



Internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries

Technical report



Project team

This report has been prepared by I & J Management Services

ABN 64 082 292 813
PO Box 845
Sunbury Victoria 3429
Telephone +61 3 9740 4222
Email ianp@ijman.com.au

Project management

Patrick Gregory, Wendy Quihampton, Melanie McCarten and Brad Langoulant, State Library of Victoria

Research

Ian Phillips, Carol Oxley, Jacqui Phillips, I & J Management Services

Editorial, design and layout

Katie Purvis, Sally Van Es, Peter Hutton, Megan Ellis

Photography

Ferne Millen Photography

Project workgroup

Janet Aumann, West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation
Michael Byrne, Maribyrnong Library Service
Felicity Macchion, Yarra Plenty Regional Library
Patti Manolis, Geelong Regional Library Corporation
Jenny Ruffy, Yarra Libraries
Deborah Skinner, Latrobe City Libraries

Published by
State Library of Victoria
328 Swanston Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Australia
Telephone +61 3 8664 7000
slv.vic.gov.au

Inquiries can be addressed to:
Public Libraries and Community Engagement Division, State Library of Victoria
The full technical report is available on the Public Libraries Victoria Network website at plvn.net.au.

© State Library of Victoria, 2012

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

ISBN 978-0-9808754-3-0

Contents

Introduction	3
A. Literature Review	4
A1. <i>Opportunity for all</i>	4
A2. Literature review	6
A3. References	11
B. Household Use of Information Technology	12
C. Public Library Provision of Computer and Internet Services	17
D. Summary of Computer and Internet User Surveys	24
D1. Main user survey	25
D2. Children's survey	36
E. Analysis of Computer and Internet User Surveys	39
E1. Main user survey	39
E2. Children's survey	54
F. Comparative Data Tables	59
F1. Main user survey results by library service	60
F2. Main user survey results by respondent demographic	69
F3. Children's survey results by respondent demographic	77
G. Snapshots	79
G1. Use of library computer and internet services	79
G2. Why people use computer and internet services <u>at the library</u>	90
G3. Real stories	98
H. Research Methodology	104
Acronyms and abbreviations	108



Introduction

The State Library of Victoria (SLV) and Public Libraries Victoria Network (PLVN) have undertaken a study of internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries. Inspired by the US study *Opportunity for all: how the American public benefits from internet access at US libraries* (April 2010), the Victorian study has established who uses the internet and personal computers (PCs) in public libraries, what tasks they

perform, and the benefits of free access to computers, the internet and related services in public libraries.

The findings from the study are presented in the main summary report of *Internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries*. This technical report has been produced to support public libraries in their endeavours to advocate for sustained capacity to meet the evolving needs

of library users and the community for access to high-quality, high-speed computer and internet services.

The summary report is informed and backed up by detailed information collected and compiled through this study by I & J Management Services on behalf of SLV and PLVN. This information is presented in this technical report.

Section

A	Literature review	Presents the findings from a review of local, Australian and international literature and studies on library provision of computer and internet services, with particular reference to <i>Opportunity for all</i> .
B	Household use of information technology	Presents data published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on trends in household access to and use of computers and the internet.
C	Public library provision of computer and internet services	Presents data on computer and internet provision published in the <i>Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries</i> , as well as supplementary information collected for this study on user access to library services, the scope and quality of library services, and library policies and protocols.
D	Summary of computer and internet user surveys	Presents the aggregated results of two online surveys of users of library computer and internet services against each of the questions in the survey.
E	Analysis of computer and internet user surveys	Presents analysis of the data from the two user surveys.
F	Comparative data tables	Compares the results of the two online surveys by library service and/or respondent demographic category.
G	Snapshots	Presents short case studies and stories of the different uses of library computer and internet services, the benefits to library users, and the reasons why users access these services at a public library.
H	Research methodology	Describes the methodology adopted for the implementation of this study.

A. Literature Review

A literature review was conducted to inform the methodology for the study of internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries, and to understand the social and political environment in which advocacy by Victorian public libraries would take place. Of central importance was the US study *Opportunity for all: how the American public benefits from internet access at US libraries* (April 2010), which was instrumental in establishment of the Victorian study.

More broadly, the issues addressed through the review of Australian and international literature on library provision of computer and internet services included:

- demand for public access to computers and the internet
- library provision of public access to computers and the internet
- characteristics of users of public libraries' computer and internet services

- the purposes for which people use computers and internet at the library
- the distinct benefits of accessing computers and internet at the library compared with other public-access points
- the challenge ahead – in terms of the role public libraries play in the evolving digital landscape.

A1. Opportunity for all

The *Internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries* project was inspired by the US study *Opportunity for all: how the American public benefits from internet access at US libraries* (April 2010). The US study examined the provision, uptake and impact of free access to computers and the internet in public libraries.

User profile

In profiling users of public library computer and internet service, *Opportunity for all* found that:

- in 2008–09 there were approximately 169 million visitors aged 14 or older to public libraries in America, and that during these visits roughly 77 million people, or 45% of these visitors (more than one-third of all Americans aged 14 or older), used a public library computer or wireless network to access the internet

- people from all walks of life are using computers and internet access at public libraries, regardless of their income, race and level of education and regardless of whether they have a connection at home or not
- teenagers are the most active users, with half of 14–18-year-olds using libraries' computers – primarily for homework
- low-income adults were most likely to rely on public libraries as their sole access to the internet and computers.

In these findings, *Opportunity for all* dispels some myths about the beneficiaries of public-access computer services in US public libraries. Public-access computer users largely resemble the general public in terms of age, education, and even the overall level of home computer and internet access.

However, what the study found was that respondents who lack internet access at home (which includes a relatively higher proportion of people who are poor or from CALD communities) are more likely to be *frequent* users of library public-access computers than people who have computers in the home.

The *Opportunity for all* study found that although many different types of people use public library computer and internet services, libraries appear to be particularly effective in addressing the needs of individuals and families who still lack alternative means of access. If not for libraries offering a technological lifeline to children and families in need, millions of Americans would not have reliable internet access in a digital age when a connection is often needed to complete school assignments, apply for jobs or access government services.

How people use the library

The *Opportunity for all* study found that access to the internet provides opportunities for people to improve their lives. When people go online they can get health information, use government services, manage finances, look for jobs, do research for school and work, and keep in touch. The study also found that access to the internet can enable library users to make meaningful contributions to society.

The study showed that some of the highest uses of library computers occurred in three critical areas: education, employment and health. Online, people completed a course, found work, accessed government benefits, learned about critical medical treatments, and connected with their communities.

- **Supporting education:** Educational needs drew 42% of users to library computers, and 37% of those users (an estimated 12 million students) were on computers to complete homework for a class.

- **Supporting employment:** 40% of library computer users (an estimated 30 million people) used library technology resources to help them with their career needs, and 75% of these were searching for a job online. Half of these users filled out applications or submitted résumés online.
- **Supporting health:** 37% were focusing on health issues. Over 80% of these users logged on to learn about a disease, illness or medical condition. Then one-third sought out doctors or health-care providers. Half of these people followed up by making appointments.

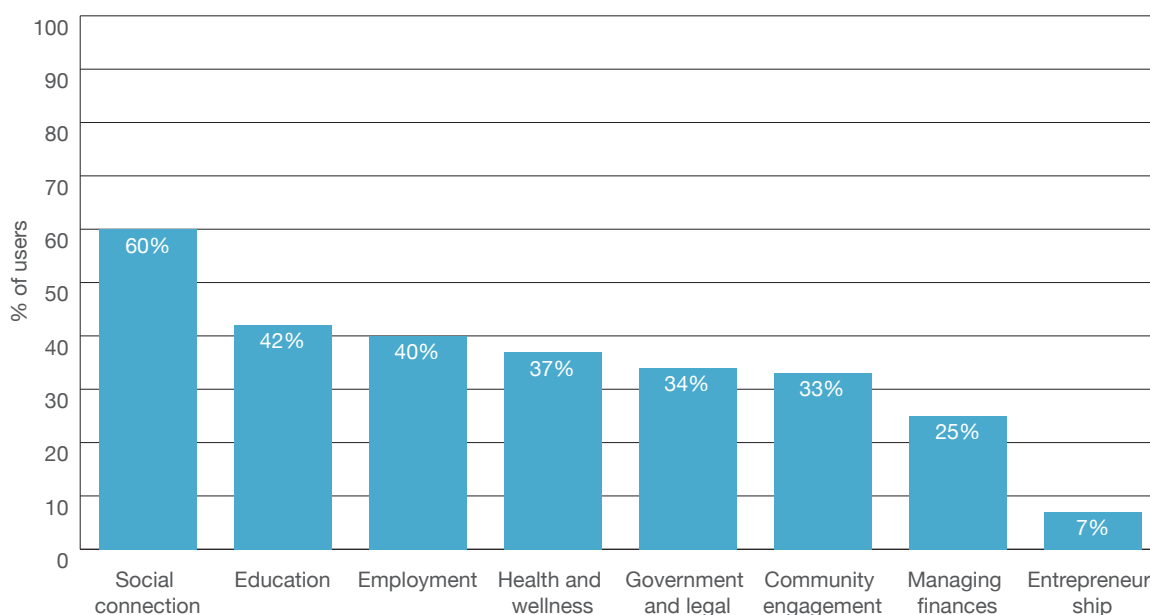
The distinctive benefits of libraries

Opportunity for all found that compared to other public-access providers, such as employment centres and internet cafes, the library model for public access to technology stands out because of the presence of librarians who provide training and assist users in navigating the internet. User feedback in the study highlighted that the library is different due to:

- support from librarians and staff who know how to navigate the landscape of information
- access to complementary hard-copy materials
- access to online databases and e-journals
- availability of peripheral services
- the convenience of the library's location in relation to schools (for students accessing the library to do their homework)
- offering a welcoming and productive place where one can attend to many needs at the same time (e.g. compared with competition for computer time at school labs between students and at home between siblings and, often, parents).

That's what makes the library better than any other place – the amount of space you have. You have the librarians who can help you. The time you can stay there isn't limited, like at a coffee shop where you can only stay if you buy their product. **(Opportunity for all)**

Figure A1. Opportunity for all: use of library computer and internet services



A2. Literature review

Beyond *Opportunity for all*, there is a range of Australian and international studies and literature that has examined the uptake and use of computer and internet services at public libraries. Statistical data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) about household access to computers and the internet in Australia is documented in Section B. Data on the provision of computer and internet services by Victorian public libraries (taken from the *Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries 2010–11*) is presented in Section C.

Demand for public access to computers and the internet

A wide range of factors is contributing to the growing demand for free public access to the internet. For example:

- more organisations and businesses are expecting people (including their employees) to access things online – for example, in January 2011, the US Internal Revenue Service announced that it would no longer mail out tax forms and directed people to community access points, such as the library
- more government services, information, resources and transactional activities are going online
- pharmaceutical companies are now less likely to include information pamphlets with medication, instead referring consumers to their website for information
- lower costs are offered to those who book online (e.g. railway tickets, theatre tickets).

Library provision of public access to computers and the internet

In the USA the library's role as a technology resource has dramatically increased since 1996, when only 28% of libraries offered internet access (and, admittedly, when use of the internet was not as widespread as it is in 2012). Today, almost all US public libraries offer visitors free access to computers and the internet, thanks to a sustained effort by federal, state and local governments, private philanthropy, and the work of librarians.

Who's in the queue?, a 2011 research brief published by the US Institute of Museum and Library Services, found that there had been increased emphasis on funding of PCs and the internet in US libraries, with the investments over recent years having been considerable and enlisting many different organisations and entities. For example, at the federal level alone the *Library Services and Technology Act*, E-Rate funding, the Technology Opportunities Program and the Rural Broadband Development Program have all contributed to the technological infrastructure found in public libraries.

Who's in the queue? notes that between 2000 and 2007 the number of internet terminals in US public libraries increased by 90% on a per capita basis. Database licensing and technology infrastructure projects continue to be the largest categories of expenditure that state library agencies report to the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

In 1998, a study for Viclink (the precursor to PLVN) titled *Victorian public libraries and the internet: results and issues* noted that Victorian public libraries had been leading Australian public libraries in their adoption of internet connectivity. It further noted that

the effort to connect Victorian public libraries to the internet was the result of collaboration and partnerships between the Victorian Government, the State Library of Victoria, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and the public library community. These partnerships, and the efforts of public librarians, enabled Victorian public libraries to achieve 100% internet connectivity across the 42 Victorian library services in a relatively short period of three years (1994–97).

Since that time there has been steady growth in the provision of computer and internet access in Victorian public libraries, from 0.5 internet-access PCs per 10,000 population in 1996 to 4.3 in 2010–11. This compares with around seven internet-access PCs per 10,000 population in the USA in 2009 (*Opportunity for all*). In Victoria in 1996–97 there were 122 library service points with public access to the internet. This increased to 274 in 2002–03, and internet access is now available at over 300 library branches and mobile stops.

Growth of wireless internet access (wi-fi)

One of the biggest changes of the past three or four years is access to wi-fi. Wireless internet access has developed rapidly as a service that most individual libraries and library services offer in response to user demand.

In the USA, almost 80% of libraries report that their wireless access is shared with existing public-access workstation connections. This shared connectivity puts additional drain on the limited available broadband during the periods of heavy use that libraries are experiencing more often, especially given the increased number of mobile devices tapping into library wireless systems.

There is also concern in Australia that investment in wi-fi is stretching internet access budgets. The *ALIA internet access in public libraries survey 2011* reports that 75% of public libraries in Australia provide wi-fi in some or all of their service points. Where wi-fi is offered, in 75% of cases it is only during library opening hours.

In Victoria in 2007–08 only five library services reported having wi-fi available to public library users. According to the *Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries 2010–11*, this had grown to 30 library services in 2010–11 – a change made possible with core funding for library services supplemented by the Department of Planning and Community Development. Over the same period, the number of wireless internet sessions booked increased more than tenfold, from around 43,000 in 2007–08 to more than half a million in 2010–11.

Strategic investment in technology provision

In the USA, government and philanthropic organisations are becoming more active in their support for public library access to the internet. The federal government is focusing on libraries as part of its nationwide broadband plan, with a proposed special funding stream for libraries to employ digital educators.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is providing funding to support state-level efforts to improve internet connections in public libraries to ensure broadband access for more Americans. It has committed nearly \$3.4 million in grants to bolster internet connections for libraries in five states.

The foundation is also working in partnership with 14 additional states to help public libraries compete for federal broadband stimulus funds. The Opportunity Online broadband grant program will help libraries develop proposals for federal

broadband stimulus funding from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), established through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. BTOP is awarding federal stimulus grants to private and public sector applicants to expand broadband infrastructure to more communities across the country, and to help new internet users benefit from broadband access.

The Gates Foundation has also invested funds to train thousands of library staff in all 50 US states and territories to develop and teach computer and internet skills, as well as skills to provide technical support to set up, maintain and evaluate the effectiveness of new technology:

We want public libraries to be led by resourceful leaders who prioritize their patrons' access to technology. We fund grants that encourage these leaders to make long-term investments to ensure the sustainability of internet access in libraries. We're also providing training to build the skills and confidence that library leaders need to seek outside support for their long-term endeavors.
(Gates Foundation)

Users of public libraries' computer and internet services

There is a common assumption that public-access computer users are generally less likely to have access to computers and the internet at home, which is why they seek access through their local library. However, in *Who's in the queue?* the vast majority of libraries' public-access computer users in the USA (86%) reported they had 'regular access to a computer and the internet for personal use' at home. This can be compared with the

overall internet and computer access rate of 90% for the general public in the US Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (similar Australian figures are that 82% of households have a computer at home and 79% have internet access; ABS Cat. No. 8146.0). A recent US Federal Communications Commission report found that even among households that enjoy broadband access, 33% reported having used computers at the library.

In a 2011 internet use survey conducted by Moreland City Libraries in Victoria, 61% of the 146 respondents said they could access the internet elsewhere. Forty-two per cent of respondents had internet access at home, 18% had access at work or an educational institution, and 16% had access via a mobile device. In addition, 35% of respondents used the wireless internet at the library, with the majority accessing the library's wi-fi service through a laptop and about 5% of respondents using a mobile device such as a smartphone or tablet.

Digital divide

Who's in the queue? notes that over the past decade policy discussions about public-access computing in US libraries have focused on the role that these institutions play in bridging the digital divide. In these discussions, public-access computing services are generally targeted at individuals who either cannot afford a computer and internet access, or who have never received formal computer instruction and lack the basic computing skills necessary for full digital citizenship.

In many cases, the public library is the only free public computing and internet access provider within a community. As a result, public libraries serve as 'first responders' for the increasing number of people in need of technology training and online resources for employment, continuing education and access to online government services.

Opportunity for all found that with free access to high-speed internet and expert assistance to aid those working with technology resources, libraries serve as a 'toll-free' bridge over the digital divide.

However, these studies also indicate concern that libraries should not focus too much on their role in overcoming the digital divide. The studies see this as leading to justifying the library role based on market failure and social welfare rationales: 'Following this logic, public-access computing could easily be seen as a temporary community service whose need would essentially fall away as more people gain access in their homes.' In practice, this has not been the case. Despite the fact that computer and internet penetration rates are climbing at dramatic rates, public-access computer services in US public libraries continue to be in high demand.

As Waller and McShane (2008) note, for libraries it is not just about providing computer and internet access to people who might not have it: there is a much larger skill and confidence gap that needs to be overcome, and this will not of itself disappear as internet access becomes more widespread:

We might have a picture of savvy users but reality is different. We find very different competencies.
(Waller and McShane)

The purposes for which people use computers and internet at the library

Opportunity for all found that library patrons use libraries' computer and internet services to undertake a variety of activities. *Who's in the queue?* also found that the substantive uses of public-access computers mirror the needs people have at different stages of the life

course. Young people identify education activities as their main use, people between the ages of 25 and 54 identify employment activities as their top use, and people 55 and older report health and wellness research as their main public-access computer use.

In the American Library Association's (ALA) *2010–11 Public Library Funding and Technology Access Study*, for the second consecutive year libraries reported that services for job-seekers rated as the most important public internet service provided to the community. It notes that ongoing high unemployment continues to drive people to the library to access job resources. Over 74% of libraries offer software and other resources to help patrons create résumés and employment materials. Nearly 72% of libraries help patrons complete online job applications, which is an increase of 5% over data from the previous year.

The same study reports an increasing number of libraries (88% in 2010–11, compared to 82% in 2009–10) saying that it is very important or most important for the library to provide access to government information and services – that is, staff support in:

- understanding how to access and use e-government websites
- applying to or accessing e-government services
- assistance in completing government forms.

As a result, more libraries are now partnering with government agencies, non-profit organisations and others to provide e-government services.

The 2011 Moreland City Libraries survey found that the majority of users of the library's internet services (76%) visited the library with the intention of combining use of the

internet with another purpose. Only 24% went to the library with the sole intention of using the internet. When asked to indicate from a list of nine options what they had used the internet for over the past 12 months, and how frequently they had undertaken these activities, general communication and information activities were at the top of the list, followed by specific educational, employment and health-related activities:

- 84% emailing (most often 77%; sometimes 17%)
- 84% general information (most often 50%; sometimes 34%)
- 65% study-related (most often 36%; sometimes 29%)
- 65% recreational (most often 35%; sometimes 30%)
- 62% exploring (most often 29%; sometimes 33%)
- 61% work-related (most often 34%; sometimes 27%)
- 59% job-seeking (most often 26%; sometimes 33%)
- 54% health information (most often 19%; sometimes 35%)
- 52% using social media (most often 25%; sometimes 27%).

The distinct benefits of accessing computers and internet at the library compared with other public-access points

For library patrons, the benefits of accessing computer and internet services at the library are the same as those offered by accessing these services anywhere: improved educational opportunities and outcomes, improved employment opportunities and outcomes, improved access to health and

wellbeing information, increased social connectedness, and increased capacity to access government, business and community services. For those who do not have computer and/or internet access at home, school or work, the library provides them with the opportunity to participate more fully in society, and in particular to do this in a supportive environment. For those with alternative technology access, the library provides a convenient place to more efficiently conduct these activities.

However, local and international research suggests that there are a number of distinct benefits for people accessing computer and internet services at the public library. Public libraries offer a combination of: accessible hours and locations; a wealth of digital and hard-copy content; access to computer and internet services, printers and peripherals; and professional supportive library staff. As noted in *Who's in the queue?*, it is not difficult to see how many different people may find public libraries to be a more efficient place to meet their information needs than the computer in their home.

The research shows that many people are able to fulfil a wide variety of information needs at their public library, which complements the information they obtain from the internet. These information needs include access to books, catalogues and databases that enable them to find information they might miss through an internet search alone.

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), in its submission to the House of Representatives Committee on Infrastructure and Communications Inquiry into the National Broadband Network, notes that the advent of online services has provided government organisations with a cost-effective delivery channel to and for its customers. Library staff often play an important role in

helping library users to access these sites and understand the material on them.

Findings from the ALA's *2010–11 Public Library Funding and Technology Access Study* emphasise the extensive range of support provided by public libraries to enable users to access and make effective use of internet-enabled services and resources:

- provision of instructional programs on computer and internet use
- access to a range of online content, such as databases, health information and government programs
- assistance using resources to seek employment
- assistance with e-government transactions
- access to secondary and higher education coursework resources.

Implicit in these findings is recognition of the specialist information discovery and research skills of librarians. Not everyone can find everything they need via Google. Library patrons value the support of library staff to help them to navigate the landscape of information.

The challenge ahead

An increasing amount of research is addressing not just the current provision and use of libraries' computer and internet services, but also the challenges ahead in continuing to be supportive of library users' information and access needs. In particular, the challenge for local government agencies in Australia to funding technology access is noted:

The idea that you can go to any public library in Australia and get good internet access is wrong. Local government is not able to fund this.

(Sue Hutley, former executive director, ALIA)

Maintaining capability

In the US, libraries report that patron demand for high-speed internet access is growing faster than their ability to provide increased bandwidth. The ALA's *Public Library Funding and Technology Access Study* reports that 60% of all libraries say their current internet speed is insufficient to meet customer need. Cost, rather than availability of higher-speed connections, constrains libraries. Almost 30% of libraries report that while they have an interest in increasing bandwidth, they cannot currently afford to do so.

Libraries have never faced so much demand for high-quality Internet access. It's critical that current efforts to expand broadband access in America include strong support for public libraries so they can continue to serve as thriving, vital community technology hubs.

When libraries have access to broadband, they can effectively deliver critical educational, employment, and government services for residents that lack Internet access elsewhere. As community anchor institutions, libraries can also help drive local broadband adoption – get online at their library and successfully look for a job, find e-government information and services, improve workforce skills, and continue education.

(Susan McVey, Director, Oklahoma Department of Libraries)

Unfortunately, many libraries face shrinking budgets even as their use grows. Staff receive less training in technology skills, computers are becoming outdated, and internet connections cannot handle the high-speed streaming audio and video requirements for distance education, research and other activities. Libraries are struggling to stay up to speed in the face of too many patrons and too little internet bandwidth.

The ALA notes that a lesson from both the USA and other countries is that it is much easier to install computers and internet connections than it is to sustain them. Libraries need up-to-date hardware, sufficient memory and fast internet connections. Moreover, public-access terminals also need current security software to run internet browsers and productivity software without technical glitches. All of these concerns are stretching library budgets.

Sustaining access requires ongoing expenditure to support software and hardware upgrades, increased bandwidth and connection speeds, continuous staff time and skills training, and maintenance of opening hours, all without shifting funding away from the other services and activities that libraries provide and communities depend on.

National Broadband Network (NBN)

The Australian Government's National Digital Economy Strategy (NDES) sets out a vision for Australia to realise the benefits of the National Broadband Network (NBN) and position Australia as a leading digital economy by 2020. The strategy's eight goals aim to:

- increase Australian households' online participation

- increase Australian businesses' and not-for-profit organisations' online engagement
- smartly manage our environment
- improve health and aged care
- expand online education
- increase teleworking
- improve online government service delivery and engagement
- increase digital engagement in regional Australia.

To give effect to these goals there is policy interest in promoting internet use in the household sector, as access to the internet has the potential to deliver economic and social benefits. Issues of skill development and service access are of interest, as is policy interest in equality of access to internet services Australia-wide, particularly in regional locations.

Ian McShane of Swinburne University of Technology notes in *Unlocking the potential* that the projected capability of the NBN offers major opportunities for libraries and other public cultural institutions to enhance access to collections and knowledge resources, to develop programs, and to build links with user communities.

ALIA suggests that state and local governments should include libraries in comprehensive broadband deployment and adoption strategies. The national broadband plan provides an important framework for communities hoping to extend broadband access to all residents. State and local broadband strategies should account for the varied ways that libraries address the technology needs of many different groups in

their community, including people who may have access but are in need of the value-added resources and services that libraries provide.

Local government has a significant role in the development of sustainable broadband services, particularly in regional areas. ALGA has been active in advocating for the establishment of broadband, and has been at the forefront of calls for greater connectivity across all communities in Australia. In its submission to the House of Representatives Committee on Infrastructure and Communications Inquiry into the NBN, ALGA argues consistently that broadband is a key enabler of services and that it strongly supports the need to focus on realising the opportunity and understanding the potential that access to the NBN will provide to business, communities and governments, including local government.

Over many years ALGA's *State of the Regions* reports have specifically looked into the importance of broadband and, more particularly, the impact of a lack of high-speed broadband on the national economy and the economic and social wellbeing of Australians.

Service benchmarks

Finally, it should be noted that there are benchmarks for public libraries' provision of computer and internet services to library users. In NSW, *Living learning libraries: standards and guidelines for New South Wales public libraries* documents minimum standards for the provision of multiple-use public internet workstations:

Minimum standards for the provision of multiple-use public internet workstations (Library Council of NSW)

- One public-access internet PC per 3000 residents or part thereof (3.3 per 10,000 residents)
- Libraries serving populations of less than 20,000 at least five PCs with internet access
- Additional public-access PCs provided with current software, printing facilities, scanners and associated equipment
- Public and staff PCs less than three years old
- Application software less than three years old
- At least one printer accessible from each public workstation
- Wireless internet provision and power outlets so that customers can use their own personal computers in the library
- ICT training programs are ongoing and updated as appropriate for staff and customers
- Library supports Web 2.0 and other social networking technologies
- Library supports portable storage devices
- Wireless networks are available to library customers in library branches
- Bandwidth is sufficient for consistent good-quality access to digital print/image/sound resources served by the library

A3. References

The following references informed the discussion in sections A, B and C of this technical report.

ALIA internet access in public libraries survey 2011, Australian Library and Information Association, August 2011.

Analysing the challenges for large public libraries in the 21st century: a case study of the State Library of Victoria in Australia, Waller, Vivienne and McShane, Ian, Swinburne University of Technology, *First Monday*, vol. 13, no. 12, December 2008.

Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries 2010–11, Public Libraries Victoria Network, April 2012.

Fiber to the library: how public libraries can benefit from using fiber optics for their broadband internet connection, American Library Association, 2009.

Household use of information technology, Australia, 2010–11, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. No. 8146.0, released December 2011.

Internet activity, Australia, December 2011, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. No. 8153.0, released March 2012.

Libraries Building Communities, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, 2005.

Libraries Building Communities: Library User Census and Survey, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, 2006.

Living learning libraries: standards and guidelines for New South Wales public libraries, 3rd edition, Library Council of New South Wales, 2011.

Moreland Library internet survey, Moreland City Libraries, 2011.

National Digital Economy Strategy: leveraging the National Broadband Network to drive Australia's digital productivity, Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, May 2011.

Opportunity for all: how the American public benefits from internet access at US libraries, Becker, Samantha et al., Institute of Museum and Library Services, Washington DC, April 2010.

State of the Regions Report 2007–08, Australian Local Government Association, June 2008.

State of the Regions Report 2008–09, Australian Local Government Association, June 2009.

Submission to the House of Representatives Committee on Infrastructure and Communications Inquiry into the National Broadband Network, Australian Local Government Association, February 2011.

Unlocking the potential? Australia's digital strategy and major public libraries, McShane, Ian and Thomas, Julian, Swinburne University of Technology, June 2010.

Victorian public libraries and the internet: results and issues, Bertot, John Carlo and McClure, Charles R, March 1998.

Who's in the queue? A demographic analysis of public access computer users and uses in US public libraries, Manjarrez, Carlos A and Schoembs, Kyle, Research Brief No. 4, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Washington DC, June 2011.

2010–11 Public Library Funding and Technology Access Study, American Library Association, 2011.

B. Household Use of Information Technology

The ABS publishes data on household and personal use of information technology in two publications, the latest releases being:

- *Household use of information technology, Australia, 2010–11* (Cat. No. 8146.0, released December 2011)
- *Internet activity, Australia, December 2011* (Cat. No. 8153.0, released March 2012).

These publications provide national benchmarks and some state-level data on household access to and use of computers and the internet. This data provides a population-wide context for interpreting the level of uptake of computer and internet services provided by Victorian public libraries.

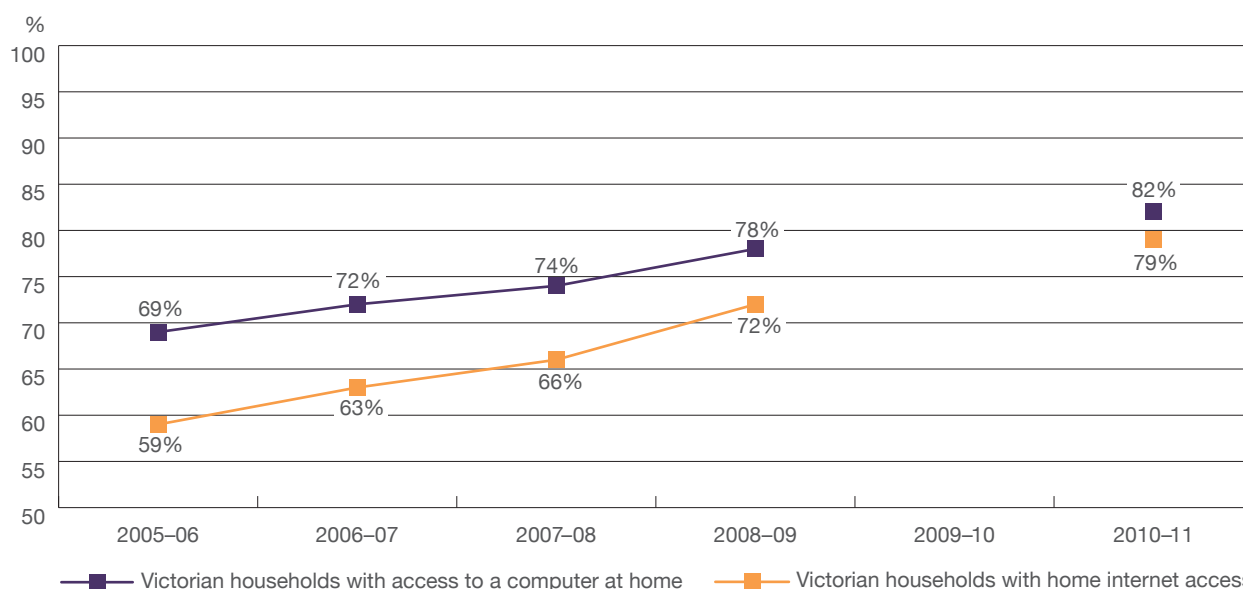
Home access to computers and the internet

In 2010–11 the ABS reported that 82% of all Victorian households had access to a computer at home,

up from 69% in 2005–06 and just below the national average of 83%. While in 2005–06 10% of households with computer access did not have internet access, this gap has narrowed in the past five years. In 2010–11 79% of all Victorian households had internet access (with 72% having broadband access) – significantly higher than the level of 59% in 2005–06 and equivalent to the Australian benchmark. There are now only 3% of Victorian households with computers that do not also have access to the internet.

Table B1/Figure B1. Household access to computers and the internet (ABS Cat. No. 8146.0)

% of total households	Year				
	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2010–11*
Households with access to a computer at home					
Victoria	69%	72%	74%	78%	82%
Australia	70%	73%	75%	78%	83%
Households with home internet access					
Victoria	59%	63%	66%	72%	79%
Australia	60%	64%	67%	72%	79%



* This data began being collected biennially from 2008–09.

Interestingly, national figures indicate that home computer and internet access is much higher in households with school-age children. Of all Australian households with children aged under 15 years, 95% have access to a computer at home, with 93% having home internet access. Home internet access is significantly higher in households with total annual income of \$120,000 or more (97%) than in households with annual income of \$40,000–79,000 (84%) or less than \$40,000 (54%). Nationally, there are also differences

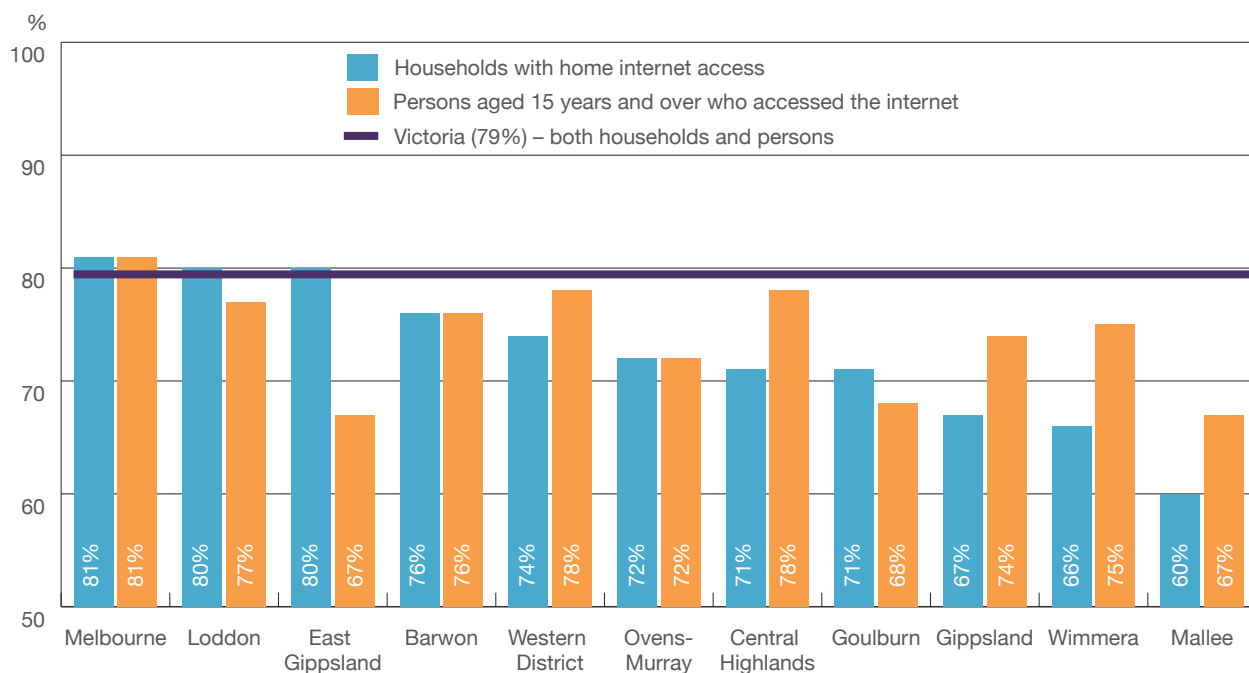
in household internet access in metropolitan areas (81%) and in regional (approximately 73%) and remote (71%) areas.

