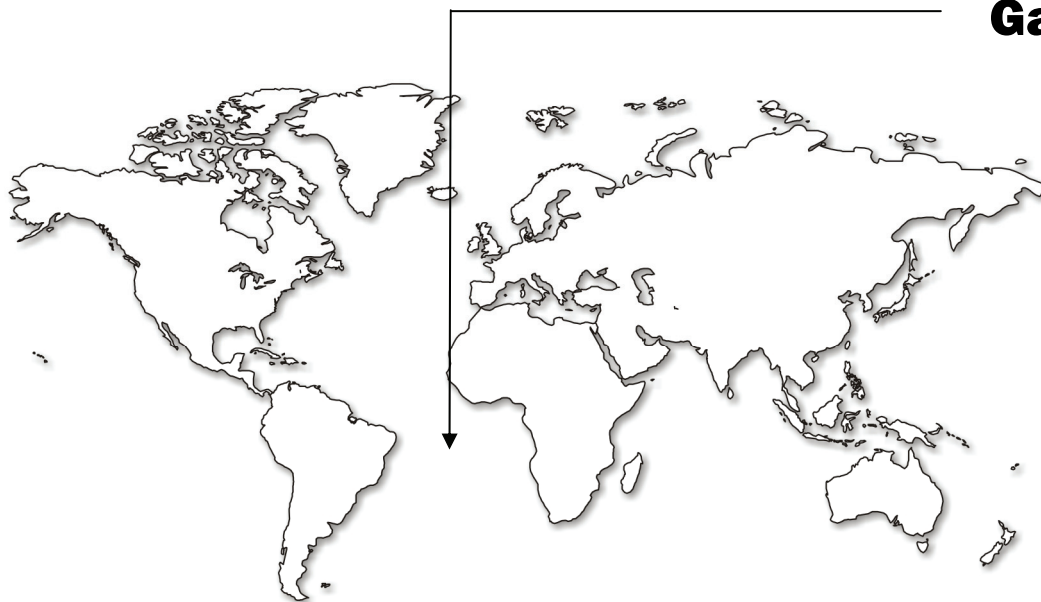


Gambia



Responding institution:

National Library of the Gambia

The Gambia contributed to the World Report series for the first time in 2003. This second contribution relates to the 6 public libraries and 27 research libraries in the country, the latter consisting of 3 university research libraries, 20 school libraries and 4 government-funded research libraries.

There is no current data available on the online population. The 2003 World Report indicated a 0.34% Internet penetration, whereas Internet World Stats for September 2005 indicated an increase up to 3.2%. Very little local content is available on the Internet and also very little content is available in local languages. The reported literacy rate in the Gambia is 42%.

There has been an increase in the percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users – from less than 20% in 2005, to 21-40% in 2007. Although less than 20% of school libraries offer Internet access to their users, 61-80% of government-funded research libraries and 81-100% of university libraries do so. Users have to pay for access, except in research institutions.

In contrast with the 2003 report, the library association is to a certain degree in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals. (No reasons have been given.) The respondent has indicated that it is not aware of the use of filtering software in the country's libraries. No extra funding has been made available by

the state and/or other library authorities for Internet access in the library system in the last two years.

Anti-terror legislation has not been passed in the Gambia. (The question as to whether such legislation, or proposed legislation, would impact on user privacy has been left unanswered.) The respondent has indicated that the keeping of user records might affect the freedom of expression of the individual Internet library user, as security agents could use it for surveillance purposes.

No violations of intellectual freedom, access to information and/or freedom of expression have been reported, and no further information resources pertaining to freedom of access to information have been provided. Consulted third-party sources have revealed some concerns, which will be discussed below.

Libraries in the Gambia are involved in HIV/Aids awareness programmes. Examples are exhibitions on World Aids Day and special Aids corners in libraries. They also have special programmes focusing on the promotion of women's literacy and women's access to information.

It was reported in 2003 that a code of ethics for libraries was adopted in 1988. The 2007 response is that the library association has not been very active for some time and that such a code has not been adopted. The respondent has, however, indicated the intent to adopt one within the next two years. The same applies to the IFLA Internet Manifesto and the Glasgow Declaration.

