South Africa

Responding institutions:

The respondents requested to remain anonymous.

South Africa is responding to the World Report for the third time, having previously contributed in 2001 and 2003, with a lapse in 2005. This report refers to the activities in 1 800 public libraries and 9 572 research libraries (including 77 university libraries, 9 416 school libraries and 79 government-funded research libraries). There are also 224 special libraries that are often not government funded, as well as a further 54 research libraries that have not been included in the statistics already mentioned.

Based on the report alone, the situation regarding intellectual freedom in the country appears to be reasonable. A number of concerns about the violation of intellectual freedom are, however, noted by third-party sources. No adverse effects of anti-terror legislation have been reported.

According to the 2007 *CIA World Factbook,* Internet penetration in South Africa was estimated at 10.3% in 2006. Internet access offered by public libraries is estimated at 61-80% (this is an increase from the 2003 estimate of 21-40%), university libraries at 81-100%, school libraries at 21-40% and government-funded research libraries at 61-80% (which is less than the estimate for 2003).

There is very little Internet coverage of local content as well as local languages. According to the 2007 *CIA World Factbook,* the literacy rate is estimated at 86.4%. The respondents offer two estimations, citing

different official sources: 93% for 2003 (http://www/gcis.gov.za/docs/publications/pocketguide04/satoday04.PDF; *Pocket Guide to South Africa,* 2004, p. 7) and 86% for 2002 (http://www.hst.org.za/healthstats/109/data).

Most academic, special and public libraries provide Internet access. At academic and special libraries this is a free service, while some libraries have Internet cafés where there may be a fee payable for the use of the Internet. The South African government has recently made a large amount of money available for the development of public libraries. The model of how the money will be applied and distributed is still being developed, but it can be assumed that it will include expenditure on library material, buildings in some instances, and certainly access to electronic sources. During the last four years some foreign funders have also made grants to public libraries for information technology development. There may also have been grants to other library types during the last two years that the respondents might not be aware of.

The library community is to some degree in favour of filtering information for the protection of children. Accordingly, the use of filtering software is to a degree widespread in the country's libraries. (In 2003, the library community was reported as being not in favour of filtering.) Safeguarding network safety and integrity against hacking, viruses and spam messages (as part of normal network maintenance through firewalls and similar procedures) are also mentioned as reasons.

Libraries in South Africa are not troubled by anti-terror legislation. No incidents of the violation of intellectual

freedom have been reported by the respondents. The following sources, suggested by the respondents, may be consulted for more information on the status of intellectual freedom in South Africa:

- The right to know: The state of media freedom in South Africa. *Leadership*, March 2006

- The media: Media freedom. *South African Yearbook*, 2006/7

- Freedom of Expression Institute. 2007/06/07 (http://www.fxi.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&id=95&Itemid=1)

Libraries in South Africa have been involved in programmes to raise awareness of HIV/Aids, but not as such in programmes to provide HIV/Aids information to members of the community who are unable to read. They are involved in special programmes to promote women's literacy, but not in programmes to promote women's access to specific topics such as social information, the economy, education, health and family planning.

South Africa's library community adopted a special code of ethics in 2002 (see http://www.liasa.org.za). Although the IFLA Internet Manifesto has not been adopted, the respondents have indicated that the South African library community intends to adopt it within the next two years. The same applies to the adoption of the IFLA Glasgow Declaration.

User privacy and anti-terror legislation

No anti-terror legislation has been passed in South Africa. The respondents do not feel that if such legislation were to be passed it would impact on user privacy. They also do not think that the keeping of user records would affect the freedom of expression of the individual library Internet user: "Keeping records for the sake of good management of resources is a requirement of the financial legislation of the country and to determine whether the library is reaching its goals and objectives in serving its clients. South Africa has, for instance, the Public Finance Management Act, which has very prescriptive reporting requirements." (In the 2003 response it was indicated that although library user records are kept, it is considered to have an impact on individual users' freedom of expression.)

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

According to the respondents, there have been no reported violations of intellectual freedom. There has, however, been debate and fears expressed from the media that the government is clamping down on them and preventing them from broadcasting certain

programmes and publishing certain matters in the press. The respondents would not describe the incidents as "adversely" affecting the freedom of expression or access to information.

Most recently, there was strong debate and controversy about a biography on President Thabo Mbeki and whether it is a fair portrayal or not. Although the fact that the debate is taking place manifests that the opportunity for debate exists, the fact that there is debate and criticism of opinions not favouring the accurateness of the book and the portrayal could perhaps be seen as disturbing.

A number of concerns and incidents are noted by third-party sources, for example:

- concerns about the misuse of power by authorities (Amnesty International World Report 2006; http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/zaf-summary-eng);

- a Commission of Inquiry into allegations of politically motivated interference in the output of the public broadcaster, the SABC (Amnesty International World Report 2006; http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Regions/Africa/South-Africa);

- banning of public events (http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/84055_June 2007);

- The need to submit publications for classification (http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/83864; June 2007);

- a warning by media freedom watchdogs that print and broadcast media could be the subject of strict censorship if changes to the Act proposed by the Home Affairs Department became law (http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/82922);

- concerns about journalists' right to protect their sources (http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/78858); and

- instructions keeping health officials prohibited from speaking to the media about HIV and Aids (http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/76837).

