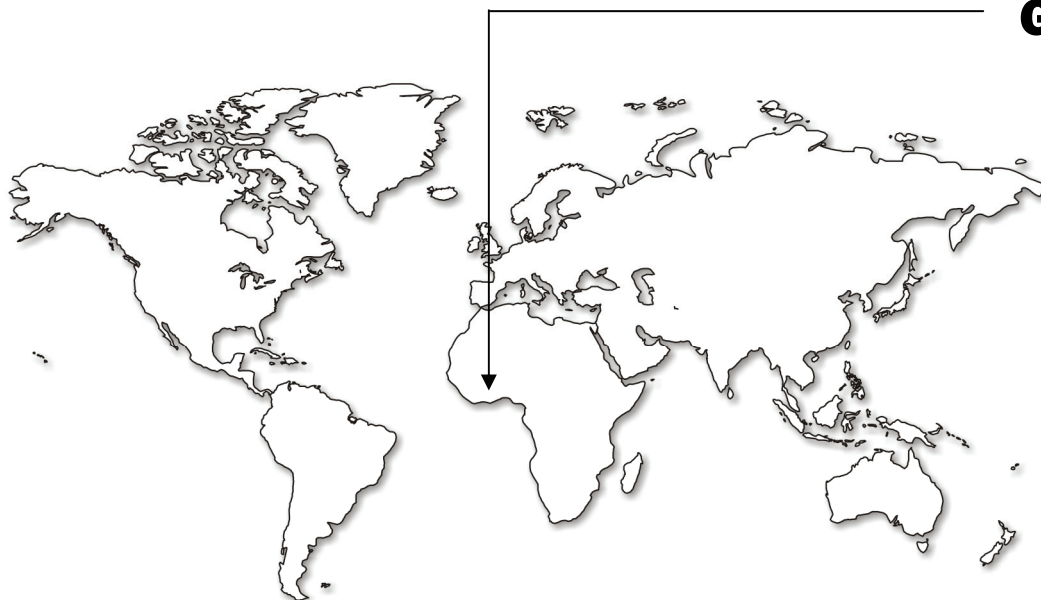# Ghana

Responding institution:
Ghana Library Association

This is the third time that Ghana has contributed to the World Report. There are 62 public libraries, consisting of 10 regional and 52 branch libraries. The website of the Ministry of Education lists 6 public and 14 private university libraries, 38 teacher training college libraries, 16 government-funded research libraries and 478 senior secondary school libraries.

More than 80% of university and government-funded research libraries provide Internet access, whereas 41-60% of school and 21-40% of public libraries do so. There is very little local content available on the Internet and very little information is in local languages.

At universities in Ghana access to the Internet is free of charge, and some universities also provide free access to the surrounding communities. In schools, students are billed at the end of the term. At other libraries, users pay a reduced fee enabling the library to generate income in order to sustain the service. The fee also serves to discourage library users to from spending too much time on the Internet to the detriment of others who also wish to access the Internet, but cannot do so due to the limited number of computers.

In universities and research institutes, satellite dishes with wireless and fibre optic cabling have been installed to widen access to the Internet for a greater number of users. Selected filtering and blocking of information on the Internet are done mostly to protect children, safeguard the national ethos/culture, prevent crime and safeguard public morality. Other reasons provided are technical, for example to prevent access by hackers and protect against viruses.

No anti-terror legislation has been passed in Ghana that can adversely affect the intellectual freedom and privacy of library users. The respondent is of the view that if such legislation were to be passed, it would affect user privacy, as user records and information would have to be made available for government scrutiny. It is felt that the keeping of user records does not impact on the freedom of expression of the library user, as the library needs the information for record-keeping purposes and would not divulge information. So far no incident has transpired that could endanger users' trust.

A few incidents of the violation of intellectual freedom have been reported by outside sources, although the respondent has indicated that no such incidents have occurred.

