IFLA Guidelines on Public Internet Access in Libraries

Developed by the IFLA Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) Expert Advisory Group. Edited by Louise Cooke, Loughborough University, UK.

1st Edition

29 May 2019

Not yet endorsed by the IFLA Professional Committee or Governing Board.

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1 INTRODUCTION

These Guidelines are presented by the **IFLA Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE)** Advisory Committee. The overall objective of IFLA FAIFE is "to raise awareness of the essential correlation between the library concept and the values of intellectual freedom" (IFLA FAIFE 2018). As an organisation deeply committed to the values of intellectual freedom, IFLA opposes censorship of any form, including the use of filtering software.

However, it is recognised that librarians and other information professionals need to operate within the limits of local and national legal frameworks, whilst simultaneously taking an informed ethical stance against any constraints on access to information. Librarians and other information professionals are uniquely placed and qualified to advise their host organisations, and to take the lead role in decision-making, concerning any legal requirements for constraints on access and for eliminating any unnecessary constraints on access.

The Guidelines, therefore, are intended to act as a framework of fundamental principles to support all those responsible for decision-making with regard to the provision of public Internet access, and to provide them with a tool for advocacy, such that they are supported in the difficult task of prioritising consideration for intellectual freedom while maintaining appropriate use of their services as required by their core organisation and community norms.

The Guidelines have been drafted in accordance with international declarations on fundamental human rights and the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2015 (United Nations 2015): in this respect, they are intended to highlight the role of public Internet access in reducing the digital divide within and across nations; providing unhindered access to information for vulnerable, marginalised and disabled groups; as well as strengthening local and national economies by enhancing the ability to harness the economic value of information access and exchange, learning and digital creativity.

The Guidelines are based on evidence gathered from extensive research involving workshops and interviews with key stakeholders, such as librarians, policy makers, professional bodies, Internet safety and Internet freedom NGOs, IT professionals and end users, as well as desk research into practice across the globe.

The Guidelines have been drafted in concordance with other relevant IFLA publications and statements, including the *IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom* (IFLA 1999) which " calls upon libraries and library staff to adhere to the principles of intellectual freedom, uninhibited access to information and freedom of expression and to recognize the privacy of library users"; the *IFLA Internet Manifesto* (IFLA 2014a) which states that "The provision of unhindered access to the Internet by library and information services forms a vital element of the right to freedom of access to information and freedom of expression, and supports communities and individuals to attain freedom, prosperity and development" (Section 2.2); the *IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers* (IFLA 2012a); the *IFLA Statement on Privacy in the Library Environment* (IFLA 2015); the *IFLA Manifesto on Transparency, Good Governance and Freedom from Corruption* (IFLA 2008); the *IFLA Statement on Net Neutrality and Zero-Rating* (IFLA 2016); the IFLA *Section on Information Literacy* (IFLA 2017a); the *Principles on Public Access in Libraries* (Dynamic Coalition on Public Access in Libraries, 2015); and the *IFLA Statement on Digital*

Literacy (IFLA 2017b) which states that national and local governments should "Refrain from censorship or discriminatory, unnecessary or disproportionate blocking of content online".

In addition to some background context, the Guidelines cover issues related to public Internet access such as:
1. Principles of access to information
2. Internet Use Policies
3. Charges for use
4. Transparency
5. Use of filtering and blocking technologies
6. Unblocking of sites
7. Privacy of use
8. Use by persons with disabilities
9. Use by minors
10. User education
11. Staff training
12. Social media
13. Wi-Fi
14. Decision-making
15. Review and stakeholder engagement

1.1   BACKGROUND TO THE GUIDELINES

The possibility to connect to the Internet has been recognised in a number of countries as a human right, or at least as a core public interest utility. The first World Summit on the Information Society 2003 (WSIS 2003), convened under the auspices of the United Nations and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), adopted a *Declaration of Principles* endorsing the rights of all to participate in an inclusive Information Society, and affirming the right to freedom of expression online.