Within Victoria, 81% of households in metropolitan Melbourne have internet access, compared to less than 70% of households in Gippsland (67%), the Wimmera (66%) and the Mallee (60%).

Across Victoria, 91% of all households with internet access have access via broadband, with

6% dial-up and 3% not sure what type of internet access they have. The rate of broadband access is fairly consistent across the state, being highest in Ovens-Murray (94%), 92% in metropolitan Melbourne and lowest in the Western District (87%). Of those Victorian households with broadband internet access, more than half (57%) have DSL access, 15% have a cable connection and 14% have mobile broadband (ABS Cat. No. 8146.0).

Figure B2. Household and personal access to the internet by Victorian region (ABS Cat. No. 8146.0)



Personal access to the internet

Just as 79% of all Victorian households had internet access in 2010–11, 79% of all Victorians aged 15 years and over accessed the internet during 2010–11, equivalent to the national figure of 79%. As shown in Figure B2, the highest proportion of Victorian internet users were in metropolitan Melbourne (81% of all persons aged 15 years or over) and the lowest rates of personal internet use were in Goulburn (68%), East Gippsland (67%) and the Mallee (67%).

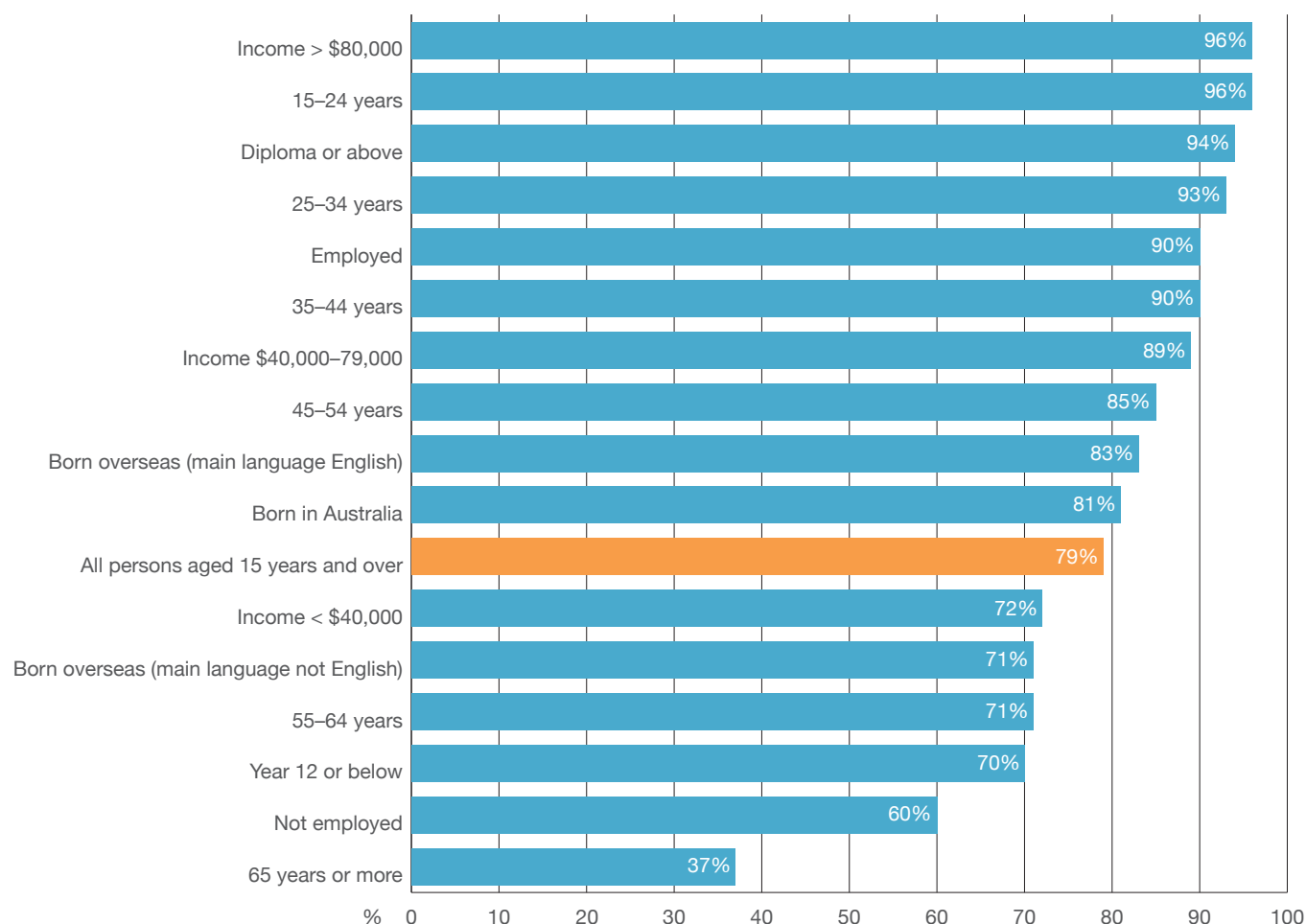
Based on national figures, this overall relatively high level of internet use varied across population subgroups. While males and females had similar levels of internet access, younger people were far more likely to have accessed the internet in the past 12 months (96% of 15–24-year-olds) than older persons (71% for 55–64-year-olds). Only 37% of Australians aged 65 years or more accessed the internet in 2010–11. There were also significant differences in internet access rates:

- by personal income level (the higher the income, the more likely to have accessed the internet)
- by employment status (90% for employed persons, 60% for not-employed persons)
- by language spoken in birth country (more than 80% for Australia and other English-speaking countries, 71% for persons born in countries where English is not the main language)
- by highest educational qualification (94% for diploma and above, 70% for Year 12 or below).

Table B2/Figure B3. Australian population accessing the internet in 2010–11 (ABS Cat. No. 8146.0)

Population subgroup*	% accessing internet	Population subgroup*	% accessing internet
Persons aged 15 years and over	79%	Personal income less than \$40,000	72%
Victorians aged 15 years and over	79%	Personal income \$40,000–79,000	89%
Males	81%	Personal income \$80,000 or more	96%
Females	78%	Employed	90%
Persons aged 15–24 years	96%	Not employed	60%
Persons aged 25–34 years	93%	Born in Australia	81%
Persons aged 35–44 years	90%	Born overseas – English-speaking	83%
Persons aged 45–54 years	85%	Born overseas – not English-speaking	71%
Persons aged 55–64 years	71%	Diploma, bachelor degree or above	94%
Persons aged 65 years or more	37%	Year 12 or below	70%

* All figures are Australian unless stated as Victorian.

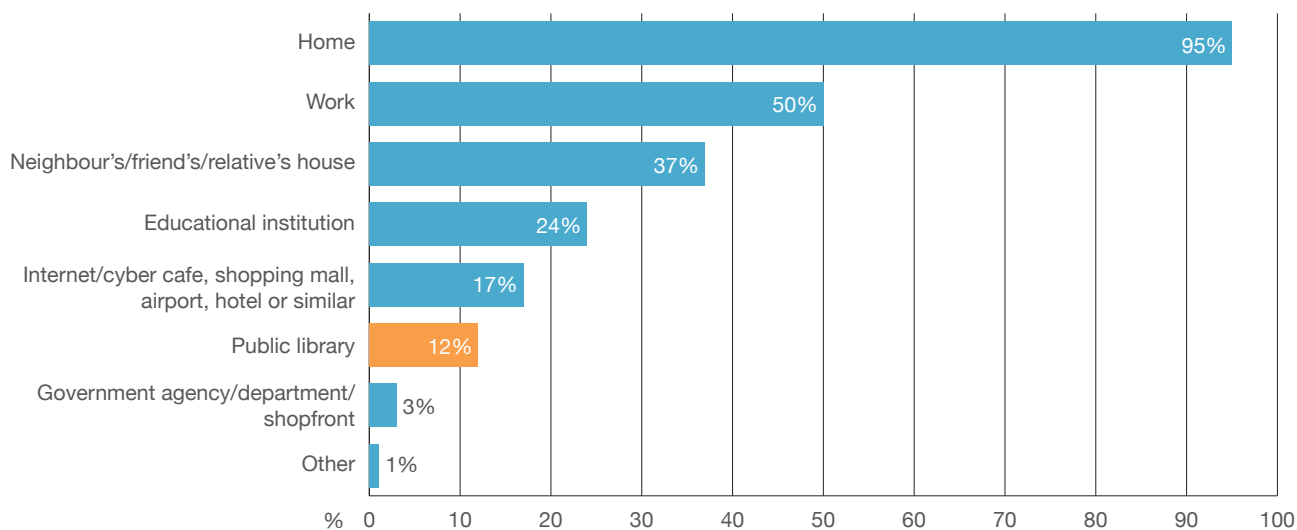


Of the 79% of Victorians aged 15 years and over who accessed the internet in 2010–11, 95% did so from home. That is, nearly everyone who accesses the internet is able to do so from their home and is not reliant on external access points such as work, school, internet cafes or

public libraries. However, this does not mean that internet users are not also accessing the internet outside their home. In fact, other places are also popular spots for people to access the internet. Fifty per cent of people access the internet at work, 37% do so from a neighbour's or

friend's house and 24% access the internet at an educational institution. In 2010–11, 12% (more than 400,000) of Victorians aged 15 years and over said they accessed the internet at a public library.

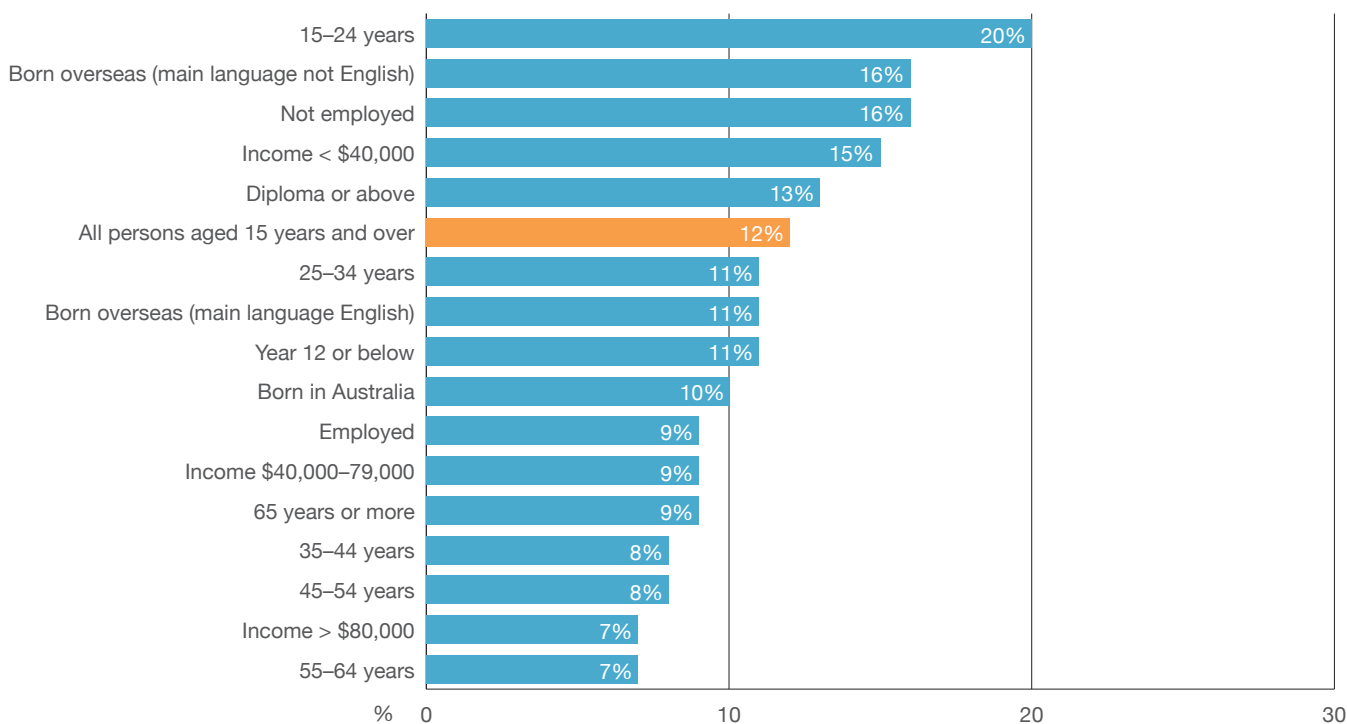
Figure B4. Location of internet access, Victoria 2010–11, Victorians aged 15 and over (ABS Cat. No. 8146.0)



However, just as internet access rates vary by population subgroups, the proportion of people accessing the internet at public libraries also varies. And among many of the population groups that have relatively lower levels of internet access (see Figure B3), those people

who do access the internet are more likely than average to do so at a public library (e.g. people born overseas where English is not the main language spoken, unemployed people, people with incomes less than \$40,000).

Figure B5. Persons accessing the internet at a public library, Australia 2010–11 (ABS Cat. No. 8146.0)



Personal use of the internet

People use the internet for a variety of different reasons, and over the course of a year they use it for an average of five or six different activities rather than just one. Of the 3.4 million Victorians estimated to have used the internet in 2010–11, emailing was the most common purpose, noted by 90% of people, with 87% using the internet to research, access news or browse. Paying bills or online banking was the third most common use of the internet among Victorian users.

Internet downloads

The exponential growth in the volume of internet downloads over the past four years, from 59,000 terabytes (TB) in the December quarter 2007 to 345,000 TB in the December quarter 2011 (ABS Cat. No. 8153.0), further highlights the extent to which internet use is becoming an integral part of contemporary society. There is:

- steady growth in the proportion of households accessing the internet
- slightly faster growth in the proportion of households with

broadband access (such that 91% of all household internet access is via broadband)

- continued growth in average download speeds (in December 2011 39% of households had download speeds of 8 Mbps or more, with 67% at 1.5 Mbps or more)
- faster growth in the volume of internet downloads as people conduct more recreational, social, personal and information activities online.

Figure B6. Reasons for using the internet in 2010–11, Victoria (ABS Cat. No. 8146.0)

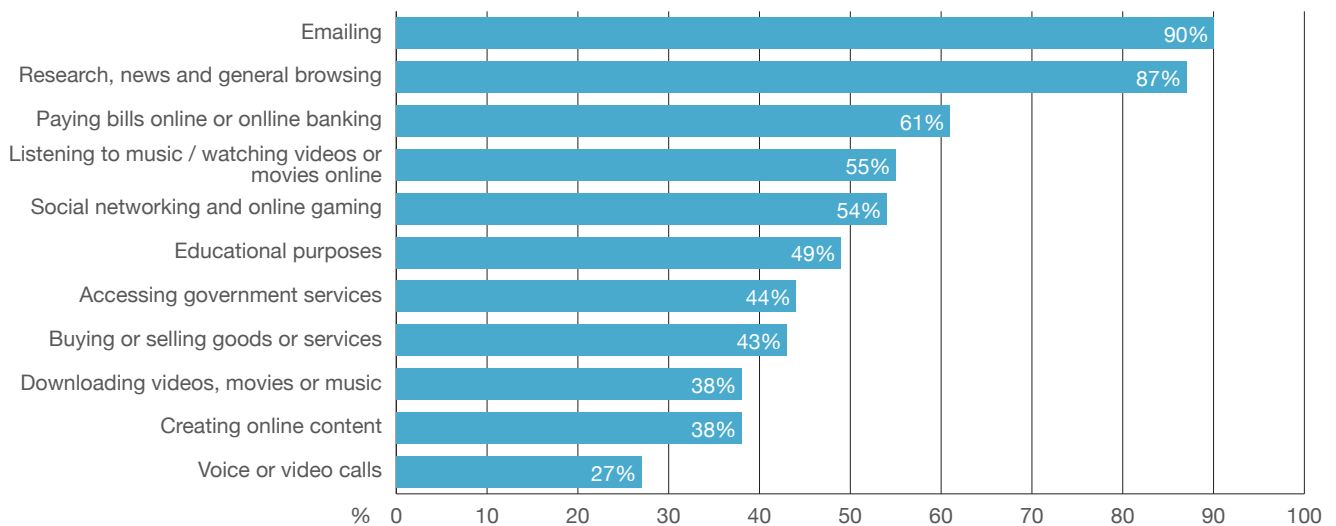
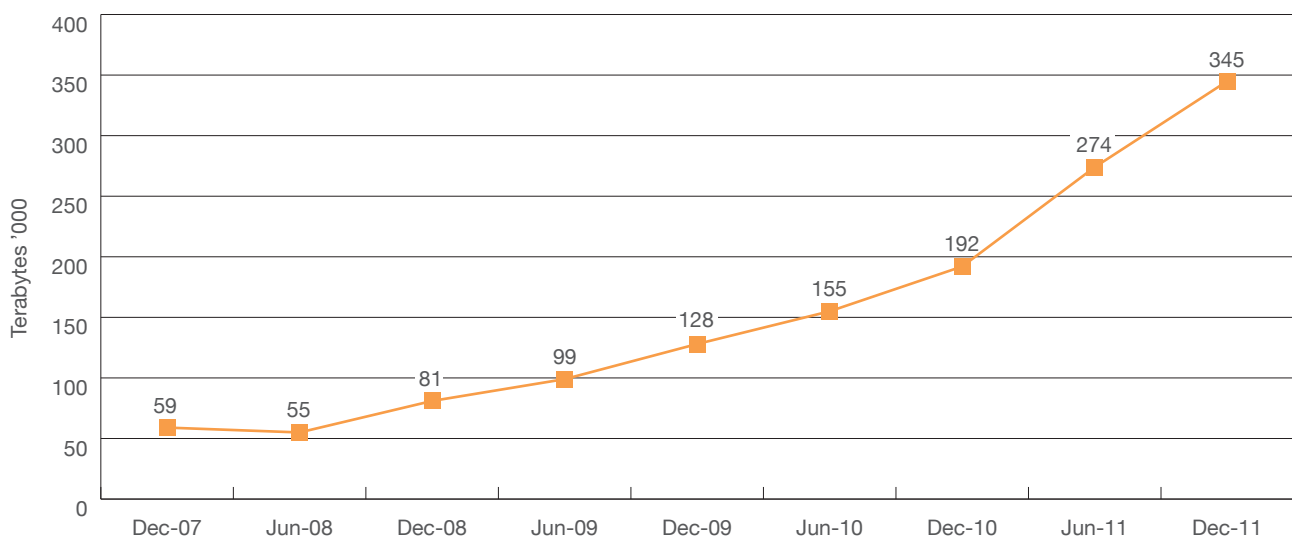


Figure B7. Volume of internet downloads, Australia (ABS Cat. No. 8153.0)



C. Public Library Provision of Computer and Internet Services

Public-access computers

The *Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries 2010–11* reports that at 30 June 2011 there were 2599 public-access computers in Victoria's 44 public library services (not including Vision or the State Library). These numbers ranged from more than 100 PCs at each of Brimbank, Eastern, Casey-Cardinia and Geelong to fewer than 20 at

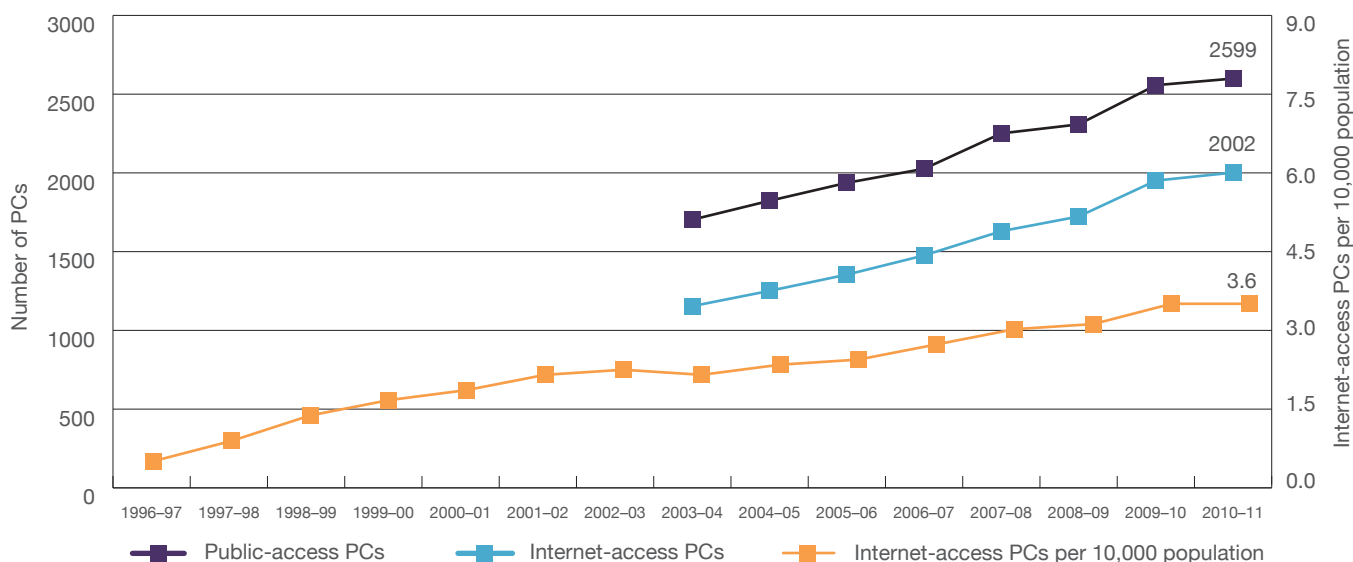
smaller library services such as Campaspe, Gannawarra, Latrobe, Murrindindi and Swan Hill. Of these PCs, 2002 (or 77% of the total) were identified as having internet and email access.

The number of public-access PCs in public libraries has grown steadily over the past ten years in absolute terms, on a per capita basis, and also in the proportion of PCs with

internet access. With the growth in public demand for access to internet services and an increasing range of government, corporate and community services and transactions heavily reliant on internet access, the growth in public library computer and internet provision demonstrates a responsiveness to community needs.

Table C1/Figure C1. Public-access PCs in Victorian public libraries

Year	Public-access PCs	Public internet access PCs	% public-access PCs with internet access	Public internet access PCs per 10,000 population
2001–02				2.2
2002–03				2.3
2003–04	1703	1154	68%	2.2
2004–05	1823	1251	69%	2.4
2005–06	1937	1354	70%	2.5
2006–07	2026	1476	73%	2.8
2007–08	2251	1630	72%	3.1
2008–09	2308	1723	75%	3.2
2009–10	2557	1951	76%	3.6
2010–11	2599	2002	77%	3.6



A survey of library services conducted as part of the internet and PC usage study¹ found that public libraries manage access to their computer and internet services through manual or online booking systems (91% have a booking system covering all public-access computers). Library users can book the computers (usually through their

library membership number) in time increments from 15 to 120 minutes. Most libraries (63%) have most computers with booking times of 60 minutes, with more than one-third also providing access in busier branches to 'express' computers, typically with a 15-minute time limit (and at one library the computers are set at standing height).

There is also some flexibility in booking arrangements, with, for example, users at one library able to book sessions in 30-minute blocks with an option to extend their time in 15-minute increments if there are no adjacent bookings on the PC, up to a maximum of 300 minutes (five hours) per day. Another has a total daily limit of 120 minutes

Figure C2. Time limits on booking library computers

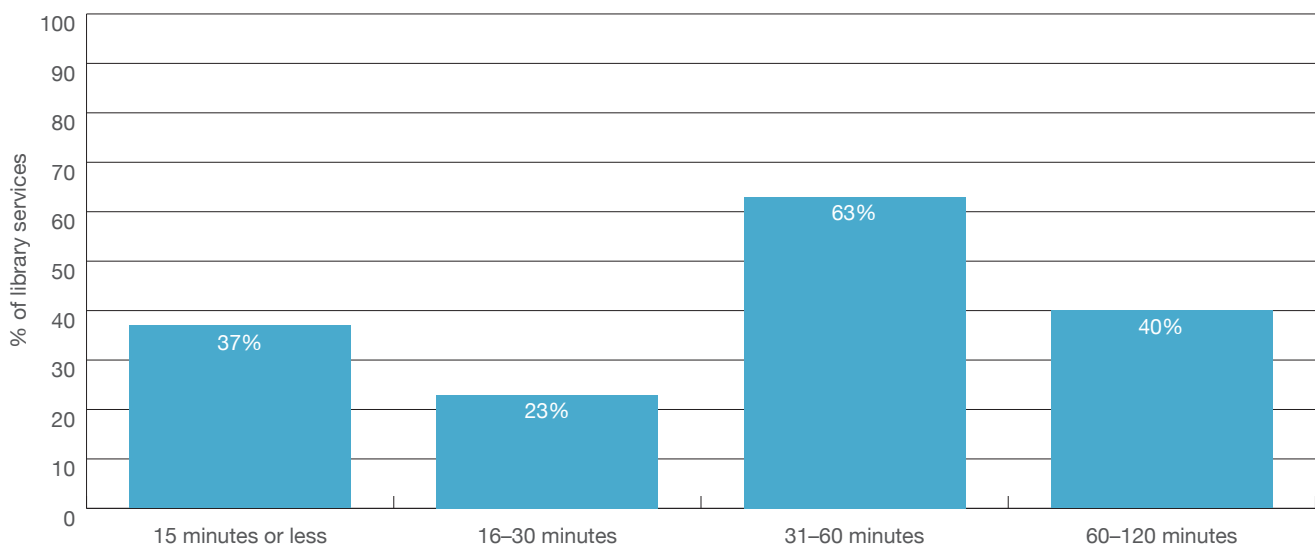
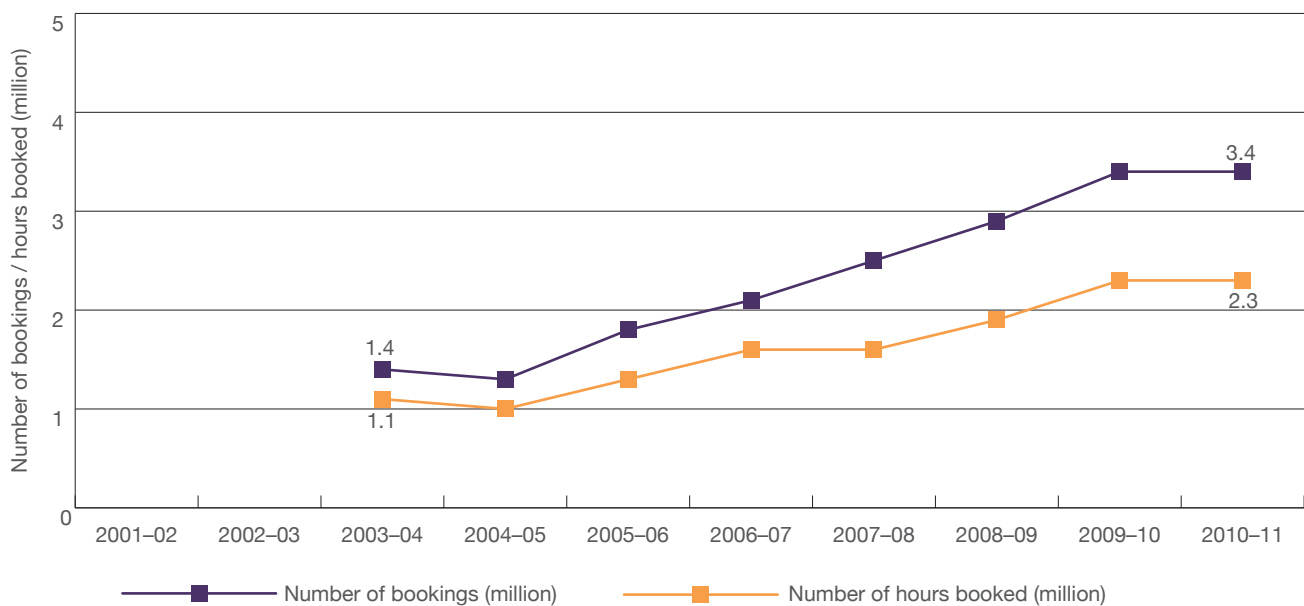


Figure C3. Bookings of Victorian public library computers



¹ All library services were asked to complete a short online survey capturing information about their management and provision of computer and internet services to library users. The survey asked about each library's conditions of access; ICT capability, policies and protocols; and training and support for library users. Thirty-five of 44 library services (80% – not including the Vision Australia Information Library Service) completed the survey.

per day, which users can take in whatever time increments they like. One library noted that it allows library members undertaking formal study or online testing to book uninterrupted longer sessions.

Over the past seven years the number of computer sessions booked by public library users and the number of hours spent on library computers have more than doubled (Figure C3). The total number of computer sessions booked in Victorian public libraries in 2010–11 was just over 3.4 million. The total of 2.3 million hours spent on the PCs by public library users in 2010–11 is the equivalent of over 260 years' worth of computer access.

Seventy-four per cent of library services reported that they provided adaptive technologies for computer access by people with a disability. The types of adaptive technologies vary considerably between libraries, but overall include:

- screen readers and software (e.g. JAWS, Natural Reader)
- screens with magnification software (e.g. ZoomText,

Microsoft Magnifier, Magical Glass) and large-print font options

- disability-friendly touch screens
- adaptive and large trackball mouse devices
- large-key keyboards
- optical scanners
- adaptive desks.

All except one of the library services indicated that they have public-access computers that accommodate wheelchairs or mobility vehicles (37% said this applies to all PCs, with 60% having wheelchair access for some PCs).

Wireless internet access

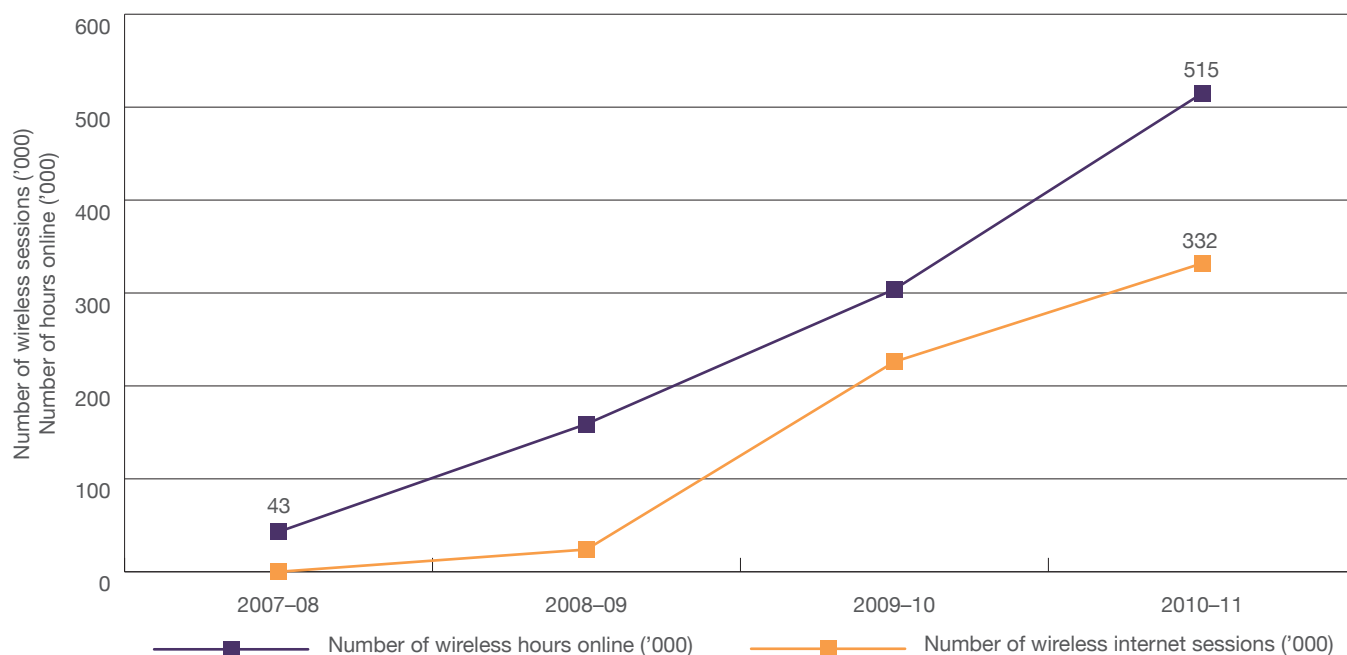
Provision of wireless internet access is a relatively new addition to the offerings of public libraries, having first commenced in five library services in 2007–08. All 35 library services responding to the survey study now offer wireless internet access, with four (Campaspe, Melbourne, Monash and Port Phillip libraries) allowing members to access the internet all day every

day, four others (Boroondara, Gannawarra, Kingston and Swan Hill libraries) offering extended hours (e.g. 6am to midnight every day, 10am to 11pm every day), and the remainder providing access at all or most sites during library opening hours (and at special times for activities and group meetings out of hours).

Sixty-three per cent of library services offer wireless internet access at all branches/service points, with a further 17% offering wireless internet at all sites except their mobile library. All other libraries reported having wireless internet available for at least two-thirds of their branches.

Since the introduction of wireless internet services in public libraries, there has been exponential growth in the number of wireless sessions and the number of hours spent on wireless internet connections. In 2010–11 there were more than half a million wireless internet sessions in public libraries, representing 332,000 hours online (based on data from 30 library services for the number of sessions but only 17 library services for the online hours data).

Figure C4. Wireless internet access in Victorian public libraries



Data from 21 library services shows that in 2010–11 library users used 126,000 GB of broadband download, at a cost to public libraries of just under \$1 million (\$991,000).²

However, these figures understate the potential use of wireless internet in libraries, as 60% of library services' current usage levels are capped by conditions related to time limits, download limits and the number of wireless logins. For example:

- time limits: 1 hour (with immediate re-login using the same password and access codes) / up to 2 hours / 2 hours per session (multiple sessions allowed) / 2 hours per day / up to 3 hours / 4-hour limit
- download limits: 20 MB per session / 100 MB / 200 MB / 250 MB
- wireless logins: maximum 60 concurrent users on site / 64 wireless logins.

