.2%	40.5%	40.7%
Public access Internet connectivity speeds will not support service(s)	26.8%	26.1%	26.6%	25.2%
Library policy restricts offering or access to service(s)	40.7%	40.8%	42.4%	40.9%
Library cannot afford to purchase and/or support service(s)	62.9%	62.7%	61.6%	62.2%
Other	11.6%	11.8%	11.9%	11.6%

stricting access to services also saw an increase — 40.9 percent, up from 33.2 percent. The number of libraries reporting the lack of computer hardware/software to support the services declined substantially, with only 40.7 percent reporting this factor compared with 55.4 percent last year. This improvement aligns with the overall increase in public access workstations reported by libraries this year.

Conclusion

As with bandwidth, it is evident that public library staff are working to provide robust Internet-based services, often available through the library’s “virtual branch” — the library website. Access alone, however, is not adequate to meet the needs of many new computer users. Formal and informal technology assistance remains critical to ensuring people have the skills needed to participate and thrive online.

SPECIAL REPORT: JOBS AND E-GOVERNMENT

Libraries are being used more than ever during these economically difficult times — and their use for job-seeking and e-government activities is particularly evident. So, too, is the reliance of employers and government agencies on library staff, technology infrastructure, services and resources that public libraries make available to their communities. At a minimum, users need access to workstations and an Internet connection to apply for jobs or seek government agency support. These skills require both information technology literacy, an understanding of the often complex

maze of government agencies and their services, and access to educational resources to meet employment requirements.

Employment Support

Many libraries offer patrons assistance with identifying job opportunities, preparing materials for applying for jobs and taking examinations in order to qualify for certain jobs (Figure C-23):

Most (88.2 percent) provide access to job databases and other job opportunity resources.

Many (68 percent) provide access to civil service examination materi-

als, a figure that increases to 85.7 percent in urban libraries.

Nearly 70 percent provide software and other resources to help patrons create résumés and employment materials, a figure that increases to 81.2 percent in urban libraries.

Two-thirds of libraries provide patrons with assistance in completing online job applications.

Forty-two percent of urban libraries offer classes on job-seeking strategies and interview tips.

E-Government Support

A substantial percentage of libraries — 82.4 percent — report that it is very

FIGURE C-23: JOB-SEEKING SERVICES PROVIDED BY PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTLETS, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

Job-seeking roles and services	Metropolitan Status			
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Overall
The library provides access to job databases and other job opportunity resources	89.3%	91.6%	85.3%	88.2%
The library provides access to civil service exam materials	85.7%	78.9%	68.0%	74.9%
The library helps patrons complete online job applications	67.4%	63.8%	69.4%	67.1%
The library collaborates with outside agencies or individuals to help patrons complete online job applications	32.9%	20.6%	22.3%	23.6%
The library helps patrons develop business plans and other materials to start businesses	22.1%	14.0%	9.5%	13.3%
The library collaborates with outside agencies or individuals to help patrons develop business plans and other materials to start businesses	26.5%	13.2%	10.5%	14.2%
The library offers classes (either by library staff or others working with the library) on job-seeking strategies, interview tips, etc.	42.0%	30.7%	13.6%	24.5%
The library offers software and other resources to help patrons create résumés and other employment materials	81.2%	68.7%	64.5%	68.9%
Other	4.7%	3.0%	3.2%	3.4%

Will not total 100%, as categories are not mutually exclusive

important or most important for the library to provide access to government information and services such as unemployment benefits, tax information, forms, Medicare information and the like. In particular (Figure C-24):

- Libraries (88.8 percent) provide as-needed assistance to patrons for understanding how to access and use e-government Web sites.

- Libraries (78.7 percent) provide assistance to patrons applying for or accessing e-government services.

- About 63.3 percent indicate that staff provide assistance to patrons for completing government forms.

- Nearly 32 percent of urban libraries indicate that at least one staff member has significant knowledge and skills in the provision of e-government services, and 26.4 percent of urban libraries indicate that they are partnering with government agencies and others to provide e-government services.

Service Challenges

Although public libraries report a range of employment and e-government support resources, they also indicate that there are challenges to their ability to offer patrons these services (Figure C-25):

- About 59 percent of libraries report that they do not have enough staff to effectively help patrons with their job-seeking needs, and 46 percent report that their library staff does not have the necessary expertise to meet patron job-seeking needs.

- Nearly 59 percent of libraries report that they do not have enough staff to effectively help patrons with their e-government needs and 52.7 percent report that their library staff does not have the necessary expertise to meet patron e-government needs.

Conclusion

The survey data — further corroborated by the March 2010 Opportunity for All study³ — show that libraries serve as vital community resources for job-seeking and e-government support. However, libraries report that they do not always have enough staff or the expertise to deal with all patron employment and e-government needs—thus creating new service challenges. ■

3 Becker, Samantha, et. al. (2010) *Opportunity for All: How the American Public Benefits from Internet Access at U.S. Libraries*. (IMLS-2010-RES-01). Institute of Museum and Library Services. Washington, D.C.

FIGURE C-24: E-GOVERNMENT ROLES AND SERVICES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTLETS, BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

E-Government roles and services	Metropolitan Status			
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Overall
Staff provide assistance to patrons applying for or accessing e-government services	75.9%	78.6%	79.9%	78.7%
Staff provide as-needed assistance to patrons for understanding how to access and use e-government Web sites	91.2%	88.8%	87.9%	88.8%
Staff provide assistance to patrons for understanding government programs and services	45.6%	45.6%	40.7%	43.3%
Staff provide assistance to patrons for completing government forms	71.4%	65.2%	65.1%	66.3%
The library developed guides, tip sheets, or other tools to help patrons use e-government Web sites and services	23.3%	18.7%	14.2%	17.4%
The library offers training classes regarding the use of government Web sites, understanding government programs and completing electronic forms	22.9%	7.3%	4.8%	8.9%
The library offers translation services for forms and services in other languages	11.1%	6.6%	4.2%	6.2%
The library is partnering with government agencies, non-profit organizations and others to provide e-government services	26.4%	21.2%	17.8%	20.5%
The library is working with government agencies (local, state or federal) to help agencies improve their Web sites and/or e-government services	11.0%	8.2%	6.0%	7.7%
The library has at least one staff member with significant knowledge and skills in provision of e- government services	31.5%	16.2%	15.4%	18.5%
Other	4.8%	3.3%	4.4%	4.1%

FIGURE C-25: CHALLENGES HELPING PATRONS MEET THEIR EMPLOYMENT AND E-GOVERNMENT NEEDS

Challenges	Overall						Average
	Least Important	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Most Important	Not Applicable	
The library does not have enough staff to effectively help patrons with their job-seeking needs	9.1%	10.3%	19.4%	22.5%	36.1%	2.7%	3.7
The library staff does not have the necessary expertise to meet patron job-seeking needs	11.7%	13.5%	26.0%	21.5%	24.5%	2.9%	3.4
This library does not have enough staff to effectively help patrons with their e-government needs	9.4%	9.4%	18.6%	21.4%	37.5%	3.6%	3.7
This library's staff does not have the necessary expertise to meet patron e-government needs	9.1%	10.8%	23.9%	22.9%	29.8%	3.5%	3.6