These principles are supported by IFLA and were endorsed in the *Lyon Declaration* of 2014 (IFLA 2014b) which noted how access to information can support all of the post-2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals, and how access to ICT is a crucial part of the development equation. Public internet access as provided by libraries has also proved to be of significant value in cases of emergency and disaster relief and recovery (Bertot, McLure and Jaeger, 2008). The benefits gained from access to information on the internet are many, empowering users with the ability to make informed decisions about all aspects of their personal and professional lives, while also supporting democracy, economic opportunity and the development of e-government.

However, worldwide many people are still not able to benefit from home access to internet and broadband services[1]. In addition to lack of access to infrastructure, there is still a skills and confidence gap that prevents many potential users from benefitting from access. Public internet access in libraries, with librarians as skilled intermediaries, has a key role to play in bridging this gap and closing the digital divide. IFLA has consistently underlined the important role of libraries in delivering access to the internet, without cost or discrimination to their users.

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[1] As of June 2018 it was estimated that 44.9% of the world's population still did not have Internet access (Internet World Stats 2018)

Public access to the internet in libraries is often restricted through the use of filtering and blocking software and other means of withholding access to certain categories of content deemed harmful, not in keeping with the library mandate, or inappropriate to the core mission of the library concerned. Such actions can be mandated by government, or a result of public pressure or the judgement of librarians themselves.

In addition, the use of surveillance (whether overt or covert) of use of public Internet access facilities, can cause users to self-censor their access to content in a way that is detrimental to freedom of access to information or freedom of enquiry. For example, a young person may feel intimidated from exploring sites offering advice on safe sex practices or sexuality.

A recent UK study found that 100% of UK public libraries are restricting access through the use of filtering technologies (Spacey et al, 2014); and in the US, the Children's Internet Protection Act 2000 (CIPA) mandates the use of filtering software for all libraries in receipt of discounted Internet access through the e-rate programme, which primarily applies to schools and public libraries (Federal Communications Commission, 2017).

Such restrictions can limit the potential benefits of effective internet use in libraries and can impede the implementation of e-government strategies. To date, although individual libraries and public information services may have developed their own local policy, there is a lack of current national or international guidelines to assist personnel responsible for policy development with regard to the provision of public Internet and Wi-Fi access in terms of issues such as content filtering, blocking and monitoring of use.

It is recognised here that the internet does contain harmful and illegal content, including that accessible on the "dark Web". Members of the community may also object to other websites or services being accessible in libraries for a variety of reasons. There may also be practical restrictions on public access, such as the need to observe intellectual property rights legislation, and more demand for the internet than supply of terminals.

These Guidelines aim to offer support to library and information professionals in the form of principles and practical guidance on how to respond to the issues that this can raise and suggestions on how to build users' abilities to use the Internet in a confident and responsible manner.

1.2   Acknowledgments

2 THE GUIDELINES

2.0   PRINCIPLES OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The benefits of the Internet and legal and ethical rights to freedom of access to information, such as those deriving from Article 19 of the *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations 1948); those deriving from the resolution on *The Promotion, Protection and Enjoyment of Human Rights on the Internet* adopted by the UN Human Rights Council on 1 July 2016 (United Nations 2016); and those deriving from professional codes of ethics such as the *IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers* (IFLA 2012), should form the overriding principles informing any guidance to provision of public access to the Internet.

> The *IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers* (IFLA 2012a, article 1) states that: "*Librarians and other information workers reject the denial and restriction of access to information and ideas most particularly through censorship whether by states, governments, or religious or civil society institutions.*"

Provision of public Internet access should be seen as enabling, leading to empowerment of users and the ability to make informed decisions about all aspects of their personal and professional lives, whilst still maintaining a safe environment for the community and vulnerable users. Public Internet access in libraries and other information services should be as unrestricted as is reasonably possible using reputable, reliable and safe hardware and software.