Wireless internet access is also limited in some libraries by download speed limitations to ensure more even access (e.g. bandwidth throttled at 512 kbps), protocol restrictions due to security, and bandwidth concerns (e.g. no SMTP or torrents).

At this stage there is no evidence to suggest that there is likely to be a drop in demand for public library computer and internet services in the next few years. In fact, data collected through the internet and PC usage study indicates that libraries are planning to increase their internet access in terms of the number of access points, hours of availability and internet speeds. However, managing or capping the cost of providing wireless internet access is a consideration for library services.

Access management

Internet and computer access is further controlled through the implementation of policies and protocols in each of the library services. While these vary to some extent, the principles governing access to computers and the internet are broadly consistent.

Age restrictions to the internet apply in all except two of the 35 library services surveyed, with parent/guardian consent required (usually as a condition of membership) for young people to access the internet (either through a library PC or the wireless internet). The most common

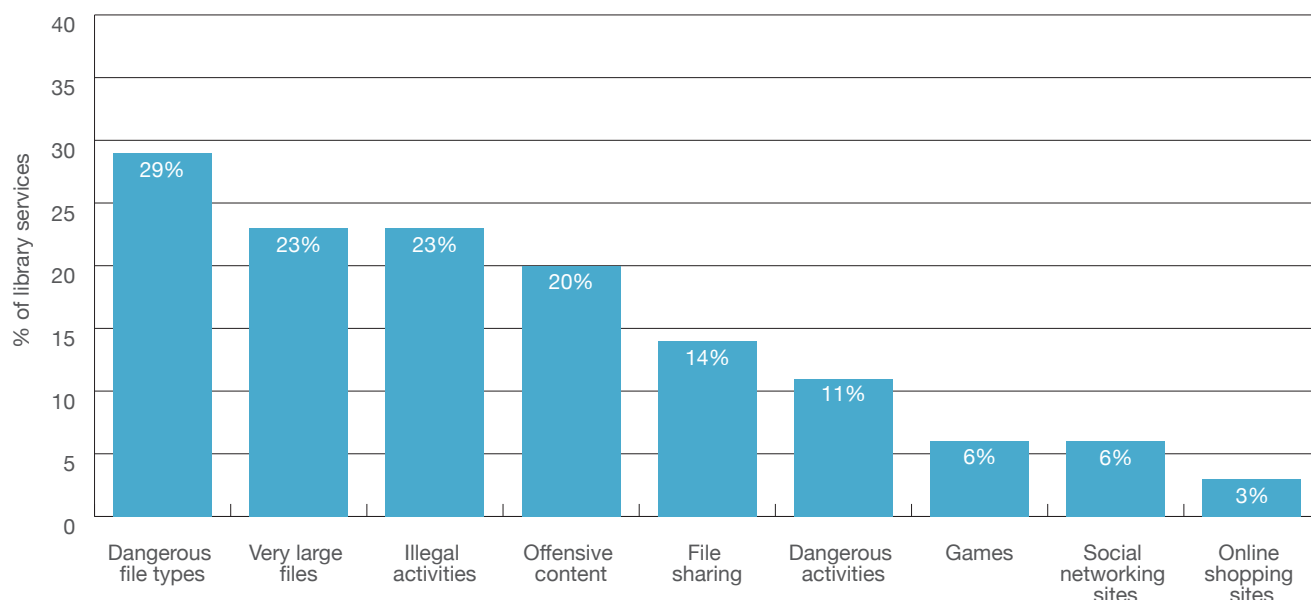
age cut-off is 18 years, at which point consent is no longer required, although this is as low as 15 years at one library. Some libraries also require supervision of children using the library internet, with this provision applying to children under the ages of 13, 12 and ten years at different libraries.

Forty-three per cent of library services set filters on internet content, with 17% using 'medium' settings and 23% using 'low' filter settings. Where filters are used, they typically aim to restrict specific file types and content containing trigger words.

Other controls on computer and internet use tend to be addressed through each library's 'Conditions of use' policies and membership agreements, which, for example, 'restrict members from deliberately accessing offensive material, as well as enforcing other social norms (e.g. no bullying)'. Library users are not allowed to install software on library PCs, or burn or save files to the computer. If library staff observe users viewing inappropriate content on a computer, the session can be ended.

² Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries 2010–11

Figure C5. Filtering of internet content



Charges for use

Computer and internet access in Victorian public libraries is essentially free for all users, although there are some exceptions to this rule. At Swan Hill Library, for example, library members get the first hour of access per day free and are then charged for any time beyond this. Non-members are charged for all computer bookings. Mildura Library Service (also on the NSW border) has free internet and computer use for Victorians, while other users pay a fee.

Wyndham Library Service allows library users to access its 'research' PCs free of charge, and then has pay-for-use 'personal use' PCs that allow unfiltered access to email, chat, social networking sites, and online banking and shopping (activities that are blocked on the free PCs).

Seventy-four per cent of library services charge users to use the printers connected to the computers. Printing charges are based on the number of copies, the size of the paper, and colour or black-and-white print (e.g. 20c per A4 page for black and white; 40c for A3 black and white; \$2 for A4 colour and \$3 for A3 colour). Charges vary considerably between libraries.

ICT devices and infrastructure

All libraries surveyed provide public access to printers. Libraries generally have one public-access printer available at each library branch, with two or more printers available at some larger branches.

Around two-thirds of library services surveyed also provide scanning facilities, usually free of charge. In around half of the library services with scanners there is one scanner per branch, with the other half having scanners only at larger branches.

Geelong, Kingston and West Gippsland libraries have iPads and other tablets available to users at the library. Monash and Yarra Plenty will soon be purchasing iPads for library use. Frankston and Yarra Plenty libraries have laptops for use by the public, while Dandenong, Gannawarra, Geelong and West Gippsland libraries have ebook readers available for users.

Based on information provided by library services in the *Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries 2010–11* and the survey conducted for the internet and PC usage study, it is estimated that 39% of public-access computers in libraries are less than two years old. The majority (52%) are currently aged between two and five years, with the remaining 9% of computers at least five years old. However, the distribution of PCs by age is not spread evenly across libraries, with the computers aged five years or more only found in five of the 35 library services participating in the survey (although in one of these libraries all public PCs were scheduled to be replaced with new hardware and software in July 2012). Eighty-six per cent of libraries had *all* of their public-access PCs less than five years old.

Figure C6. Age of Victorian library computers

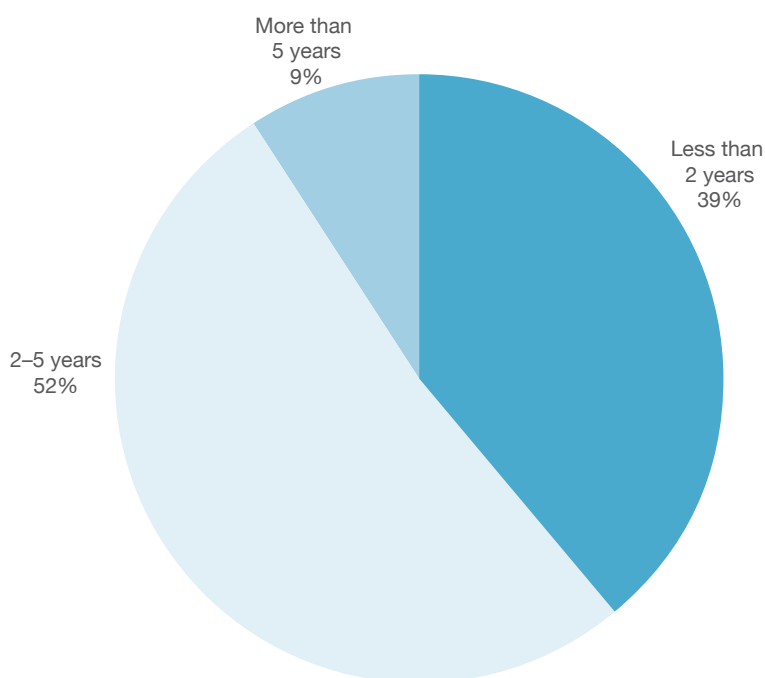
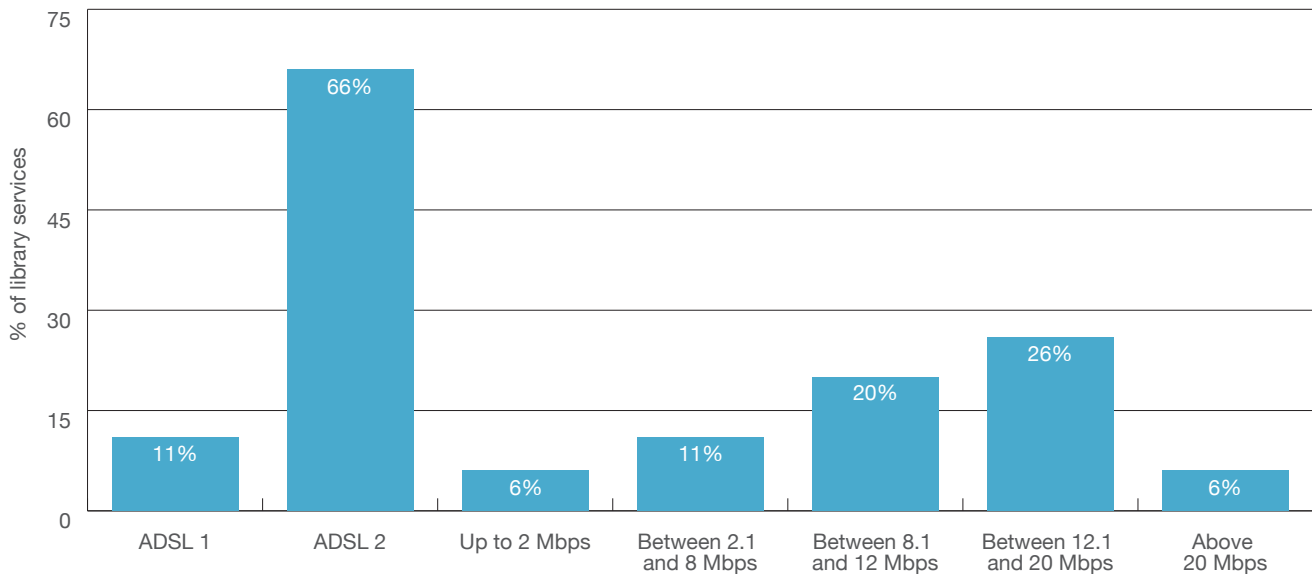


Figure C7. Internet speeds



Seventy-seven per cent of library services have ADSL internet connections, with 17% having broadband connections and 6% connected to the internet via fibre links. In addition to its ADSL connection, Eastern Regional Library has ISDN, radio and microwave links; Wimmera has a satellite connection; and Central Highlands has cable access. The speed of the internet connection varies both between and within library services, with two services (Eastern and Casey-Cardinia) currently providing users at some branches with download speeds above 20 Mbps.

In 89% of library services, primary responsibility for IT system administration, troubleshooting and support sits within the library team. Where council IT staff also have some responsibility (57% of library services), this is usually as secondary-level support or for management of networking infrastructure and issues. Three library services indicated that they also engage IT contractors when specialised support is required.

Computer training and support

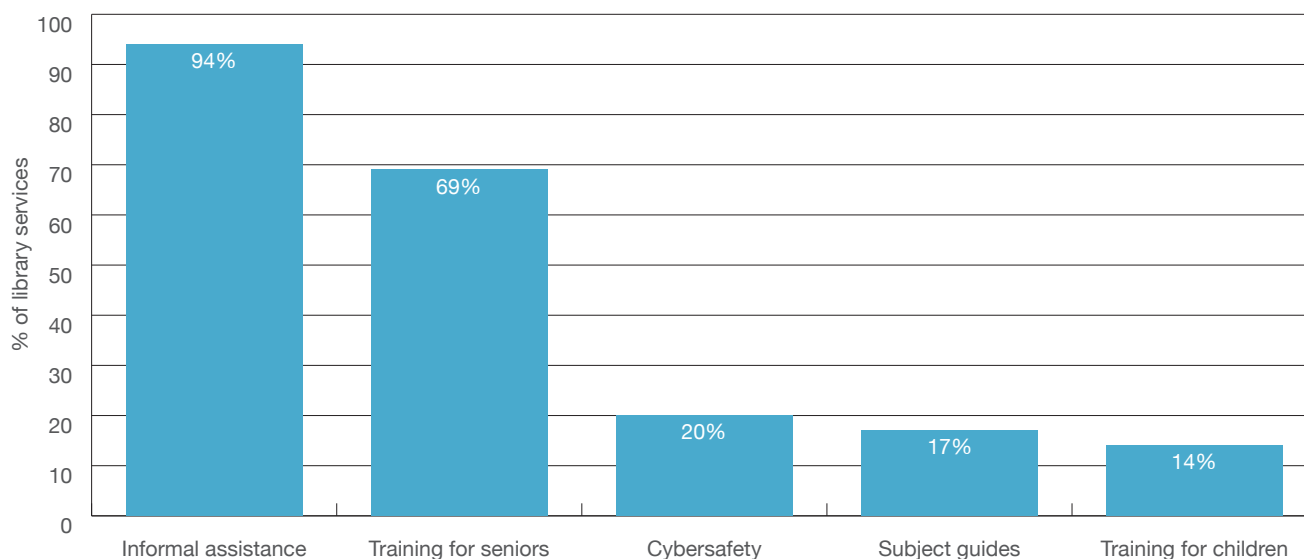
All library services surveyed indicated that they provide some level of formal or informal training and support for library users accessing computers and the internet. In addition to the informal assistance provided by staff to library users to help them to log on to the internet, use the computer or printer, and search for information, many libraries provide formal training programs for targeted user groups and on specific issues.

Examples of the types of training and support provided and programs run to facilitate and encourage the use of library computers are:

- weekly ‘Internet assist’ training at each branch (no booking required, topic decided by patrons on the day)
- monthly ‘Click goes the library’ sessions on online services and products of interest
- regular ‘Computer Savvy Seniors’ PC training program run by peer volunteers

- iPads for seniors, internet tours for seniors, ‘cyber seniors’, broadband for seniors
- introductory training on internet basics – how to surf the internet
- introduction to computers, involving attending a session followed by one-on-one follow-up support with the trainer
- free training and tutorials on topics such as eBay, blogging, Skype, creating a Facebook page, online shopping, booking a holiday online, setting up an email account, downloading e-audio and ebooks from the library website
- PC training program in English and to various CALD groups (e.g. Vietnamese, Chinese and Spanish)
- homework club for primary-age children
- ‘Appy Hour’
- a dedicated IT learning lab with multiple PCs and presentation facilities
- school visits to promote online services and resources

Figure C8. Computer and internet training and support for library users



- ‘Genealogy Online’ and courses on Ancestry.com, Trove and other databases
- external funding to deliver computer classes in Vietnamese
- partnering with a local health service to get youth into the library to use the computers as part of an activity the service runs.

Although most libraries provide a mix of formal and informal computer and internet support for library users, they are conscious of the amount of time they have within staff resources to provide this service.

National Broadband Network

The survey of library services conducted as part of the internet and PC usage study asked respondents how they thought the NBN might affect the provision and use of the internet at their library. Feedback on this question ranged across comments about:

- the future cost of internet provision (higher? lower?) and changes to pricing plans associated with significantly increased data usage

- changes in demand for use of library internet services (decreased as users get access at home, increased where rural communities have limited access)
- stable levels of demand for access to fixed PCs but increased demand for wi-fi access
- increased demand for online learning, and increased capacity to download content
- greater demand for training programs as more people get connected, and an increased need for training to help people get the most out of the technology and learn how it impacts on their lives.

‘Demand (for library internet) will continue as affordability will always be an issue for many of our users. NBN will contribute to a greater shift to online transactions as the standard form of government and agency interaction. Those without online access at home will continue to use libraries to lodge online forms and undertake transactions.’

‘NBN has potential to promote the library as a point where community groups can access both the NBN and the AV support infrastructure (large screens, printers and scanners).’

‘The NBN will provide amazing potential for completely new services, including high-quality video conferencing, file transfer and super-fast internet (wired and wi-fi) within the library. It may increase options for “cloud” computing as internet connections will presumably be more reliable and bandwidth significantly improved. It will also change community expectations about library service delivery as our members will have super-fast connections at home and expect higher-quality services online.’

D. Summary of Computer and Internet User Surveys

The study of internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries conducted two surveys of computer and internet users at public libraries. These were *not* surveys of general library users but of a distinct subset of library users: those people who use the computer and internet services provided by public libraries. It should not be assumed that the demographic profile, experiences and attitudes of this subset of library users are representative of the wider population of public library users, just as a survey of library users who attend, say, 'Story Time' (i.e. young children and their parents and carers) would not be representative of all library users. Nor should it be assumed that the results from these surveys are necessarily representative of all people in the community who use computer and internet services. Again, this is a specific subgroup of computer and internet users.

The main survey was targeted at people aged 15 years and over. The second, much shorter and much simpler survey was for children aged 8–14 years. The surveys were conducted online, with a small number of library services choosing to offer a print-based version that their staff then entered into the online survey. The main survey contained skip logic so that respondents were guided efficiently through the questions and skipped irrelevant questions based on their responses to a preceding question.

- A total of 3088 responses to the main survey were used in the analysis for this study:
 - There were 3214 responses to the main survey (after removing duplicate and incomplete responses). A further 126 responses from library services with a relatively high number of survey responses (i.e. Maribyrnong, Geelong, Boroondara) were randomly removed from the database to reduce any bias from the profile of computer and internet use in those libraries.

- A total of 623 responses to the children's survey were used in the analysis for this study:
 - There were 733 responses to the children's survey (after removing duplicate and incomplete responses). A further 110 responses were removed to reduce any bias related to over-representation of responses from library services with a relatively high survey response rate (i.e. Maribyrnong, Brimbank).

The aggregated results from each of the surveys are presented in the following pages. Analysis of the data from the two surveys can be found in Section E.

D1. Main user survey

The aggregated results from 3088 responses to the main survey of internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries are presented against a copy of the survey questions.

Screening questions

1. Are you aged 15 years and over?

Yes

No *Persons who answered 'No' to this question did not proceed further into the survey.*

2. At the public library, do you use a library computer to undertake activities (not just to use the library catalogue) OR use your own device to access the library's wi-fi internet?

Yes

No *Persons who answered 'No' to this question did not proceed further into the survey.*

Your use of public libraries

3. Are you completing this survey at a public library?

75% Yes

25% No

If 'Yes', which branch are you at? If 'No', where are you?

Of the 25% of survey respondents who did not complete the survey at a public library, around 80% did not specify where they did complete the survey. Of those who did say where they completed the survey (other than at a library), 76% were at home – either accessing the survey through their library's website or having taken a hard-copy survey provided by their library. Many of the remainder completed the survey at work, university, TAFE or school. Being online, the survey could be completed anywhere people had internet access, which in a mobile world included a park, an internet cafe, a community centre and a tram.

4. Which library branch do you use most frequently? If a mobile library is your most commonly used branch, please indicate which mobile stop you use.

Library service	No.	Library service	No.	Library service	No.
Yarra Plenty	240	Wimmera	63	Latrobe	22
Boroondara	200	Casey-Cardinia	63	Goldfields	21
Geelong	200	High Country	59	Campaspe	19
Maribyrnong	200	West Gippsland	57	Frankston	18
Darebin	173	Corangamite	52	Melton	18
Moonee Valley	167	Hobsons Bay	48	Swan Hill	17
Wyndham	145	Stonnington	47	Glen Eira	14
Eastern	144	East Gippsland	45	Kingston	9
Central Highlands	129	Goulburn Valley	40	Glenelg	5
Moreland	124	Greater Dandenong	38	Port Phillip	3
Monash	105	Mornington Peninsula	31	Murrindindi	3
Brimbank	97	Yarra	30	Hume	2
Wellington	88	Melbourne	26	State Library of Victoria	24
Upper Murray	73	Gannawarra	25	Interstate/overseas	9
Whitehorse Manningham	65	Mildura	24	Traveller	3
Bayside	65	Mitchell	23	Not specified	15

5. What other public libraries do you access? Please list as many as are applicable.

Of the 3088 survey respondents, 2019 (65%) said they used other public libraries, leaving only 35% of respondents as single library users. The other libraries accessed were generally other branches within the 'home' library service, although there were some people who accessed libraries in neighbouring municipalities and others who used libraries in the Melbourne CBD: the State Library of Victoria and the City Library in Flinders Lane.

6/7. In the past 12 months, how often have you ... ?

	More than once a week	Weekly	Fortnightly	Every 1–2 months	3–4 times a year or less	Never
6. Visited a public library	43%	27%	15%	11%	4%	
7. Visited a public library to ...						
• Use a library computer to access the internet	32%	19%	11%	15%	14%	9%
• Use a library computer without accessing the internet	12%	14%	11%	14%	14%	35%
• Use your own device to access the library's wi-fi internet	15%	11%	8%	12%	11%	43%

8. How do you connect to the internet at the library? Multiple responses allowed.

5%	I do not use the internet at the library
78%	Using the library's computers
35%	Using my own computer (e.g. laptop)
16%	Using a mobile device (e.g. tablet, smartphone) (please specify)

Some 497 people indicated that they connected to the internet using a mobile device. Fifty-three per cent of these people said they connected to the internet via their phone, 16% used an iPad (with another 5% using a 'tablet') and 8% used an iPod. Sixteen per cent of these people said that they used multiple mobile devices.

9. If you use the library for other purposes, what are these? Multiple responses allowed.

86%	Borrowing books, CDs, DVDs and other items
56%	A place to read, study or access library services (e.g. reference material)
26%	Attending programs and events
10%	Other (please specify)

While several hundred survey respondents said that they came to the library for reasons other than those mentioned above, there was no clustering of responses into particular categories of activity. Some said they came to browse, others just came for a quiet place to sit, others came to print or photocopy, and still others used the library as a place for meeting friends. The diversity in responses reflects a sentiment that a library is a place where you can do just about anything – and nothing. As one respondent said: 'Arguably for some socialising. But I often find libraries are something of a haven from the outside world.'

Your use of library computers and the internet

Please note: The % responses in questions 11, 13, 15, ... , 29 are expressed as percentages of those people who indicated that they were using the library's computer and internet services to undertake the activities mentioned in questions 10, 12, 14, ... , 28 respectively. For example, of the 57% of people who said they used computer and internet services for education and learning (25% frequently, 32% occasionally), 74% did so to undertake research for further knowledge.

10. In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for education and learning (e.g. getting homework help, taking a class, applying for courses)?

25%	Yes – frequently
32%	Yes – occasionally
43%	No <i>Skip next question</i>

11. Did you use the library computer or internet to: Multiple responses allowed.

74%	Undertake research for further knowledge
42%	Do homework for a class you are taking
30%	Research options for schools, colleges, TAFE or university
25%	Do an online assignment or take an online course
25%	Learn about admissions or financial aid for school, college, TAFE or university
9%	Apply for college or university
6%	Other (please specify)

Among those who specified 'Other' education and learning activities were people undertaking computer classes or attending a computer club; parents who were assisting their children with homework (e.g. a parent helping her child to access the Mathematics website); seniors accessing the University of the Third Age (U3A); and teachers researching educational information and resources.

12. In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for employment or career purposes (e.g. looking for a job, writing a résumé, getting job training)?

17%	Yes – frequently
27%	Yes – occasionally
56%	No <i>Skip next question</i>

13. Did you use the library computer or internet to: Multiple responses allowed.

70%	Search for a job or career opportunity
60%	Research or find information related to your job or profession
52%	Apply for a job or a career opportunity
50%	Work on a résumé
26%	Develop skills or undertake training related to your job
4%	Other (please specify)

Those who specified 'Other' employment and career purposes included people who were printing job descriptions, résumés, contracts and other work-related material; people checking work emails and corresponding with work colleagues or clients; people seeking out potential clients or promoting their skills online; and one person who was applying for an overseas work visa – that is, some people used library computer and internet services to seek out and access work, while others used them to conduct their work.

14. In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for health and wellbeing (e.g. seeking information about health or fitness)?

12%	Yes – frequently
36%	Yes – occasionally
52%	No <i>Skip next question</i>

15. Did you use the library computer or internet to: Multiple responses allowed.

70%	Learn about illness, disease or a medical condition
52%	Learn about diet and nutrition
46%	Learn about exercise or fitness
24%	Find information about a doctor or health-care provider
24%	Look up about prescription or over-the-counter drugs
16%	Find out about health insurance
13%	Find an online or face-to-face support group for a medical or health condition
5%	Other (please specify)

Those who specified 'Other' health and wellbeing purposes included people who were finding information about natural remedies and natural health protocols; people accessing 'self-help' and medical advice websites; people researching the latest medical and scientific advances; people checking dosage effects; and one young student trying to find a support group for gay teens.

16. In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for social purposes (e.g. chatting/messaging, Facebook, communicating with friends or family)?

30%	Yes – frequently
33%	Yes – occasionally
37%	No <i>Skip next question</i>

17. Did you use the library computer or internet to: Multiple responses allowed.

87%	Email friends or family
64%	Access a social networking site (such as MySpace, Facebook or Twitter)
13%	Maintain a personal blog or website
8%	Use Skype to stay in touch with family or friends
4%	Other (please specify)

Those who specified 'Other' social purposes included people accessing internet dating sites and introduction agencies; people contacting, participating in or running social websites (e.g. playgroups, mothers' groups, religious groups); people accessing chat sites (e.g. MSN, Google Chat); and people watching YouTube videos or playing fantasy football.

18. In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for managing your finances (e.g. banking, buying or selling items, paying bills)?

11%	Yes – frequently
24%	Yes – occasionally
65%	No <i>Skip next question</i>

19. Did you use the library computer or internet to: Multiple responses allowed.

72%	Do online banking
51%	Pay bills
44%	Purchase something online
21%	Gather information about or compare financial products or services
16%	Look up or monitor investment information
14%	Look up information about loans
13%	Learn about financial management
12%	Attempt to sell something online
2%	Other (please specify)

Only 2% of people who used library computer and internet services to manage their finances mentioned activities other than those listed above. They included people accessing information about property (e.g. researching new homes, comparing property prices); people trading shares; a person watching the ABC's *Inside business* program online; and one retired woman who needed the internet to sell the house of her elderly mother who had lived and died in America.

20. In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for accessing government (e.g. contacting your representative, getting information on government services)?

7%	Yes – frequently
32%	Yes – occasionally
61%	No <i>Skip next question</i>

21. Did you use the library computer or internet to: Multiple responses allowed.

56%	Learn about government programs or services
48%	Get government forms
36%	Learn about licences or permits (e.g. liquor licensing, car registration)
34%	Learn about local, state or federal laws or regulations
26%	Get help from a government official or department
8%	Other (please specify)

Among the 8% who specified 'Other' government-related purposes were people accessing Centrelink and the Australian Taxation Office, filling out government forms online, checking out local by-laws (e.g. pet registration), finding out about visa and citizenship issues, and engaging in public debate through their elected representatives at all levels of government.

22. In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for business support (e.g. starting or managing your business)?

3%	Yes – frequently
8%	Yes – occasionally
89%	No <i>Skip next question</i>

23. Did you use the library computer or internet to: Multiple responses allowed.

45%	Investigate opportunities for your business (e.g. tenders)
30%	Start your own business
27%	Locate potential customers
21%	Write a business plan
20%	Find financial support for your business
19%	Get a business licence or permit
15%	Other (please specify)

The 15% of respondents who specified 'Other' business support purposes were split between two groups. One was people actually conducting their business online from the library by doing work, contacting clients, researching competitors, registering their business details, designing business cards or managing their business finances (e.g. completing tax returns and business activity statements, managing a self-managed superannuation fund), and the other was people conducting research into potential business opportunities, arts and research grants, and the like.

24. In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for accessing services and advice (e.g. investigating real-estate options, finding legal advice)?

7%	Yes – frequently
28%	Yes – occasionally
65%	No <i>Skip next question</i>

25. Did you use the library computer or internet to: Multiple responses allowed.

66%	Find out about real estate (e.g. renting or buying property)
53%	Find out about community services and support
29%	Look for advice or assistance with a legal question or problem
2%	Other (please specify)

Only 2% of the people who used library computer and internet services to access services and advice mentioned activities other than those listed above. These included looking for information about building regulations, consumer rights and rental bonds.

26. In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for news, current affairs or community activities (e.g. accessing a news website, accessing community groups, finding out about social causes)?

24%	Yes – frequently
37%	Yes – occasionally
39%	No <i>Skip next question</i>

27. Did you use the library computer or internet to: Multiple responses allowed.

83%	Keep up with current events through a news website
43%	Learn about a social and/or environmental cause
20%	Learn about a political activity or a political candidate
16%	Organise or manage activities for a club, civic group, community group, church or non-profit group
12%	Learn about starting a club or non-profit organisation
3%	Other (please specify)

Only 3% of people who used library computer and internet services for news, current affairs and community activities mentioned activities other than those listed above, although these covered a wide variety of activities – including checking out information about the weather, sports, horseracing, support groups, church news and overseas events. Seeking out and/or participating in local community activities was also mentioned.

28. In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for recreation or entertainment purposes (e.g. playing games, pursuing a hobby, surfing the internet)?

26%	Yes – frequently
42%	Yes – occasionally
32%	No <i>Skip next question</i>

29. Did you use the library computer or internet to: Multiple responses allowed.

68%	Research a topic of personal interest
67%	Surf the internet
41%	Research travel plans, book flights or accommodation
35%	Pursue hobbies
22%	Play games
18%	Explore your family genealogy
3%	Other (please specify)

Among the responses from the 3% of people who used library computer and internet services for ‘Other’ recreation or entertainment purposes (including accessing internet dating sites), two types of activities stood out. The first was accessing movies, TV shows and/or music via YouTube, iTunes and overseas websites (especially for US and UK TV series). The second was people participating in AFL or other football Dreamteam, Supercoach or fantasy leagues.

30. Which of the purposes mentioned in the survey is the most important to you?

33%	Education and learning
15%	Recreation and entertainment purposes
14%	Social purposes
11%	Employment and career purposes
10%	News, current affairs and community activities
6%	Health and wellbeing
5%	Accessing services and advice
4%	Managing your finances
1%	Accessing government
1%	Business support

31. In the past 12 months, how often have you used a library computer or internet connection at the library to check or send emails?

27%	More than once a week
18%	Weekly
11%	Fortnightly
12%	Every 1–2 months
14%	3–4 times a year or less
18%	Never

32. In the past 12 months, have you used a library computer or internet connection at the library for any purposes other than the ones we have asked you about?

14%	Yes
-----	-----

If ‘Yes’, please explain the purpose.

Many of the ‘Yes’ responses to this question actually repeated (in more explicit terms) the responses people had made to questions 10–29 – that is, for example, people used the library’s computer and internet services for independent research (into any number of topics), for football tipping, for genealogy, for internet dating, for study and homework purposes and for work purposes. Responses to this question also noted the use of the library catalogue and the library’s printing facilities (see also the later Question 41). One use of the internet that had not been raised previously was downloading ebooks, podcasts, music, videos and software (e.g. Windows updates) because the internet speed at the library was faster than users were able to get at home.

33. Was the access to library computers and/or the internet for:

79%	Yourself
1%	Someone else
20%	Both yourself and someone else

34. How would you rate your skills and confidence in using computers and the internet?

55%	High
38%	Medium
7%	Low

Benefits of using library computers and the internet

35. What are the special advantages of using the computers or internet at the library compared to other locations? Multiple responses allowed.

88%	Free internet access
66%	Free computer access
59%	A safe, secure place to access computers and the internet
48%	Access to printers/scanners
47%	I am able to seek and get support from library staff
27%	Access to up-to-date computers
13%	Access to special computer programs
9%	Other (please specify)

The 9% of 'Other' responses primarily reiterated, aggregated or accentuated the reasons listed above. '*A faster more reliable internet and computer connection when compared with my completely unreliable laptop and mobile broadband.*' '*A place away from home where I can concentrate.*' '*Access to subscriber-only databases which may require support from library staff.*' There was particular mention of access to specialist genealogical databases.

36. How have you benefited from accessing the computers or internet at your library?

For analysis of responses see Section E1.

37. How important are the library's computers and internet connection to you personally?

53%	Very important
26%	Important
16%	Moderately important
4%	Of little importance
1%	Unimportant

38. How important is it to you that others in the community have access to library computers and internet?

68%	Very important
22%	Important
7%	Moderately important
2%	Of little importance
1%	Unimportant

Access and support

39. Do you have access to a computer for your own personal use somewhere other than at the library? Multiple responses allowed.

20%	No
67%	Yes – at home
23%	Yes – at work
15%	Yes – at school, TAFE or university
9%	Yes – at an internet cafe or wi-fi hotspot
2%	Yes – at a community centre
4%	Yes – other (please specify)

Most of the 'other' computer access points mentioned were at a family member's or friend's place or through a mobile device.

40. Do you have access to the internet apart from at the library? Multiple responses allowed.

25%	No
55%	Yes – at home
24%	Yes – at work
16%	Yes – at school, TAFE or university
13%	Yes – through a smartphone
10%	Yes – at an internet cafe or wi-fi hotspot
3%	Yes – at a community centre
5%	Yes – other (please specify)

Around half of the 'other' internet access points mentioned were at a family member's or friend's place. Mobile devices (other than smartphones) and other community locations were also noted as alternative points of internet access.

41. Do you use/access any of the following at your library? Multiple responses allowed.

71%	Library website (including the library catalogue)
55%	Library printers/scanners
38%	Online databases (excluding the library catalogue)

42. In the past 12 months, have you participated in computer-related training or classes (e.g. how to use computer software or search the internet)?

9%	At a public library
11%	Other than at a public library

43. In the past 12 months, have you received assistance from library staff for any of the following purposes? Multiple responses allowed.

31%	How to print or scan documents
21%	How to connect to the library's wi-fi
19%	How to connect to the internet
19%	How to use library databases for research
12%	How to search on the internet
7%	How to use a word-processing or spreadsheet program like Word or Excel
7%	How to save documents
7%	Other (please specify)

The 'Other' reasons that people sought assistance from library staff with computer and internet services related to technical problems, logging in or accessing the library network, issues specific to particular software or applications (e.g. email, Skype, Facebook), searching for information online, and downloading files.

