



Global Library Statistics 1990 – 2000

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Introduction

This is a first attempt to provide a snapshot of the world's libraries. The compilation of accurate, up-to-date and reliable statistics on a global level involves combining data from two sources, UNESCO¹ and Libecon².

The availability of global data lags behind that of nationally available statistics. Although international standards on library statistics (ISO 2789) and performance indicators (ISO 11620) are used internationally, not all countries collect the same data or include the same sectors. This inevitably leads to gaps in country data and sometimes whole sectors e.g. registered users for school libraries.

New media and electronic services are largely underrepresented, as the data is often not available. As data collection criteria evolve to take ICTs into account and as international standards are updated, it should be possible in future to obtain global statistical information on the role of libraries in the information society. For now, we can provide some regional data.

The value of statistics is as an advocacy and lobby tool to illustrate to policy-makers, politicians and partners how libraries provide access to our cultural and scientific heritage; contribute to the development of the knowledge economy; support the democratic process; help bridge the digital divide; support lifelong literacy; represent good value for money.

Data in the tables has been converted into a selection of *Fast Facts* for re-use and comparison.

For more information on library statistics, performance indicators and benchmarking, see the IFLA Statistics and Evaluation Section³.

Teresa Hackett
The Hague, September 2003

¹ UNESCO 1999 Statistical Yearbook. Culture & Communication.
http://portal.unesco.org/uis/ev.php?URL_ID=3754&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201

² <http://www.libecon2000.org/>

³ <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s22/ss.htm>

Sources & Notes

Two sources were used to compile the statistics, UNESCO and Libecon. This means there are some anomalies between the datasets. Where possible, data has been harmonised.

1. Data for the latest available year has been used. Where a country has not submitted data for the latest year, then the last year for which data was submitted has been used. For example, the last year for which China submitted data for loan transactions in education libraries was in 1990.
2. Not all member countries appear to submit their data UNESCO, even though detailed statistics are available nationally e.g. Australia. To take into account missing data, some figures have been increased by 15%, noted in the table.
3. The United States are not members of UNESCO, so US data has been taken from Libecon.
4. UNESCO education data refers to tertiary education. Libecon education data refers to higher education. Therefore, the US education data refers to higher education.
5. UNESCO financial data is in US dollars. Libecon financial data is in Euro. The Libecon data was converted from Euro to US dollars. Exchange rate 24.7.2003 <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>.

UNESCO

The UNESCO data is taken from the latest official publication, the 1999 Statistical Yearbook (see footnote 1). The statistics are based mainly on figures from 1997. Data from some countries in some categories is missing in the UNESCO figures.

Table 1 shows a list of countries covered by UNESCO.

Libecon

Libecon is a European Commission funded research study into international library economics (see footnote 2). The data is taken from the published spreadsheets. The Libecon data is based mainly on figures from 2000 and includes data for new media and services.

Table 2 shows a list of countries covered by Libecon.

Table 1
UNESCO Regions

Africa	Benin	North America	Canada		
	Burkina Faso		Greenland		
	Egypt		St Pierre & Miquelon		
	Equatorial Guinea		South America	Argentina	
	Gambia			Bolivia	
	Kenya			Chile	
	Malawi			French Guinea	
	Nigeria			Venezuela	
	Reunion			Europe	
	Senegal		Andorra		Malta
	Togo		Austria		Moldova
	Tunisia		Belarus		Monaco
	Uganda		Belgium		Netherlands
Asia	Armenia	Bulgaria	Norway		
	Azerbaijan	Croatia	Poland		
	Brunei Darussalam	Czech Rep	Portugal		
	China	Denmark	Romania		
	Hong Kong	Estonia	Russian Fed		
	Cyprus	FR Yugoslavia	Slovakia		
	Georgia	Finland	Slovenia		
	Iran	France	Spain		
	Israel	Germany	Sweden		
	Japan	Greece	Switzerland		
	Kazakstan	Hungary	FYROM		
	Korea	Iceland	Ukraine		
	Kuwait	Ireland	UK		
	Kyrgystan	Italy			
	Malaysia	Latvia			
	Pakistan	Liechtenstein			
	Qatar	Lithuania			
Turkey	Luxembourg				
Vietnam					
Oceania	Australia	Nauru	New Caledonia		
	New Zealand	Niue	PNG		