Above all, it should be recognised that libraries are a unique resource for access to information, ideas and communications, providing universal personal, social, cultural and economic opportunities for all communities: they should be seen as the *providers* of information to the general public and not as *withholders* of access to information.

2.1   INTERNET USE POLICIES

Libraries and other institutions providing public access to the Internet are recommended to have a clear, up-to-date and well promoted Internet Use Policy (also known as Acceptable Use Policy). This should set out roles and responsibilities for public Internet access (including those of end users); the purposes for which the access is provided, for whom it is intended, and any limits on usage (e.g. time limits, categories of content deemed not in keeping with the library mandate, or filtering software that is used); procedures for securing access (e.g. booking and registration processes); procedures for managing, and consequences of, misuse of access (violation of the policy); assistance and guidance available for users, including those living with disabilities; procedures for managing problems and complaints with the service; and legal compliance relevant to the service (e.g. data protection and intellectual property legislation).

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list: each service should develop an Internet Use Policy in consultation with local stakeholders and with local context in mind, but also mindful of the principles of public access as outlined in (1) above. The policy should be written in accessible language, clearly communicated and promoted to all users and should form the basis of the 'contract' between service provider and user under which the service is offered.

An example of an Internet Use Policy from Rochdale Borough Council, UK, with a focus on education and the evaluation of information (rather than its restriction) can be seen at: http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/policies-strategies-and-reviews/policies/corporate-policies/Pages/acceptable-use-policy.aspx

2.2 CHARGES FOR USE

In line with IFLA's aspiration that libraries play an important role in delivering access to the Internet, without cost or discrimination to their users, libraries and information services should strive to provide public internet access and Wi-Fi free of charge at the point of use: this is key to ensuring access for all socioeconomic groups and for promoting digital and social inclusion.

Where this is not possible, the fees applied for public access should be affordable to users, in line with local income level. Access to online information, whether e-reference sources or the internet, is the equivalent to the conventional reference library and therefore should wherever possible be made available free of charge to users once the initial purchase (where relevant) has been made.

Libraries are also spaces for the exchange of ideas, and the facilitation of learning and creativity: this can be enhanced through access free of charge to the internet for communication of ideas (e.g. via email and social media); the dissemination of information and knowledge (e.g. through contribution to knowledge-sharing platforms such as Wikipedia); and participation in networks of shared interest. Such participation can play an important role in improving well-being and the fundamental dignity of human life.

The Library AanZet at Dordrecht City Library in the Netherlands notes that: *"In our offices we offer computers that visitors can use and WiFi with which they can access the internet on their own device. The use of the computers - and thus access to the internet - is free. Without a library card (read: membership) they have access to library-related websites. To be able to freely browse the web, we do need a library card / membership. Of course, young people can take out a free subscription as standard and there is also a free subscription for adults. We emphatically promote this free subscription in combination with free computer use, because we believe that it should be possible for everyone to make free use of the computers."*

2.3 TRANSPARENCY

Libraries and information services should be transparent about any restrictions to access and about personal data held, including data on Internet usage. These provisions should be explained clearly in the Internet Use Policy and any Terms and Conditions of usage, and library staff should be trained appropriately in order to be able to inform and explain such issues to users.

For example, if the library service uses filtering software and monitors usage, the Internet Use Policy should contain a clear statement to that effect such as "*All Anytown Library services are filtered in order to block access to websites known to contain inappropriate, harmful or illegal content. However, filtering software is not infallible and on occasion legitimate content may be blocked and some inappropriate content may not be filtered. Users should also be aware that usage of the Internet may be monitored*".

2.4 FILTERING SOFTWARE

The need to maintain a safe environment for vulnerable users in communities, such as children, may require the blocking of specific content. This can be accepted in principle, but libraries should always aim to restrict content as little as is feasible within the norms of local standards, legislation and the provisions of their parent organisations.