44. Do you have a disability that impacts on your use of computers and/or the internet at your library?

4% Yes

45. With respect to your disability, do you have any specific issues with your library's provision of computers and/or the internet (e.g. size of the screen font, height of the tables)?

Of the 4% of survey respondents who indicated that they had a disability that impacted their use of computers and/or the internet at their library, around half said they had no issues with this service, and the library service and staff met and were accommodating of their needs.

Where there were issues mentioned, these related to visual conditions (e.g. lighting, screen size), seating (e.g. better spinal support for people with serious back conditions, more room to get into and out of seats) and privacy. People with learning disabilities also noted a desire to have longer periods of time on the computers.

Your satisfaction with library computer and internet services

46. How satisfied are you with your access to a computer and/or the internet at your library?

52% Very satisfied

37% Satisfied

7% Neither satisfied or dissatisfied

3% Dissatisfied

1% Very dissatisfied

Please explain your response.

For analysis of responses see Section E1.

47. How satisfied are you with the support provided by the staff at your library when accessing a computer and/or the internet at your library?

59% Very satisfied

30% Satisfied

9% Neither satisfied or dissatisfied

1% Dissatisfied

1% Very dissatisfied

48. Are any of your computer/internet needs not met at your library? If 'Yes', please explain.

22% Yes

The many 'Yes' responses to this question covered a wide variety of issues, some of which present improvement opportunities for public libraries. The issues most often mentioned included:

- longer time allowances on the computers
- more computers
- faster internet speeds
- faster computers and more up-to-date versions of common software (e.g. Office, Adobe)
- removing blocks for downloads from some sites
- better capacity for capturing, accessing and connecting to data on memory sticks and portable devices
- increased privacy at the computers
- more printers and scanners
- more support from library staff
- removal of charges for computer and internet use.

For further analysis of responses, see Section E1.

49. Do you have any suggestions as to how the computers or internet connection at your library could be improved?

For analysis of responses see Section E1.

About you

50. Your gender

42% Male

58% Female

51. Your age group

18% 15–24 years

16% 25–34 years

18% 35–44 years

20% 45–54 years

18% 55–64 years

10% 65 or older

52. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

1% Yes

53. What is the main language spoken at home?

85% English

2% European language

8% Asian language

1% African language

0% Pacific Island language

4% Other (please tell us what language)

Other main languages that respondents spoke at home included Arabic, Hindi, Punjabi, Spanish, Greek, Italian, Filipino, Tamil and Urdu.

54. How well do you read English?

88% Very well

8% Fairly well

3% OK

1% Very little

55. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

19% Full-time employment

22% Part-time employment

6% Self-employed

12% Unemployed

16% Retired

6% Home duties or carer

16% Student

3% Other (please specify)

Among the 3% of respondents who mentioned 'Other' employment status were people with a disability (1%) and people who undertook casual work (1%).

56. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1%	Did not go to school
6%	Still at school
14%	Year 11 or below
14%	Year 12 or equivalent
24%	Certificate/diploma
41%	Degree/higher degree

57. What is your annual income (individual pre-tax)?

50%	Below \$30,000 per year
24%	Between \$30,000 and \$60,000 per year
9%	Between \$60,000 and \$100,000 per year
3%	Over \$100,000 per year
14%	Did not answer

D2. Children's survey

The aggregated results from 623 responses to the children's survey of internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries are presented against a copy of the survey questions.

Screening questions

1. How old are you?

	Not yet 8	<i>Children who ticked this box did not proceed further into the survey.</i>
4%	8	
5%	9	
11%	10	
16%	11	
22%	12	
19%	13	
23%	14	
	Older than 14	<i>Children who ticked this box were redirected to the main survey.</i>

2. When you are at the library, do you use a library computer or access the library's internet from your computer, iPad/iPod or smartphone?

Yes	
No	<i>Children who answered 'No' to this question did not proceed further into the survey.</i>

Coming to the library

3. Which library branch do you use most often?

Library service	No.	Library service	No.	Library service	No.
Brimbank	80	Stonnington	7	Frankston	4
Maribyrnong	80	Casey-Cardinia	6	Mildura	4
Moonee Valley	78	Goulburn Valley	6	Campaspe	3
Geelong	48	Greater Dandenong	6	Swan Hill	3
Boroondara	39	Hobsons Bay	6	Gannawarra	2
Monash	31	Moreland	6	Melbourne	2
Yarra Plenty	29	Mornington Peninsula	6	Melton	2
Darebin	28	Upper Murray	6	Yarra	2
Wyndham	27	Wellington	6	Goldfields	1
Wimmera	23	West Gippsland	6	Hume	1
Whitehorse Manningham	14	East Gippsland	5	Kingston	1
Central Highlands	13	Mitchell	5	Latrobe	1
High Country	11	Corangamite	4	State Library of Victoria	1
Bayside	9	Eastern	4	Not specified	7

4. How often do you come to the library?

64%	Every week
30%	A couple of times a month
6%	A couple of times a year

5. Do you usually come to the library with someone else? Multiple responses allowed

21%	No – I come alone
39%	Yes – parent or carer
37%	Yes – other family members
26%	Yes – friends
3%	Yes – I come with school

6. How often do you use the library computers?

8%	I don't
49%	Every week
31%	A couple of times a month
12%	A couple of times a year

7. How often do you use the library's internet from your computer, iPad/iPod or smartphone?

38%	I don't
29%	Every week
22%	A couple of times a month
11%	A couple of times a year

8. Do you do anything else when you come to the library (e.g. like borrow books)?

84% Yes (please tell us what else you do)

Sixty-eight per cent of children said that they also borrowed books and other material when they came to the library, while 17% of children also read at the library, 7% did homework and 5% played games. A smaller number of children mentioned other activities, socialising and doing research at the library.

The library computers and internet

9. What do you use the library computers or the library internet for (e.g. play games, do homework, surf the internet, visit Facebook)?

Computer/internet activity	%	Computer/internet activity	%
Play games	51	Emails	8
Do homework	49	Use catalogue	7
Facebook	25	Do research	6
Surf the internet	21	YouTube	4

Social networking, downloading material, listening to music and printing were mentioned by 2% of children. All other activities were mentioned by 1% or less of the children who completed the survey.

10. Do you use the library internet to check or send emails?

50% Yes

11. How good are you at using computers and the internet?

58%	Really good
29%	Good
9%	OK
4%	I am still learning

12. Why do you like to use the computers or internet at the library? Multiple responses allowed.

67%	Because it is free
34%	Because it is safe
22%	Because I can get help from library staff
26%	Other (please tell us why)

Twenty-six per cent of children gave an 'Other' reason for using the computers and internet at the library. Across a wide range of reasons, the most common were that the children did not have the internet at home or had limited internet access (7% of respondents), the library is a nice environment (2%) and the internet speed is fast (2%).

Access and help

13. Do you have access to a computer or the internet somewhere else? Multiple responses allowed.

9% No

69% Yes – at home

65% Yes – at school

25% Yes – at someone else's house

3% Yes – other (please tell us where)

Among the responses of the 3% of children who accessed computers and/or the internet at other locations were McDonald's, internet cafes and their mobile phone or iPhone.

14. Have you asked for help from the library staff when using a computer or the internet? Multiple responses allowed.

15% How to connect to the internet

8% How to use a computer

28% How to print

9% For something else (please tell us what for)

The other reasons children asked library staff for help included (among one-off issues) assistance to overcome technical problems, and help logging on and off.

15. How easy is it for you to get to use a computer or the internet at the library?

53% Very easy

27% Easy

17% It's OK

2% Not very easy

1% Very difficult

16. How could the computers or the internet at your library be better?

The most common improvement respondents said library services could make to their computer and internet services for children was to increase internet speeds. This was mentioned by 16% of children. Other notable improvement opportunities mentioned were having more computers (9%), having longer time on the computers (7%), having more up-to-date programs (3%) and computers (3%), and allowing downloads and unblocking websites.

About you

17. Your gender

51% Male

49% Female

18. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

4% Yes

19. What language do you speak at home?

77% English

23% Other (please tell us what language)

Other main languages that children spoke at home included Vietnamese (3%), Cantonese (2%), Chinese (2%), Dinka (1%), Spanish (1%), Mandarin (1%) and Polish (1%).

E. Analysis of Computer and Internet User Surveys

The study of internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries conducted two surveys of computer and internet users at public libraries. The main user survey was targeted at persons aged 15 years and over, and 3088 responses were used in the analysis for this study. The second, much shorter and much simpler survey was for children aged 8–14 years. Responses from 623 children were used in

the analysis for this study. The aggregated results from each of the surveys are presented in Section D, shown against each individual question in the surveys.

This section analyses the data from the two surveys to highlight:

- who uses computer and internet services offered by Victorian public libraries
- what they do when they use the libraries' computer and/or internet services
- what benefits they get from undertaking these activities
- and MOST IMPORTANTLY ...
- why they access these services at a public library (as opposed to anywhere else).

E1. Main user survey

Who uses computer and internet services offered by Victorian public libraries?

Demographic characteristics

People who use the computer and internet services in Victorian public libraries are not a perfect cross-section of the library user population.¹ They are, on average, younger (think school, tertiary and vocational education students), of more balanced gender (not likely to be two-thirds female) and more likely to be engaged in the labour market (employed or looking for work, rather than retired). Nor are they a perfect representation of the Victorian population aged 15 years and over.

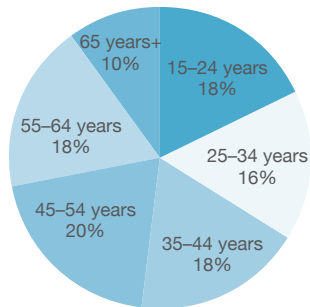
Of the more than 3000 people who responded to the main survey from the study of internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries (analysis of responses from eight- to 14-year-olds is in Section E2):

- 42% were male and 58% were female
- there was an even spread across age cohorts from 15–24 years (18% of respondents) to 55–64 years (18% of respondents), and those aged 65 years or more (10%)
- 85% spoke English as the main language at home, with slightly more than half of the rest (8%) speaking an Asian language
- 46%, or nearly half, were employed either full-time, part-time or self-employed, with 12% identifying themselves as unemployed
- 65% had a highest educational qualification at certificate/diploma level (24%) or degree level or above (41%)
- 16% were students and 16% were retirees
- 58% said that they had an annual income (individual pre-tax) of less than \$30,000 per annum.

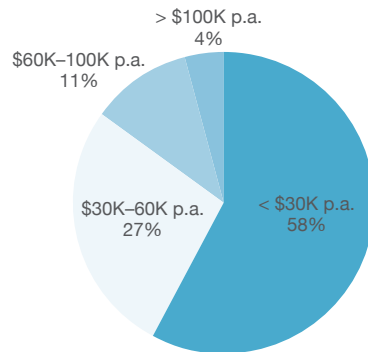
¹ Compared with the results of the 2006 *Libraries building communities* survey of Victorian public library users.

Figure E1. Users of library computer and internet services

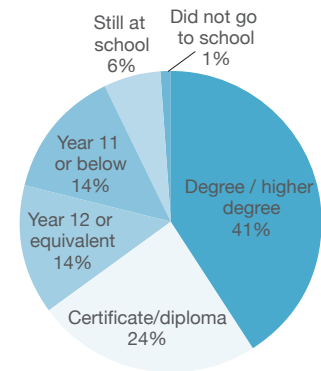
Age of respondents



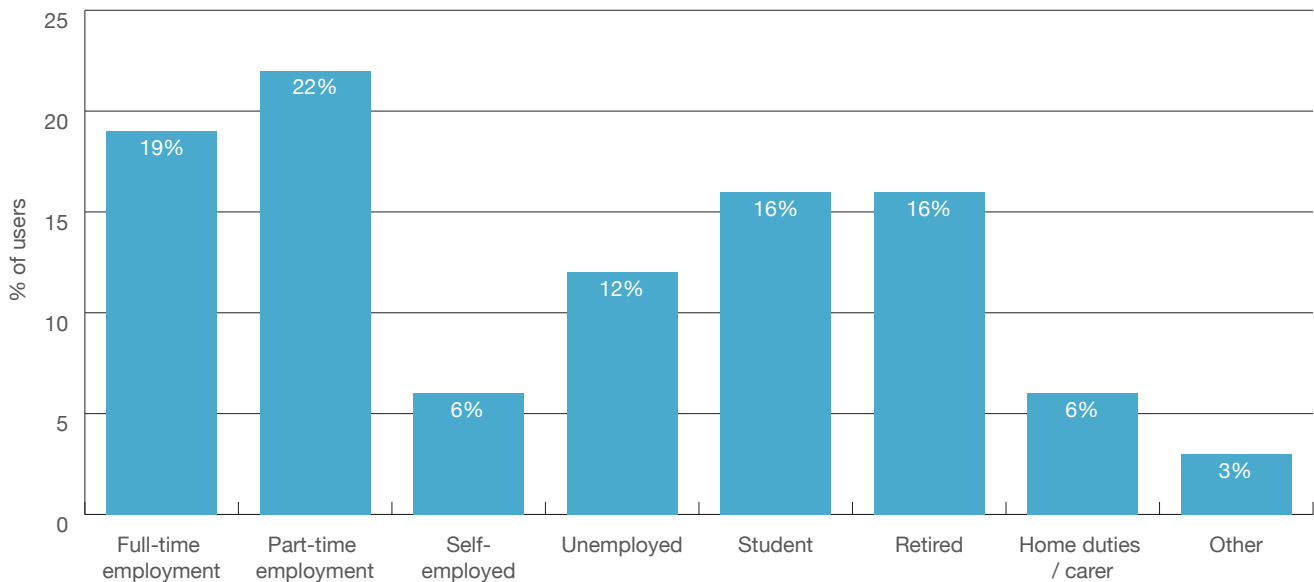
Income of respondents



Education of respondents



Employment of respondents



Much of the demographic classification of users of libraries' computer and internet services was consistent with general societal norms: students were younger than average, retirees were in the top age brackets, high-income earners tended to be in full-time employment and more educated and in the middle age brackets, students and the unemployed had lower incomes. Notably, while the gender split was fairly even across most of these demographic categories, there were significantly more females in the home-duties/carer group (91% female) and in the part-time employment category (71% female).

Of those who did not speak English as the main language at home,

69% said that they were students. Thirty per cent were aged 15-24 years, with a total of 74% under the age of 45 years.

Eighty-eight per cent of respondents said that they read English very well, with only 1% stating that they spoke English very little. This may in part be a bias related to respondents' capacity to complete the online research survey, but it is also influenced by the need for most users of computers and the internet to have a working knowledge of English to be able to do most of the things people use these services for: study and research, accessing government and business information, conducting

transactions, and engaging in recreational pursuits.

Library customers

All 44 Victorian municipal library services were represented in the survey responses. Four library services (Yarra Plenty, Boroondara, Geelong and Maribyrnong) generated 200 or more responses, with a further seven library services having more than 100 responses, and altogether 21 of 44 library services contributing at least 50 survey responses. There was good coverage across inner and outer metropolitan areas as well as major regional centres (e.g. Geelong, Ballarat) and rural areas (e.g. Wellington, Upper Murray, High Country).

Table E1. Survey respondents by library service

Library service	No.	Library service	No.	Library service	No.
Yarra Plenty	240	Wimmera	63	Latrobe	22
Boroondara	200	Casey-Cardinia	63	Goldfields	21
Geelong	200	High Country	59	Campaspe	19
Maribyrnong	200	West Gippsland	57	Frankston	18
Darebin	173	Corangamite	52	Melton	18
Moonee Valley	167	Hobsons Bay	48	Swan Hill	17
Wyndham	145	Stonnington	47	Glen Eira	14
Eastern	144	East Gippsland	45	Kingston	9
Central Highlands	129	Goulburn Valley	40	Glenelg	5
Moreland	124	Greater Dandenong	38	Port Phillip	3
Monash	105	Mornington Peninsula	31	Murrindindi	3
Brimbank	97	Yarra	30	Hume	2
Wellington	88	Melbourne	26	State Library of Victoria	24
Upper Murray	73	Gannawarra	25	Interstate/overseas	9
Whitehorse Manningham	65	Mildura	24	Traveller	3
Bayside	65	Mitchell	23	Not specified	15

Around two-thirds of respondents (65%) said that they accessed more than one library, these generally being other branches within the same library service, although there were some people who accessed libraries in neighbouring municipalities and some who

used libraries in the Melbourne CBD (e.g. State Library of Victoria, City Library).

Nearly all survey respondents used the library for other purposes than internet access and computer usage, most commonly borrowing

items from the library's collection (86% borrowed books, CDs, DVDs or other items). Fifty-six per cent used the library as a place to read, study or access library services, and 26% attended programs or events at the library.

Figure E2. Frequency of use of library computers and the internet

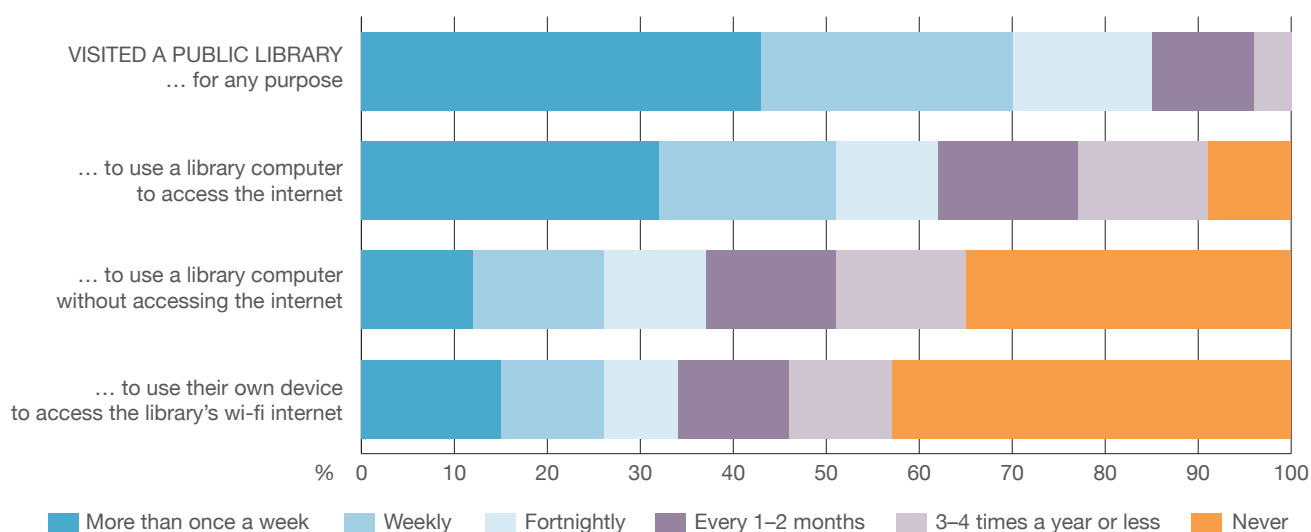
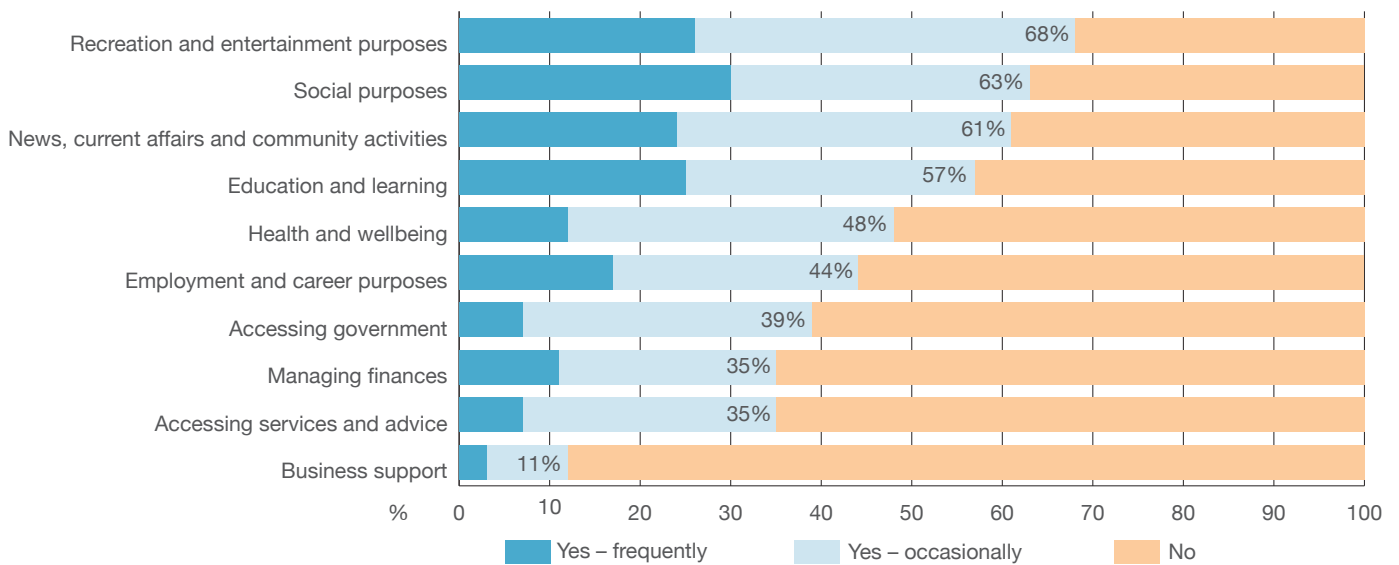


Figure E3. Use of library computer and internet services



Seventy per cent of users of libraries' computer and internet services visited their library at least weekly, with 43% visiting more than once a week. Nearly all survey respondents (91%) had in the past 12 months used library computers to access the internet, with 51% doing so on at least a weekly basis, and one in three (32%) doing it more than once a week. Two-thirds of respondents had at some time used the library computers without accessing the internet. And more than half of the respondents (57%) had at some time in the past year accessed the library's wi-fi internet using their own device (most commonly a laptop, but sometimes a smartphone or a tablet device, e.g. an iPad). This final point suggests that there is a fair level of usage of library computer and internet services by people who are likely to have alternative means of accessing these services.

What are libraries' computer and internet services used to do?

The things people do when they are using their library's computer and internet services are much the same as what people do with computers and the internet anywhere else.

Email

Eighty-two per cent of survey respondents said they send and receive emails when they are at the library (45% at least weekly), which is a little below the national figure of 90% reported by the ABS for all internet users in 2010-11 (see Section B). However, it should be noted that at least one library service has blocks on or charges for a range of password-enabled activities, such as using email and online banking.

General activities

Beyond email, which can be used for a wide range of social, information, employment and other purposes, the most common type of computer or internet activities undertaken by library users (although not necessarily the most

frequent or the most important) were for recreational and/or entertainment purposes.

Sixty-eight per cent of survey respondents said they used library computers and the internet for **recreation and entertainment purposes**, through activities such as:

- researching a topic of personal interest – undertaken by 68% of people in the recreation or entertainment group (46% of all respondents), and an activity undertaken at an equivalent level across people of all ages, genders, types of employment status, and education and income levels
- surfing the internet – undertaken by 67% of people in this group (46% of total), and an activity more likely to be done by younger library users (77% of people aged 15-24 years vs 44% of those aged 65 years or more, and 77% of students vs 52% of retired persons)
- playing games – undertaken by 22% of this group (15% overall), mostly school-age students

- exploring family genealogy – undertaken by 18% of this group (12% overall), more likely females aged 45 years or more from an English-speaking background, retired or in part-time employment.

The next most common type of activity, which 63% of users of libraries' computer and internet services said they undertook, involved **social engagement** and keeping in touch with family or friends through a range of technological applications, such as email, Facebook and Skype. The two most common social activities on libraries' internet services were:

- emailing family and friends – undertaken by 87% of the 63% of people in the social activity group (55% of all survey respondents), and an activity undertaken at a similar level across all demographics except school-age students
- accessing a social networking site such as Facebook or Twitter – undertaken by 64% of people in this group (40% overall), and an activity having a significant correlation with age (being used by around 82% of people aged 15–34 years, and only 40% of people aged 55–64 years and 27% of people aged 65 years and over).

Although it is not a service offered at all public libraries, about 5% of all survey respondents said they used Skype at the library, with a high of 18% of users for whom English was not the main language spoken at home.

Activities related to **news, current affairs and community engagement** were undertaken by 61% of survey respondents, with 83% of people in this group (50% of all respondents) using their libraries' computer and internet services to keep up with current events through a news website. The demographic

groups with a higher propensity to access these websites were aged between 35 and 54 years, were in full-time employment and had higher tertiary qualifications.

More than half of the survey respondents (57%) said they used the libraries' computer and internet services for **education and learning purposes**. These users fall into two groups. The first and smaller group is those who are seeking information about educational options: 30% of people who said they used library services for educational purposes said that in the past 12 months they had researched schools, colleges, TAFE or university. This group includes parents of school-age children, students applying for college, and older workers and people looking to re-enter the labour market seeking out opportunities to upgrade their qualifications and skills. It also includes older people looking to access training courses for personal interest and enjoyment. A higher-than-average proportion of people from homes where English is not the main language spoken (40%) undertook this activity. The second and much larger group is those who are actually undertaking formal or informal education and training. This includes school-age children and tertiary students doing homework or study, as well as people undertaking research for further knowledge (74% of users in this category).

Five other groups of activities investigated through the study were undertaken by between 35% and 48% of survey respondents. While not as common as the four top-ranked activities, these are nevertheless activities that a lot of people engage in online:

- 48% used library computer and internet services for **health and wellbeing purposes**, including learning about illnesses, diseases and medical conditions (70% of this group); diet and nutrition

(52% of this group); and exercise or fitness (46% of this group). These research activities were more likely (than average) to be undertaken by persons aged 45–64 years, and much less likely to be done by students and people aged 15–24 years

- 44% used the library for **employment and career purposes**. Within this group 70% had in the past 12 months used the internet to search for a job or career opportunity, 60% had undertaken research related to their job or profession, 52% had applied for a job or career opportunity online, and 50% had used the library computers to work on their résumé. The demographic characteristics of this group were as would be expected, with a much higher representation of unemployed persons (73% of unemployed respondents used the library for this purpose), especially in the 25–44 age categories
- 39% of survey respondents said they **accessed government services**, learned about government programs and regulations, got government forms and got information about licences and permits online at the library. Other than younger students, who were less likely to be undertaking these activities at the library, the spread of usage was fairly even across most demographic categories, although the actual use varied (e.g. unemployed persons accessing Centrelink, self-employed persons accessing the Australian Taxation Office)
- 35% used library computer and internet services to **manage their finances**, with 72% of these banking online at the library, 51% paying bills online and 44% purchasing products and services online. This group was less likely to contain older persons and retirees, and younger persons and students. People working

full-time on incomes over \$60,000 and aged 25–44 years had higher-than-average representation in this activity

- 35% of survey respondents used library internet connections to **access services and advice**, such as real-estate options (e.g. buying and renting property) (66% of this group), finding out about community services and support (53%) or looking for advice or assistance with a legal question or problem (29%). This activity was relatively more common among those aged 35–64 than among younger library users.

Finally, 11% of people who use library computers and the internet do so for **business support**. However, the corresponding figure for persons who are self-employed is a much higher 35%. So although this was clearly the least frequently

undertaken activity among survey respondents, anecdotal feedback from these people (see Section G) indicates that the opportunity to access free internet services at the library was often critical to them being able to successfully run their small- and micro-business endeavours – investigating opportunities for their business (e.g. tenders), locating potential customers, writing a business plan and finding financial support for their business.

While individual respondents have specific activities that are a consistent focus in their use of computers and the internet at the library, they use the library services to do a variety of things. On average, all respondents said that in the past 12 months they had undertaken activities in four to five of the ten different groups referenced in the survey.

A more detailed breakdown of the activities undertaken in each of the ten activity groups referenced in the internet and PC usage study survey is presented in Section G.

Top ten specific activities

In capturing information about the types of activity people undertook when using computers and the internet at the library, the survey also identified a number of specific activities within each of the ten activity groups. The most common activity was general use of email, mentioned by 82% of survey respondents. Emailing friends and family, within the social engagement group of activities, was second on the list at 55%, followed by keeping up with news through online sites (51% of all respondents).

Table E2. Activities undertaken by at least 20% of libraries' computer and internet users

No.	% of users	Activity	Group
1	82%	Check or send email (general)	–
2	55%	Email friends or family	Social engagement
3	51%	Keep up with current events through a news website	News, current affairs or community activities
4	46%	Research a topic of personal interest	Recreation or entertainment
5	45%	Surf the internet	Recreation or entertainment
6	42%	Undertake research for further knowledge	Education and learning
7	40%	Access a social networking site (e.g. Facebook)	Social engagement
8	33%	Learn about illness, disease or a medical condition	Health and wellbeing
9	31%	Search for a job or career opportunity	Employment or career
10	28%	Research travel plans, book flights or accommodation	Recreation or entertainment
11	26%	Research or find information related to your job or profession	Employment or career
12	26%	Learn about a social and/or environmental cause	Accessing services and advice
13	25%	Do online banking	Managing finances
14	25%	Learn about diet and nutrition	Health and wellbeing
15	24%	Do homework for a class you are taking	Education and learning
16	24%	Pursue hobbies	Recreation or entertainment
17	23%	Find out about real estate (e.g. renting/buying property)	Accessing services and advice
18	23%	Apply for a job or a career opportunity	Employment or career
19	22%	Learn about exercise or fitness	Health and wellbeing
20	22%	Work on a résumé	Employment or career
21	22%	Learn about government programs or services	Accessing government

While this list is interesting for what activities are on it and where they rank (e.g. Facebook, online banking and homework are all in the top 15), it is also interesting for what is *not* on the list. In particular, two activities that many librarians mention and respondents to the survey comment on as being common uses of the computers and internet do not make this list. Only 15% of respondents to this survey used the computers to play games (a sometimes noisy and attention-getting activity), although there was a much higher percentage for respondents to the children’s survey (see Section E2). The second is people exploring their family genealogy (a total of 12% of survey respondents), which for some is a fairly time-intensive activity and one that often requires assistance from library staff to access specialist databases.

Most important activities

The things that people do most often on the internet or computers,

or the things they spend most time on, are not necessarily the things that are most important to them. As noted in Table E2, more than 50% of respondents are in email contact with family and friends via the library, and for some with family overseas this is an important part of keeping in touch. But while general browsing or surfing of the internet was also an activity undertaken by nearly half of the survey respondents, it did not receive the same level of recognition in respondents’ anecdotal responses to the survey.

When asked which activity group was the *most* important to them, ‘education and learning’ stood apart from all others. While 57% of respondents undertook activities within this group, more than half of them and 33% of all respondents said this was the most important activity they performed when at the library. In fact, 59% of students said this was the most important activity to them. The next activity group

on the ‘most important’ list was recreation and entertainment, which was top for 15% of respondents, and for a slightly higher-than-average 20% of retirees and 21% of people aged 65 years or more.

Other uses of online databases, equipment and programs

The survey also asked respondents about use of other library websites, online databases, printers and scanners, and computer-related training classes. The results show that 71% of respondents used library websites and the library catalogue. More than half also used the library’s printers and scanners, with usage spread evenly across all demographic user groups.

Twenty per cent of survey respondents said that in the past 12 months they had participated in computer-related training or classes (e.g. how to use computer software, how to search the internet), 9% doing so at the library and 11% somewhere other than the library.

Figure E4. Use of library computer and internet services

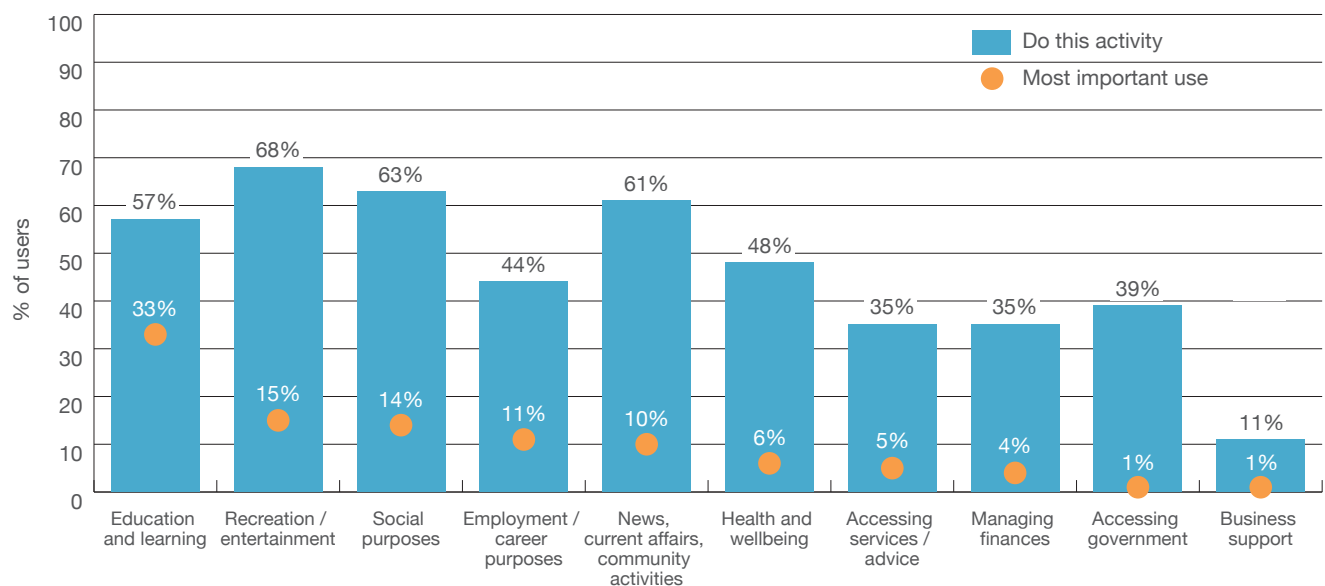
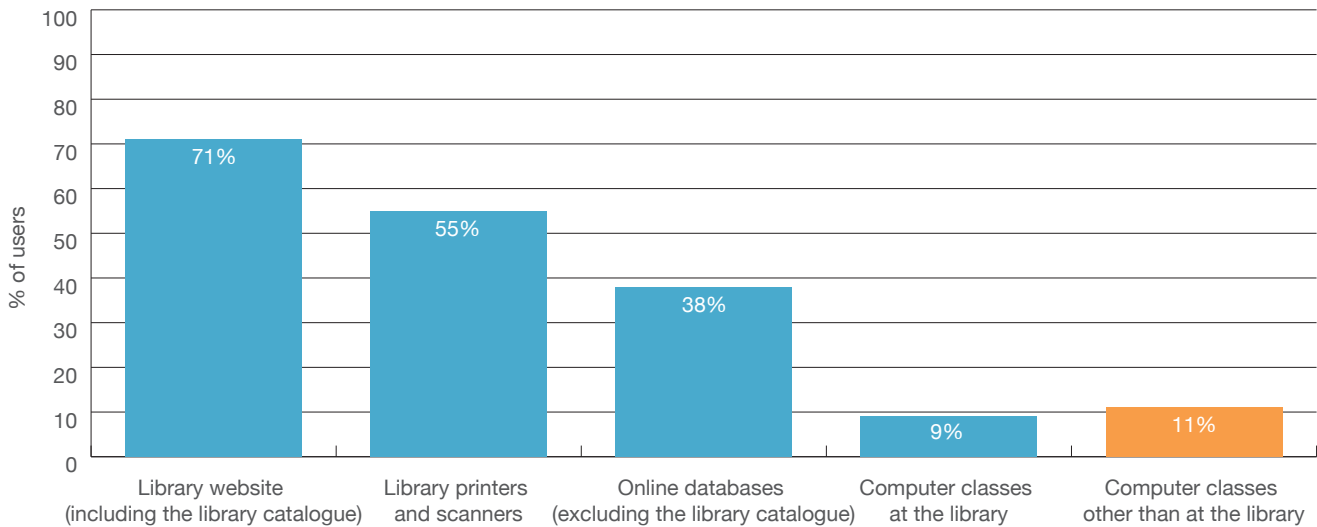


Figure E5. Use of other library services



What is the benefit of accessing computer and internet services at the library?