**Table 2
Libecon Regions**

European Union (EU)	Austria
	Belgium
	Denmark
	Ireland
	Finland
	France
	Germany
	Greece
	Italy
	Luxembourg
	Netherlands
	Portugal
	Spain
	Sweden
UK	
Central & Eastern Europe (CEE)	Bulgaria
	Czech Republic
	Estonia
	Hungary
	Latvia
	Lithuania
	Poland
	Romania
	Slovak Rep
	Slovenia
European Free Trade Association (EFTA)	Iceland
	Liechtenstein
	Norway
	Switzerland

Libecon also includes data for:

Australia
Mexico
Turkey
United States

Libraries serving the public

Region	Library Service Points				Total
	Public	Education	School	National	
Africa	797	266	51	15	1,129
Asia	37,063	6,909	29,992	66	74,030
North America	20,081	11,460	78,773	50	110,364
South America	3942	17	---	32	3991
Oceania	---	---	2	---	2
Europe	205,336	10,161	164,436	178	380,111
Total	267,219	28,813	273,254	341	569,627

Source: UNESCO & Libecon

- Total above may be increased by 15%.
- No figures for special libraries or Australia.

Fast Facts

There are more than half a million library service points worldwide.

There are 1,200 library service points in Africa.

There are 85,000 library service points in Asia.

There are 125,000 library service points in North America.

There are 5,000 library service points in South America.

There are 440,000 library service points in Europe.

Libraries serving the public

Metres of Shelving

Region	Public	Education	School	National	Total
Africa	4,142	74,144.5	---	---	78,286.5
Asia	9,003,358	2,479	---	---	9,005,837
North America	---	492,057	---	---	492,057
South America	11,000	6,735	---	---	17,735
Oceania	---	351	---	---	351
Europe	99,629	151,569	---	---	251,198
Total	9,118,129	727,335.5	0	0	9,845,464.5

Source: UNESCO & Libecon

- Total above may be increased by 15%.
- No figures for special libraries or Australia.
- Many countries do not keep these statistics.

Fast Facts

There are fifteen thousand km of library shelving worldwide.

There are 100 km of library shelving in Africa.

There are 9,000 km library shelving in Asia.

There are 750 km library shelving in North America.

There are 25 km library shelving in South America.

There are 10 km library shelving in Oceania.

There are 350 km library shelving in Europe.

Library Collections

Traditional media (000)

Region	Books	Microforms	A.V.	Other	Total
Africa	52,260	146	387.79	896.18	53,689.97
Asia	1,615,792	27,371	41,897.9	214,812.6	1,899,873.50
North America	8,877,165	1,087,541	1,094,128	786,789.7	11,845,623.70
South America	461,160	1,972	2,129.25	3,930.39	469,191.64
Oceania	---	5,735	---	---	---
Europe	5,638,092	19,602	6,540,788	2,681,982	14,880,464
Total	16,644,469	1,142,367	7,679,331	3,688,411	29,148,842.00

Source: UNESCO & Libecon. National, public & education libraries only.

- Figures above are to be multiplied by 1000.
- Total above may be increased by 15%.
- No figures for special libraries or Australia.

Fast Facts

There are 35 billion traditional library media worldwide.

There are 20 billion library books worldwide.

There are 1.5 billion microforms worldwide.

There are 10 billion AV media worldwide.

There are 4 billion "other" library media worldwide.

There are 60 million traditional library media in Africa.

There are 1.5 billion traditional library media in Asia.

There are 12 billion traditional library media in North America.

There are half a billion traditional library media in South America.

There are 16 billion traditional library media in Europe.



New Media

Public Libraries

Region	CD-ROMs	Average % automated cat records	No. w/s for users	No. Connected to Internet	Total
EU	821,487	71	125,077	64,352	1,010,987
CEE	166,095	36	3,564	1,915	171,610
EFTA	16,702	81	3,428	1,722	21,933
USA	1,148,788	70	28,271	15,521	1,192,650
Australia	27,569	70	3,447	1,731	32,817
Mexico	676	11	4,191	29	4,907
Total	2,181,317	56.5	1,679,78	85,270	2,434,904

Source: Libecon

Fast Facts

In public libraries in the above countries, there are:

2.5 million CDs

200,000 workstations for users

100,000 Internet connections

In public libraries in CEE countries, there are 200,000 CDs.

