



Responding institution:

The respondent has requested to remain anonymous.

This is the first contribution of the Republic of Congo Brazzaville. This report relates to the 56 public libraries in the country (there are a further 16 registered libraries belonging to international organisations and the army, and a number of private libraries), as well as 10 research libraries (consisting of 3 university libraries, 5 school libraries and 2 government-funded research libraries).

There is no current data available on the online population. According to Internet World Stats, the Internet penetration was 1.0% in September 2005. Consequently, less than 20% of all libraries (public, school, university and government-funded research libraries) offer access to the Internet. Access is not free of charge to users. The state and/or other library authorities have made extra funding available for Internet access in libraries in the last two years.

The respondent has indicated that, even though very little local content is available online, very much of this is available in local languages. The reported literacy rate is 74%, which differs from the literacy rate of 83.8% reported by the 2007 *CIA World Factbook*.

The library association is in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals. The motivation includes national security, protecting religious values and safeguarding the national ethos/culture. The use of filtering software is, however, not widespread in the country.

Anti-terror legislation that affects library users' intellectual freedom has not been passed in the Republic of Congo Brazzaville. The respondent has not indicated whether such legislation would have an impact on user privacy. According to the respondent, the keeping of user records does affect the freedom of expression of the individual Internet library user.

No violations of intellectual freedom, access to information and/or freedom of expression in the last two years have been reported by the respondent. Third-party sources have, however, raised some concerns, as discussed below.

Libraries are involved in HIV/Aids awareness programmes, but not in programmes to provide HIV/Aids information to members of the community who are unable to read. Libraries have programmes focusing on the promotion of women's literacy, as well as special programmes focusing on promoting women's access to information.

The library association has not adopted a code of ethics, but the intention is to do so within the next two years. The same applies to the IFLA Internet Manifesto and the Glasgow Declaration.

User privacy and anti-terror legislation

Anti-terror legislation that affects library users' intellectual freedom has not been passed in the Republic of Congo Brazzaville. The respondent has not indicated whether such legislation would have an impact on user privacy. The keeping of user records is seen to affect the freedom of expression of the individual Internet library user.

Reported incidents/violations of intellectual freedom in the past two years

No violations of intellectual freedom, access to information and/or freedom of expression in the last two years have been reported by the respondent, and no further information resources pertaining to the freedom of access to information have been provided. Third-party sources have, however, raised some concerns. The Human Rights Watch (<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/11/15/congob14603.htm>) and IFEX (<http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/79130/>) reported on an incident in 2006 where an anti-corruption campaigner was allegedly arrested and detained "because of his criticism of the government's misuse of oil revenues". Other incidents with regard to defamation have been reported by IFEX (<http://www.ifex.org>).

HIV/Aids awareness

Libraries are involved in HIV/Aids awareness programmes (e.g. to raise public awareness through different media such as radio, TV and newspapers), but they are not involved in any special programmes for providing HIV/Aids information to members of the community who are unable to read.

Women and freedom of access to information

Libraries have programmes focusing on the promotion

of women's literacy through theatre, poetry and songs. Interschool activities were started two years ago with the aim to mobilise and empower young girls, and these have been very successful. Libraries also have special programmes focusing specifically on promoting women's access to information (e.g. social information, the economy, education, health and family planning). According to the respondent, these issues are also dealt with during the interschool activities. Much work is done with young girls, as they constitute the next generation of, for example, writers, actors and poets.

IFLA Internet Manifesto

The IFLA Internet Manifesto has not been adopted by the library association. The intention is to adopt it within the next two years.

IFLA Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom

The Glasgow Declaration has not been adopted by the library association, but should be in two years' time.

Ethics

The library association has not yet adopted a code of ethics but intends to do so within the next two years.

Main indicators

Country name:	Republic of Congo Brazzaville
Population:	3 800 610 (July 2007 est.)
Main language:	French (official), Lingala and Monokutuba (lingua franca trade languages), many local languages and dialects (of which Kikongo is the most widespread)
Literacy:	83.8%
Literacy reported by respondent:	74%

Population figures, language and literacy are from the
CIA World Factbook, 2007 edition
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>.



Libraries and Internet access

The Republic of Congo Brazzaville participated for the first time in the IFLA/FAIFE World Report in 2007. No comparisons can therefore be made with previous reports.

Library services

Estimated number of public libraries*:	56
Estimated number of school libraries:	5
Estimated number of university libraries:	3
Estimated number of government-funded research libraries:	2
Source of these numbers:	National Library Survey

Internet access

Population online**:	36 000 Internet users as of Sept. 2005 (1.0%)
Percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
Percentage of school libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
Percentage of university libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
Percentage of government-funded research libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
In your estimate, how much local content*** is available on the Internet:	Very little
<i>To what degree is content on the Internet available in local languages:</i>	Very much
Is the library association in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals:	Yes – for national security and to safeguard religious values and the national ethos/culture
Is the use of filtering software widespread in your country's libraries:	No
Is it free of charge for library users to access the Internet on library computers:	No
Has the state or other library authorities made any extra funding available for Internet access in the library system of your country in the last two years:	Yes

* Public library service points, including branch libraries.

** Online population numbers are from Internet World Stats (www.Internetworldstats.com).

*** Local content is defined as content that originates in the country.