

Guyana



Responding institution:
National Library of Guyana

This is the first time that Guyana has responded to the IFLA/FAIFE questionnaire. There are 28 public libraries in Guyana, 3 government-funded research libraries and 1 university library with 2 campus libraries. Even though libraries exist at senior secondary schools, no numbers have been provided.

Internet penetration is fairly low in Guyana, with 18.1% of the population being Internet users. Some 61-80% of public libraries offer Internet access to their users, whereas 81-100% of university libraries and government-funded libraries do so. In those libraries where Internet access is provided, it is generally not free of charge. Schoolchildren have free access at public libraries and patrons have to pay a small fee at university libraries to access the Internet. Some corporate funding may be available on request.

Very little local content is available on the Internet and very little content is available in local languages. The literacy rate is given as 98.8% (*CIA World Factbook*, 2007 edition).

Although the library association is in favour of filtering information to a certain extent (e.g. to protect children), filtering software is not widely used in the libraries. The reasons given for the use of such software include the protection of children and the safeguarding of religious values and public morality.

The library association has not adopted the IFLA

Internet Manifesto and it has not been indicated whether or not the Glasgow Declaration has been adopted. A code of ethics has not been adopted.

User privacy and anti-terror legislation

No anti-terror legislation has been passed, although the respondent has indicated that efforts are being made to draft this form of legislation. It is felt that if such legislation were to be drafted, it might impact on some users. It is also felt that the keeping of user records would affect the freedom of expression of the individual Internet library user.

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

The respondent has not completed this section of the questionnaire.

IFEX reports that the government withdrew advertising from the largest privately owned newspaper after it had criticised the government (<http://www.ifex.org/alerts/content/view/full/80475/> and <http://www.ifex.org/alerts/content/view/full/81071/>).

Reporters Without Borders reports that a television broadcasting station's licence was suspended for a month after criticising the government (http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=12448).

HIV/Aids awareness

Several programmes are offered by libraries in Guyana to promote HIV/Aids awareness. Seminars have been held to inform staff members of the national library; however, no active involvement in any programme is

being pursued. There is also an Aids Resource Corner at the national library where patrons have access to relevant information. HIV/Aids programmes are gaining momentum in Guyana and the national library plans to become involved in an identified programme shortly. The University of Guyana Library has established an Aids corner that strives to provide timely information in all forms to its clientele.

There are also programmes in place to provide HIV/Aids information to members of the community who are unable to read. The University of Guyana Library runs a "Reading is Fun" programme where one component deals with social issues such as HIV/Aids. The programme caters for children aged 6-12 years from a deprived area in the country, many of whom are unable to read.

Women and freedom of access to information

Libraries in Guyana have special programmes that focus on the promotion of women's literacy, and include conferences, workshops, seminars and special collections in libraries. The University of Guyana Library has a Women's Studies Unit dealing specifically with gender studies issues that form part of a curriculum, and it has a substantial collection in this regard.

There are also programmes that focus specifically on women's access to certain topics. The national library, in collaboration with UNICEF, is currently embarking on

the provision of document centres that focus particularly on social issues affecting women and children. Such centres will also be established at the University of Guyana Library (the Turkeyen and Tain campuses) and the National Resource and Documentation Centre for Gender and Development. The latter centre has been established under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security and deals specifically with these issues.

IFLA Internet Manifesto

The IFLA Internet Manifesto has not been adopted. The library association in Guyana has been dormant for some time due to the shortage of professional skills and the resultant lack of time.

IFLA Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom

This section of the questionnaire has not been completed.

Ethics

The respondent has indicated that the library association has not formally adopted a code of ethics. Rather, it has informally adopted aspects of the code of ethics of library associations in the "developed world, ALA, etc.". A formal code of ethics will be adopted within the next two years.

Main indicators

Country name:	Guyana
Population:	769 095 (July 2007 est.)
Main language:	English, Amerindian dialects, Creole, Caribbean Hindustani (a dialect of Hindi), Urdu
Literacy:	98.8%
Literacy reported by respondent:	No data provided

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

Guyana 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*:	28
Estimated number of school libraries:	No data provided
Estimated number of university libraries:	1 university library, with 2 campus libraries
Estimated number of government-funded research libraries:	3
Source of these numbers:	No data provided

Internet access

Population online**:	160 000 users as of Sept. 2006 (18.1%)
Percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users:	61-80%
Percentage of school libraries offering Internet access to users:	No data provided
Percentage of university libraries offering Internet access to users:	81-100%
Percentage of government-funded research libraries offering Internet access to users:	81-100%
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>	Average to very little
Is the library association in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals:	Yes, to a certain degree – for the protection of children; to safeguard religious values and to safeguard public morality
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, but access for schoolchildren is free of charge at public libraries, whereas at university libraries patrons have to pay a small fee to access the Internet
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:	Some corporate assistance may be available

* 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.