No provision is made in Ghana's libraries regarding information for special needs, such as HIV/Aids, people who are unable to read, and women.

Neither a code of ethics nor the IFLA Internet Manifesto and the Glasgow Declaration have been adopted. (The 2005 report indicated that this would happen within the next two years.)

User privacy and anti-terror legislation

No anti-terror legislation has been adopted. The respondent is of the opinion that the adoption of such legislation would impact on user privacy, as user records and information would have to be made available for government scrutiny. On the other hand, keeping user records would not compromise the users, as libraries that need such records for record-keeping purposes would not divulge the information. So far, no incident has transpired that would abuse users' trust.

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

Although the respondent has stated that no incidents have occurred that affected the freedom of access to information, both IFEX (http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/55/) and the Index on Censorship (http://www.indexonline.org/) report on quite a number of incidents involving violations of the rights of journalists and media workers.

HIV/Aids awareness

Raising awareness about HIV/Aids has been limited to providing access to Hinari databases and other health information. Libraries are not involved in the special provision of information on HIV/Aids to people who are unable to read. The respondent has contributed this to a lack of skills of library staff in rural areas.

Women and freedom of access to information

No special programmes focusing on the promotion of women's literacy exist. Public libraries focus their literacy programmes on the youth, because the culture of reading has yet to be adopted by the Ghanaian youth. Libraries do not specifically target women. The literacy programme consists of spelling and reading competitions, and essay writing, for which resources are provided by the library.

No programmes exist to enhance women's access to information, the reason being that men also need information and their support is seen as crucial for the empowerment of women. The government targets women in all the areas of special focus mentioned in the questionnaire. Libraries provide information to support all governmental campaigns and do not initiate special programmes of their own.

IFLA Internet Manifesto

The IFLA Internet Manifesto has not yet been adopted, but the library association is working towards adopting it within the next two years.

IFLA Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom

Similarly, the Glasgow Declaration has not been adopted yet, but the library association plans to adopt it within the next two years.

Ethics

Although a code of ethics has not yet been adopted, the library association is working on it. Section 5 of its constitution (under "Discipline") states: "Every member is required to uphold the reputation of the association and the dignity of the profession. A professional member is required to observe the code of ethics and act in a fiduciary manner towards his/her clients and employers and others with whom his/her work is connected …" It has not been published yet. The code will be adopted within the next two years.

Main indicators

Country name:	Ghana
Population:	22 931 299 (July 2007 est.)
Main language:	Asante 14.8%, Ewe 12.7%, Fante 9.9%, Boron (Brong) 4.6%, Dagomba 4.3%, Dangme 4.3%, Dagarte (Dagaba) 3.7%, Akyem 3.4%, Ga 3.4%, Akuapem 2.9%, other 36.1% (includes English – official) (2000 census)
Literacy:	57.9%
Literacy reported by respondent:	74.8%

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

Ghana

Libraries and Internet access

Ghana 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*:	62 (10 regional and 52 branch libraries) (2005: 1 headquarter, 10 regional and 10 branch libraries)
Estimated number of school libraries:	478 senior secondary schools
Estimated number of university libraries:	6 public and 14 private university libraries and 38 teacher training college libraries
Estimated number of government-funded research libraries:	16
Source of these numbers:	Ghana Library Board; Directory of Libraries in Ghana, and Ministry of Education website

Internet access

Population online**:	401 300 Internet users as of Sept. 2006 (1.8%) (2005: 0.8%)
Percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users:	21-40% (2005: Less than 20%)
Percentage of school libraries offering Internet access to users:	41-60%
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:	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 – to protect children, safeguard the national ethos/culture, prevent crime and safeguard public morality; other technical reasons (e.g. hackers and viruses) (2005: Yes, to a certain degree)
Is the use of filtering software widespread in your country's libraries:	Yes, to a certain degree (2005: Yes, to a certain degree)
Is it free of charge for library users to access the Internet on library computers:	No (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, in some cases (2005: Yes)

* 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.