Decisions to filter content should be based on the legality of content and the appropriateness within the social and cultural context in which content is accessed. Filtering software is an inaccurate and imperfect solution that can lead to over- and under-blocking and should not be relied on as a single solution to the issue of managing public Internet access.

> For example, consider the danger presented to children whose daily visit to school involves passing an unfenced swimming pool. We can try to prevent children drowning by placing fences around the swimming pools, but there is always the risk that the more adventurous child will climb over the fence and drown. Alternatively, we can teach them to swim and provide them with the skills to protect themselves, not just from this pool but from other encounters with water too. (National Research Council, 2001; cited in Kranich, 2004, p.17).

Where it is deemed necessary to use filtering software (or this is obligated by law), information professionals should advocate for the best system for their own context that is flexible enough to provide levels of access that best meet the needs of individual users. They should also advocate for the lowest level of content filtering necessary to maintain legal compliance.

> The Public Library of Rotterdam is an example of a library that does not use filtering on its public terminals, as a result offering all users the opportunity to have access to the full range of information available on subjects according to their own interests within the limits of the law and general decency standards. The house rules state that "*Visiting discriminating, violent and pornographic internet sites is prohibited*" and users are advised that "*The Rotterdam Library also has the right to remove a user from the network if s/he does not behave properly or does not comply with the house rules.*"

> Another similar example, also from the Netherlands, comes from The Hague Public Library, who state "*In principle, every user has full access to the internet, only in the youth department are some sites / topics filtered (via Cisco Web Usage Controls). Any unjustified blocking can only be lifted via the IT department. The Library believes that all information must be accessible to everyone. That is why there is no censorship at the Library workstations. With young people this led to some difficult confrontations and an unsafe environment. The Library has therefore decided to filter illegal content in the youth department.*"

2.5 UNBLOCKING OF CONTENT

There should be clear guidelines and a transparent process for unblocking of any legal content that has been blocked inappropriately. Library staff should be given the skills and knowledge to be able to understand and explain why a particular site has been blocked; to be able to make decisions about the appropriateness of unblocking sites; and where necessary to be able to unblock sites without burdensome bureaucratic formalities.

For example, consider the user who wants to apply for a sales position with a large, well-known clothing retailer. He tries to access the retailer's website, but encounters a message informing him that "Access to this site is not allowed". Feeling that he must have done something wrong, he is too embarrassed to approach the library staff. He leaves the library dispirited, having not achieved the aim of his visit.

A different scenario that could be envisaged is one where the same user encounters a message that says, "Please see a member of staff who will be happy to advise if you wish to proceed with accessing this site". He approaches the member of staff at the Information Desk who, recognising the retailer's site, and realising that it has been blocked on account of the fact that it contains visual images of women in lingerie, is able to adjust the filtering software settings to enable the user to access the site and to proceed and apply for the job. He leaves the library happy to have achieved the aim of his visit and without any sense of wrongdoing.

(Based on an actual example from the MAIPLE project, Spacey et al, 2014)

2.6   PRIVACY OF USE

The rights of users to personal privacy should be respected. Wherever possible, guest access to public Internet access without identifiable login should be available to permit freedom of inquiry without interference. In addition, wherever feasible, libraries should install privacy screens such that users can take advantage of services such as Internet banking, without inappropriate viewing by other users.

De Bibliotheek AanZet at Dordrecht City Library is an example of a library that aims to protect the privacy of computer users by shielding the monitors with screens.

Such simple privacy measures also remove the need to advocate for higher levels of filtering justified on the grounds of avoidance of offence to other users. Although monitoring of use can provide an important indicator for performance measurement purposes, surveillance and monitoring of users' access should be kept to the absolute minimum necessary to ensure effective management and legal compliance. In addition, all users should be made aware of any surveillance measures in place.

Public libraries also have a duty to ensure that users are aware of the potential privacy dangers inherent in using public access computers, with clear and visible warnings not to tick the 'Save my password' 'Save my details on this computer' option boxes, and to ensure that they logout fully after using e-commerce, banking and government services sites. This should also be included in any user education programmes.