In public libraries in EU countries, there are 150,000 workstations for users.

In public libraries in EU countries, there are 75,000 Internet connections.

New Media

Higher Education Libraries

Region	CD-ROMs	Average % automated cat records	No. w/s for users	No. Connected to Internet	Total
EU	338,235	53	156,260	56,285	550,833
CEE	94,310	25	5,627	2,162	102,124
EFTA	23,211	30	3,152	1,159	27,552
USA	3,473,225	54	82,736	28,803	3,584,818
Australia	83,788	54	5,795	2,068	91,705
Mexico	55,502	30	29,534	10,540	95,606
Total	4,068,271	41	283,104	101,017	4,452,638

Source: Libecon

Fast Facts

In HE libraries in the above countries, there are:

- 5 million CDs
- 350,000 workstations for users
- 125,000 Internet connections

In HE libraries in CEE countries, there are 110,000 CDs.

In HE libraries in EU countries, there are 180,000 workstations for users.

In HE libraries in EU countries, there are 65,000 Internet connections.

New Media

School Libraries

Region	CD-ROMs	Average % automated cat records	No. w/s for users	No. Connected to Internet	Total
EU	410,629	31	82,236	28,604	521,500
CEE	318,912	40	10,220	3,696	332,868
EFTA	11,727	96	5,228	1,886	18,937
USA	389,732	31	54,612	19,012	463,387
Australia	18,196	31	2,550	910	21,687
Mexico	48,844	31	6,845	2,443	58,163
Total	1,198,040	43.3	161,691	56,551	1,416,542

Source: Libecon

Fast Facts

In school libraries in the above countries, there are:

- 1.3 million CDs
- 185,000 workstations for users
- 65,000 Internet connections

In school libraries in CEE countries, there are 370,000 CDs.

In school libraries in EU countries, there are 95,000 workstations for users.

In school libraries in EU countries, there are 35,000 Internet connections.

New Media

National Libraries

Region	CD-ROMs	Average % automated cat records	No. w/s for users	No. Connected to Internet	Total
EU	23,289	28	871	328	24,516
CEE	8,082	18	268	78	8,446
EFTA	4,021	17	8	3	4,049
USA	17,641	17	438	149	18,245
Australia	1,493	1	77	71	1,642
Mexico	918	0	20	0	938
Total	55,444	13.5	1682	629	57,836

Source: Libecon

Fast Facts

In national libraries in the above countries, there are:

65,000 CDs

2,000 workstations for users

725 Internet connections

In national libraries in CEE countries, there are 10,000 CDs.

In national libraries in EU countries, there are 1,000 workstations for users.

In national libraries in EU countries, there are 400 Internet connections.



New Media

Libecon global cumulative figures

- European Union
- Central & Eastern Europe
- European Free Trade Area
- Australia
- Mexico
- USA

Fast Facts

In the above regions & countries, there are:

- 8.86 million CDs
- 737,000 workstations for users
- 290,725 Internet connections

In libraries in CEE countries, there are 690,000 CDs.

In libraries in EU countries, there are 426,000 workstations for users.

In libraries in EU countries, there are 175,400 Internet connections.

Usage & Users

Registered Users (000)

Region	Public	Education	School	National	Total
Africa	335.4	3,592.2	---	24	3,951.6
Asia	115,071	67,821.3	---	4,283	187,175.3
North America	57,840.7	8,894.6	---	935	67,670.3
South America	88.8	72	---	117	277.8
Oceania	---	551	---	---	551
Europe	1,473,868	180,018.3	---	4,271	1,658,157
Total	1,647,204	260,949.4	0	9,630	1,917,783

Source: UNESCO & Libecon

- Figures above are to be multiplied by 1000.
- Total above may be increased by 15%.
- No figures for special libraries, school libraries or Australia.

