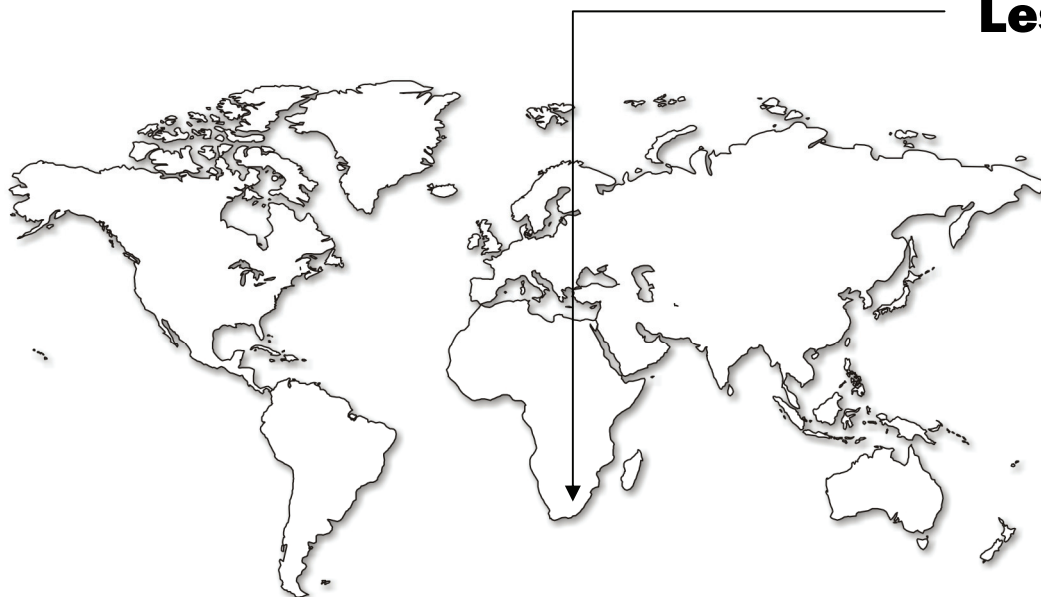


Lesotho



Responding institution:

The respondent has requested to remain anonymous.

Lesotho responded to the IFLA questionnaire once previously in 2001. There are 6 public libraries in Lesotho, as well as 203 school libraries and 4 university libraries. The number of government-funded research libraries is given as 4.

Internet penetration is low and only 1.7% of the population are Internet users. Levels of access in the country's libraries are correspondingly low. Less than 20% of all public libraries, school libraries and government-funded libraries offer Internet access to their users. Of the university libraries, only 21-40% offer Internet access. In public libraries where Internet access is provided, a minimal fee is charged. At the academic libraries Internet access is free of charge for students.

The state has made extra funding available to improve Internet access in the last two years. Notably, 40 computers were procured for the national library for the creation of an Internet café.

An average amount of local content is available on the Internet; also, an average amount of content is available in local languages. The literacy rate is given as 78% (84.4% according to the 2007 *CIA World Factbook*).

The respondent has indicated that the library association is in favour of filtering information to a certain extent (e.g. for children). Filtering software is

used on children's terminals in libraries. The protection of children, national security, and the safeguarding of religious values, the national ethos/culture and public morality are all listed as reasons for using filtering software.

There is a discrepancy in the questionnaire in that the respondent has indicated that the IFLA Internet Manifesto has been adopted, as well as that it will be adopted within the next two years. The library association has not adopted the Glasgow Declaration or a code of ethics, but intends to adopt both within the next two years.

The respondent has indicated that there have been no violations of freedom of access to information. Several incidents, however, have been reported where journalistic freedom has been curbed.

User privacy and anti-terror legislation

No anti-terror legislation has been passed. It is felt that keeping user records would affect the freedom of expression of the individual Internet library user, as the record would reflect the type of information that the particular user is searching for.

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, however, have reported a few incidents. In February 2007, several journalists were threatened by anonymous callers after

being accused of “promoting negative perceptions about some members of the government of Lesotho” and causing “confusion in the country and within the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy” (<http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/81117/>). A freelance journalist was arrested on charges of treason after a radio broadcast in June 2007 (<http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/84363/>).

HIV/Aids awareness

Libraries in Lesotho have been involved in programmes to raise awareness of HIV/Aids through peer educators and counsellors becoming part of testing teams. They have also made provision for people who cannot read through posters, brochures, and video and film shows, and through drama engage children with issues related to HIV/Aids.

Women and freedom of access to information

Libraries in Lesotho have no special programmes that

focus on the promotion of women’s literacy. They do, however, have programmes that focus specifically on women’s access to certain topics (e.g. social information, the economy, education, health and family planning).

IFLA Internet Manifesto

The information given in the questionnaire is contradictory and it is not clear whether the IFLA Internet Manifesto has been adopted, or will be adopted within the next two years.

IFLA Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom

The Glasgow Declaration has not been adopted, but will be within the next two years.

Ethics

The library association has not yet adopted a code of ethics, but plans to do so within the next two years.

Main indicators

Country name:	Lesotho
Population:	2 125 262 (July 2007 est.)
Main language:	Sesotho (southern Sotho), English (official), Zulu, Xhosa
Literacy:	84.8%
Literacy reported by respondent:	78%

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

Lesotho last contributed to the World Report series in 2001. Comparisons are unfortunately not possible due to changes in the questionnaire.

Library services

Estimated number of public libraries*:	6
Estimated number of school libraries:	203
Estimated number of university libraries:	4
Estimated number of government-funded research libraries:	4
Source of these numbers:	Research by the respondent

Internet access

Population online**:	43 000 Internet users as of Sept. 2005 (1.7%)
Percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
Percentage of school libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
Percentage of university libraries offering Internet access to users:	21-40%
Percentage of government-funded research libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
In your estimate, how much local content*** is available on the Internet:	Average
<i>To what degree is content on the Internet available in local languages:</i>	Average
Is the library association in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals:	Yes
Is the use of filtering software widespread in your country's libraries:	Yes, to a certain degree – to protect children; national security; to safeguard religious values and the national ethos/culture; to prevent crime and to safeguard public morality
Is it free of charge for library users to access the Internet on library computers:	Yes, in university libraries, school libraries and statutory research council libraries; minimal fees are paid in public libraries
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 – procurement of 40 computers in the national library for the creation of an Internet café in the library

* 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.