

## Ireland




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### Responding institution:

***Library Association of Ireland***

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Ireland responded to the IFLA/FAIFE questionnaire in 2003 and 2005. There are approximately 1 500 public libraries in Ireland. The number of university libraries is given as 45-50 and government-funded research libraries as 35-40, whereas precise data for the number of school libraries is not available.

Internet penetration is high, with 50.2% of the population being Internet users. Levels of access in the country's libraries are also very high, with 81-100% of all libraries offering Internet access to users. Access in university, school and government-funded libraries is free of charge, but a small fee is charged in some public libraries. The state has made extra funding available to improve Internet access in the last two years. In particular, the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government has provided grants for personal computers for Internet access. In 2007, a grant was also provided for broadband/wi-fi in public libraries.

The respondent has indicated that an average amount of local content is available on the Internet, and that very much of this is available in local languages. The literacy rate is given as 99%.

The library association is in favour of filtering information to a certain extent (e.g. for children) and the use of filtering software is widespread in libraries. The reasons given are the protection of children,

national security and the prevention of crime. The respondent has also indicated that in many workplaces and government offices (including workplace libraries but not public libraries), additional filtering is applied to lock websites such as leisure sites, gambling sites, pornography sites and sites containing profanities.

The library association has not adopted the IFLA Internet Manifesto or the Glasgow Declaration, but a code of ethics was adopted in 2007.

### **User privacy and anti-terror legislation**

No anti-terror legislation has been passed. It is felt that the keeping of user records would not affect the freedom of expression of the individual Internet library user, as statistical records should be retained for purposes of effecting better service.

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

The respondent has indicated that no incidents have occurred in the last two years that adversely affected the freedom of access to information or the freedom of expression. Third-party sources report on two new Bills introduced in 2006: the Defamation Bill and the Privacy Bill. The Defamation Bill decriminalises almost all forms of defamation, except "publication of gravely harmful statements". The Privacy Bill was criticised by the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) because it would make unlawful the publication of much material that is clearly in the public interest. Some of the provisions in both these Bills still pose a threat to freedom of expression and freedom of the press

(<http://www.ifex.org/fr/content/view/full/78691/>).

In January 2007, Reporters Without Borders voiced concern about a Bill discussed by the Parliamentary Assembly of Northern Ireland, entitled the “Draft Policing – Miscellaneous Provisions (Northern Ireland) Order 2007”. This Bill would extend the powers of the police to search and seize documents ([http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=20483](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=20483)).

#### **HIV/Aids awareness**

The respondent has indicated that libraries in Ireland have been involved in programmes to raise awareness of HIV/Aids through the distribution of leaflets and health awareness exhibitions.

#### **Women and freedom of access to information**

Libraries in Ireland have special programmes that focus on the promotion of women’s literacy – provision of easy reading material is made for tutors and all readers, men as well as women. There are also programmes that focus specifically on women’s access to certain topics (e.g. social information, the economy, education, health and family planning), but this is seen as part of normal social inclusion and outreach programmes for all members of the community.

#### **IFLA Internet Manifesto**

Even though the 2005 report indicated that the intention was to adopt the IFLA Internet Manifesto in two years’ time, it has not yet been adopted, as most library organisations in Ireland have policies on Internet access and use. The respondent has not indicated whether the Manifesto will be adopted within the next two years.

#### **IFLA Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom**

Even though the 2005 report indicated that it is intended to adopt the Glasgow Declaration in two years’ time, it has not yet been adopted and there is no indication whether or not it will be adopted within the next two years.

#### **Ethics**

The respondent has indicated that the library association adopted a code of ethics in 2007 (see <http://www.libraryassociation.ie>).

## Main indicators

Country name:	Ireland
Population:	4 109 086 (July 2007 est.)
Main language:	English (official and the language generally used), Irish (Gaelic or Gaeilge) (official and spoken mainly in areas located along the western seaboard)
Literacy:	99%
Literacy reported by respondent:	99%

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

Ireland contributed to the World Report series in 2005 and 2003. 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*:	Ca.1500 (2005: 340)
Estimated number of school libraries:	Precise data not available
Estimated number of university libraries:	45-50
Estimated number of government-funded research libraries:	35-40
Source of these numbers:	Irish Library Council; Institute of Public Administration Yearbook 2007; Government Libraries Section of the Library Association

### Internet access

Population online**:	2 060 000 Internet users as of March 2005 (50.2%) (2005: 49.7%)
Percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users:	81-100% (2005: 81-100%)
Percentage of school libraries offering Internet access to users:	81-100%
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:	Average
To what degree is content on the Internet available in local languages:	Very much
Is the library association in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals:	Yes, to a certain degree (2005: N/A)
Is the use of filtering software widespread in your country's libraries:	Yes – for the protection of children, national security and to prevent crime
Is it free of charge for library users to access the Internet on library computers:	Yes, in university, school and statutory research council libraries; a small fee is charged in some public libraries (2005: 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 – the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government granted aid for personal computers for Internet access in public libraries and, in 2007, for the introduction of broadband/wifi in public libraries (2005: Yes)

\* Public library service points, including branch libraries.

\*\* Online population numbers are from Internet World Stats ([www.Internetworldstats.com](http://www.Internetworldstats.com)).

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