Benefits of technology access

The primary benefits that library users get from access to computers and the internet are related to the activities they undertake, as is the case with access to technology at home, work, school and any other place. Students of all ages get efficient access to research information and can access digital resources and undertake courses online. People of all ages and backgrounds keep in touch with family and friends locally and overseas via email, Facebook and Skype. They access news and information services and find out about community activities so that they are connected with the world around them. They access Centrelink, the ATO and state and local government services, check out rental accommodation, find a car to buy, pay bills and do their banking online – everyday parts of life in modern society. With the shift in publication of classified advertisements from newspapers to online media, people now check out the job market, submit their résumé

and apply for jobs online. And some people find relaxation, entertainment and amusement online by playing computer games or browsing the internet.

The following comments from people who use computer and internet services at their library illustrate the importance of technology access in their lives.

‘I have been able to keep in touch with the world including friends and family during a period of homelessness and unemployment that locks me out of other networks and resources.’

‘I would not have passed this year at uni because I need internet access, study time and to be able to print, all of which I use the library for.’

‘I’m up to date with any family matters or dramas. I’m a pensioner and access to recipes, getting values of things, and keeping up to date with health issues is paramount, and made easy on a computer.’

‘I can get access to so many online website for improve my English language. This method is better than going to ESL course. This is very important for learning English.’

‘Able to find information I need, access information and services, etc. when on low income of government disability pension. Info often relating to my or my son’s disabilities/health conditions. There are few books directly about the condition I have, and especially focusing on what info I want to know. It is good on the internet that you can get the most up-to-date info and seek info regarding specific aspects of a condition.’

‘At a public library in Tasmania I was able to renew books on loan from Boroondara which were due back. Also did the same at Wellington library in NZ. My normal transport is by bicycle – great to be able to call into a library and check the BOM [Bureau

of Meteorology] rain map to avoid getting drenched. Access to timetables; access to other libraries' catalogues; able to locate very hard-to-find books and CDs, etc.; ... the list is endless.'

'I do not have internet at home as I cannot afford it at present, so I come to the library to use computers 2-3 times a week. I need the computer to buy health supplements from overseas. I use it for access to emails. The internet provides up-to-date information on most websites and it is crucial for us – the public – to have this important service. The computers at the library have helped me with job seeking, researching, and it is a great way to learn. I shop online because it's cheaper as I'm on a budget. I would be in trouble if the library didn't have computers with internet. The public needs it simply because the whole world now operates on the internet!!'

These are the comments of just seven of the more than 3000 people who completed the survey for the study of internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries. They are the comments of people of different ages, from different ethnic backgrounds, with different levels of education and income, and who use the library computers and the internet to do different things. These and similarly positive sentiments were repeatedly expressed through the survey.

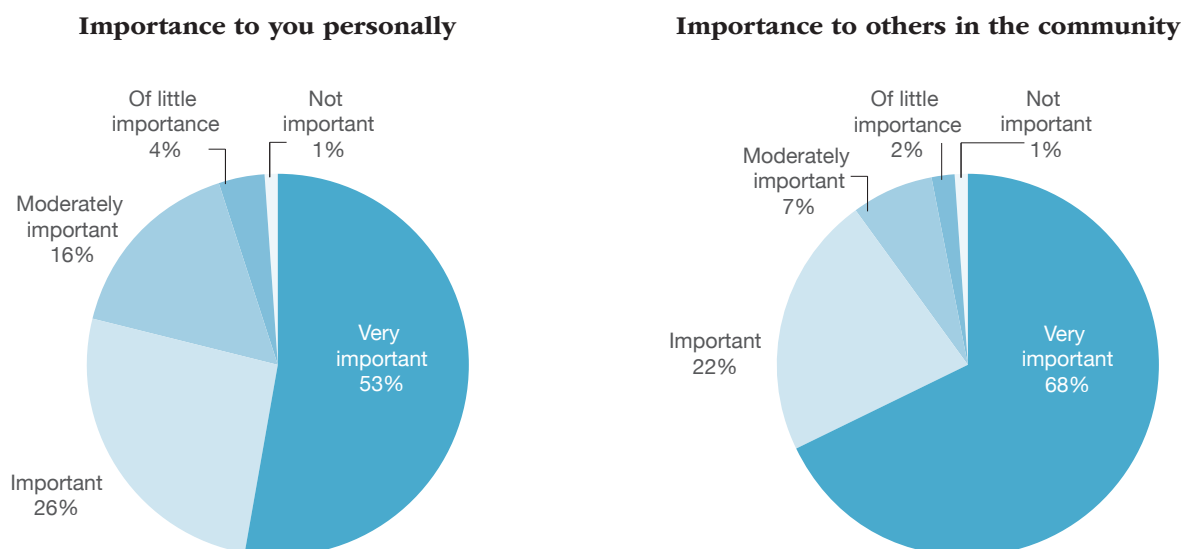
What these and many other survey comments have in common is a thankfulness that these people can get access to computers and the internet to do what they need and want to do to get by. The benefit of computer and internet access in a highly connected technology-enabled world is that people are connected – to one another, to information and to services. And as these comments demonstrate, the quality of their life is improved.

User satisfaction

The study survey asked users of libraries' computer and internet services how important it was to them that they had access to these services. Given the feedback just described, it is no surprise that overall 53% of people said that this access was 'very important', with a total of 79% saying it was either 'important' or 'very important'.

The personal value placed on access to these services was fairly consistent across most demographic groups, with two exceptions. The first was people aged 15-24 years with a highest level of education at Year 12 or below (predominantly current school students), who rated the importance slightly below average. The group that placed a significantly above-average value on access to computers and the internet was the unemployed, 64% of whom rated these services as 'very important' to them.

Figure E6. The importance of library access to computers and the internet



However, as has been found in other research conducted in relation to public libraries (e.g. *Libraries building communities*), many people place a higher value on public libraries as a community service than they do as a service for themselves. When asked how important it was that public libraries offer computer and internet services to others in the community, 68% said it was 'very important', with a further 22% rating these services as 'important'.

As with the personal importance ratings, the responses were fairly consistent across demographic groups, with again two significant exceptions. The value placed on community access to computer and internet services at public libraries is positively correlated with an individual's:

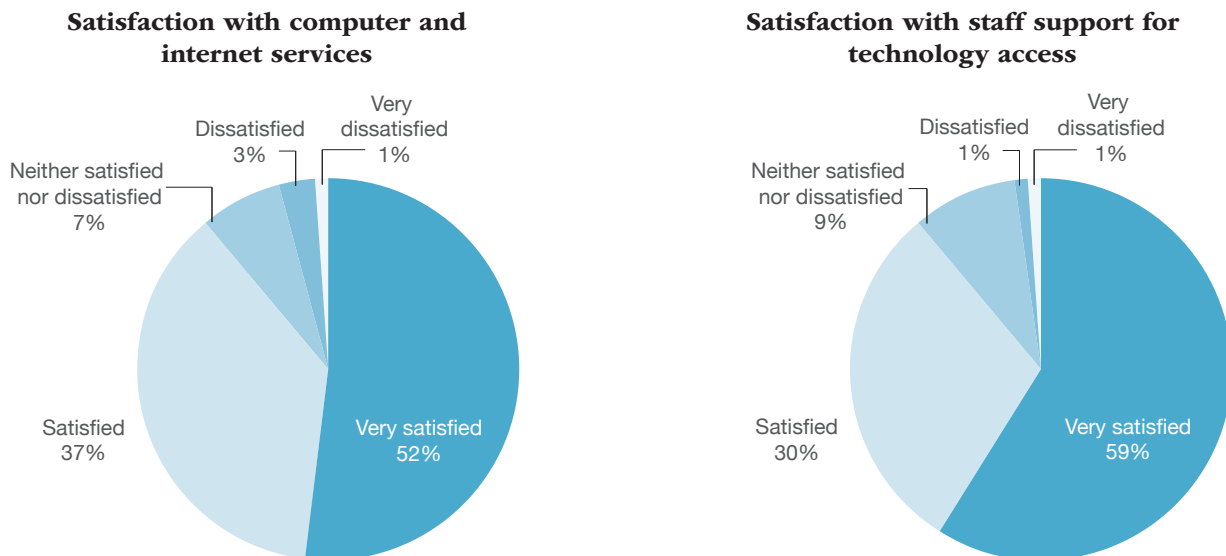
- highest level of education – that is, the higher the level of education, the more likely that the respondent rates library provision of technology access to others in the community as 'very important'
- income – that is, the higher the level of personal income, the more likely that the respondent rates library provision of technology access to others in the community as 'very important'.

These two groups are also more likely than average to have home or work access to computer and internet services. So access at the library is useful and convenient for them, but not as critical as they perceive it to be for others in the community.

Overall, library users are highly satisfied with the computer and internet services they access at their library. Fifty-two per cent of survey respondents said they were 'very satisfied' with the computer and internet services, with a further 37% 'satisfied' with the service. Only 4% of users said they were not satisfied with these services.

Library users are equally positive about the support they receive from library staff when accessing a computer and/or the internet at the library. Eighty-nine per cent said that they were either 'very satisfied' (59%) or 'satisfied' (30%), compared with only 2% who were not satisfied with the support from library staff.

Figure E7. User satisfaction with library access to computers and the internet



Why do people come to the library to use the computer and internet?

The key question in this study is not who uses the computer and internet services at Victorian public libraries, nor what they do there, nor what benefit they get from this activity – even though the answers to all of these questions are important to understanding the current profile of technology access and use. The key question is ‘Why do people come to the library to use the computer and internet?’ What is it about libraries,

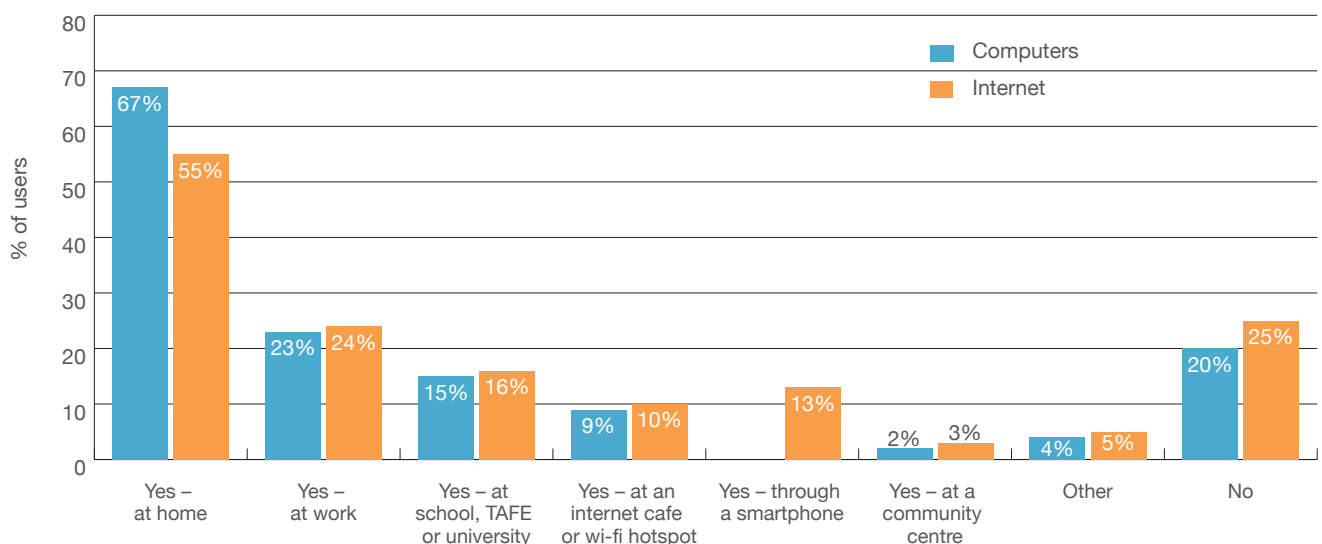
and the computer and internet services they offer, that attracts people from all walks of life to book a library PC or log in to the wireless internet service?

The first point to note is that most people who use libraries’ computer and internet services do have alternatives. It is not that they do not have access to the computers or the internet anywhere else.

Overall, one in five survey respondents (20%) said they did not have alternative access to computers

other than at the library, and one in four (25%) did not have alternative access to the internet. Two-thirds of survey respondents (67%) said they had computer access at home (compared with 82% population-wide from the latest 2010–11 ABS data), and 55% said they had internet access at home (compared with 79% population-wide). So these library users are significantly more likely than most people in the community to not have ready access to a computer and the internet.

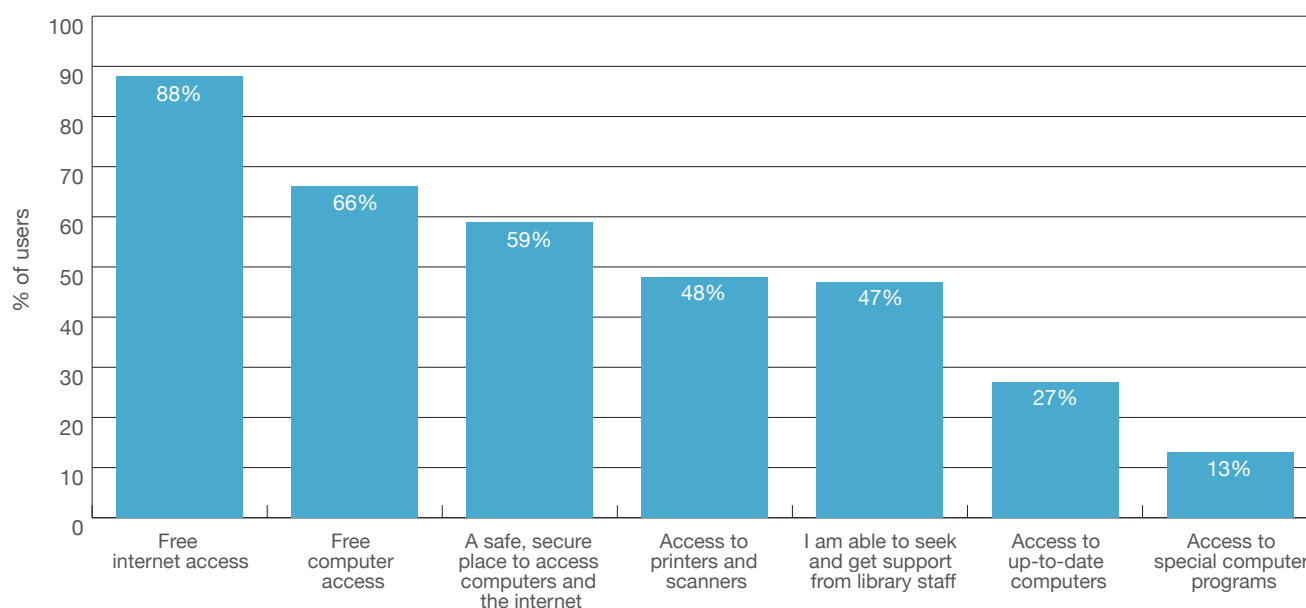
Figure E8. Personal access to computers and the internet



But the real answer to the question ‘Why do people come to the library to access computer and internet services?’ comes in five parts – five sometimes interrelated parts:

1. because it’s free or cheap internet access
2. because the quality of internet connection, computers and peripherals is better than the alternatives
3. because the library is a safe, convenient and comfortable place to use the internet
4. because library staff (or even other library users) can help out if help is needed
5. because the library can aggregate demand to make access to specialist information affordable.

Figure E9. Why people use the computers and internet at the library



Free or cheap internet access

The main reason why people access computer and internet services at their public library is, according to 88% of survey respondents, because it is free. And 66% of respondents said that free access to computers was also a special advantage of using computers *at the library*. Across all demographic categories – even people in the middle to high income brackets – free internet and computer access at the library was the major drawcard. However, it is the survey comments of library users from the lower income brackets that most strongly puts the case for public provision of free or cheap internet access.

Aggregate economic measures of a nation's prosperity (e.g. high standards of living, economic growth, 5% unemployment) do not recognise that there is a portion of the population who have low levels of discretionary income once the rent, mortgage, and supermarket, energy and petrol bills have been paid. Despite the fact that internet access is on the way to being an essential (not optional) part of life in contemporary society, there are people for whom the monthly cost of internet access, the cost of

purchasing a computer or mobile device, and the cost of buying and maintaining a printer could only be met by cutting back on other essential items in the individual or family budget.

'If I had to pay I would not be able to afford it. I don't have the internet at home as it is too costly. I don't even have a landline phone connection at home.'

'Landline and telephone bills have skyrocketed so that pensioners no longer can afford the luxury of a home telephone.'

'I work in childcare, I'm broke! No internet or phone bills make a big difference in my budget!'

'Being unemployed I am unable to access the internet at home, as I do not have a working phone line. This is my ONLY means of accessing the internet.'

'Art is rewarding – not financially though. I frequently find myself

broke and with a job that needs internet access in order to be completed.'

'I am a writer on a low part-time sales income and a community activist. It's a cheap and reliable computer, internet, networking and printing and photocopying service in a pleasant community environment.'

'I use the library's printer. It saves me the expense of buying inks. Ink is massively more expensive than buying a new printer so I print what I want to at the library.'

The unemployed, people in low-paying employment, pensioners and some tertiary students typically commented on the difference free internet and computer access made to their lives, because without it they would not be able to afford to be connected – and would miss out on the benefits that brings.

Reliable internet connections, computers and peripherals

Just because someone can afford an internet connection at home is not a guarantee that that connection

will not drop out frequently or be enough to cover peak usage times (e.g. software upgrades, exam study times). In different parts of Victoria (e.g. rural and remote areas; new estates in outer urban areas, such as Point Cook) and for some people on low incomes, a reliable internet connection is not possible.

‘Access to high-speed internet for online study purposes instead of using slow connections from our farm.’

‘My internet access is slow and drops out frequently. I find the library computer much better in this regard. I live 20 km from the closest town and being able to have access at a convenient time is a bit of a problem.’

‘I have not got an internet connection at my home, not because I can’t afford it but because it NOT AVAILABLE in my area. My friends in Europe enjoying the latest and fastest internet facilities ask me which “village” I live in and I answer them shamelessly that my “village” name is Australia where the internet is not available in all areas. I live in a “newly built” area and (have been) living there for the last three years now, but Government could not provide the internet and Telstra can’t put the line in yet. Maybe my grandchildren will be able to use the internet at home if I kept on waiting for it like this.’

‘I have a very small internet plan at home so I use the library’s internet when it is convenient to ensure I don’t go over my plan. I live two hours each way from my university so it is much more practical to use the local library for the internet. Additionally, when

my computer at home blew up and was unusable for four weeks, the internet and computers at the library were a necessity.’

‘Library computers and printers are reliable. For some time my home printer hasn’t worked and I don’t intend getting it fixed until I can afford to. Very grateful to have access to a library computer.’

Despite feedback from some library users that the speed of their library’s internet connection could be faster and that the library computers were not up to date with the latest software (all of which was true), for some people the computer and internet access that the library can provide is much better than they can actually get where they live or that they can afford.

A safe, convenient, comfortable place

The public library is well known to be a safe place for information, reading and learning in the community and that is welcoming to all (e.g. the *Libraries building communities* research). These traits hold true for users of computer and internet services in public libraries, with the added benefits of convenience and (despite what some may say) access to spaces that are quiet and conducive to focusing on study and work. The survey feedback suggests that in most libraries you can probably find someone with a wi-fi-connected laptop hidden in a quiet spot at the back taking advantage of the library as ‘a place to do the things [they] need and want to do’.

Among the 59% of survey respondents who commented on the value of the library as a safe, convenient and comfortable place to access the internet and computers were:

- tertiary students
- employed people undertaking further study and people acquiring skills to re-enter the workforce
- people running a small business or micro-business
- people working from home (or at least not working in their usual place of employment)
- people on the move.

These people almost universally have access to computers and the internet somewhere other than at the library (e.g. at home, work, TAFE or university), but they choose to come to the library because it is an environment that allows them to do what they are doing more quickly, more conveniently and/or in a more relaxed way. The reported benefits include better-quality time with family and friends, more hours in the day (by removing or reducing commuting time to work or study), and a better quality of work or study output.

‘It’s been a great place to study for a few hours at a time, away from the distractions of home life. It’s easier to focus on distance ed. uni assignments and essays when at the library.’

‘A very quiet and safe environment to study. No distractions, which therefore results in a higher chance to receive high marks at university.’

‘I have been able to do homework and complete many assignments, as well as start researching my next step in moving to a new city as I’m pursuing my dream goals. I’ve been able to work in an environment that is peaceful and relaxing so I can maintain a great work area.’

'I find I study better away from home (and distractions like washing, dishes, etc.) and the library provides a safe place to study with a fairly quiet and almost comfortable space to work.'

'I had a space away from children to study my final year of a grad. dip.'

'I am working as an interpreter. I move from one suburb to another. I can use the computer at any public libraries whenever I have spare time between appointments during the working day.'

'Whilst looking for a job it has given me a constant place to report to, keep an appointment, keep in touch and interact with others. It can be depressing to be looking for a job but conversation and interaction with library staff keep my self-esteem positive.'

For people who are less confident in their computer skills (in particular those aged 55 years and above, retirees, and people with highest educational qualifications at certificate or diploma level), having someone close by who will endeavour to help out when assistance is needed is a source of great comfort. Additionally, some libraries offer computer classes.

because I am a person with disabilities.'

'I kept up to date with modern technology (at the library). Had Library Instructor classes and Senior Savvy Computer personal class.'

'Obviously because it is free! Also, having a librarian available for assistance when required.'

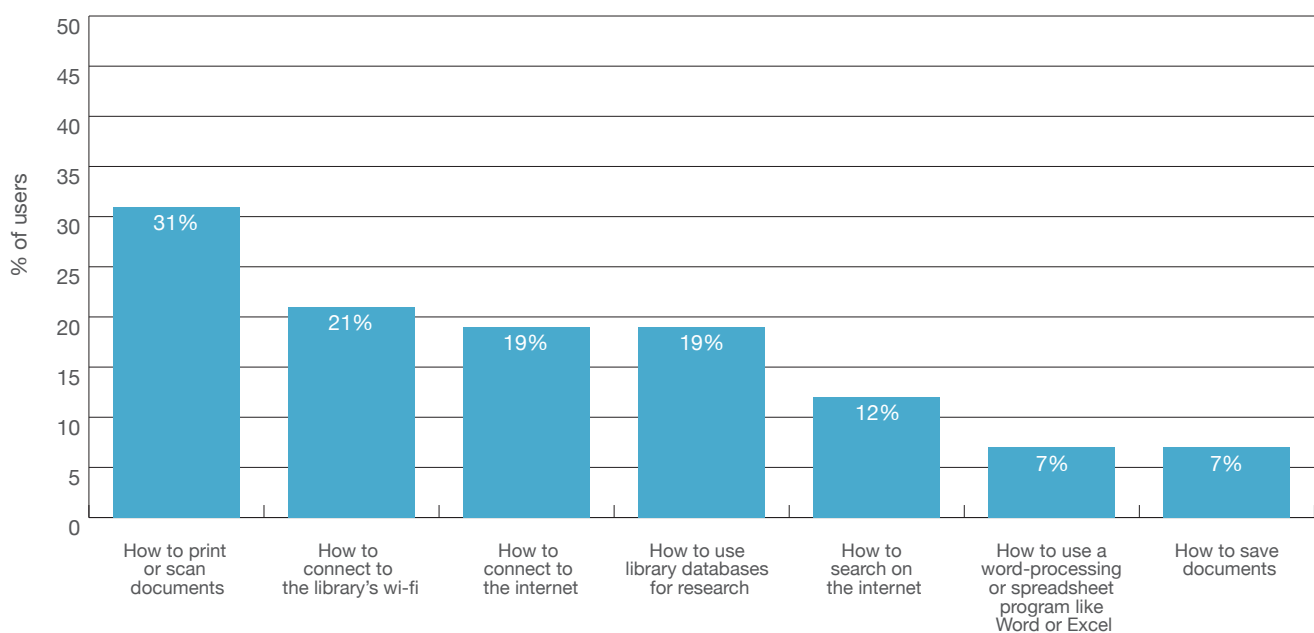
Despite the fact that 55% of survey respondents rated their skills and confidence in using computer and the internet as high, with only 7% saying they had a low level of skills, when asked if they had in the past 12 months received assistance from library staff for any of a range of technology-related activities, 67% of respondents said they had. The nature of this support varied, although there was a greater emphasis on support for specific functional technology uses (e.g. how to print or connect to the wi-fi network) than for general information-related activities.

Library staff for support

Forty-seven per cent of survey respondents said that one of the benefits of coming to the library to access the internet and computers was that they could seek and get support from library staff – not to mention the fact that the friendly person on the next computer might also be able to help out.

'I have gained more skills in learning how to use the computer as I have forgotten a lot of what I learned many years ago. The staff have been teaching me how to use a flash drive, how to save information and a lot of other information. It is wonderful for me to gain information

Figure E10. Support from library staff in the past 12 months



Low-cost access to specialist information

The final major reason why people choose to come to the library to access computers and the internet is that libraries are able to provide low- or no-cost access to specialist information and databases. Genealogical databases are the obvious example, and public libraries are a source of great enjoyment and fulfilment for the 12% of survey respondents who said (with great satisfaction) that they had used library services to explore their family genealogy.

‘There are genealogy websites that I can access freely via the library which I would have to pay for if I used my home computer.’

‘Being able to use free genealogy programs has saved me costs.’

‘By accessing Ancestry.com (library edition) at no cost to me.’

But it is not just genealogy databases to which libraries offer affordable access. By identifying and aggregating community demand, public libraries are able to significantly reduce the unit cost for people to access a range of specialist information databases and resources (which are useful to library users for homework, study and personal research purposes), and can package up and direct people to information resources that they know to be of interest to targeted groups in the community.

How could libraries improve their technology access services?

Four per cent of survey respondents said they had a disability that impacted on their use of computers and the internet at the library. Around half of these said they had no issues with this service and the

library service and staff met and were accommodating of their needs. Where there were issues mentioned, these related to visual conditions (e.g. lighting, screen size), seating (e.g. better spinal support for people with serious back conditions, more room to get into and out of the seats) and privacy. People with learning disabilities also noted a desire to have longer periods of time on the computers.

Across all survey respondents, 22% said that to some degree their computer and internet needs were not met at the library. However, not all of the concerns expressed represent improvement opportunities for public libraries, as they included expectations of personal access, service and support that might exceed what a public library is reasonably expected to provide for its community.

‘A lockable desk of some sort, as the only problem I have had is when you want to leave everything that you have set up to study in order to have a snack/drink break, stretch your legs or go to the toilet. You have to take your laptop/bag/books/etc. with you as you can’t just leave everything lying around on your desk. If there was a retractable, lockable cover for the desk so you could leave it for 10 minutes and then come back and keep studying that would be great. Keys could be borrowed from the circulation desk.’

‘A user-pays for travellers, children and young teens to have separate computers in other location at library (noise).’

‘A tea lady going around if you want tea, coffee biscuits, scones. :)’

Areas that libraries might act on, from among the thousands of comments received, included:

- longer time allowances on the computers
- more computers (and more power points for wi-fi users to charge laptops)
- faster internet speeds
- wireless access (where it is not currently available)
- faster computers and more up-to-date versions of common software (e.g. Office, Adobe)
- removing blocks for downloads from some sites
- better capacity for capturing and accessing data on memory sticks and portable devices
- increased privacy at the computers (and in some libraries access to quieter working spaces ‘away from NOISY kids’ playing on the computers)
- more printers and scanners
- more support from library staff, and more training courses
- removal of charges for computer and internet use and printing.

‘24 hours a day, 7 days a week and faster wi-fi connection speed will be great. No access during public holidays is an issue. And keep an eye on the latest technology for upgrade if possible.’

‘A 10–15 minute express computer for just checking emails. More computers and more desks for people to use wireless.’

‘Better graphics card, processor, RAM, audio cards.’

‘Allow us to access email and personal blogs. It is reasonable to block material that may lead to viruses on the system, but as adults (or supervised children) we should have the right to access what we wish while using the service.’

‘A buzzer at the computer to alert staff to a problem. Designated staff to help with computer problems.’

The differences that exist in service provision between library services was also evident as some people’s suggestions for improved service levels were things that are already provided at other libraries (e.g. wi-fi

access, scan to USB, wi-fi-enabled printers, release of ‘booked time’ that is not taken up) (see also Section C). It was noticeable from the survey comments that a number of people have been ‘library shopping’ (both within and between library services) to find the branch that offers the best range of services, equipment, access and work spaces to meet their individual needs.

E2. Children’s survey

The survey of children who use Victorian public libraries’ computer and internet services was open to those aged 8–14 years. This analysis is based on 623 completed responses.

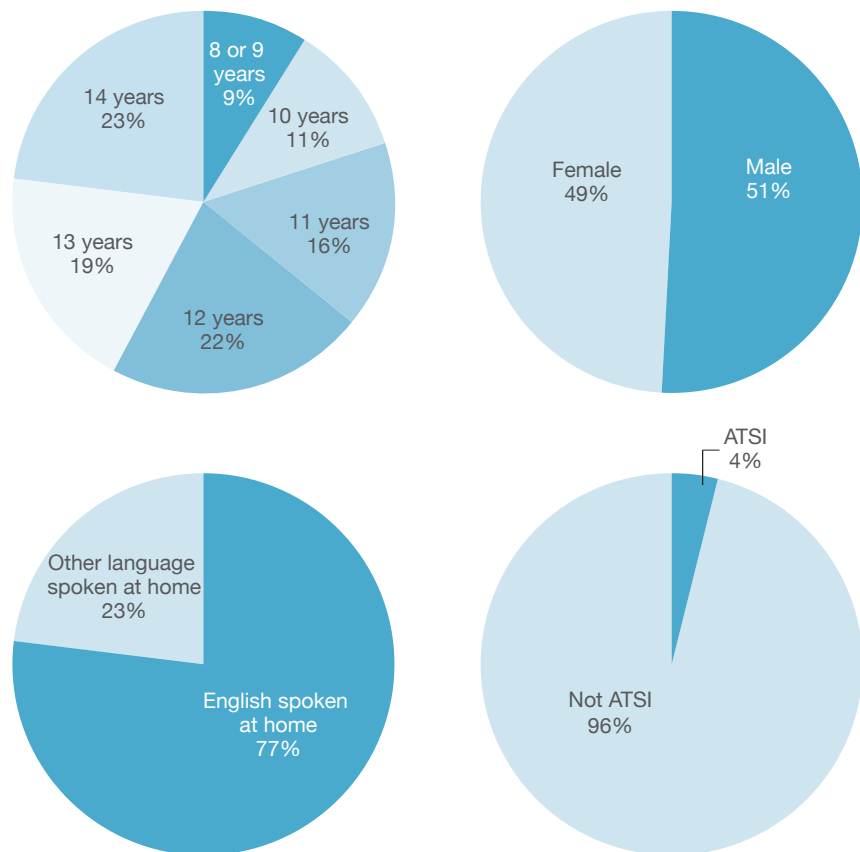
Who uses the computer and internet services offered by Victorian public libraries?

Demographic characteristics

The children who responded to the survey were evenly split by gender, with a fairly even spread of age from eight or nine to 14 years, although there were slightly more older respondents than younger ones. Four per cent of respondents said they were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, and 23% said they spoke a language other than English at home (3% Vietnamese, 2% Cantonese, 2% Chinese).

Fifty-eight per cent of children said they were ‘really good’ at using computers and the internet. This proportion was slightly lower for younger children and higher for older children, and was a significantly lower 45% among children for whom English was not the main language spoken at home.

Figure E11. Child users of library computer and internet services



Library customers

Forty of the 44 Victorian municipal library services were represented in the survey responses, although 38% of the total number of responses

came from just three library services – Brimbank, Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley – and another 36% were from the next seven highest ranked libraries.

Table E3. Child survey respondents by library service

Library service	No.	Library service	No.	Library service	No.
Brimbank	80	Stonnington	7	Frankston	4
Maribyrnong	80	Casey-Cardinia	6	Mildura	4
Moonee Valley	78	Goulburn Valley	6	Campaspe	3
Geelong	48	Greater Dandenong	6	Swan Hill	3
Boroondara	39	Hobsons Bay	6	Gannawarra	2
Monash	31	Moreland	6	Melbourne	2
Yarra Plenty	29	Mornington Peninsula	6	Melton	2
Darebin	28	Upper Murray	6	Yarra	2
Wyndham	27	Wellington	6	Goldfields	1
Wimmera	23	West Gippsland	6	Hume	1
Whitehorse Manningham	14	East Gippsland	5	Kingston	1
Central Highlands	13	Mitchell	5	Latrobe	1
High Country	11	Corangamite	4	State Library of Victoria	1
Bayside	9	Eastern	4	Not specified	7

What are libraries' computer and internet services used to do?