On a positive note, IFEX reports on a court ruling that granted the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper permission to publish an article on allegations of possible fraud, violations of tender rules, and contraventions of the Public Finance Management Act that had occurred in the South African Post Office (http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/77311_September 2006).

HIV/Aids awareness

Libraries in South Africa have been involved in programmes promoting HIV/Aids awareness. An article is recommended for further reading: Hart, G. 2001.

HIV/Aids pandemic … are librarians doing enough? *Cape Librarian*, July/August 2001, pp. 9-11.

South African libraries have, however, not been involved in programmes to provide HIV/Aids information to members of the community who cannot read. The respondents feel that this might be ascribed to scarce resources, lack of training skills, lack of material, understaffed libraries, and ignorance. There may also be various other organisations involved in the provision of information to non-literate groups, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the Department of Health, theatre groups and theatre personalities. The respondents are, however, not aware of structured and formal programmes presented at libraries on a wide scale.

Women and freedom of access to information

Libraries have been involved in initiatives designed to promote women's literacy. Some public libraries run literacy programmes for women. They are run mostly by volunteers and there is probably great variation in quality (e.g. due to inadequate adult teaching skills or teaching in the non-mother tongue). The respondents are uncertain about libraries' involvement in special programmes to promote women's access to specific topics such as social information, the economy, education, health and family planning. They are not aware of any such programmes but feel that it is safe to assume that NGOs, women's groups, churches and similar organisations may have such programmes. The respondents are not aware of any formal and structured programmes or initiatives offered by libraries in this regard.

IFLA Internet Manifesto

The IFLA Internet Manifesto has not been adopted by the library community of South Africa. According to the respondents, it is, however, intended to adopt the Manifesto within the next two years.

IFLA Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom

The IFLA Glasgow Declaration has not been adopted by the library community of South Africa. It is, however, the intention to do so within the next two years.
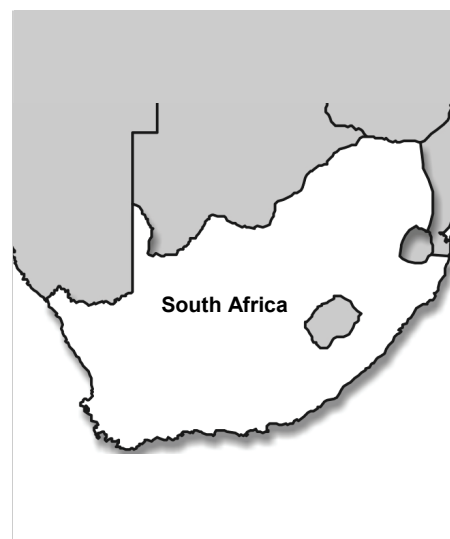
Ethics

The library community of South Africa adopted a special code of ethics in 2002 (see http://www. liasa.org.za). According to the respondents, there is no information available on how the code has been implemented.

Main indicators

Country name:	South Africa
Population:	43 997 828 (July 2007 est.)
Main language:	IsiZulu 23.8%, IsiXhosa 17.6%, Afrikaans 13.3%, Sepedi 9.4%, English 8.2%, Setswana 8.2%, Sesotho 7.9%, Xitsonga 4.4%, other 7.2% (2001 census)
Literacy:	86.4%
Literacy reported by respondents:	93%; 86% (93% in 2003, http://www/gcis.gov.za/docs/publications/pocketguide04/satoday04.pdf) (86% in 2002, http://www.hst.org.za/healthstats/109/data)

Population figures, language and literacy are from the
CIA World Factbook, 2007 edition
(https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html).

South Africa

Libraries and Internet access

South Africa contributed to the World Report series in 2003 and 2001. The following section compares data and answers from 2007 with the 2003 IFLA/FAIFE World Report and adds context from the respondents' estimates, where possible.

Library services

Estimated number of public libraries*:	1 800
Estimated number of school libraries:	9 416
Estimated number of university libraries:	77
Estimated number of government-funded research libraries:	79 (+ 54 research libraries not government funded)
Source of these numbers:	South African Yearbook, 2006/7

Internet access

Population online**:	5 100 000 Internet users as of Sept. 2006 (10.3%) (2003: 7.01% in 2002)
Percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users:	61-80% (2003: 21-40%)
Percentage of school libraries offering Internet access to users:	21-40%
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:	Yes, to a certain degree – for the protection of children and to safeguard network safety and integrity against hacking, viruses and spam messages as part of normal network maintenance through firewalls, etc. (2003: No answer)
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 (2003: 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:	No – but government has made a large amount of money available to develop public libraries

* 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.