Other privacy-enhancing measures are exemplified by The Hague Public Library: "*After the user logs out, the PC is restarted, so that it is returned to the basic configuration: saved data, browsing history, log-ins and the like are deleted. If the user does not log out, the computer automatically restarts / cleans after a quarter of an hour.*"

Nationally (e.g. via national professional bodies) and internationally (via IFLA), the library and information profession should be involved in, and participate actively in, consultations and conversations concerning monitoring, surveillance and control of people's Internet access at local, organisational, national and supra-national levels.

2.7   USE BY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

In order to ensure that the public Internet access service is accessible to all in the user community and offers fair and equitable access, libraries should assume members of their user communities have a wide range of differing abilities and should therefore aim to procure technology which incorporates accessibility features. The functional needs of people with disabilities must be remembered in accordance with rights recognized by the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations, 2006).

> This may entail, for example, the use of assistive technologies such as special software programs and devices to use the computers or other provided device, and libraries' websites and applications. Those blind or partially sighted may need special screen readers and magnifiers, and people with limited mobility may need voice recognition software. Additionally, keyboards designed for people with low vision or those who are unable to use a mouse (e.g., due to Parkinson's disease), should be available in libraries. Computer tables should be height adjustable for persons in wheelchairs. When subscribing to or purchasing from third parties, libraries should seek content that meets web accessibility standards (e.g. WCAG 2.1, developed by the W3C (2018) and useful for websites and applications). All library documents published online should be in line with accessibility requirements.

This is not an exhaustive list of requirements: all services should engage and consult regularly with their user community and make provision accordingly to ensure that the service is genuinely accessible to all users, including those with disabilities.

> Examples of good practice in adopting accessibility technologies to ensure that people with disabilities enjoy equal access to the Internet can be found in initiatives from the Czech Republic. These include *Friendly Vox*, a voice-enabled web portal which provides a solution for giving access to information and communication services without the need to use sight; *Biblioweb*, which is a competition for libraries which focuses on the evaluation of their websites and awards a prize for the library with the best barrier-free web pages; *Handicap Friendly* which is a certificate for libraries which provide excellent services (including digital) for people with disabilities; and *Daleth*, also known as *Library Gateway for Visually Impaired*, which is a nationwide library of accessible materials including e-documents, tactile prints and audio or hybrid publications. More about these projects can be found in Appendix A.

2.8   INTERNET SAFETY AND USE BY MINORS

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations 1989, Art.17) asserts that "Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them". While the importance of safeguarding of minors is recognised, this should not be used as a justification for excessive levels of filtering. While it is recognised that offering filtered access may be seen as appropriate for a specific age group, parental and staff training and user education have an equally important and appropriate role to play in helping minors learn to evaluate information and to use the Internet safely and avoid harm. In particular, the IFLA Section for Libraries for Children and Young Adults statement on *Social Media, Children and Young Adults @ the Library* offers useful guidance for librarians, parents, children and young adults with regard to safety, privacy and online behaviour (IFLA Section for Libraries for Children and

Young Adults, 2015). In addition, it should be recognised that user education on internet safety is equally essential for first-time and less experienced internet users.

The Regional Library in Karlovy Vary in the Czech Republic cooperates with experts on Internet safety and participates in a project entitled Internetem bezpečně (Safe Internet Use). They have created manuals and leaflets concerning the safety in the online environment for children and adults and have made them freely available for download. They organize workshops and other events in this field, and there is also online help available.

Pilsen Public Library is one of the Czech libraries which regularly join Safer Internet Day, an international day for Internet safety. It introduces programs for their users, usually workshops, and competitions for children and youth.

