

PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND THE INTERNET 2008: STUDY RESULTS AND FINDINGS

John Carlo Bertot, Ph.D.
Professor and Director of the
Center for Library Innovation,
University of Maryland

Charles R. McClure, Ph.D.
Director and Francis
Eppes Professor,
Florida State University

Carla B. Wright, M.S.
ALA Survey Manager

Elise Jensen, M.S.
Research Associate

Susan Thomas, M.L.S.
ALA Project Manager



Funded by the American Library Association and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND THE INTERNET 2008: STUDY RESULTS AND FINDINGS

John Carlo Bertot

John Carlo Bertot was Professor and Associate Director of the Information Institute at the College of Information, Florida State University during this research period. He is currently Professor and Director of the Center for Library Innovation at the University of Maryland. His research spans library technology planning and evaluation, information and telecommunications policy, and E-Government. He has conducted a range of research broadly related to planning and evaluation of networked services. His publications focus on topics related to demonstrating the value of library services, E-Government, and telecommunications policy.

Charles R. McClure

Charles R. McClure, Ph.D., is the Francis Eppes Professor of Information Studies and Director of the Information Institute at Florida State University. Prior to his current position, he was a distinguished professor at the School of Information Studies, Syracuse University. McClure is the founder and, with John Carlo Bertot, has conducted the U.S. survey of public libraries and the Internet since 1994. He has written extensively on topics related to the planning and evaluation of information services, federal information policy and information resources management. Most recently, he co-authored *Public Libraries and Internet Service Roles: Measuring and Maximizing Internet Services* (ALA, 2008).

www.ii.fsu.edu/~cmclure.

Elise Jensen

Elise Jensen is a Graduate Research Associate at the Information Use Management and Policy Institute. At present, she is a doctoral student at the College of Criminology and Criminal Justice at FSU, and is experienced in survey research and data analysis for large-scale research projects. Her research interests focus on the relationship between neighborhood characteristics and juvenile delinquency.

Susan Thomas

Susan Thomas has a Master's in Library Science and has sixteen years of work experience with Florida State University. At the Information Use Management and Policy Institute she has been responsible for development and submission of research proposals, management of Institute contracts and budgets, coordination of research projects, and management of project deadlines, deliverables and invoicing. She has taken a leading role in the planning, preparation and processes of the PL Internet survey mail out, and responding to and tracking of questions via phone and email. She also assists with report compilation and editing.

Carla B. Wright

Carla B. Wright is a Graduate Research Associate as well as Survey Manager at the Information Use Management and Policy Institute. She is a Ph.D. candidate at the College of Criminology and Criminal Justice at FSU, and has several years of data analysis and survey administration experience through her positions as both a Graduate Research Assistant and Project Manager at FSU. Her research interests include homicide and female criminal victimization. She has presented her research at several national conferences, been a contributing author on publications and research monographs, and serves as a manuscript reviewer for peer-reviewed journals.

Funded by the American Library Association and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

142 Collegiate Loop, P.O. Box 3062100, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2100

Telephone 850.645.5683 Fax 850.644.4522

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Large-scale national surveys and site visits such as this involve substantial effort and support from a number of individuals and groups. While impossible to mention each person or group, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of those who provided substantial assistance.

The study team wishes to express their gratitude to the American Library Association (ALA) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for their generous support of this study. Without such funding, it would not be possible to continue these surveys. Also, we thank ALA and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for their assistance in securing a high survey response rate.

The study team would like to recognize the significant efforts of the state librarians, the state data coordinators, and other state library agency staff members. As with all of the studies conducted since 1994, the amount of time, energy, and support that the state library community invested in this study contributed directly to the survey's high response rate – we cannot thank them enough for all of their efforts.

We also extend a debt of gratitude to all the public librarians who completed the survey. We realize that it takes a great deal of time, effort, and commitment to participate in the survey. Without your interest and your participation, we simply would not have any data. Without data, this study would have no ability to affect policy, practice, and engagement in networked services by public libraries. The time you take to provide the data in this report offers valuable information for national, state, and local policymakers, library advocates, researchers, practitioners, government and private funding organizations, and others to understand the impact, issues, and needs of libraries providing public access computing. The data also provide public librarians with the opportunity to advocate for the communities that they serve.

We are also in debt to the study's Advisory Committee. These individuals assisted us in a number of key study areas including issue identification, question development, survey pretesting, and providing perspectives on study findings. Our thanks to Stacey Aldrich (California State Library), Nancy Ashmore (Prarie du Chien Public Library), Robert Bocher (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Division for Libraries), Linda Crowe (Peninsula Library System), John D. Hales (Northeast Florida Library Information Network), Christopher Jowaisas (Texas State Library), Rochelle Logan (Douglas County Libraries), Sarah Ann Long (North Suburban Library System), Charlie Parker (Tampa Bay Library Consortium), Rivkah K. Sass (Omaha Public Library), and Patricia Wallace (Enoch Pratt Free Library).

Finally, the study team thanks all members of the Information Institute staff for their help and dedication throughout this entire process. Paragon New Media also deserves mention for their tremendous efforts in developing and maintaining the survey website.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
I. INTRODUCTION	7
Objectives of the study.....	7
II. METHODOLOGY	8
Outlet (Branch) versus Systems	9
III. DATA ANALYSIS AND IMPORTANCE OF THE SURVEY	10
IV. KEY FINDINGS.....	11
V. NATIONAL BRANCH LEVEL DATA.	17
VI. NATIONAL SYSTEM LEVEL DATA.....	46
VII. STATE BRANCH LEVEL DATA.....	66
VIII: APPENDICES.....	164