Fast Facts

There are almost 2.5 billion registered library users worldwide.
 There are 5.5 million registered library users in Africa.
 There are 215 million registered library users in Asia.
 There are 77 million registered library users in North America.
 There are 318,000 registered library users in South America.
 There are 650,000 registered library users in Oceania.
 There are 1.8 billion registered library users in Europe.

Usage & Users

Loan Transactions (000)

Region	Public	Education	School	National	Total
Africa	2,635.02	8,870	410,597	43	422,145.02
Asia	941,745	134,508.8	71,580,559	34,328	72,691,140.8
North America	1,941,085	12,179.2	56,208,576	147	58,161,987.2
South America	39,693	690	---	2,045	42,428
Oceania	---	23,634.7	15,000	---	38,634.7
Europe	860,743.5	124,181.2	99,003,081	41,591	999,029,596.7
Total	3,785,902	304,063.9	1,126,217,813	78,154	1,130,385,932

Source: UNESCO & Libecon

- Figures above are to be multiplied by 1000.
- Total above may be increased by 15%.
- No figures for special libraries or Australia.

Fast Facts

There are 1.5 trillion loan transactions worldwide.
 There are 485 million loan transactions in Africa.
 There are 82 billion loan transactions in Asia.
 There are 66 billion loan transactions in North America.
 There are 48 million loan transactions in South America.
 There are 43 million loan transactions in Oceania.
 There are 1.1 trillion loan transactions in Europe.

Library staffing

Total Library Staff

Region	Public	Education	School	National	Total
Africa	4,396	5,403	89	348	10,236
Asia	112,394	77,281	19,116	2,238	211,029
North America	138,210	104,020	44,592	6,182	293,004
South America	3,023	230	---	522	3,775
Oceania	---	5,380	3	---	5,383
Europe	98,726	28,336	135,484	21,912	284,458
Total	356,749	220,650	199,284	31,202	807,885

Source: UNESCO & Libecon

- Total above may be increased by 15%.
- No figures for special libraries or Australia.

Fast Facts

There are 100,000 library staff worldwide.
 There are 11,000 library staff in Africa.
 There are 242,000 library staff in Asia.
 There are 363,000 library staff in North America.
 There are 4,500 library staff in South America.
 There are 6,200 library staff in Oceania.
 There are 326,000 library staff in Europe.

Library expenditure

Expenditure US \$ (000)

Region	Public	Education	School	National	Total
Africa	689,635	692,427	2,086	---	1,384,148
Asia	1,175,299	502,848	13,152,554	---	14,830,701
North America	69,047,03,274	248,410	727,457,865	---	7,632,409,549
South America	1,457,607	13,804	---	---	1,471,411
Oceania	---	466	13	---	479
Europe	17,475,147	3,771,370	4,406,123	---	25,652,640
Total	6,925,500,962	5,229,325	745,018,641	0	7,675,748,928

Source: UNESCO & Libecon

- Total above may be increased by 15%.
- No figures for national libraries, special libraries or Australia.

Fast Facts

Library expenditure worldwide was US\$ 8,7 trillion.
 Library expenditure in Africa was US\$ 1,5 billion.
 Library expenditure in Asia was US\$ 17 billion.
 Library expenditure in the North America was (also) US\$ 8,7 trillion.
 Library expenditure in South America was US\$ 1,69 billion.
 Library expenditure in Oceania was US\$ 550,000.
 Library expenditure in Europe was US\$ 28 billion.

Miscellaneous

European's cultural activities

The citizens of the European Union were asked how many times in the last 12 months they have participated in cultural activities by positioning themselves on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 = never and 5 = more than 12 times; the central position is 3 i.e. 4-6 times).

1.	Go to the cinema	2.03
2.	Go to a library	1.67
3.	Historical monuments	1.65
4.	Sports event	1.64
5.	Visit museums or galleries in your own country	1.4
6.	Concert	1.38
7.	Theatre	1.33
8.	Visit museums or galleries abroad	1.2
9.	Visit archaeological sites	1.15
10.	Ballet or dance performance	1.12

Source: European's participation in cultural activities. A Eurobarometer survey carried out at the request of the European Commission, Eurostat. April 2002.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/datashop/print-catalogue/EN?catalogue=Eurostat&product=culture-EN>