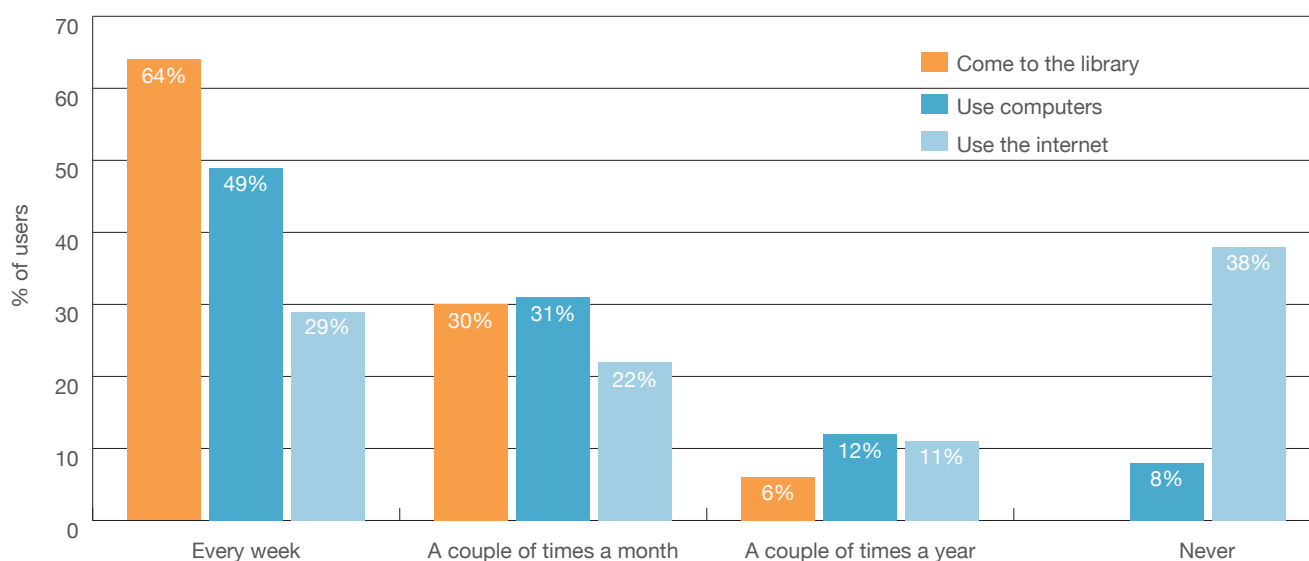
Sixty-four per cent of the children said they came to the library every week (30% a couple of times a month and 6% a couple of times a year), and 79% usually came to the library with someone else – either a parent (39% of children), other family member (37%) and/or friends

(26%). The older children were more likely than average to come to the library alone (39% of 14-year-olds came to the library alone, compared with none of the eight- and nine-year-olds) or with friends; younger children were more likely to come to the library with a parent.

Just under half of the children who use the libraries' computers (49%) use the computers every week, but

only 29% use the libraries' internet every week. Unlike adults, children are more likely to just be using a computer at the library and not also using the internet, although 62% of children do use the internet at some stage. When at the library 84% of children also do other activities, mainly borrowing books or other library material.

Figure E12. Children's frequency of use of computers and the internet



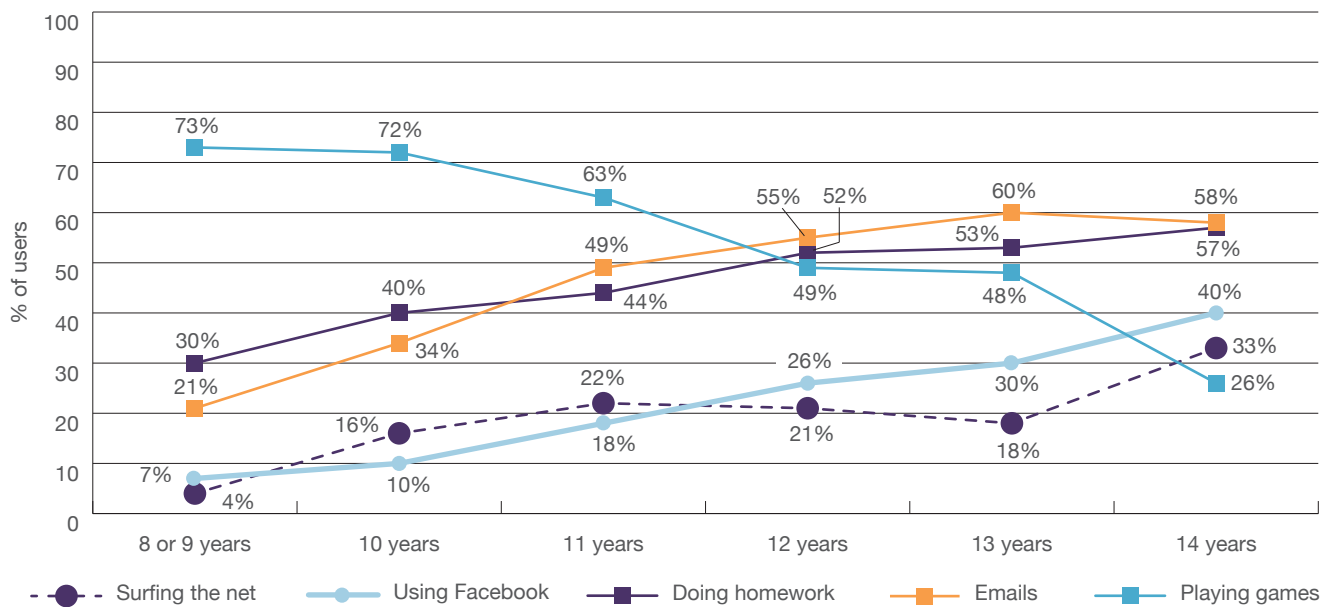
When they are on the computers and internet at the library, children are usually doing one of five things: playing games (51% of survey respondents), checking or sending emails (50%), doing homework (49%), using Facebook (25%) or just surfing the internet (21%). Much smaller proportions of children do other activities: these are clearly the big five. What is interesting about each of these activities is that the level of use is related to the child's age.

Younger children play games at the library. More than 70% of the under-11 children on the library computers are playing games. As they get older, they are less likely to be playing computer games, with only 26% of the 14-year-olds playing games.

So what do the older children do? More than anything else they are doing homework at the library: from 30% of the eight- or nine-year-olds, the proportion doing homework increases steadily to 57% of the

14-year-olds (and according to the main user survey up to 78% for the 15–24-year-olds). Around 60% of 13- and 14-year-olds are also checking and sending emails, an activity that is much less common among younger library users. Forty per cent of 14-year-olds and 30% of 13-year-olds are accessing Facebook through their library's internet (as, according to the survey, are children who are too young to have a Facebook account). And finally, the older children are more likely than the younger ones to be surfing the net.

Figure E13. Children's top five computer and internet activities at the library



Why do people come to the library to use the computer and internet?

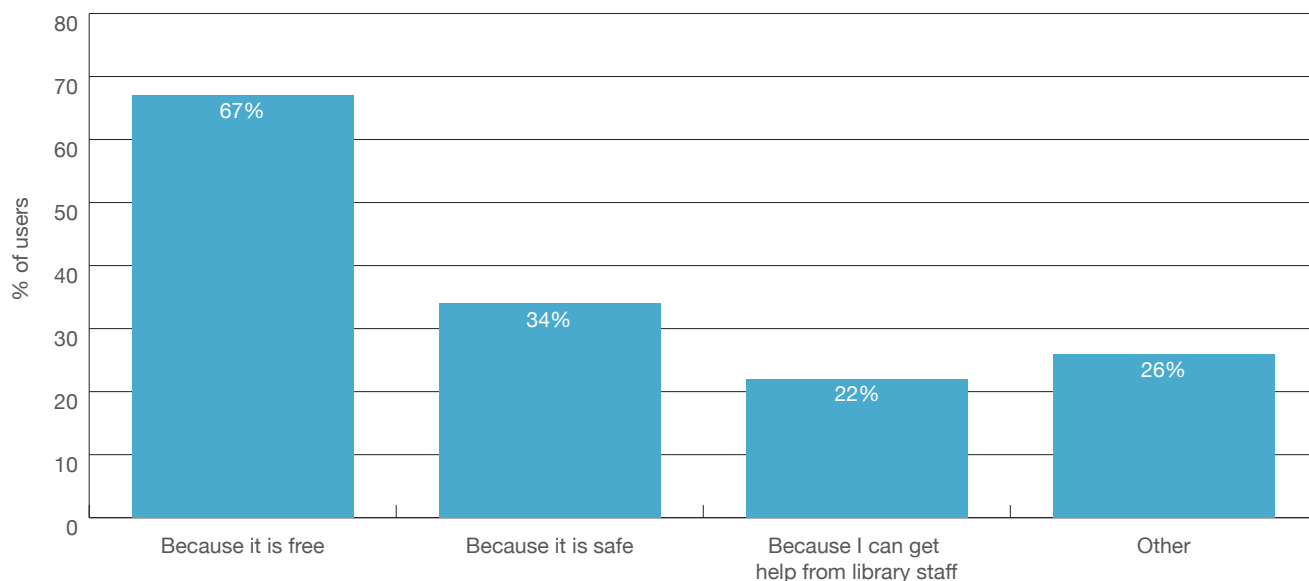
Compared with the main survey, the children's survey had a shorter list of options as to why they used the computer and internet services at the library, but the ranking of reasons proved to be the same. The main reason was because it is free.

Two-thirds of the children (67%) said that free computer and internet access was why they used these services at the library, with one-third (34%) saying they came to the library because it was safe.

With multiple response options allowed, a further 22% valued the help they could get from library staff. When asked about the help

they sought from library staff, 28% of children said they had asked for help in printing from the computers, 15% had sought help in connecting to the internet, and 8% had asked for help in using the computer.

Figure E14. Why children use the computers and internet at the library

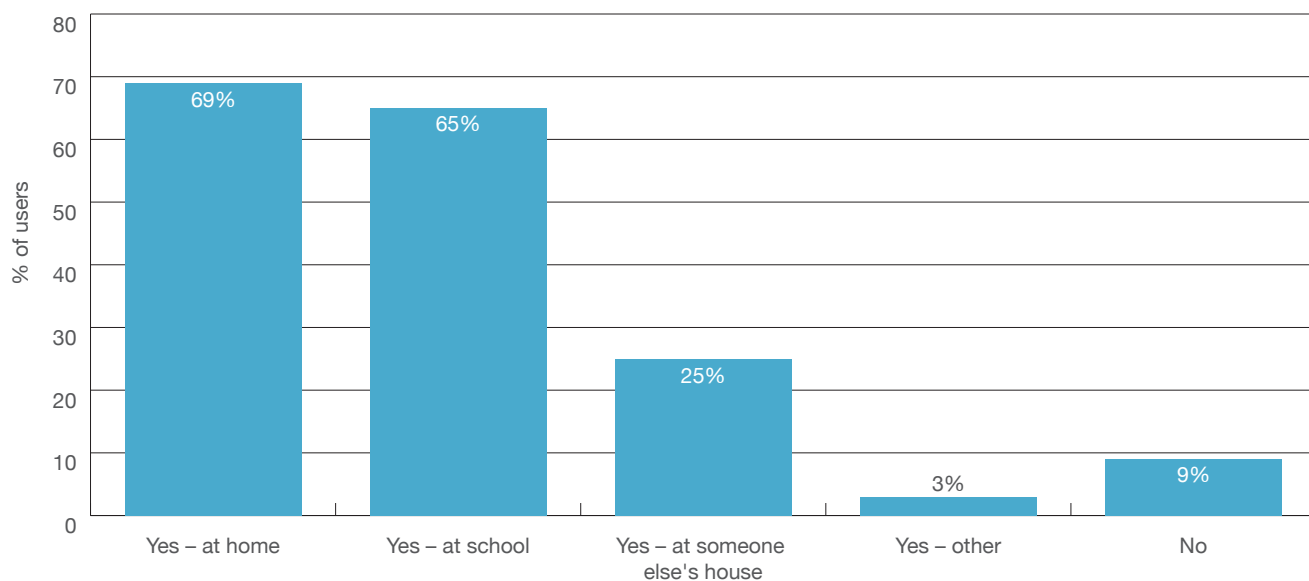


Most of the children who completed the survey had access to computers and the internet at other locations, notably at home (69%) and at school (65%). These results were consistent across different demographic groups, with no significant variations. However, when compared with

ABS data that shows that of all Australian households with children aged under 15 years, 95% have access to a computer at home and 93% have home internet access, it is clear that the children who use these library services are much more disadvantaged than their

peers in terms of internet access and connectivity. It is therefore encouraging that 80% of the children from the survey said it was easy to get onto a computer at the library, with only 3% saying it was 'not very easy' or 'difficult'.

Figure E15. Children's access to computers and the internet



Given that library provision of computers and the internet appears to be filling a gap for relatively disadvantaged children, it is interesting to note the differences that exist in the survey responses of those children aged 8–14 years who do have home internet access and those who do not.

Demographically – in terms of age, gender, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) and language status – there are no significant differences between the two groups. There are differences in the frequency with which they come to the library, who they come with, and what they do when they get on the computers. Compared to children who have home internet access, children who do not have access to the internet at home are:

- more likely to come to the library on a regular basis
- less likely to come to the library with a parent or carer
- more likely to use the library’s computers and internet on a regular basis
- more likely to just use the computers when they are at the library (because when they have a chance to use a computer, they are going to take it)
- more likely to do as much as they can when they are on the computers (e.g. play games, do homework, use Facebook)
- more likely to ask for help from library staff.

With technology access critical to young people for education, social and entertainment purposes, these children are maximising their use of the libraries’ computer and internet services because without them, they are being left behind.

How could libraries improve their technology access services?

According to the children, the most common improvement library services could make to their computer and internet services is to increase internet speeds. This was mentioned by 16% of children. Other improvement opportunities included having more computers (9%), having longer time on the computers (7%), having more up-to-date programs (3%) and computers (3%), and allowing downloads and unblocking websites.

Table E4. Comparison of children’s use of the library by home internet access

Survey question	Home internet access	
	Yes	No
Come to the library every week	60%	76%
Come to the library with a parent or carer	42%	31%
Use the library computers every week	42%	70%
Use the library’s internet from my own computer	27%	37%
Do other things when I come to the library	89%	73%
Use the library computers to play games	48%	56%
Use the library computers to do homework	45%	59%
Use the library computers to access Facebook	22%	34%
Come to the library because it is free	70%	60%
Come to the library because it is safe	38%	24%
Come to the library because I can get help from library staff	19%	29%

F. Comparative Data Tables

The following tables compare the results from each of the surveys across different response groups:

- main user survey – by library service (for all library services that received at least 30 responses, plus Gannawarra Library, which had 25 responses)
- main user survey – by respondents' demographic category
- children's survey – by respondents' demographic category (there were only sufficient responses to publish results for six to nine library services).

The results in each table are compared with the statewide Victorian results documented in sections D1 and D2 of this technical report. Where the response is significantly different from the Victorian figure the data is shaded yellow (higher than average) or purple (lower than average). Responses are presented as the percentage of responses to the question from each subgroup of respondents. Where the question was non-numerical, the results are not shown.

F1. Main user survey results by library service

		Library service																													
Survey question (responses shown are %)		Victoria	Bayside	Boroondara	Brimbank	Casey-Cardinia	Central Highlands	Corangamite	Darebin	East Gippsland	Eastern*	Gannawarra	Geelong*	Goulburn Valley *	Greater Dandenong	High Country*	Hobsons Bay	Maribyrnong	Monash	Moonee Valley	Moreland	Mornington Peninsula	Stonnington	Upper Murray*	Wellington	West Gippsland	Whitehorse Manningham*	Wimmera*	Wyndham	Yarra	Yarra Plenty
Number of survey responses		3088	65	200	97	63	129	52	173	45	144	25	200	40	38	59	48	200	105	167	124	31	47	73	88	57	65	63	145	30	240
3	Are you completing this survey at a public library?																														
	• Yes	75	63	61	89	57	91	94	49	87	71	96	88	83	89	54	63	94	74	80	99	68	89	95	98	65	74	92	89	60	76
6	In the past 12 months, how often have you visited a public library?																														
	• More than once a week	43	48	31	47	40	33	52	35	32	55	44	51	45	50	46	50	49	42	46	44	42	66	27	49	51	38	56	35	50	32
	• Weekly	27	25	29	23	34	25	27	25	34	25	24	24	38	29	31	17	23	24	30	27	23	26	23	28	26	33	30	23	27	31
	• Fortnightly	15	12	22	15	13	18	8	23	16	11	24	12	13	16	12	15	13	18	13	15	16	4	19	10	14	8	5	13	3	23
	• Every 1–2 months	11	14	15	8	10	16	8	13	14	7	4	10	3	3	8	17	10	12	7	8	10	2	22	9	7	14	8	18	17	11
	• 3–4 times a year or less	4	2	4	6	3	9	6	4	5	1	4	3	3	3	3	2	5	4	3	6	10	2	8	3	2	8	2	11	3	3
7a	In the past 12 months, how often have you visited a public library to use a library computer to access the internet?																														
	• More than once a week	32	36	17	39	38	27	38	22	23	43	32	39	37	42	22	40	39	33	33	39	41	43	24	44	36	33	50	26	37	19
	• Weekly	19	13	15	22	18	25	24	15	27	24	24	20	17	26	22	19	20	16	20	24	7	19	19	22	16	12	20	16	17	15
	• Fortnightly	11	5	9	13	8	17	10	14	14	8	24	11	17	11	12	11	11	12	11	9	3	6	11	11	13	17	13	15	7	7
	• Every 1–2 months	15	19	13	10	11	14	8	27	23	7	4	12	14	11	15	15	11	17	17	13	17	13	19	13	24	10	13	16	10	20
	• 3–4 times a year or less	14	16	21	11	11	11	18	13	9	12	12	13	9	2	24	6	10	15	14	12	21	13	11	7	7	17	2	19	23	23
	• Never	9	13	26	4	13	6	2	10	5	7	4	6	6	8	5	8	10	9	5	3	10	6	16	3	4	12	4	8	7	17
7b	In the past 12 months, how often have you visited a public library to use a library computer without accessing the internet?																														
	• More than once a week	12	11	9	18	11	11	7	6	3	14	7	19	11	19	10	16	13	13	11	12	11	16	13	15	16	13	13	12	33	9
	• Weekly	14	19	18	10	5	16	7	9	9	21	13	14	9	29	12	11	8	12	17	16	7	14	13	23	6	13	15	13	8	13
	• Fortnightly	11	9	11	15	14	11	15	16	12	9	13	12	9	0	10	2	11	14	12	16	7	9	6	4	14	15	2	9	8	11
	• Every 1–2 months	14	9	14	14	14	14	12	14	18	14	7	16	23	6	16	20	11	15	13	11	11	9	13	14	16	15	15	18	13	17
	• 3–4 times a year or less	14	15	10	14	16	15	12	19	3	8	20	12	20	6	16	12	13	16	12	13	22	9	15	11	12	15	6	15	13	21
	• Never	35	36	39	29	40	33	46	36	55	35	40	27	29	39	37	38	45	32	37	32	41	42	40	32	35	30	49	33	25	30
7c	In the past 12 months, how often have you visited a public library to use your own device to access the library's wi-fi internet?																														
	• More than once a week	15	20	17	17	14	4	13	15	6	22	0	18	22	9	15	9	22	17	18	8	18	20	12	18	18	7	20	16	19	10
	• Weekly	11	11	15	10	10	13	11	11	17	13	0	8	30	9	23	11	14	11	11	8	4	20	15	9	16	9	6	9	12	5
	• Fortnightly	8	11	16	7	10	11	7	10	11	3	7	6	19	13	4	5	9	8	7	2	7	0	3	4	4	4	6	8	4	12
	• Every 1–2 months	12	9	12	21	15	12	4	13	11	15	0	12	5	16	12	11	11	11	7	8	4	8	14	4	12	14	7	8	19	17
	• 3–4 times a year or less	11	9	12	10	10	14	13	9	0	9	7	10	5	3	8	8	10	16	7	14	21	10	14	7	12	9	6	10	15	17
	• Never	43	39	28	35	41	47	51	42	54	37	86	46	19	50	38	55	35	38	51	59	46	43	42	57	38	58	56	48	31	40
8	How do you connect to the internet at the library?																														
	• I do not use the internet	5	3	7	10	2	3	2	5	4	1	4	5	3	8	5	8	3	4	1	4	0	6	1	2	2	3	10	5	0	11
	• Using the library's computers	78	77	51	84	75	88	94	72	91	78	96	82	70	76	75	83	72	79	84	93	74	77	78	85	77	82	76	79	83	72
	• Using my own computer	35	46	49	33	37	32	38	44	20	30	16	29	65	26	44	23	45	31	31	16	23	38	41	23	33	25	32	34	43	34
	• Using a mobile device	16	18	25	20	25	10	13	10	20	9	0	17	18	13	7	27	14	26	13	5	23	21	14	6	21	14	16	11	27	16
9	If you use the library for other purposes what are these?																														
	• Borrowing books, CDs, DVDs and other items	86	89	85	87	90	81	87	90	93	88	84	89	85	82	88	94	76	92	87	81	100	83	75	82	93	94	78	77	83	96
	• A place to read, study or access library services	56	65	65	54	52	49	54	60	53	63	32	59	65	58	49	56	65	63	61	51	52	57	47	47	54	55	37	57	60	51
	• Attending programs and events	26	15	16	27	22	21	29	21	27	38	28	29	33	24	27	60	16	22	33	29	29	28	22	26	35	14	11	23	33	35
	• Other	10	12	7	5	3	12	13	9	4	11	12	8	18	8	17	15	10	7	8	10	16	2	11	10	9	6	13	10	17	11

* Regional library corporation

Library service

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Victoria	Bayside	Boroondara	Brimbank	Casey-Cardinia	Central Highlands	Corangamite	Darebin	East Gippsland	Eastern*	Gamawarra	Geelong*	Goulburn Valley *	Greater Dandenong	High Country*	Hobsons Bay	Maribyrnong	Monash	Moonee Valley	Moreland	Mornington Peninsula	Stonnington	Upper Murray*	Wellington	West Gippsland	Whitehorse Manningham*	Wimmera*	Wyndham	Yarra	Yarra Plenty	
10 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for education and learning (e.g. getting homework help, taking a class, applying for courses)?																															
• Yes – frequently	25	29	21	22	33	22	21	28	9	35	24	29	33	45	17	19	32	20	27	31	16	34	19	27	26	14	22	28	27	16	
• Yes – occasionally	32	28	30	41	21	26	40	31	40	34	36	33	20	24	29	35	41	31	33	24	32	34	36	35	37	28	24	33	27	25	
• No	43	43	49	37	46	52	38	41	51	32	40	39	48	32	54	46	28	49	40	45	52	32	45	38	37	58	54	39	47	58	
11 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																															
• Learn about admissions/ financial aid for school, college, TAFE or uni	25	30	20	21	26	25	28	19	32	24	20	29	38	23	15	15	34	17	24	24	20	22	33	35	19	22	28	25	25	20	
• Research options for schools, colleges, TAFE or uni	30	35	17	36	35	25	28	29	23	24	47	41	43	31	26	15	37	24	28	27	27	25	35	29	25	44	24	38	50	20	
• Apply for college or uni	9	5	6	11	12	7	9	10	9	7	0	12	5	12	4	0	15	2	8	10	0	13	10	11	6	11	17	9	13	7	
• Do homework for a class you are taking	42	51	49	52	56	34	31	46	18	45	27	32	62	46	48	38	50	37	38	34	47	31	48	42	25	44	38	48	38	44	
• Do an online assignment or take an online course	25	32	21	20	38	23	28	33	14	24	33	19	38	27	15	12	29	17	29	18	40	25	38	22	33	22	21	22	13	23	
• Undertake research for further knowledge	74	81	79	70	68	72	69	76	86	81	60	73	67	81	78	81	71	72	72	79	67	81	70	69	78	63	79	67	63	77	
• Other	6	11	7	3	12	10	13	3	5	6	0	11	0	8	4	8	4	13	5	3	13	3		4	6	7	0	2	13	8	
12 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for employment or career purposes (e.g. looking for a job, writing a résumé, getting job training)?																															
• Yes – frequently	17	15	14	24	16	15	17	22	13	17	20	18	18	18	17	13	25	10	16	25	13	13	14	20	11	11	6	18	20	10	
• Yes – occasionally	27	29	20	27	19	25	19	33	13	25	40	28	28	37	24	29	37	25	27	36	20	32	32	27	25	22	21	33	33	18	
• No	56	55	67	49	65	60	63	45	73	58	40	55	55	45	59	58	39	65	57	39	67	55	54	52	65	67	73	49	47	72	
13 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																															
• Search for a job or career opportunity	70	69	67	73	86	69	74	71	75	68	67	78	79	52	71	75	68	62	66	71	60	67	79	67	75	43	71	84	56	64	
• Work on a résumé	50	55	54	59	59	53	42	58	58	47	53	59	63	57	50	35	49	46	49	45	50	33	52	45	25	43	29	51	50	51	
• Apply for a job or a career opportunity	52	59	48	63	64	53	37	60	60	55	53	58	58	43	46	40	50	54	52	52	40	48	58	48	35	38	29	59	69	46	
• Develop skills/undertake training related to your job	26	34	22	29	27	22	42	20	20	28	27	25	26	38	13	20	32	30	25	24	50	38	18	21	15	10	18	27	25	28	
• Research or find information related to your job or profession	60	69	66	57	64	51	68	58	58	58	47	57	74	48	63	65	67	65	65	59	60	57	52	50	70	71	71	46	44	66	
• Other	4	3	6	0	5	2	0	8	8	8	0	1	0	0	8	5	2	5	1	3	10	5	3	2	10	10	0	3	13	3	
14 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for health and wellbeing (e.g. seeking information about health or fitness)?																															
• Yes – frequently	12	16	8	12	10	12	19	10	14	15	12	12	10	18	10	8	14	14	10	15	13	15	11	11	16	9	10	13	10	9	
• Yes – occasionally	36	34	26	36	27	37	38	41	43	45	44	46	50	32	29	42	37	32	44	33	52	34	21	41	39	42	26	23	33	30	
• No	52	50	67	52	63	52	42	49	45	40	44	42	40	50	61	50	49	53	46	53	35	51	68	47	46	48	65	64	57	61	
15 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																															
• Learn about illness, disease or a medical condition	70	66	69	55	78	59	73	54	76	76	64	70	83	63	57	88	63	71	72	74	85	83	61	78	77	88	59	54	77	75	
• Find an online or face-to-face support group for a medical or health condition	13	22	5	4	13	11	10	7	4	7	21	11	13	16	9	21	15	16	11	14	5	4	61	24	10	3	27	19	31	14	
• Look up about prescription or over-the-counter drugs	24	19	25	9	17	26	43	9	40	27	43	25	38	26	13	25	19	27	22	21	25	39	39	26	16	15	45	19	54	26	
• Learn about diet and nutrition	52	72	58	40	43	54	47	51	28	47	43	56	46	47	57	46	52	61	48	53	55	65	52	46	48	52	41	58	62	61	

* Regional library corporation

Library service

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Victoria	Bayside	Boroondara	Brimbank	Casey-Cardinia	Central Highlands	Corangamite	Darebin	East Gippsland	Eastern*	Gannawarra	Geelong*	Goulburn Valley *	Greater Dandenong	High Country*	Hobsons Bay	Maribyrnong	Monash	Moonee Valley	Moreland	Mornington Peninsula	Stonnington	Upper Murray*	Wellington	West Gippsland	Whitehorse Manningham*	Wimmera*	Wyndham	Yarra	Yarra Plenty	
• Learn about exercise or fitness	46	53	48	49	39	46	47	54	24	34	36	54	38	37	35	42	49	43	43	53	45	52	52	41	48	45	50	44	38	51	
• Find information about a doctor or health-care provider	24	28	27	30	22	25	20	22	28	11	29	18	29	21	30	13	26	27	23	40	15	35	30	24	23	27	32	21	31	17	
• Find out about health insurance	16	19	15	17	26	11	13	13	12	11	14	15	29	11	17	13	16	18	12	19	10	35	22	13	19	27	9	12	15	12	
• Other	5	6	1	2	4	10	0	6	4	8	0	5	13	11	9	8	2	6	3	5	10	4	0	2	3	0	9	10	0	4	
16 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for social purposes (e.g. chatting/messaging, Facebook, communicating with friends or family)?																															
• Yes – frequently	30	34	17	35	32	22	29	31	24	43	32	34	46	29	31	38	37	33	31	35	35	36	29	35	39	20	33	16	43	15	
• Yes – occasionally	33	33	33	35	32	30	33	34	38	29	24	35	33	39	41	23	40	27	34	27	39	28	37	38	35	25	32	25	33	31	
• No	37	33	51	30	37	48	38	36	38	28	44	32	21	32	28	38	23	40	35	38	26	36	34	27	26	55	35	60	23	54	
17 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																															
• Email friends or family	87	95	86	85	85	91	91	92	86	91	93	88	87	81	79	90	88	89	83	93	78	93	73	89	88	79	93	79	96	88	
• Use Skype to stay in touch with family or friends	8	7	9	16	10	3	16	13	4	4	0	12	23	8	10	3	14	3	8	3	9	10	6	2	7	3	2	7	9	5	
• Access a social networking site	64	58	60	71	68	55	50	71	54	64	7	66	74	42	67	72	63	59	63	68	74	63	59	59	57	55	66	68	70	57	
• Maintain a personal blog or website	13	5	9	18	15	14	9	11	11	16	7	10	19	15	12	0	19	11	16	9	4	13	19	9	7	3	2	16	35	9	
• Other	4	9	3	4	3	3	13	4	4	5	0	4	3	4	2	3	2	2	4	4	13	3	4	2	0	3	0	4	9	9	
18 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for managing your finances (e.g. banking, buying or selling items, paying bills)?																															
• Yes – frequently	11	11	9	8	11	6	17	12	11	12	16	14	14	6	10	13	12	7	15	18	3	17	13	14	16	5	8	7	20	5	
• Yes – occasionally	24	31	18	26	23	26	8	29	20	24	8	20	41	29	29	25	35	16	24	22	35	26	32	23	18	23	16	18	20	19	
• No	65	58	73	65	66	68	75	59	68	64	76	65	46	66	61	63	53	77	60	60	61	57	55	64	66	72	76	75	60	76	
19 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																															
• Do online banking	72	85	62	64	81	65	100	77	71	59	50	72	85	42	83	67	65	88	78	83	58	80	72	63	84	72	60	69	92	68	
• Pay bills	51	46	47	36	76	50	69	57	64	53	17	43	50	25	48	50	44	54	59	55	42	55	53	47	53	33	20	46	75	54	
• Purchase something online	44	38	34	42	52	35	69	46	64	47	33	46	40	33	39	44	34	54	33	43	42	40	38	47	58	39	27	40	67	41	
• Attempt to sell something online	12	8	6	15	14	5	23	16	29	14	17	15	15	0	0	0	15	4	14	11	25	15	3	19	11	7	9	17	13		
• Look up information about loans	14	12	13	15	14	13	23	10	21	6	17	12	20	8	4	0	11	21	22	23	8	15	13	13	16	17	7	23	8	13	
• Learn about financial management	13	12	13	12	0	15	8	6	21	18	0	22	20	8	0	6	15	25	22	23	8	15	13	13	16	17	7	11	17	11	
• Look up or monitor investment information	16	23	23	18	19	10	15	7	14	25	33	26	20	8	13	22	12	21	19	6	8	20	9	9	5	17	7	11	17	20	
• Gather information about or compare financial products or services	21	19	25	24	19	20	15	12	21	31	0	19	20	17	17	6	22	33	27	19	25	25	9	13	32	22	27	17	17	20	
• Other	2	4	2	0	0	5	0	0	7	2	17	3	0	0	0	6	0	0	2	2	8	5	6	0	0	6	7	3	0	4	
20 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for accessing government (e.g. contacting your representative, getting information on government services)?																															
• Yes – frequently	7	5	5	11	10	2	2	5	2	10	25	8	8	16	8	0	10	7	8	10	3	11	8	9	9	5	5	6	10	4	
• Yes – occasionally	32	32	23	32	19	35	27	39	36	38	42	35	38	43	25	38	36	38	30	37	55	32	30	33	28	31	21	25	34	26	
• No	61	63	72	57	71	63	71	56	62	51	33	58	55	41	66	63	54	55	62	53	42	57	62	57	63	64	75	69	55	70	
21 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																															
• Learn about government programs or services	56	71	55	55	61	57	60	49	47	53	50	63	44	59	70	39	53	72	53	57	72	65	46	51	57	61	50	53	62	60	
• Get government forms	48	33	50	45	33	32	73	45	71	50	69	52	72	36	45	67	38	43	39	55	50	50	61	43	62	52	44	47	62	35	

