Congo (DRC)

Responding institution:

The respondent has requested to remain anonymous.

This is the second contribution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the first being in 2005. Compared with the 2005 report, there is a large discrepancy between the numbers given for public libraries in the country – an estimated 30, compared with 475 in 2005. The difference between the number of research libraries is smaller – 111 in 2005, compared with an estimated 95 in 2007. According to the respondent, these research libraries consist of 50 university libraries, 35 school libraries and 10 government-funded research libraries.

There is no current data available on Internet access in the DRC. There has been a slight increase since the 2005 World Report, which indicated an Internet penetration of 0.1%, compared with 0.2% in September 2006 (according to Internet World Stats). As in 2005, the low Internet penetration is reflected in the percentage of libraries offering Internet access. Less than 20% of public, school and government-funded research libraries offer Internet access, whereas 21-40% of university libraries provide access. The respondent has indicated that almost all libraries lack Internet access and power cuts also pose great challenges.

Internet access is not free of charge in the DRC. According to the respondent, the state and/or other library authorities have not made extra funding available for Internet access in the last two years. From a remark by the respondent, it seems as if the state does not provide sufficient funding for the running of libraries.

Practically no local content is available on the Internet, and very little content is available in local languages. The reported literacy rate in the DRC is 20%, which differs substantially from the literacy rate of 65.5%, as reported by the 2007 *CIA World Factbook*.

In contrast with the 2005 report, the respondent has indicated that the library association is not in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals. Due to limited access to the Internet, the use of filtering software is not widespread in the DRC.

Anti-terror legislation that affects library users' intellectual freedom has not been passed in the DRC, and the respondent has indicated that such legislation would not impact on user privacy. The keeping of user records also does not 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. Consulted third-party sources, however, have revealed some serious concerns, which will be discussed below.

Libraries are not involved in HIV/Aids awareness programmes and do not have special programmes focusing on the promotion of women's literacy.

Although it was reported in 2005 that the library association intended to adopt a code of ethics, this has not yet been the case. The intent to adopt a code of

ethics within the next two years has again been indicated by the respondent. The same applies to the IFLA Internet Manifesto. There is some uncertainty as to whether the Glasgow Declaration has been adopted, as the respondent has indicated that implementation is not very effective, but also that the library association intends to adopt it within the next two years.

User privacy and anti-terror legislation

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

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

No reports of violations of intellectual freedom, access to information and/or freedom of expression in the last two years have been cited by the respondent. Consulted third-party sources, however, have revealed some serious concerns.

The 2006 and 2007 reports of Amnesty International express concern about human rights violations that took place in the DRC (http://web.amnesty.org/report 2006/cod-summary-eng and http://thereport.amnesty. org/eng/Regions/Africa/Democratic-Republic-of-Congo). These violations relate to repression of freedom of expression as "members of human rights organisations, journalists and opposition activists were arbitrarily detained for denouncing human rights violations or criticising the authorities" (http://web. amnesty.org/report2006/cod-summary-eng). Other concerns regarding journalists include threats, charges of defamation, and murder (http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/cod-summary-eng).

The 2006 annual report of Reporters Without Borders also expresses concern about the situation regarding press freedom, which "has been characterised by death threats, abusive arrests and police brutality"

(http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=17396). Reports on incidents involving journalists are also provided.

UNESCO (http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=24785&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201. html) reports on the murder of a journalist in 2007 and states that it is "the third Congolese journalist to be murdered since November 2005".

HIV/Aids awareness

Libraries in the DRC are not involved in HIV/Aids awareness programmes or in any programmes to provide HIV/Aids information to members of the community who are unable to read.

Women and freedom of access to information

Libraries in the DRC do not have special programmes for the promotion of women's literacy, or for the promotion of women's access to information.

IFLA Internet Manifesto

Although it was reported in 2005 that the library association intended to adopt the IFLA Internet Manifesto, it has not yet been adopted. The intent to do so within the next two years has again been indicated by the respondent.

IFLA Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom

There is some uncertainty as to whether the Glasgow Declaration has been adopted, as the respondent has indicated that the implementation is not very effective, but also that the library association intends to adopt it within the next two years.

Ethics

Although it was reported in 2005 that the library association intended to adopt a code of ethics, such a code has not yet been adopted. The respondent has again indicated the intention to adopt a code of ethics within the next two years.

Main indicators

Country name:	Congo (DRC)
Population:	65 751 512 (July 2007 est.)
Main language:	French (official), Lingala (a lingua franca trade language), Kingwana (a dialect of Kiswahili or Swahili), Kikongo, Tshiluba
Literacy:	65.5%
Literacy reported by respondent:	20%

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

**Democratic Republic
of the Congo**

Libraries and Internet access

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) contributed to the World Report series in 2005. The following section compares data and answers from 2007 with the 2005 IFLA/FAIFE World Report and adds context from the respondent's estimates, where possible.

Library services

Estimated number of public libraries*:	30 (2005: 475)
Estimated number of school libraries:	35
Estimated number of university libraries:	50
Estimated number of government-funded research libraries:	10
Source of these numbers:	National Library

Internet access

Population online**:	140 600 Internet users as of Sept. 2006 (0.2%) (2005: 0.1%)
Percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20% (2005: Less than 20%)
Percentage of school libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
Percentage of university libraries offering Internet access to users:	21-40%
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:	Nothing, or practically nothing
To what degree is content on the Internet available in local languages:	Very little
Is the library association in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals:	No (2005: Yes, although respondents did not indicate a specific motivation)
Is the use of filtering software widespread in your country's libraries:	No (2005: No)
Is it free of charge for library users to access the Internet on library computers:	No (2005: Yes, in research libraries only)
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:	No (2005: No)

* 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.