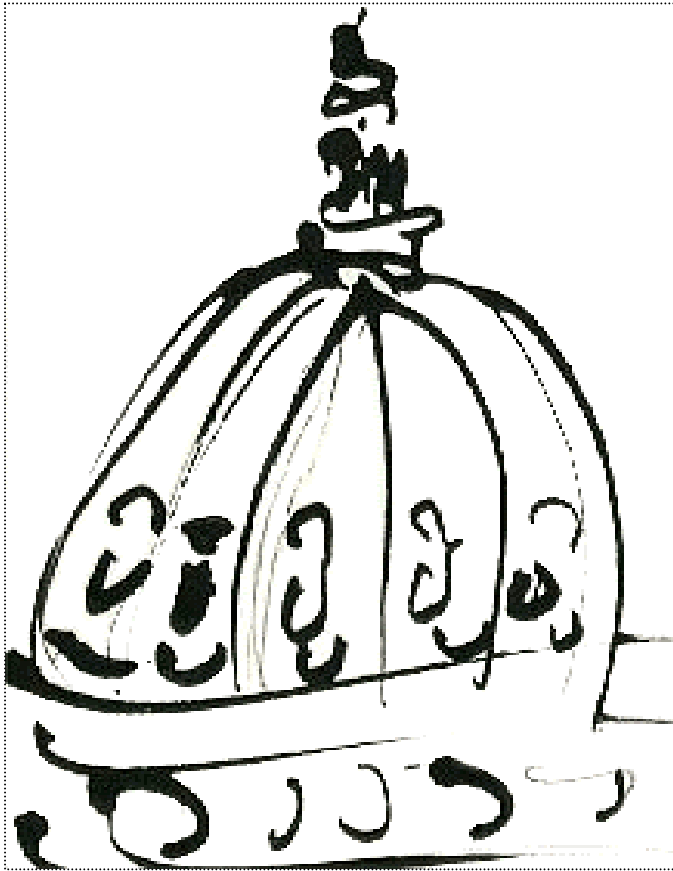




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Public Libraries and the Internet 2006: Study Results and Findings

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APPENDIX 3-B: SAMPLE E-MAIL NOTE TO SITE VISIT PARTICIPANTS

Site Visits Describing Successfully Networked Public Libraries Public Libraries and the Internet 2006 Study

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the “best practices” portion of the Information Institute at Florida State University’s College of Information’s (read library school) biennial *Public Libraries and the Internet 2006 Study* funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. I will be visiting and doing case studies of “successfully networked public libraries” in five states (Oregon, Texas, New Jersey Florida, Iowa) as part of the study. I am hoping to learn about the libraries’ story, find out what you are like, how you got to where you are, see if you have found sustainable funding and how, and look for measures that you are using to define success and persuade others of your networked libraries value. I have lots of questions, you may not have all the answers, and that’s OK. I am sure I’m not asking all the right questions and that you will straighten me out!

What is Involved

During my visit, I would like to interview you, relevant members of your staff and others (board members, funding decision makers) depending on how long I can be there. Anyone who might help address the questions I am trying to answer.

It would be helpful to have a copy of any written documentation that describes the library and the story. For example, annual reports, statistical summaries, parts of planning documents or grant reports that relate to the networking/Internet side of the library’s operation, newspaper articles, etc. You can give them to me when I visit or mail them in advance.

After my visit I will send you a visit summary to see if I heard things correctly and to give you a chance to add anything else you forgot to say.

Details

Florida State University’s, Information Institute⁴⁹ conducts a national, biennial, *Public libraries and the Internet* study.⁵⁰ The 2006 study, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation⁵¹ and the American Library Association, will contain *Public libraries and the Internet: Best Practices* case studies. The case studies will tell the stories of exceptional rural, urban and suburban public libraries or systems who have successfully addressed significant challenges to provide a range of innovative public access Internet services. The study will address the following research questions:

⁴⁹ Florida State University, School of Information Studies, Information Use Management and Policy Institute <<http://www.ii.fsu.edu/>>.

⁵⁰ *Public libraries and the Internet* studies <<http://www.ii.fsu.edu/plinternet.cfm>>.

⁵¹ Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation <<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Libraries/>>.

- **Visions of Success:** So what makes your public library “successfully networked?” What factors, management, infrastructure, activities and data describe your successfully networked public library?
- **Getting from A to B:** How did the library achieve success? What strategies and factors contributed to becoming a successfully networked public library, particularly insights that might be of use to other public libraries? What constitutes support for a successfully networked library? Are there programs or approaches at the local, state, or national levels that you used or that ought to exist to assist public libraries become successfully networked?
- **Measures of Value:** Are there measures that describe your successfully networked public library that show its value, help you manage or provide a lever to use with public library funding decision makers? What worked for you?
- **Sustainable Funding:** Has your public library found ways to generate new, sustaining revenue to support your work? What varieties of local, state, and national support have your library obtained?
- **Issues and next steps:** What issues do you face now related to network service provision? What are the next steps does your library plan?

The study will use a qualitative case methodology to provide a range of evidence to better understand factors affecting successfully networked public libraries. The study will better define the context, issues and potential strategies useful to understanding and improving Internet services offered by U.S. public libraries.

Who is Joe Ryan

Joe Ryan <jzryan@earthlink.net> is President of Ryan Information Management and Senior Research Associate, Information Institute, Florida State University. He co-developed the manual: *Statistics and Performance Measures for Public Library Networked Services*, Chicago: American Library Association used by libraries throughout the country. He co-developed the Florida State University, Information Institute’s <<http://www.ii.fsu.edu/>> E-Metrics Instruction System (EMIS) <<http://www.ii.fsu.edu/emis/>>. EMIS is a web-based instruction package designed to introduce basic measures of electronic resources and services to library managers, students and others. He is currently working with the Institute to develop the Evaluation Decision Management System (EDMS) <<http://www.ii.fsu.edu/projects/effective-eval/>> funded by the U.S. Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS). He has worked with libraries to show their value and “return on investment.” He has studied public libraries and the digital divide for IMLS. And, he looks forward to meeting you!