* Regional library corporation

Library service

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Victoria	Bayside	Boroondara	Brimbank	Casey-Cardinia	Central Highlands	Corangamite	Darebin	East Gippsland	Eastern*	Gamawarra	Geelong*	Goulburn Valley *	Greater Dandenong	High Country*	Hobsons Bay	Maribyrnong	Monash	Moonee Valley	Moreland	Mornington Peninsula	Stonnington	Upper Murray*	Wellington	West Gippsland	Whitehorse Manningham*	Wimmera*	Wyndham	Yarra	Yarra Plenty
• Get help from a government official or department	26	21	21	17	17	32	13	20	6	26	44	31	39	14	20	17	29	26	28	24	17	30	21	30	43	30	19	44	31	22
• Learn about local, state or federal laws or regulations	34	38	34	31	28	38	47	28	6	41	6	32	33	27	25	22	38	34	39	29	39	45	21	41	48	39	19	36	38	29
• Learn about licences or permits (e.g. liquor licensing, car registration)	36	38	23	50	39	32	20	36	41	37	13	37	44	32	45	50	42	32	39	33	33	40	29	24	33	30	25	31	38	28
• Other	8	4	13	0	22	6	7	9	6	19	0	10	0	14	15	6	2	13	8	9	0	10	11	3	0	4	6	13	0	8
22 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for business support (e.g. starting or managing your business)?																														
• Yes – frequently	3	3	4	6	0	0	2	3	2	3	12	2	3	3	0	2	4	1	6	3	3	5	1	6	5	3	0	2	4	1
• Yes – occasionally	8	6	10	11	6	7	6	8	5	9	8	10	3	11	9	4	10	6	5	11	7	2	11	9	11	3	2	8	7	3
• No	89	90	87	82	94	93	92	90	93	88	80	88	95	87	91	94	86	93	89	86	90	93	87	85	84	94	98	90	89	96
23 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																														
• Start your own business	30	17	23	29	50	11	25	44	0	35	60	46	50	40	0	0	30	14	39	24	67	0	22	54	11	50	0	13	0	44
• Write a business plan	21	17	23	24	0	11	25	33	0	24	0	29	50	0	20	0	30	0	17	18	0	0	11	15	11	0	0	40	0	33
• Find financial support for your business	20	17	8	6	0	33	25	22	0	12	20	21	100	0	40	67	26	14	11	18	0	67	11	15	33	25	0	20	0	33
• Get a business licence or permit	19	17	8	18	0	11	25	11	33	6	0	29	100	0	20	67	22	0	17	35	33	0	33	8	33	0	0	13	33	22
• Locate potential customers	27	50	12	18	0	33	25	17	0	29	20	38	50	20	0	33	33	14	22	18	67	67	33	38	22	50	0	27	33	33
• Investigate opportunities for your business	45	83	46	41	25	56	75	56	67	47	0	63	50	0	60	33	45	57	39	65	67	0	11	38	67	25	100	33	33	33
• Other	15	0	23	12	25	22	50	11	33	18	0	29	0	40	20	0	7	0	6	12	0	0	11	0	0	25	0	0	67	33
24 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for accessing services and advice (e.g. investigating real-estate options, finding legal advice)?																														
• Yes – frequently	7	8	5	11	5	6	10	6	5	11	20	9	8	11	2	9	8	3	9	11	6	15	3	9	9	5	0	9	13	4
• Yes – occasionally	28	25	17	22	29	32	27	32	35	30	48	37	35	22	25	32	29	35	32	26	39	32	30	20	30	22	21	21	17	18
• No	65	67	78	67	66	62	63	62	60	58	32	55	58	68	73	60	63	62	59	63	55	53	57	70	61	73	79	70	70	78
25 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																														
• Find out about real estate (e.g. renting or buying property)	66	57	58	75	71	53	79	66	82	71	59	71	65	67	63	68	62	48	68	71	57	68	71	77	68	59	77	65	67	62
• Look for advice or assistance with a legal question or problem	29	33	23	25	24	36	26	25	24	32	29	28	53	8	50	32	26	25	26	31	43	27	25	27	32	29	31	35	44	21
• Find out about community services and support	53	71	47	38	67	60	47	48	53	44	65	59	71	42	38	58	45	70	47	44	79	55	50	54	73	59	46	44	56	53
• Other	2	0	2	0	0	2	0	3	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	3	6	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	11	2
26 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for news, current affairs or community activities (e.g. accessing a news website, accessing community groups, finding out about social causes)?																														
• Yes – frequently	24	22	19	32	17	12	21	21	20	34	28	30	23	37	7	36	27	30	23	33	29	41	16	20	32	14	10	17	33	16
• Yes – occasionally	37	45	37	31	40	40	40	49	34	36	28	40	40	32	46	28	37	38	39	34	32	35	26	36	28	39	37	27	37	37
• No	39	33	44	37	43	48	38	30	45	30	44	30	38	32	48	36	35	33	38	33	39	24	58	43	40	48	53	57	30	47
27 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																														
• Keep up with current events through a news website	83	88	87	84	92	75	78	84	83	86	86	81	84	73	81	90	84	81	80	84	84	83	90	66	85	91	79	84	86	84
• Learn about a political activity or a political candidate	20	21	15	20	22	15	16	20	21	21	21	22	20	23	13	17	27	19	20	21	21	29	19	16	21	21	7	27	19	13

* Regional library corporation

Library service

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Victoria	Bayside	Boroondara	Brimbank	Casey-Cardinia	Central Highlands	Corangamite	Darebin	East Gippsland	Eastern*	Gannawarra	Geelong*	Goulburn Valley *	Greater Dandenong	High Country*	Hobsons Bay	Maribyrnong	Monash	Moonee Valley	Moreland	Mornington Peninsula	Stonnington	Upper Murray*	Wellington	West Gippsland	Whitehorse Manningham*	Wimmera*	Wyndham	Yarra	Yarra Plenty
• Learn about a social and/or environmental cause	43	47	34	36	47	43	41	45	29	40	29	51	56	46	45	47	41	46	46	48	68	40	42	46	56	32	31	29	52	39
• Learn about starting a club or non-profit organisation	12	5	7	10	8	14	16	10	8	10	0	14	8	8	23	7	13	10	18	11	21	6	13	24	12	12	3	11	19	9
• Organise or manage activities for a club, civic group, community group, church or non-profit group	16	19	7	13	8	18	13	17	8	11	7	18	28	8	16	10	16	16	12	12	21	17	13	28	32	24	21	16	29	11
• Other	3	2	5	2	0	3	3	3	8	2	0	3	4	8	10	0	3	3	1	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	5	10	2
28 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection within the library for recreation or entertainment purposes (e.g. playing games, pursuing a hobby, surfing the internet)?																														
• Yes – frequently	26	15	13	34	19	27	31	21	22	39	24	32	40	37	25	47	25	29	26	20	35	32	27	26	13	19	40	22	33	16
• Yes – occasionally	42	46	42	41	49	36	42	49	47	42	40	45	38	32	37	32	48	38	39	45	32	30	30	41	64	48	32	30	23	45
• No	32	38	45	25	32	37	27	29	31	20	36	24	23	32	37	21	27	33	36	36	32	38	42	32	23	33	29	48	43	39
29 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																														
• Play games	22	5	8	36	28	20	18	11	3	18	0	22	23	27	35	19	32	27	26	6	33	7	36	17	16	12	53	25	35	20
• Pursue hobbies	35	28	29	37	30	31	29	35	29	35	13	34	42	23	43	32	26	37	36	34	57	48	40	41	40	35	40	31	65	31
• Research travel plans, book flights or accommodation	41	55	39	38	37	44	47	58	48	35	38	38	52	38	43	59	35	33	44	48	38	41	29	41	47	37	24	36	47	34
• Research a topic of personal interest	68	73	64	56	70	73	53	71	81	66	75	71	77	54	62	67	64	71	72	76	76	83	69	68	72	65	51	68	65	68
• Explore your family genealogy	18	13	15	14	19	15	21	16	29	31	13	22	29	8	16	27	9	13	17	11	19	17	19	29	16	12	11	15	35	24
• Surf the internet	67	70	64	71	74	70	53	66	58	60	56	69	81	62	59	68	61	71	67	72	81	90	62	61	56	70	67	67	76	64
• Other	3	3	2	3	2	3	5	2	4	6	0	1	0	0	3	3	1	4	2	4	5	0	2	0	2	2	7	3	0	2
30 Which of the purposes mentioned in the survey is the most important to you?																														
• Accessing government	1	2	1	1	5	2	2	2	2	1	8	1	8	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	3	2	3	1	0	0	0	3	3	1
• Accessing services and advice	5	6	3	3	2	9	8	5	5	5	12	6	0	3	3	4	4	8	6	5	6	7	1	7	7	3	6	7	3	8
• Business support	1	3	2	0	0	2	6	1	0	1	0	2	0	5	2	2	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	3	1
• Education and learning	33	34	41	30	29	34	22	29	27	40	12	31	24	37	20	19	44	57	36	33	35	29	26	20	25	28	27	46	20	33
• Employment and career purposes	11	9	9	10	13	8	6	21	11	7	20	12	11	13	10	6	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	3	1
• Health and wellbeing	6	8	5	5	6	8	0	7	2	4	8	5	5	5	5	13	5	4	10	4	16	4	6	6	7	13	5	7	7	6
• Managing your finances	4	5	2	2	5	5	10	4	9	4	4	3	0	0	10	4	2	2	4	2	6	2	4	5	9	8	2	4	0	4
• News, current affairs and community activities	10	8	14	10	8	6	4	10	9	7	12	12	16	11	14	17	8	12	8	14	6	7	10	8	14	14	5	4	20	11
• Recreation and entertainment purposes	15	14	13	19	16	14	25	7	25	15	8	16	13	13	20	15	8	23	11	10	6	27	10	21	5	16	24	10	7	21
• Social purposes	14	11	10	19	17	13	18	15	9	16	16	13	24	13	15	21	15	13	13	15	16	11	22	18	23	11	24	6	23	9
31 In the past 12 months, how often have you used a library computer or internet connection at the library to check or send emails?																														
• More than once a week	27	38	18	33	33	21	29	25	20	32	24	35	30	34	21	29	38	25	25	37	35	43	15	28	29	19	23	18	40	15
• Weekly	18	11	13	20	24	17	18	21	20	24	28	15	20	29	19	19	16	16	22	18	10	15	16	24	27	14	26	14	20	13
• Fortnightly	11	6	11	11	5	14	4	14	16	12	20	13	15	8	9	8	17	14	13	8	6	6	11	14	5	8	13	11	7	5
• Every 1–2 months	12	12	13	10	10	11	14	17	9	9	0	14	18	8	16	13	13	14	8	13	6	11	16	10	18	10	13	11	10	11
• 3–4 times a year or less	14	18	17	8	13	11	12	14	9	12	12	14	10	5	17	6	9	10	15	10	23	11	18	11	7	21	8	13	13	23
• Never	18	14	29	17	16	25	24	9	25	11	16	11	8	16	19	25	8	20	18	14	19	15	23	13	13	29	18	32	10	34
32 In the past 12 months, have you used a library computer or internet connection at the library for any other purposes than the ones we have asked you about?																														
• Yes	14	20	10	11	13	9	18	15	12	16	8	8	21	8	13	4	16	11	13	19	20	17	16	9	19	8	8	13	24	16

* Regional library corporation

Library service

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Victoria	Bayside	Boroondara	Brimbank	Casey-Cardinia	Central Highlands	Corangamite	Darebin	East Gippsland	Eastern*	Gamawarra	Geelong*	Goulburn Valley *	Greater Dandenong	High Country*	Hobsons Bay	Maribyrnong	Monash	Moonee Valley	Moreland	Mornington Peninsula	Stonnington	Upper Murray*	Wellington	West Gippsland	Whitehorse Manningham*	Wimmera*	Wyndham	Yarra	Yarra Plenty
33 Was the access to library computers and/or the internet for ... ?																														
• Yourself	79	80	85	71	75	81	75	80	74	74	84	82	62	82	83	85	79	79	80	84	81	83	82	77	77	88	71	75	90	80
• Someone else	1	2	1	3	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	3	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	3	0
• Both yourself and someone else	20	18	14	26	25	17	25	20	26	25	16	17	36	16	17	15	20	21	18	16	19	15	18	21	23	11	29	25	7	20
34 How would you rate your skills and confidence in using computers and the internet?																														
• High	55	57	64	56	62	39	42	63	52	62	32	56	63	46	56	48	56	56	50	54	48	66	41	42	46	59	52	50	67	54
• Medium	38	35	33	40	33	46	46	31	34	34	48	37	30	41	36	42	38	38	42	40	48	32	44	48	46	36	37	43	30	42
• Low	7	8	3	4	5	15	12	6	14	5	20	8	8	14	8	10	6	4	8	7	3	2	15	10	9	5	11	6	3	4
35 What are the special advantages of using the computers or internet at the library compared to other locations?																														
• Free internet access	88	83	83	87	94	82	96	89	91	95	96	92	95	87	90	88	94	89	87	92	87	91	97	88	95	72	92	74	93	86
• Free computer access	66	68	45	71	76	57	75	62	87	69	68	72	75	74	64	67	63	68	66	75	68	66	58	66	65	63	70	57	63	67
• A safe, secure place to access computers and the internet	59	65	47	54	63	57	67	53	53	69	72	71	55	50	59	58	56	58	60	59	61	53	60	65	56	57	63	61	47	58
• I am able to seek and get support from library staff	47	46	27	51	46	46	58	38	62	50	52	59	58	42	54	60	45	45	53	44	48	40	52	49	63	32	44	46	33	43
• Access to up-to-date computers	27	32	11	31	35	30	38	18	42	28	44	44	33	37	32	35	18	25	25	21	26	32	33	30	25	22	32	30	10	28
• Access to special computer programs	13	11	8	12	13	9	23	9	11	14	24	15	25	13	12	19	16	12	12	6	19	9	5	14	9	8	10	12	3	16
• Access to printers/scanners	48	49	29	49	56	40	54	53	56	56	56	54	65	50	54	50	50	38	57	50	52	45	42	50	40	49	44	48	30	40
• Other	9	9	13	2	10	9	12	10	4	12	4	7	15	11	15	13	7	12	8	8	6	11	3	6	12	11	6	8	13	13
37 How important are the library's computers and internet connection to you personally?																														
• Very important	53	60	45	49	67	50	55	55	58	63	68	58	53	50	56	57	63	54	58	50	48	55	43	64	56	37	61	50	52	38
• Important	26	28	25	31	31	26	27	27	28	23	20	25	28	32	17	13	23	22	25	30	23	28	29	20	26	42	23	30	31	29
• Moderately important	16	8	17	12	12	16	14	16	12	12	12	16	18	13	22	23	11	19	16	19	29	11	21	14	16	17	11	17	7	21
• Of little importance	4	3	10	7	7	5	4	2	0	1	0	3	3	3	5	4	2	3	1	1	0	2	4	2	2	3	3	3	7	9
• Unimportant	1	2	4	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	1	2	1	0	0	4	3	0	0	2	2	1	3	3
38 How important is it to you that others in the community have access to library computers and internet?																														
• Very important	68	77	65	57	75	66	62	72	71	70	54	69	73	58	69	77	63	70	71	69	81	72	60	72	74	58	61	61	66	74
• Important	22	15	26	22	16	24	33	24	21	20	38	20	20	26	19	17	25	21	41	24	3	23	18	24	16	31	29	28	28	14
• Moderately important	7	5	6	15	6	7	2	3	5	7	8	10	8	16	12	4	9	7	6	7	16	4	17	4	5	5	6	9	3	10
• Of little importance	2	2	2	5	3	2	4	1	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	4	4	5	3	3	1	0	2
• Unimportant	1	2	2	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	3	1
39 Do you have access to a computer for your own personal use somewhere other than at this library branch?																														
• No	20	17	6	12	14	19	25	8	18	14	48	22	20	29	14	10	23	17	13	15	16	4	32	27	21	11	30	17	17	8
• Yes – at another library branch		17	21	28	17	9	21	17	11	19	16	23	15	24	7	27	29	16	25	22	10	28	7	14	12	29	3	13	27	13
• Yes – at work	23	20	31	24	24	11	21	32	16	23	8	18	15	18	17	33	19	24	25	19	16	34	16	10	28	25	16	21	40	30
• Yes – at home	67	71	76	66	76	65	60	76	64	62	32	64	65	45	73	75	56	74	70	65	64	77	59	58	68	75	51	67	63	83
• Yes – at school, TAFE or university	15	15	22	27	19	11	12	18	4	15	4	12	5	16	15	10	26	18	13	12	10	6	19	13	11	11	13	23	20	15
• Yes – at a community centre	2	2	2	3	6	2	0	3	0	6	0	3	10	0	3	0	4	2	4	5	6	0	3	3	5	8	3	1	0	2
• Yes – at an internet cafe or wi-fi hotspot	9	9	8	10	13	7	8	6	2	10	16	8	15	13	12	13	13	9	10	9	6	4	4	3	7	5	0	8	23	6
• Yes – other	4	6	5	2	3	6	2	4	5	4	0	6	0	0	3	2	3	1	3	2	6	4	7	6	2	2	5	1	10	3

* Regional library corporation

Library service

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Victoria	Bayside	Boroondara	Brimbank	Casey-Cardinia	Central Highlands	Corangamite	Darebin	East Gippsland	Eastern*	Gannawarra	Geelong*	Goulburn Valley *	Greater Dandenong	High Country*	Hobsons Bay	Maribyrnong	Monash	Moonee Valley	Moreland	Mornington Peninsula	Stonnington	Upper Murray*	Wellington	West Gippsland	Whitehorse Manningham*	Wimmera*	Wyndham	Yarra	Yarra Plenty	
40 Do you have access to the internet apart from at this library branch?																															
• No	25	14	7	15	11	29	23	10	20	15	44	21	25	34	20	13	23	16	15	23	13	6	37	28	19	8	29	18	7	6	
• Yes – at another library branch	22	27	32	25	15	25	28	16	29	28	29	18	21	17	29	34	26	31	23	19	38	10	15	23	40	11	17	43	17		
• Yes – at work	24	20	32	23	24	12	23	32	13	19	12	21	18	16	19	35	22	26	26	23	13	36	15	10	30	29	17	21	40	31	
• Yes – at home	55	66	72	53	62	46	48	60	58	44	16	53	50	39	56	69	47	59	55	44	58	64	41	38	54	60	40	58	53	80	
• Yes – at school, TAFE or university	16	15	22	28	22	11	12	21	4	17	4	14	5	11	14	8	28	18	14	11	10	9	15	11	7	11	14	19	20	15	
• Yes – at a community centre	3	0	1	1	2	4	2	5	0	6	0	4	8	3	5	6	4	1	4	2	3	0	3	3	5	5	3	1	3	3	
• Yes – at an internet cafe or wi-fi hotspot	10	12	13	12	16	5	8	10	2	10	16	7	20	16	10	13	13	10	9	15	6	9	4	7	7	12	5	10	13	8	
• Yes – through a smartphone	13	17	23	21	14	5	8	14	2	11	8	13	10	11	14	17	12	10	13	9	10	9	12	6	16	18	6	13	13	11	
• Yes – other	5	9	4	1	6	9	6	7	4	8	0	8	5	0	5	2	4	7	6	4	6	6	4	6	4	9	3	1	10	5	
41 Do you use/access any of the following at your library?																															
• Library website (including the library catalogue)	71	85	77	70	78	64	67	76	44	74	52	72	63	68	73	77	64	78	72	75	81	83	45	53	74	85	54	55	77	86	
• Online databases (excluding the library catalogue)	38	40	33	36	40	33	31	33	29	46	28	45	48	39	31	44	32	38	32	39	45	57	30	31	49	40	32	31	47	40	
• Library printers/scanners	55	55	29	63	67	53	69	61	62	63	60	53	68	55	61	60	53	48	61	60	58	45	52	61	54	55	63	52	43	47	
42 In the past 12 months, have you participated in computer-related training or classes (e.g. how to use computer software or search the internet) ...?																															
• At a public library	9	4	6	13	5	9	7	4	15	7	9	14	11	19	4	29	13	6	15	7	14	7	12	7	2	2	5	6	0	11	
• Other than at a public library	11	17	9	7	12	17	11	13	7	15	10	14	21	13	12	3	11	14	8	15	8	10	2	7	12	7	5	14	8	8	
43 In the past 12 months, have you received assistance from library staff for any of the following purposes?																															
• How to connect to the internet	19	17	20	20	17	18	13	19	22	8	24	15	25	26	19	29	25	13	23	25	23	21	34	23	14	11	27	21	27	12	
• How to search on the internet	12	11	5	16	5	14	17	6	27	11	28	14	20	8	12	8	12	11	15	11	19	11	18	15	9	6	19	9	13	10	
• How to use library databases for research	19	22	9	18	17	19	21	13	27	16	24	26	35	13	29	31	15	21	25	15	19	36	11	15	21	8	21	18	20	19	
• How to use a word-processing or spreadsheet program like Word or Excel	7	3	3	8	5	6	8	2	13	6	16	8	18	11	7	8	9	5	9	7	3	9	5	9	11	2	8	6	7	4	
• How to save documents	7	8	2	11	6	7	8	4	9	6	16	8	15	13	2	6	9	7	10	6	16	2	4	15	9	5	10	5	10	3	
• How to print or scan documents	31	32	12	41	24	23	29	47	33	34	44	28	40	26	31	29	39	15	47	40	26	19	23	27	23	26	48	30	17	26	
• How to connect to the library's wi-fi	21	25	21	30	21	22	25	27	36	22	8	17	38	16	27	21	19	28	19	19	19	28	12	19	25	11	29	16	27	14	
• Other	7	11	8	5	6	9	6	5	2	10	4	9	5	13	5	8	7	8	6	6	10	15	3	5	1	5	5	8	3	11	
44 Do you have a disability that impacts on your use of computers and/or the internet at your library?																															
• Yes	4	2	1	6	0	6	8	1	0	3	12	3	5	3	2	4	6	2	8	8	3	9	3	8	9	0	2	3	0	3	
46 How satisfied are you with your access to a computer and/or the internet at your library?																															
• Very satisfied	52	72	40	44	61	61	63	49	60	51	84	67	62	50	68	55	48	44	65	36	61	56	66	59	60	30	70	44	21	41	
• Satisfied	37	26	45	40	21	31	31	47	21	41	16	27	31	31	25	32	44	39	29	50	32	33	31	34	35	56	22	41	52	42	
• Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7	2	8	16	15	6	4	2	7	5	0	4	3	14	5	9	7	11	3	10	4	2	0	6	2	8	8	9	17	12	
• Dissatisfied	3	0	6	1	0	2	2	2	7	1	0	2	5	6	2	4	2	6	2	2	4	7	3	1	2	3	0	4	10	5	
• Very dissatisfied	1	0	2	0	3	1	0	0	5	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	2	3	0	1	0	0	

* Regional library corporation

Library service

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Victoria	Bayside	Boroondara	Brimbank	Casey-Cardinia	Central Highlands	Corangamite	Darebin	East Gippsland	Eastern*	Gamawarra	Geelong*	Goulburn Valley *	Greater Dandenong	High Country*	Hobsons Bay	Maribyrnong	Monash	Moonee Valley	Moreland	Mornington Peninsula	Stonnington	Upper Murray*	Wellington	West Gippsland	Whitehorse Manningham*	Wimmera*	Wyndham	Yarra	Yarra Plenty
47 How satisfied are you with the support provided by the staff at your library when accessing a computer and/or the internet at your library?																														
• Very satisfied	59	71	39	53	63	59	72	60	81	64	96	69	64	61	71	70	55	51	74	52	62	57	71	70	70	35	83	52	37	51
• Satisfied	30	17	40	31	19	32	20	33	12	26	4	25	31	25	24	21	36	35	21	34	31	28	20	24	21	47	11	40	40	29
• Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	11	19	13	10	6	8	6	7	8	0	6	3	8	3	9	7	12	4	12	3	11	7	6	7	18	6	6	23	18
• Dissatisfied	1	0	1	3	6	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	1	2	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
• Very dissatisfied	1	0	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	0
48 Are any of your computer/internet needs not met at your library?																														
• Yes	22	22	21	26	21	26	22	18	28	29	13	19	28	25	21	27	17	22	17	26	21	26	16	28	21	36	8	26	38	17
50 Your gender																														
• Male	42	43	45	49	35	37	24	33	43	41	48	49	33	69	46	27	55	51	34	44	52	51	35	30	39	43	48	49	37	31
• Female	58	57	55	51	65	63	76	67	57	59	52	51	67	31	54	73	45	49	66	56	48	49	65	70	61	57	52	51	63	69
51 Your age group																														
• 15–24 years	18	12	20	33	29	12	10	15	14	13	20	16	18	17	20	13	30	20	15	11	14	4	20	20	11	15	37	25	7	14
• 25–34 years	16	18	11	19	10	9	16	24	7	13	16	19	13	19	17	17	24	13	13	21	7	20	21	14	11	10	6	29	30	11
• 35–44 years	18	9	17	19	15	22	8	23	16	18	16	17	15	28	14	13	17	17	26	19	17	24	16	10	18	23	13	16	10	16
• 45–54 years	20	15	20	18	21	20	28	20	20	18	20	21	26	8	19	13	14	18	20	23	14	35	19	24	23	26	16	14	27	23
• 55–64 years	18	22	20	5	13	22	18	13	32	23	20	18	23	22	20	21	11	20	20	18	28	9	14	21	18	13	22	11	23	21
• 65 or older	10	23	14	4	13	15	20	5	11	13	8	10	5	6	10	25	5	13	6	8	21	9	10	10	21	15	6	4	3	15
52 Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?																														
• Yes	1	2	0	1	0	2	2	1	2	1	4	2	0	0	3	0	2	2	1	4	0	0	6	1	0	0	3	1	0	0
53 What is the main language spoken at home?																														
• English	85	92	85	60	92	97	98	80	98	90	96	96	85	57	98	92	58	75	79	78	100	89	88	95	98	87	94	76	87	89
• Not English	15	8	15	40	8	3	2	20	2	10	4	4	15	43	2	8	42	25	21	22	0	11	12	5	2	13	6	24	13	11
54 How well do you read English?																														
• Very well	88	94	92	77	94	92	92	89	88	90	76	91	87	75	95	91	73	86	90	83	93	96	86	88	93	92	87	88	90	95
• Fairly well	8	6	6	16	5	6	6	9	9	9	8	8	3	17	3	9	15	10	7	13	7	4	11	7	5	2	5	5	3	4
• OK	3	0	2	3	2	2	2	2	0	1	16	1	11	8	2	0	11	3	2	3	0	0	1	5	2	3	8	6	3	1
• Very little	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	3	0
55 Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?																														
• Full-time employment	19	20	20	15	20	10	8	25	10	14	16	16	13	19	14	28	16	21	17	18	29	33	17	14	9	30	10	23	23	20
• Part-time employment	22	17	20	24	25	22	26	25	33	18	12	18	33	14	24	19	22	16	17	22	18	30	24	33	42	17	23	17	33	23
• Self-employed	6	6	11	3	3	5	6	5	5	8	8	6	5	8	8	0	4	8	10	5	4	4	4	5	4	7	2	5	10	5
• Unemployed	12	8	9	13	10	18	6	12	19	11	28	18	10	17	10	4	17	9	10	24	14	13	13	10	5	8	13	15	13	3
• Retired	16	27	17	3	13	25	28	10	19	25	20	17	13	14	17	34	7	24	15	11	29	11	11	14	21	18	17	4	10	25
• Home duties or carer	6	2	4	3	3	7	2	4	2	4	12	5	5	8	8	4	4	3	10	3	0	2	10	7	12	7	8	9	3	8
• Student	16	16	17	36	21	9	14	18	5	16	4	14	15	17	15	9	29	20	17	13	0	4	20	10	5	12	22	26	3	11
• Other	3	5	2	2	5	3	10	2	7	5	0	5	5	3	3	2	2	0	4	3	7	2	1	7	2	2	5	1	3	4
56 What is the highest level of education you have completed?																														
• Did not go to school	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	2	3	0	2	0	3	1	0	0
• Still at school	6	8	5	12	15	3	0	2	7	6	4	4	0	3	8	9	11	12	4	1	7	0	9	8	4	7	16	7	3	4
• Year 11 or below	14	3	5	13	10	23	16	5	26	14	52	17	24	21	24	11	12	8	9	8	14	0	26	25	13	7	32	11	7	14
• Year 12 or equivalent	14	11	7	19	15	13	10	14	16	15	9	13	8	12	8	11	23	11	18	17	29	13	13	16	14	16	13	23	10	11
• Certificate/diploma	24	31	12	25	32	25	46	22	21	31	17	29	39	24	25	34	18	19	30	22	21	17	26	22	23	16	19	27	30	23
• Degree/higher degree	41	47	72	29	29	35	26	55	30	34	13	37	29	41	34	36	36	50	38	50	29	68	24	28	45	54	16	31	50	47

* Regional library corporation

Library service

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Victoria	Bayside	Boroondara	Brimbank	Casey-Cardinia	Central Highlands	Corangamite	Darebin	East Gippsland	Eastern*	Gannawarra	Geelong*	Goulburn Valley *	Greater Dandenong	High Country*	Hobsons Bay	Maribyrnong	Monash	Moonee Valley	Moreland	Mornington Peninsula	Stonnington	Upper Murray*	Wellington	West Gippsland	Whitehorse Manningham*	Wimmera*	Wyndham	Yarra	Yarra Plenty	
57 What is your annual income (individual pre-tax)?																															
• Below \$30,000 per year	58	57	50	60	59	72	78	51	63	63	71	64	56	68	66	45	68	58	55	61	56	42	56	66	65	40	70	59	46	48	
• Between \$30,000 and \$60,000 per year	27	25	26	28	31	21	15	34	25	24	21	25	26	26	21	33	23	27	34	28	28	40	29	29	24	32	24	24	29	32	
• Between \$60,000 and \$100,000 per year	11	18	14	6	9	5	2	12	13	9	8	10	9	6	9	19	7	13	8	10	16	16	6	4	11	16	4	9	25	14	
• Over \$100,000 per year	4	0	10	5	0	2	4	4	0	4	0	1	9	0	4	2	2	2	4	1	0	2	8	1	0	12	2	8	0	5	

* Regional library corporation

F2. Main user survey results by respondent demographic

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Victoria	Gender		Age group						Main language			Employment status					Highest level of education			Income			
		Male	Female	15-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65 and older	English	Not English	Full-time	Part-time	Self-employed	Unemployed	Retired	Home duties / carer	Student	Year 12 or below	Certificate/diploma	Degree/higher degree	Less than \$30K	\$30-60K	\$60K or more
Number of survey responses	3088	1274	1748	539	493	534	600	544	318	2558	464	564	659	171	360	492	175	482	1041	723	1239	1549	730	391
3 Are you completing this survey at a public library?																								
• Yes	75	81	69	78	79	73	74	73	67	74	79	70	73	70	89	72	73	75	81	75	69	79	73	62
6 In the past 12 months, how often have you visited a public library?																								
• More than once a week	43	47	40	33	43	43	46	48	48	42	47	38	43	40	56	49	36	35	40	46	44	46	40	38
• Weekly	27	26	28	29	25	29	26	26	28	27	27	28	26	24	24	27	29	28	27	27	26	27	28	25
• Fortnightly	15	13	16	17	13	15	15	15	13	15	12	16	17	17	10	13	16	16	16	12	15	14	15	17
• Every 1-2 months	11	9	12	14	14	9	9	10	9	11	9	12	11	13	6	9	12	15	11	10	11	9	12	15
• 3-4 times a year or less	4	4	4	7	7	4	4	2	2	4	5	6	3	6	5	2	5	6	5	5	3	4	5	4
7a In the past 12 months, how often have you visited a public library to use a library computer to access the internet?																								
• More than once a week	32	38	28	25	29	32	35	36	37	31	37	29	31	23	50	36	26	24	33	35	29	36	29	25
• Weekly	19	19	20	20	20	19	19	17	20	19	21	19	19	18	21	19	20	19	21	20	17	19	19	16
• Fortnightly	11	11	16	17	13	15	15	15	13	15	12	16	17	17	10	13	16	16	16	12	15	11	11	11
• Every 1-2 months	15	12	16	13	18	14	13	14	15	15	11	16	15	15	10	14	22	14	13	16	15	13	17	18
• 3-4 times a year or less	14	11	16	17	15	13	15	12	10	14	12	15	15	20	6	10	18	17	12	13	16	13	15	16
• Never	9	10	9	12	9	11	7	7	8	9	9	10	8	15	6	9	4	12	7	6	12	8	8	14
7b In the past 12 months, how often have you visited a public library to use a library computer without accessing the internet?																								
• More than once a week	12	13	11	8	10	12	16	14	11	12	14	11	11	13	20	11	12	10	11	13	12	13	9	12
• Weekly	14	13	14	10	15	16	16	14	13	14	13	16	13	8	14	13	17	12	14	14	14	13	14	14
• Fortnightly	11	11	11	12	10	10	10	13	11	12	7	10	14	10	8	11	10	12	10	11	12	11	11	11
• Every 1-2 months	14	13	15	13	14	13	16	14	10	14	10	14	16	18	11	12	18	12	15	12	14	14	15	13
• 3-4 times a year or less	14	13	15	13	14	13	16	14	10	14	10	14	16	18	11	12	15	12	15	12	14	13	15	16
• Never	35	37	34	44	36	32	29	31	40	34	45	34	30	37	35	40	27	42	40	34	33	35	35	34
7c In the past 12 months, how often have you visited a public library to use your own device to access the library's wi-fi internet?																								
• More than once a week	15	19	13	18	18	14	15	12	12	14	21	15	11	15	20	12	10	22	14	14	16	15	13	15
• Weekly	11	12	10	16	16	10	8	7	9	11	14	13	10	16	18	7	8	17	12	10	11	10	10	13
• Fortnightly	8	8	8	11	6	10	7	8	7	8	8	11	8	5	8	7	3	9	8	7	9	7	10	10
• Every 1-2 months	12	12	12	14	17	12	7	12	7	11	15	12	15	12	9	9	9	14	11	10	14	11	11	16
• 3-4 times a year or less	11	10	12	14	12	12	10	7	9	11	9	13	11	14	8	8	14	12	10	10	12	10	13	13
• Never	43	40	45	27	31	41	53	55	57	45	33	36	44	39	47	58	14	28	45	49	38	47	43	32
8 How do you connect to the internet at the library?																								
• I do not use the internet	5	4	5	4	3	4	5	5	7	5	5	4	5	6	4	6	3	3	5	4	5	4	4	7
• Using the library's computers	78	77	78	69	76	76	83	82	81	79	72	77	82	68	80	81	85	67	79	83	73	80	80	68
• Using my own computer	35	38	33	51	43	35	29	26	20	33	42	36	31	42	31	23	22	56	32	29	41	34	33	40
• Using a mobile device	16	17	16	26	22	20	12	8	7	16	18	24	14	18	12	8	13	25	16	13	19	14	16	25
9 If you use the library for other purposes what are these?																								
• Borrowing books, CDs, DVDs and other items	86	81	90	79	83	90	89	89	88	88	78	85	90	82	84	89	90	82	83	86	89	86	88	87
• A place to read, study or access library services	56	57	56	69	59	57	52	55	43	55	64	56	55	62	56	45	43	76	53	53	62	59	53	59
• Attending programs and events	26	18	32	12	22	31	30	34	29	27	21	30	28	29	19	31	38	15	16	31	32	23	31	34
• Other	10	10	10	9	9	8	13	11	9	10	11	9	8	16	9	12	11	9	10	12	9	11	7	10

