Impact of PCCs: A US Public Library Perspective

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Public Libraries in the US
Public Libraries and the Internet

- Longitudinal data collection since 1994
- Provides snapshot of what libraries offer their communities:
  - Library public access technology infrastructure
  - Capacity
  - Internet-enabled services
  - Challenges and issues
  - Funding
Why the survey?

- Data about what libraries do in their communities in key areas of:
  - Access to the Internet
  - Access to increasingly digital-only content and services
  - Digital literacy
  - Digital inclusion
Methodology

- Data are collected at both the branch (outlet) and system (administrative entity) levels
- Typically receive response rates that range from 70.0% to 84.3% (numbers of responses range from 5,500 to over 8,400)
  - 7,260 responses (82.5%) in 2011-2012
Community Access Points

- 62.1% of library branches report that they are the only provider of free public computer and Internet access in their community
- 90.5% provide Wi-Fi

**Wi-Fi and Free Access Provider**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wi-Fi Access (%)</th>
<th>Free Access Provider (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>76.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td>90.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Access

Broadband Connectivity

- 41.7% of reported that their connection speeds are insufficient some or all of the time
Digital Literacy

Training

- Point-of-use assistance: 82.7%
- Formal classes: 44.3%
- One-on-one assistance: 34.8%
- Online training material: 28.1%
E-government

- Assist with use of websites: 91.8% (2011), 88.8% (2009)
- As-needed assistance: 96.6% (2011), 78.7% (2009)
- Assist with forms: 70.7% (2011), 66.3% (2009)
- Assist understand services: 50.0% (2011), 43.3% (2009)
- Partnering with agencies/others: 30.9% (2011), 20.5% (2009)
Employment

Employment Services

- Job search classes: 2011 - 31.3%, 2009 - 24.5%
- Assist with applications: 2011 - 76.0%, 2009 - 67.1%
- Software for resumes, etc.: 2011 - 77.5%, 2009 - 68.9%
- Civil service exam materials: 2011 - 77.1%, 2009 - 74.9%
- Job seeking resources: 2011 - 92.2%, 2009 - 88.2%
It’s about

- Trans-literacies
  - Digital
    - Device and Content
  - Information
    - Finding, assessing, using, engaging
  - Domain
    - Civics, workforce, health
  - Traditional
  - Cultural
It’s about

• Partnerships
  ◦ Partnerships are comprised of both online and in-person components
  ◦ Partnerships are supported by a range of local stakeholders, each of which offers knowledge, resources, and expertise that contributes to their success
  ◦ Partnership goals align with community needs
  ◦ Partners have clear understanding of roles and responsibilities
  ◦ **Partners understand the each other’s missions and limitations**
It’s about

- Engagement
  - Hartford Public Library (CT)
    - The American Place
  - Austin Public Library (TX)
    - New Immigrants Project
  - Alachua County Public Library (FL)
    - The Library Place
  - Sacramento Public Library (CA)
    - I Street Press
  - Chicago Public Library (IL)
    - YouMedia
  - Enoch Pratt Free Library (MD)
    - Baltimarket
  - Cleveland Public Library (OH)
    - TechCentral (MakerBot)
It’s about

- Community transformation in critical areas of need
  - Education
  - Economic and workforce development
  - Health and wellness
  - Community/civic engagement
Are there negative impacts of PCCs?

- Depends on your definitions and perspectives
  - Shifting the burden, or leveraging?
  - Creating social innovation in communities, or smaller government?
  - Effective and transformative, or efficient and economies of scale?

- Some of both? Is it “and” and not “or”??
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