In Lithuania, Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania and municipal public libraries are among stakeholders invited to the Advisory Board of the National Safer Internet consortium that has led the Safer Internet Centre Lithuania: draugiskasinternetas.lt project since 2006. Each year to mark Safer Internet Day the network of public libraries in Lithuania invite users to watch educational films on safety on the internet and related issues, to take safe internet use tests, and to participate in contests, quizzes and workshops. (Safer Internet Centre Lithuania 2019)

2.9   USER EDUCATION AND COMPUTER SKILLS TRAINING

Librarians and information professionals play a key role in enabling their users to get optimum benefit from information available on the internet. Subject to the mandate and resources of the library, user education should be ongoing for all users, and sessions targeted specifically at parents and other caregivers held on a regular basis to help them to support their children in safe use of the Internet and technology.

In addition to education on safe internet use, libraries are able to benefit first time computer and internet users through the provision of basic computer skills training. Public libraries providing public access computers are uniquely placed to address issues of digital divide through the development of digital skills. This has been recognised by TASCHA as the 'added value' of public access in libraries as compared with internet cafes or other public access points (Sey et al. 2013).

EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries, www.eifl.net) has developed a capacity building initiative for public libraries in Africa, to connect the unconnected and get people who have never used the internet online (EIFL n.d.)

In addition to basic computer skills training, user education should include the skills of media and information literacy, i.e. being able to evaluate the appropriateness, quality and authenticity of information and communication (including being able to distinguish misinformation and disinformation such as 'fake news') and evaluation of the currency of information; understanding and respecting intellectual property rights; and searching techniques. Resources from external agencies, such as those provided online by Childnet International (2018), could be drawn upon to help with these activities, as can EDRi's *Your Guide to Digital Defenders vs. Data Intruders – Privacy for Kids!* (EDRi 2016).

The Hague Library in the Netherlands has been offering courses in computers and the internet for almost 20 years. In 2019 there is still a need for basic skills, but in recent years there have also been courses in the field of security and privacy on the internet. One of those courses (Introduction to cybersecurity) concerns a collaboration with CISCO. In addition to the regular course offer, the European project *Older People in the Neighbourhood* also runs in several branches. In addition to the courses, the project also offers lectures, discussions, meetings. Reading a newspaper together is also possible. The aim is that older people can strengthen their social networks and remain self-reliant for as long as possible.

In the Working with E-government course, people learn how to interact with websites of the municipality and government. The teachers who give this course are specially trained for this, among other things to guarantee the privacy of the participants. Privacy screens can also be used for this purpose, to separate the workstations from each other.

2.10 STAFF TRAINING

All staff interacting with users should be trained regularly to understand the basic legal, ethical, societal and political implications of Internet use and restrictions to use. This applies to library leaders, managers, service delivery staff and volunteer helpers.

Staff should also receive regular and frequent training with regard to the usage policy and understanding any restrictions on access and how to unblock restrictions, as well as on how to provide education sessions for users, parents and caregivers with regard to media and information literacy and safe use of the Internet. Staff should be trained on best practices in user education and effective pedagogical practices in teaching users about Internet access and free access to information, in order best to empower and support communities.

"Trained library staff help users find and apply online information as a tool for development, improving capacity and knowledge in health, education, agriculture, the environment and income generation. For instance, public libraries are teaching coffee farmers and fishermen to use the Internet to better promote their products and access market prices. They are helping people access information on early childhood development and nutrition, HIV/AIDS and maternal health. And, they are giving people access to information on organic farming and showing them how to combat climate change and deforestation." (IFLA, 2012b, p.2)

Within The Hague Public Library, in order to keep employees informed of developments in the field of computers, internet and media literacy, the Digital Information Center distributes a (digital) Scrapbook Newspaper every month containing a selection of relevant articles. In addition, regular training is organized to keep colleagues up-to-date in the field of digital skills.