User privacy and anti-terror legislation

Anti-terror legislation has not been passed in the Gambia. (The respondent has not answered the question as to whether such legislation would impact on user privacy.) The keeping of user records might affect the freedom of expression of the individual Internet library user, as security agents could use it for surveillance purposes.

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

No violations of intellectual freedom, access to information and/or freedom of expression have been reported by the respondent, and no further information resources pertaining to freedom of access to information have been provided. Consulted third-party sources have, however, revealed various concerns.

With regard to press freedom, the 2006 annual report of Reporters Without Borders (http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=17377) expresses serious concern about the state of press freedom in the Gambia, and reports on various incidents. Similar incidents have been reported in the 2007 annual report (http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=20757).

Amnesty International's report for 2007 (<http://thereport.amnesty.org/page/1045/eng/>) also cites incidents involving journalists and editors, and states that "repression of the right to freedom of expression [has] intensified". IFEX (<http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/83748/>) reports on an initiative that was launched in 2007 by the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) and the Network of African Freedom of Expression Organisations (NAFEO) "to end impunity and the violent attacks on free expression in the country".

HIV/Aids awareness

Libraries are involved in HIV/Aids awareness programmes. Examples are exhibitions on World Aids

Day and special Aids corners in libraries. Due to a lack of resources, both material and human, libraries are not involved in programmes to provide HIV/Aids information to members of the community who are unable to read.

Women and freedom of access to information

Libraries have special programmes focusing on the promotion of women's literacy – these include having girl/women's corners and providing functional literacy materials on skills, health, harmful practices, childcare and farming. In addition, libraries also have special programmes that promote women's access to information on specific topics such as social information, the economy, education, health and family planning. The respondent has explained that these are mainly special libraries operated by non-governmental organisations that focus on women's reproductive health, rights, economic empowerment, literacy and other forms of advocacy.

IFLA Internet Manifesto

The library association has not adopted the IFLA Internet Manifesto. The respondent has indicated the intent to adopt it within the next two years.

IFLA Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom

The library association has not adopted the IFLA Glasgow Declaration. The respondent has indicated the intent to adopt it within the next two years.

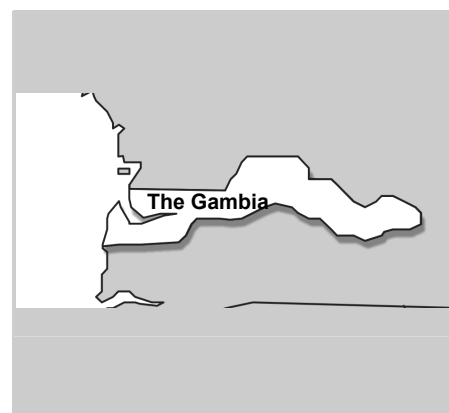
Ethics

Although the 2003 report states that the library association adopted a code of ethics in 1988, the respondent has indicated that the association has not adopted such a code. The intention is to adopt one within the next two years, and the respondent has also indicated that the library association is in the process of working on it.

Main indicators

Country name:	The Gambia
Population:	1 688 359 (July 2007 est.)
Main language:	English (official), Mandinka, Wolof, Fula, other indigenous vernaculars
Literacy:	40.1%
Literacy reported by respondent:	42%

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

The Gambia contributed to the World Report series in 2003. The following section compares data and answers from 2007 with the 2003 IFLA/FAIFE World Report and adds context from the respondent's estimates, where possible.

Library services

Estimated number of public libraries*:	6
Estimated number of school libraries:	20
Estimated number of university libraries:	3
Estimated number of government-funded research libraries:	4
Source of these numbers:	Reports; personal knowledge

Internet access

Population online**:	49 000 Internet users as of Sept. 2005 (3.2%)
Percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users:	21-40% (2003: Less than 20%)
Percentage of school libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
Percentage of university libraries offering Internet access to users:	81-100%
Percentage of government-funded research libraries offering Internet access to users:	61-80%
In your estimate, how much local content*** is available on the Internet:	Very little
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:	Yes, to a certain degree (2003: No)
Is the use of filtering software widespread in your country's libraries:	No (2003: No)
Is it free of charge for library users to access the Internet on library computers:	Yes, in statutory research council libraries only (2003: Extra funding has not been made available for Internet access in the Gambia)
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

* 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.