Personnel should also be trained to answer questions with regard to use of filtering software, justification for any filtering of access, categories of content that are blocked, and procedures for unblocking sites. More senior personnel should be provided with training to gain advocacy skills and a deeper understanding of the public policy issues and specific legislation relating to privacy, intellectual freedom, intellectual property rights (especially action on infringing content), human rights, protection of minors, incitement to race hatred, cybersecurity and net neutrality.

This is not an exhaustive list, as requirements for training will be ongoing and will change in line with new technological, social and legal developments.

2.11 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media content should be treated the same as other content on the Internet and the principle of full access allowed as much as possible within the limitations of the law. Parents and guardians should take primary responsibility for use of social media by their children. TASCHA's 2012 research study on public access computing highlights that allowing and encouraging responsible use of social media in libraries creates opportunities for citizens to "participate in networked media production and grassroots economic mobilization" (Walton and Donner 2012: 2).

Providing media literacy education for young people can be a useful way to ensure that they are able to gain enjoyment, connection, pleasure and learning from new media without detriment to their own safety. Libraries can offer support by including links and support for reporting harmful and abusive content, as well as guidance as to where to get further help. In this respect, the IFLA Section for Libraries for Children and Young Adults (2015) *Statement on Social Media, Children and Young Adults @ the Library* offers useful guidance as noted in (9) above.

> The Hague Library has 50 Mediacoaches who assist colleagues and offer training in the field of media literacy. In addition, they are committed to providing guidance to citizens in this area, for example through information meetings (Mediacafés), support at schools, etc. Among other things, lessons are given in vlogging, making (and recognizing) fake news, 3D printing, working with Green screen. Every month the Central Library organizes a Coderclub. Children between the ages of 7 and 17 learn how to program in a playful way (including Scratch, HTML, Microbit). Every month it is sold out: 50 children, plus their parents.

Responsibility also rests with government agencies and non-governmental initiatives with responsibility for regulation of Internet content, the social media companies and Internet Service Providers.

2.12 WI-FI

The exponential growth in ownership of mobile devices implies that, increasingly, the more economic and cost-effective direction for libraries – in both developing and developed countries – will be to shift the balance of provision to Wi-Fi to supplement the provision of personal computers. Wi-Fi provision is becoming more of a city- or region-wide initiative rather than a library authority issue, and developments in Wi-Fi technology have reduced the impact of bandwidth restrictions.

> The Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) report on Wi-Fi in Scottish Libraries reported a librarian as commenting: "*Staff who previously were spending a lot of time dealing with complaints, connection issues and equipment failure now spend more time supporting users in accessing our full range of library services.*" (Robertson, 2015, p.33)

> Another example of the importance of Wi-Fi is provided by de Bibliotheek AanZet in Dordrecht City Library in the Netherlands, who have noticed that "*optimizing the WiFi speeds - work that took place in 2018 - has had a huge impact on the use of study and work places by pupils and students. Without explicit marketing communication just through word-of-mouth advertising, they tell each other about the improved conditions in the libraries. This means that we have more pupils and students who use the library as a workplace.*"

> Similarly, and also from the Netherlands, The Hague Public Library offers free unlimited Wi-Fi access for everyone in all branches, which people can use with their laptops, tablets and smartphones. Users must accept the conditions of use of the municipality before use. Every day hundreds of people make use of this in the Central Library alone. To enable people with a lower income access to information and courses, the Library offers discounts for people with a Stork pass [discount card for those with restricted means].

The same principles regarding unhindered access should apply with regard to Wi-Fi provision as to static access, particularly given that access is usually via the user's own mobile device(s). Decisions concerning any restrictions on Wi-Fi access should be implemented with this in mind and should involve as few constraints as are absolutely necessary in the name of legality, safeguarding and security.

2.13 DECISION-MAKING

Decisions concerning the management of public Internet access are necessarily sensitive and context dependent. It is recognised that local considerations and community norms will inevitably play a part in determining what will work best in a specific setting. All specialized library staff, including librarians, information professionals, IT personnel, and administrators, have a role in shaping the culture of information access within the library, and should bring together their collective expertise in a positive, collaborative approach to decisions that support the provision of open information and Internet access to all library users.

2.14 REVIEW AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Every information service providing public Internet access should have a schedule of regular review of the effectiveness and relevance of, and need for, any restrictions on access and on monitoring of use. Community norms and standards are subject to change over time, and decisions on access should be held up to regular scrutiny.

Library services should engage and consult with relevant local and national agencies such as professional bodies, IFLA, internet safety NGOs, the national internet authority (if applicable). as well as key stakeholders and end users when conducting such reviews and aim to maintain an appropriate balance between the ethical principles outlined in these guidelines and the needs of individual stakeholders.

The library and information services sector should maintain a high-level working relationship with any relevant national internet authority, domain names regulatory authority and cybersecurity agency to provide evidence useful to the development of policy and to allow action in cases of harmful content.

The importance of being guided by the ethical and professional principles of library and information work regarding freedom of access to information and freedom of expression should underpin any further developments of policy and practice with regard to provision of public internet access.

3 REFERENCES AND FURTHER RESOURCES

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4 APPENDIX

4.1 Examples from the Czech Republic

Examples of good practice in adopting accessibility technologies to ensure that people with disabilities enjoy equal access to the internet

- Friendly Vox is a voice-enabled web portal, which provides a solution for giving access to information and communication services without the need to use sight. Friendly Vox has been created with the specific needs of visually impaired people in mind. The portal can be fully controlled using the keyboard and all the necessary information is communicated through a voice output. An integral part of FriendlyVox is the help, thanks to which the portal is easy to use even for the less experienced user. Computers in many public libraries in the Czech Republic are equipped with Friendly Vox service and are available for visually impaired people. Librarians are trained to help people use it. Friendly Vox is for free. Examples of libraries offering Friendly Vox to their users include Vysočina Regional Library, Petr Bezruč Library in Opava and Public Library Hodonín.

- Biblioweb is a competition for libraries which focuses on the evaluation of their websites. One of the prizes is the award for the library with the best barrier-free web pages. The jury evaluates accessibility of pages for visually impaired users (conducts a heuristic test of web pages using selected rules from the Czech accessibility rules and WCAG 2.0 methodology, and a supplementary user accessibility test). In 2018 and 2017 Bílovec Library received the accessibility award and in 2016 František Bartoš Regional Library in Zlín was the winner in the category, following Litvínov City Library which had won back in 2015.

- Handicap Friendly is a certificate for Czech libraries, which provide excellent services (including digital) for the disabled. City Library Ostrava, City Library Hradec Králové and Jiří Mahen Library in Brno City have already received the certificate.

- Daleth – also known as Library Gateway for Visually Impaired – is a nationwide library of accessible materials such as e-documents, tactile prints, and audio or hybrid publications. The interface (a website or a mobile application) allows its users to search in multiple library catalogues at once, so there is no need to use different interfaces or tools to perform the same task. Both academic and non-academic libraries take part in the project.

  9. Examples of library projects helping young people to be more aware of the risks online and so avoid them

- Regional Library in Karlovy Vary cooperates with experts on Internet safety and participates in a project entitled Internetem bezpečně (Safe Internet Use). They have created manuals and leaflets concerning the safety in the online environment for children and adults and have made them freely available for download. They organize workshops and other events in this field, there is also online help available.

Examples of libraries engaging in broader internet initiatives

- [Pilsen Public Library](#) is one of the Czech libraries which regularly join [Safer Internet Day](#), an international day for Internet safety. It introduces programs for their users, usually workshops, competitions for children and youth.

Our thanks to Vladana Pillerová (National Library of the Czech Republic, vladana.pillerova@nkp.cz), Linda Jansová (National Library of the Czech Republic, linda.jansova@nkp.cz, linda.jansova@gmail.com) and Eva Cerniňáková (Jabok Library, cernin@jabok.cz) for compiling these examples..