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Gender			Age group						Main language		Employment status						Highest level of education			Income				
	Victoria	Male	Female	15-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65 and older	English	Not English	Full-time	Part-time	Self-employed	Unemployed	Retired	Home duties / carer	Student	Year 12 or below	Certificate/diploma	Degree/higher degree	Less than \$30K	\$30-60K	\$60K or more	
10 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for education and learning (e.g. getting homework help, taking a class, applying for courses)?																									
• Yes – frequently	25	26	25	36	28	26	25	19	14	24	35	24	24	19	28	14	17	44	25	25	26	29	21	22	
• Yes – occasionally	32	31	32	38	36	31	30	27	24	31	31	32	35	32	29	20	27	38	32	33	30	31	33	30	
• No	43	43	43	26	36	43	45	54	62	45	34	43	41	49	43	66	55	18	42	41	45	40	46	48	
11 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																									
• Learn about admissions/ financial aid for school, college, TAFE or uni	25	26	24	28	29	27	28	18	7	24	31	22	23	20	38	6	27	30	24	26	25	30	20	18	
• Research options for schools, colleges, TAFE or uni	30	30	30	36	38	32	30	19	5	28	40	27	30	26	35	7	28	39	28	37	27	33	28	20	
• Apply for college or uni	9	11	8	13	15	8	8	3	0	9	11	8	11	2	10	0	6	14	9	12	8	12	6	6	
• Do homework for a class you are taking	42	37	45	78	45	36	32	18	7	40	51	34	35	22	29	7	33	86	51	39	36	46	34	28	
• Do an online assignment or take an online course	25	23	26	35	31	26	21	14	4	24	30	26	25	17	21	5	17	37	24	24	26	25	26	24	
• Undertake research for further knowledge	74	78	72	61	71	77	79	87	84	78	61	77	76	80	77	87	73	63	66	77	81	73	75	83	
• Other	6	5	7	4	4	7	5	10	16	6	6	4	5	8	6	17	8	4	5	7	7	6	6	5	
12 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for employment or career purposes (e.g. looking for a job, writing a résumé, getting job training)?																									
• Yes – frequently	17	18	16	16	25	23	19	10	3	16	21	19	18	17	42	2	11	11	14	19	18	19	18	14	
• Yes – occasionally	27	27	27	30	37	31	28	22	5	25	35	29	34	36	31	6	20	33	26	29	27	28	26	27	
• No	56	55	57	54	38	46	53	68	92	59	44	52	47	46	27	93	68	57	61	52	55	53	55	59	
13 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																									
• Search for a job or career opportunity	70	71	70	70	76	70	69	68	32	70	71	66	66	63	82	61	73	70	70	74	68	76	67	58	
• Work on a résumé	50	48	52	59	52	53	46	40	32	50	52	45	51	32	61	25	51	55	52	56	45	54	50	42	
• Apply for a job or a career opportunity	52	52	53	57	60	50	49	46	24	53	52	48	52	37	70	36	49	49	51	60	49	56	52	42	
• Develop skills/undertake training related to your job	26	27	25	26	23	30	28	23	32	24	36	29	27	23	25	28	15	28	20	33	26	26	26	29	
• Research or find information related to your job or profession	60	63	59	52	54	65	64	66	80	62	57	60	64	73	58	69	55	53	50	65	66	59	58	71	
• Other	4	3	5	2	3	4	5	7	8	5	2	4	4	5	2	11	5	1	2	5	5	3	6	6	
14 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for health and wellbeing (e.g. seeking information about health or fitness)?																									
• Yes – frequently	12	11	12	9	11	14	14	13	10	11	14	10	11	13	15	13	15	8	11	14	11	14	10	8	
• Yes – occasionally	36	35	37	22	35	38	42	42	37	36	34	38	42	33	35	37	38	25	31	40	38	36	39	38	
• No	52	55	50	69	55	48	44	45	52	52	52	51	47	54	50	50	47	67	57	46	51	50	51	54	
15 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																									
• Learn about illness, disease or a medical condition	70	70	70	61	55	66	76	78	77	71	62	64	70	59	64	83	61	68	67	74	69	71	69	67	
• Find an online or face-to-face support group for a medical/health condition	13	15	12	16	17	13	14	12	7	12	19	12	13	6	22	7	15	14	14	14	12	16	11	10	
• Look up about prescription or over-the-counter drugs	24	26	24	16	19	18	28	31	33	26	17	22	25	12	25	38	16	16	24	23	26	27	20	26	
• Learn about diet and nutrition	52	49	54	58	57	48	51	52	49	52	53	52	52	46	46	54	54	56	49	58	52	55	48	48	
• Learn about exercise or fitness	46	45	47	60	55	43	48	40	31	45	51	51	46	49	44	37	48	56	41	51	47	45	47	46	

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Victoria	Gender		Age group						Main language		Employment status						Highest level of education			Income			
		Male	Female	15-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65 and older	English	Not English	Full-time	Part-time	Self-employed	Unemployed	Retired	Home duties / carer	Student	Year 12 or below	Certificate/diploma	Degree/higher degree	Less than \$30K	\$30-60K	\$60K or more
• Find information about a doctor or health-care provider	24	26	23	30	30	26	23	18	15	22	31	23	20	23	32	17	23	34	23	23	24	26	18	27
• Find out about health insurance	16	17	15	14	19	18	17	14	8	15	20	20	20	9	14	12	17	12	12	16	19	14	16	24
• Other	5	5	5	5	4	7	3	6	5	5	5	3	3	9	5	6	8	6	6	3	5	5	2	
16 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for social purposes (e.g. chatting/messaging, Facebook, communicating with friends or family)?																								
• Yes – frequently	30	30	31	43	37	30	26	22	22	29	40	30	32	21	37	23	26	38	35	31	27	33	28	23
• Yes – occasionally	33	33	32	36	37	31	33	31	26	32	35	34	33	25	35	26	31	38	32	33	34	34	34	29
• No	37	37	37	21	26	39	40	46	53	39	25	36	35	53	28	51	43	24	33	36	40	34	38	47
17 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																								
• Email friends or family	87	87	88	78	88	92	90	92	88	88	88	91	91	94	86	92	83	78	80	91	92	86	91	91
• Use Skype to stay in touch with family or friends	8	10	7	14	11	8	5	4	3	6	18	8	7	16	7	3	7	13	8	6	10	9	6	10
• Access a social networking site	64	62	65	83	81	64	58	40	27	63	66	69	67	51	65	32	62	80	67	64	62	64	65	64
• Maintain a personal blog or website	13	13	12	21	15	11	11	5	5	12	14	13	14	19	12	3	6	18	14	11	12	14	10	15
• Other	4	5	3	2	4	5	4	5	3	4	3	3	3	5	4	5	8	2	4	5	3	5	4	2
18 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for managing your finances (e.g. banking, buying or selling items, paying bills)?																								
• Yes – frequently	11	13	10	8	14	14	13	9	9	11	13	12	11	13	14	10	13	8	10	11	13	11	12	13
• Yes – occasionally	24	24	24	21	33	26	24	21	15	23	28	31	26	25	23	17	22	20	21	25	26	24	29	25
• No	65	63	66	71	53	60	63	69	76	66	59	57	63	61	62	73	65	72	69	64	61	65	58	63
19 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																								
• Do online banking	72	69	75	75	85	74	68	66	52	73	72	79	69	70	73	57	84	79	67	72	77	71	74	80
• Pay bills	51	48	54	39	54	57	54	51	43	52	47	56	50	50	47	49	59	50	46	50	56	48	54	62
• Purchase something online	44	46	43	45	46	49	45	38	31	46	36	50	46	44	38	35	41	40	42	48	43	43	44	48
• Attempt to sell something online	12	16	10	22	13	14	9	7	5	12	14	11	12	17	15	6	14	15	15	14	10	13	9	14
• Look up information about loans	14	14	15	17	14	18	17	7	4	14	14	20	12	13	14	5	24	12	12	15	15	13	12	23
• Learn about financial management	13	16	10	18	11	13	13	13	8	12	16	13	11	20	11	12	14	16	12	13	14	13	10	16
• Look up or monitor investment information	16	25	9	10	8	16	17	23	36	16	18	13	11	19	14	36	17	11	15	15	17	16	13	20
• Gather information about/compare financial products or services	21	28	16	18	17	22	25	22	24	20	25	21	20	36	19	22	16	18	18	24	22	21	16	26
• Other	2	3	2	0	1	1	3	6	3	2	1	1	1	3	2	5	5	1	3	2	2	2	2	2
20 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for accessing government (e.g. contacting your representative, getting information on government services)?																								
• Yes – frequently	7	9	6	4	7	11	11	6	3	7	9	9	7	6	15	4	9	4	6	7	8	9	6	7
• Yes – occasionally	32	34	30	20	34	34	36	38	27	32	34	32	35	35	32	33	31	25	27	36	34	34	33	31
• No	61	57	63	76	59	55	53	56	70	61	57	60	58	58	53	63	59	71	67	57	58	58	61	62
21 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																								
• Learn about government programs or services	56	57	57	39	48	61	56	69	59	57	55	56	50	59	56	66	56	54	47	54	65	57	56	59
• Get government forms	48	47	48	43	53	46	50	46	41	47	48	53	47	45	57	39	48	41	44	49	48	45	48	59
• Get help from a government official or department	26	28	25	22	31	24	30	28	13	26	28	21	25	35	36	23	31	23	24	27	27	28	24	21

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Gender		Age group					Main language		Employment status					Highest level of education			Income						
	Victoria	Male	Female	15-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65 and older	English	Not English	Full-time	Part-time	Self-employed	Unemployed	Retired	Home duties / carer	Student	Year 12 or below	Certificate/diploma	Degree/higher degree	Less than \$30K	\$30-60K	\$60K or more
• Learn about local, state or federal laws or regulations	34	37	31	35	29	36	33	36	34	33	37	34	31	34	36	37	24	38	28	36	37	36	30	30
• Learn about licences or permits (e.g. liquor licensing, car registration)	36	41	31	48	42	39	37	26	21	34	47	49	33	44	40	20	28	36	38	39	34	35	39	36
• Other	8	6	9	8	8	5	8	10	9	9	3	6	7	3	10	13	10	6	8	10	7	8	7	5
22 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for business support (e.g. starting or managing your business)?																								
• Yes – frequently	3	4	2	2	3	6	4	1	0	3	5	5	2	12	3	0	2	1	2	3	4	2	3	6
• Yes – occasionally	8	10	6	4	10	11	9	5	7	7	12	9	8	23	8	3	6	4	6	8	9	8	8	10
• No	89	86	92	94	87	84	88	94	93	91	83	86	89	65	89	97	92	95	92	89	88	90	89	84
23 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																								
• Start your own business	30	37	22	38	34	34	26	29	5	30	32	31	25	36	38	19	7	31	32	33	27	32	28	31
• Write a business plan	21	23	20	35	20	21	18	26	10	21	24	29	20	8	18	19	14	35	23	22	20	19	23	25
• Find financial support for your business	20	22	17	24	26	20	14	24	14	19	22	23	22	10	26	13	21	23	23	17	20	21	20	18
• Get a business licence or permit	19	24	14	29	29	13	19	15	10	20	20	27	17	12	21	13	0	31	22	26	16	18	21	21
• Locate potential customers	27	29	26	29	32	24	29	24	29	28	28	33	19	34	23	25	0	35	22	31	30	28	20	31
• Investigate opportunities for your business	45	49	42	29	52	44	48	50	43	44	49	47	48	49	41	38	50	42	32	42	56	41	53	56
• Other	15	10	21	12	14	16	15	12	24	18	5	6	13	22	21	25	21	12	14	23	12	19	11	8
24 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for accessing services and advice (e.g. investigating real-estate options, finding legal advice)?																								
• Yes – frequently	7	9	6	5	7	10	8	6	6	7	10	9	7	12	10	4	7	4	7	7	8	7	7	8
• Yes – occasionally	28	27	28	14	26	32	33	34	22	27	28	33	30	28	27	27	29	18	23	30	30	27	31	29
• No	65	64	66	81	67	57	59	59	72	66	63	58	63	60	63	69	64	78	71	63	62	66	62	62
25 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																								
• Find out about real estate (e.g. renting or buying property)	66	64	68	72	75	68	65	64	46	66	66	71	65	75	70	54	71	64	68	68	65	64	67	71
• Look for advice or assistance with a legal question or problem	29	35	25	28	26	30	33	30	21	29	29	27	25	26	36	30	30	29	27	29	30	31	26	29
• Find out about community services and support	53	53	53	49	42	54	53	60	63	53	54	47	55	49	54	58	56	57	52	56	53	58	48	46
• Other	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	1	3	2	2	3	1	3	2	3	0	1	1	2	3	2	2	2
26 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection at the library for news, current affairs or community activities (e.g. accessing a news website, accessing community groups, finding out about social causes)?																								
• Yes – frequently	24	28	21	16	23	28	27	26	18	23	26	30	24	22	29	21	10	17	20	23	27	23	27	28
• Yes – occasionally	37	36	38	36	40	39	38	36	33	37	39	37	40	37	35	33	40	40	33	40	39	39	37	37
• No	39	36	41	47	37	33	34	39	50	40	35	33	37	41	36	46	50	43	47	37	34	38	36	36
27 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																								
• Keep up with current events through a news website	83	84	82	88	88	84	82	80	74	83	84	88	83	82	83	77	83	85	83	80	85	80	85	88
• Learn about a political activity or a political candidate	20	26	15	24	21	19	17	19	20	20	22	20	15	24	25	19	10	26	19	21	20	22	15	20
• Learn about a social and/or environmental cause	43	45	42	46	45	46	37	45	37	43	43	43	38	52	48	40	41	48	39	45	44	45	45	39
• Learn about starting a club or non-profit organisation	12	13	11	16	14	13	11	9	8	11	15	11	12	9	14	7	15	16	13	10	12	14	10	10

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Victoria	Gender		Age group						Main language			Employment status						Highest level of education			Income		
		Male	Female	15-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65 and older	English	Not English	Full-time	Part-time	Self-employed	Unemployed	Retired	Home duties / carer	Student	Year 12 or below	Certificate/diploma	Degree/higher degree	Less than \$30K	\$30-60K	\$60K or more
• Organise or manage activities for a club, civic group, community group, church or non-profit group	16	15	16	18	16	15	15	16	11	16	11	15	16	18	11	14	18	18	13	18	17	16	16	14
• Other	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	5	4	3	3	2	2	4	3	5	1	2	2	4	3	3	2	2
28 In the past 12 months, have you used a computer or internet connection within the library for recreation or entertainment purposes (e.g. playing games, pursuing a hobby, surfing the internet)?																								
• Yes – frequently	26	30	24	34	27	27	28	22	13	26	27	28	26	22	33	18	20	30	31	25	22	27	24	24
• Yes – occasionally	42	41	43	40	41	42	43	44	41	42	42	43	42	35	37	42	45	43	39	45	42	42	43	38
• No	32	30	34	26	32	31	29	35	45	32	31	29	32	43	30	40	35	27	30	31	35	31	32	39
29 Did you use the library computer or internet to ... ?																								
• Play games	22	21	22	42	26	18	17	9	9	20	28	16	21	13	24	9	29	39	33	20	12	23	18	11
• Pursue hobbies	35	38	33	41	42	36	32	30	23	37	27	33	37	36	37	28	33	36	38	34	34	38	33	32
• Research travel plans, book flights or accommodation	41	36	45	26	48	45	43	49	35	41	44	54	46	48	34	44	36	25	30	45	49	37	52	51
• Research a topic of personal interest	68	68	69	66	71	67	67	74	62	70	62	67	70	70	69	68	65	68	65	71	70	70	69	69
• Explore your family genealogy	18	13	22	9	11	13	24	29	27	20	8	15	22	15	16	30	16	11	16	21	19	19	18	18
• Surf the internet	67	70	65	77	77	69	67	55	44	67	68	73	65	61	71	52	57	77	70	61	68	65	68	71
• Other	3	3	2	4	2	1	3	1	3	3	2	4	2	0	3	2	1	3	3	2	2	3	1	3
30 Which of the purposes mentioned in the survey is the most important to you?																								
• Accessing government	1	1	2	1	0	2	3	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	3	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
• Accessing services and advice	5	5	5	1	3	6	6	8	8	6	2	6	5	7	3	9	8	2	5	5	6	5	6	4
• Business support	1	2	1	0	2	2	2	1	0	1	1	2	1	8	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	3
• Education and learning	33	31	33	48	35	29	28	28	22	31	39	30	30	27	25	22	27	59	30	31	35	35	26	33
• Employment and career purposes	11	11	10	9	17	10	6	1	10	14	11	14	10	28	0	6	5	8	13	11	12	11	9	
• Health and wellbeing	6	5	7	3	4	8	8	8	8	6	6	6	5	9	5	8	14	2	7	7	5	6	5	7
• Managing your finances	4	4	4	2	3	5	4	5	6	4	2	6	3	4	2	6	1	4	4	4	4	3	6	5
• News, current affairs and community activities	10	13	8	4	9	10	12	14	16	10	12	12	12	12	8	16	5	4	8	10	12	9	12	14
• Recreation and entertainment purposes	15	16	14	13	12	12	17	15	21	16	8	15	14	11	11	20	17	12	19	14	11	14	16	13
• Social purposes	14	13	16	19	19	11	11	14	17	14	15	12	16	10	16	17	13	14	16	14	13	14	15	11
31 In the past 12 months, how often have you used a library computer or internet connection at the library to check or send emails?																								
• More than once a week	27	31	24	20	29	29	30	29	27	26	33	25	29	24	40	27	18	22	25	28	29	29	27	22
• Weekly	18	19	18	20	20	21	18	14	14	18	22	20	19	16	20	15	17	19	20	19	16	19	19	16
• Fortnightly	11	10	11	15	12	8	10	11	6	10	13	11	12	9	12	7	9	13	12	10	10	12	9	11
• Every 1-2 months	12	11	13	16	14	12	10	11	9	12	14	13	12	16	6	10	13	17	12	12	12	11	14	12
• 3-4 times a year or less	14	11	15	16	15	13	12	12	13	14	8	14	14	14	9	12	22	15	13	13	15	13	13	14
• Never	18	17	19	13	10	16	21	23	31	20	11	17	14	21	13	30	22	14	19	18	18	15	19	25
32 In the past 12 months, have you used a library computer or internet connection at the library for any other purposes than the ones we have asked you about?																								
• Yes	14	16	12	11	13	15	13	16	16	13	17	12	13	15	15	15	13	11	12	12	16	15	13	15
33 Was the access to library computers and/or the internet for ... ?																								
• Yourself	79	82	77	79	82	77	76	80	82	79	78	80	79	81	81	81	69	78	79	77	81	80	78	79
• Someone else	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
• Both yourself and someone else	20	18	22	20	17	22	23	19	17	20	20	19	20	18	18	18	30	22	20	22	19	19	21	20

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Gender		Age group					Main language		Employment status					Highest level of education			Income							
	Victoria	Male	Female	15-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65 and older	English	Not English	Full-time	Part-time	Self-employed	Unemployed	Retired	Home duties / carer	Student	Year 12 or below	Certificate/diploma	Degree/higher degree	Less than \$30K	\$30-60K	\$60K or more	
34 How would you rate your skills and confidence in using computers and the internet?																									
• High	55	55	55	76	71	60	47	38	28	55	53	65	54	61	53	30	46	74	48	51	63	52	54	69	
• Medium	38	37	39	22	27	36	45	52	53	38	40	32	40	32	41	55	42	23	42	42	34	39	41	26	
• Low	7	8	6	2	2	4	8	10	20	7	7	3	6	7	6	15	13	3	11	7	3	8	5	4	
35 What are the special advantages of using the computers or internet at the library compared to other locations?																									
• Free internet access	88	88	89	92	92	90	88	89	79	88	91	90	90	82	91	83	92	91	89	89	88	90	89	85	
• Free computer access	66	63	68	64	68	65	70	66	59	66	65	64	70	57	71	62	73	62	69	69	62	68	66	58	
• A safe, secure place to access computers and the internet	59	58	60	60	59	57	60	64	53	60	56	58	61	53	66	57	58	58	59	63	57	61	58	59	
• I am able to seek and get support from library staff	47	44	50	40	41	43	49	65	57	48	42	41	51	37	48	54	52	41	50	55	40	50	47	36	
• Access to up-to-date computers	27	28	26	22	21	27	29	33	31	28	20	25	29	20	30	32	32	20	31	33	21	30	26	23	
• Access to special computer programs	13	12	14	12	9	12	14	16	17	13	13	10	14	12	12	16	13	12	14	15	11	14	12	11	
• Access to printers/scanners	48	44	51	52	53	49	45	48	38	49	45	46	52	40	53	41	53	49	49	52	45	52	47	39	
• Other	9	9	9	9	8	10	10	8	12	10	8	7	8	15	5	11	9	11	7	9	12	9	8	9	
37 How important are the library's computers and internet connection to you personally?																									
• Very important	53	51	55	45	56	55	56	57	49	53	56	53	52	50	64	52	50	49	50	56	54	56	52	52	
• Important	26	28	24	27	27	26	26	24	26	25	29	29	27	27	22	25	26	25	25	28	25	24	28	27	
• Moderately important	16	16	16	23	13	13	14	15	19	17	11	14	17	16	9	17	20	20	20	13	15	16	14		
• Of little importance	4	4	4	5	4	4	3	2	3	4	3	4	3	6	3	3	4	5	3	3	5	3	6		
• Unimportant	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	2		
38 How important is it to you that others in the community have access to library computers and internet?																									
• Very important	68	62	72	55	69	71	74	73	65	70	55	73	71	72	64	67	72	59	59	69	76	66	73	77	
• Important	22	25	20	29	24	21	18	18	23	20	32	20	20	22	25	21	16	27	27	21	18	23	20	17	
• Moderately important	7	9	6	13	5	7	6	7	8	7	10	5	6	5	9	8	10	12	12	8	4	9	5	4	
• Of little importance	2	3	1	3	2	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	
• Unimportant	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	
39 Do you have access to a computer for your own personal use somewhere other than at this library branch?																									
• No	16	18	16	12	15	14	17	20	23	16	20	9	14	10	32	24	18	8	23	17	10	21	11	7	
• Yes – at another library branch	19	20	18	21	21	20	20	16	15	18	25	20	19	17	19	17	13	22	18	20	19	19	19	17	
• Yes – at work	23	20	25	12	29	33	33	18	7	24	17	60	36	21	4	3	4	9	10	23	34	11	36	54	
• Yes – at home	67	64	71	77	68	68	65	66	61	70	59	71	70	82	49	62	72	79	60	64	77	63	74	78	
• Yes – at school, TAFE or university	15	15	16	53	16	9	6	2	2	13	28	5	11	4	6	1	4	66	24	10	11	20	7	5	
• Yes – at a community centre	2	3	3	3	2	4	3	4	3	3	2	2	2	4	5	3	3	3	3	4	2	4	3	1	
• Yes – at an internet cafe or wi-fi hotspot	9	11	7	14	12	8	7	5	6	8	11	10	8	12	8	5	3	13	9	9	9	8	11		
• Yes – other	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	2	3	4	2	6	4	3	3	4	5	3	4	3	3	
40 Do you have access to the internet apart from at this library branch?																									
• No	17	19	15	12	17	15	18	22	22	17	19	10	14	13	34	24	23	8	22	18	12	21	12	9	
• Yes – at another library branch	25	26	25	26	29	26	25	25	18	24	30	27	24	22	27	23	21	28	24	26	26	26	24	24	
• Yes – at work	24	21	26	13	31	33	34	18	7	25	19	61	39	23	5	2	3	11	10	24	36	11	39	57	
• Yes – at home	55	51	60	63	56	57	55	52	51	57	48	63	59	68	34	50	55	67	49	52	65	50	62	68	
• Yes – at school, TAFE or university	16	15	16	54	17	9	6	3	2	14	27	6	11	5	5	1	3	68	24	10	13	21	8	5	

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Victoria	Gender		Age group						Main language		Employment status						Highest level of education			Income			
		Male	Female	15-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65 and older	English	Not English	Full-time	Part-time	Self-employed	Unemployed	Retired	Home duties / carer	Student	Year 12 or below	Certificate/diploma	Degree/higher degree	Less than \$30K	\$30-60K	\$60K or more
• Yes – at a community centre	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	4	4	3	3	2	2	5	2	5	4	4	2	3	4	4	3	2
• Yes – at an internet cafe or wi-fi hotspot	10	13	9	15	14	10	10	8	5	10	12	11	9	14	9	6	2	17	10	9	12	10	9	12
• Yes – through a smartphone	13	12	13	24	19	14	9	6	1	13	13	16	13	19	9	3	6	24	12	10	15	12	14	17
• Yes – other	5	5	6	4	4	5	6	6	7	6	3	4	5	5	8	7	6	3	5	7	5	7	4	3
41 Do you use/access any of the following at your library?																								
• Library website (incl. the library catalogue)	71	65	77	66	68	77	75	75	64	72	67	76	74	70	65	69	71	70	62	72	79	69	75	74
• Online databases (excl. the library catalogue)	38	37	39	35	32	40	41	43	32	39	32	41	40	38	31	36	29	43	30	40	44	38	38	43
• Library printers/scanners	55	51	58	54	59	55	56	58	47	56	52	53	61	49	59	51	53	53	55	62	52	59	56	50
42 In the past 12 months, have you participated in computer-related training or classes (e.g. how to use computer software or search the internet) ...?																								
• At a public library	9	7	10	6	9	8	9	10	15	8	13	8	9	7	9	12	12	7	10	10	7	9	10	7
• Other than at a public library	11	10	12	11	9	12	12	14	12	11	12	14	11	6	11	11	4	15	10	12	12	11	11	14
43 In the past 12 months, have you received assistance from library staff for any of the following purposes?																								
• How to connect to the internet	19	22	17	16	21	17	22	18	22	18	24	21	18	21	22	18	18	18	23	19	16	21	19	20
• How to search on the internet	12	12	12	6	8	10	14	16	21	12	13	12	11	11	15	17	13	5	15	13	8	14	10	10
• How to use library databases for research	19	18	20	12	16	22	21	23	20	19	18	21	20	21	17	22	19	16	18	20	19	19	21	19
• How to use word-processing/spreadsheet programs (Word, Excel)	7	7	7	5	5	8	10	6	7	6	8	7	9	4	9	6	5	5	8	9	5	8	6	5
• How to save documents	7	7	7	4	5	8	9	9	7	7	7	8	9	5	9	7	6	3	10	7	4	7	8	5
• How to print or scan documents	31	30	32	25	29	36	32	33	32	31	34	30	34	29	34	31	33	26	34	35	28	33	35	24
• How to connect to the library's wi-fi	21	21	22	26	25	23	21	19	13	21	24	23	24	23	20	15	17	28	20	22	23	22	21	23
• Other	7	7	7	4	5	8	8	9	8	7	4	5	7	8	7	11	4	5	5	8	8	8	6	7
44 Do you have a disability that impacts on your use of computers and/or the internet at your library?																								
• Yes	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	5	3	4	4	2	2	4	4	4	5	5	5	3	3	6	2	1
46 How satisfied are you with your access to a computer and/or the internet at your library?																								
• Very satisfied	52	50	53	43	51	51	53	55	60	53	46	48	54	50	52	59	60	44	53	56	48	54	52	50
• Satisfied	37	38	37	41	40	37	36	36	32	36	42	41	36	36	39	32	34	41	36	35	40	36	40	37
• Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7	8	6	12	5	7	6	6	5	7	9	7	6	6	7	6	3	11	8	6	7	7	5	6
• Dissatisfied	3	4	3	2	3	4	5	2	2	3	2	3	3	7	1	3	2	3	2	3	4	3	2	5
• Very dissatisfied	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
47 How satisfied are you with the support provided by the staff at your library when accessing a computer and/or the internet at your library?																								
• Very satisfied	59	57	61	49	58	58	60	68	67	61	53	57	62	59	57	67	67	50	60	64	56	60	61	57
• Satisfied	30	33	27	35	33	30	30	24	23	28	35	31	28	26	33	24	26	34	30	29	30	29	29	30
• Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	8	10	13	8	11	8	7	9	10	9	9	8	14	8	9	7	13	8	7	12	9	9	10
• Dissatisfied	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
• Very dissatisfied	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
48 Are any of your computer/internet needs not met at your library?																								
• Yes	22	24	21	18	22	25	26	22	16	22	21	26	20	20	25	18	17	22	19	23	24	24	22	26

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Gender		Age group						Main language		Employment status						Highest level of education				Income							
	Victoria	Male	Female	15-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65 and older	English	Not English	Full-time	Part-time	Self-employed	Unemployed	Retired	Home duties / carer	Student	Year 12 or below	Certificate/diploma	Degree/higher degree	Less than \$30K	\$30-60K	\$60K or more				
50 Your gender																												
• Male	42	100	0	43	41	40	40	43	50	41	50	50	29	56	49	9	52	46	40	39	42	39	50					
• Female	58	0	100	57	59	60	60	57	50	59	50	71	44	45	51	91	48	54	60	61	58	61	50					
51 Your age group																												
• 15-24 years	18	18	18	100	0	0	0	0	16	30	6	13	3	18	0	6	69	37	10	6	25	6	3					
• 25-34 years	16	16	17	0	100	0	0	0	15	24	25	18	14	23	0	21	15	11	17	20	15	20	17					
• 35-44 years	18	17	18	0	0	100	0	0	17	22	28	21	25	21	0	32	7	12	19	22	15	23	26					
• 45-54 years	20	19	21	0	0	0	100	0	21	14	28	26	28	21	6	26	6	15	24	22	16	25	30					
• 55-64 years	18	18	18	0	0	0	0	100	0	20	6	11	18	27	16	41	13	2	15	19	20	18	19	17				
• 65 or older	10	13	9	0	0	0	0	0	100	12	3	2	4	2	1	53	3	0	10	11	10	11	9	8				
52 Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?																												
• Yes	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	0	2	2	3	1	1	2	1	1					
53 What is the main language spoken at home?																												
• English	85	82	87	74	77	81	89	94	95	100	0	86	88	80	79	95	89	71	83	87	85	83	89	89				
• Not English	15	18	13	26	23	19	11	6	5	0	100	14	12	20	21	5	11	29	17	13	15	17	11	11				
54 How well do you read English?																												
• Very well	88	85	91	85	84	87	90	94	91	94	59	91	91	86	80	93	89	85	84	89	92	86	92	94				
• Fairly well	8	10	6	10	11	9	7	4	6	5	26	6	7	10	14	5	6	9	10	8	6	9	7	5				
• OK	3	4	2	4	4	4	2	1	2	1	12	2	2	2	5	1	3	5	5	3	2	4	1	1				
• Very little	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	3	1	0	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	1				
55 Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?																												
• Full-time employment	19	22	16	6	29	30	27	11	4	19	17	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	19	27	3	35	60				
• Part-time employment	22	15	27	16	24	26	29	22	8	23	17	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	18	25	23	21	31	12				
• Self-employed	6	8	4	1	5	8	8	9	1	5	8	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	3	5	8	4	9	9				
• Unemployed	12	16	9	12	17	14	13	10	1	11	16	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	14	13	9	19	3	4				
• Retired	16	19	14	0	0	0	5	37	83	18	6	0	0	0	0	100	0	0	15	18	16	18	14	9				
• Home duties or carer	6	1	9	2	7	10	8	4	2	6	4	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	7	6	5	8	3	3				
• Student	16	16	16	62	15	7	5	2	0	13	31	0	0	0	0	0	100	29	10	8	23	4	2					
• Other	3	3	3	1	3	3	6	4	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	3	5	2	2				
56 What is the highest level of education you have completed?																												
• Did not go to school	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	1			
• Still at school	6	6	6	29	1	1	0	1	0	4	14	1	3	1	1	0	1	30	17	0	0	7	1	1				
• Year 11 or below	14	16	12	15	9	11	13	17	20	15	8	7	11	6	26	19	20	10	39	0	0	17	10	6				
• Year 12 or equivalent	14	15	14	28	12	10	12	11	14	14	15	9	15	13	13	13	20	22	42	0	0	18	14	3				
• Certificate/diploma	24	23	25	13	26	26	29	25	27	25	20	25	27	22	27	27	24	15	0	100	0	25	26	15				
• Degree/higher degree	41	39	43	15	52	51	45	46	38	41	41	58	44	58	31	42	35	22	0	0	100	32	49	74				
57 What is your annual income (individual pre-tax)?																												
• Below \$30,000 per year	58	57	58	88	53	46	42	51	65	56	68	7	48	33	89	67	71	73	75	61	43	100	0	0				
• Between \$30,000 and \$60,000 per year	27	25	29	9	33	33	30	25	23	28	21	45	35	37	7	24	11	5	20	30	31	0	100	0				
• Between \$60,000 and \$100,000 per year	11	12	10	0	12	15	14	9	9	12	6	31	5	12	3	7	2	1	3	7	19	0	0	73				
• Over \$100,000 per year	4	5	3	2	3	5	6	3	3	4	5	10	2	8	1	2	3	1	2	2	7	0	0	27				

F3. Children's survey results by respondent demographic

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Victoria	Gender		Age group						Main language		Home access to internet	
		Male	Female	8 or 9 years	10 years	11 years	12 years	13 years	14 years	English	Not English	Yes	No
Number of survey responses	623	305	298	56	68	97	136	122	144	462	135	431	176
4 How often do you come to the library?													
• Every week	64	70	60	59	60	65	67	69	60	64	69	60	76
• Couple of times a month	30	24	35	41	37	30	27	27	28	30	26	34	20
• Couple of times a year	6	6	5	0	3	5	5	4	12	6	5	7	3
5 Do you usually come to the library with someone else?													
• No – I come alone	21	23	19	0	10	12	18	28	39	21	24	21	23
• Yes – parent or carer	39	34	42	66	47	42	31	38	29	38	37	42	31
• Yes – other family	27	33	42	43	40	40	47	29	28	38	35	36	39
• Yes – friends	26	29	24	13	22	27	26	33	28	27	26	27	25
• Yes – school	3	2	4	2	7	1	1	7	1	2	4	3	3
6 How often do you use the library computers?													
• I don't	8	7	7	4	1	4	9	13	9	7	6	8	6
• Every week	49	57	43	51	49	49	52	48	49	49	55	42	70
• Couple of times a month	31	26	36	42	41	33	28	30	24	31	31	36	19
• Couple of times a year	12	10	13	4	9	14	11	9	18	12	8	15	4
7 How often do you use the library's internet from your computer, iPad/iPod or smartphone?													
• I don't	38	39	36	53	49	43	34	30	33	35	45	37	38
• Every week	29	29	30	22	22	25	32	34	33	32	24	27	37
• Couple of times a month	22	21	23	22	19	22	20	28	21	23	20	24	17
• Couple of times a year	11	10	11	4	10	9	14	8	13	11	10	12	7
8 Do you do anything else when you come to the library?													
• Yes	84	78	92	87	88	84	81	87	81	84	86	89	73
9 What do you use the library computers or the library internet for?													
• Play games	51	60	41	73	72	63	49	48	26	50	54	48	56
• Do homework	49	41	58	30	40	44	52	53	57	48	53	45	59
• Facebook	25	25	26	7	10	18	26	30	40	27	23	22	34
• Surf the internet	21	19	23	4	16	22	21	18	33	22	19	23	16
• Emails	8	6	10	13	7	4	10	8	5	7	11	8	8
• Use catalogue	7	4	8	4	12	8	7	6	5	7	3	8	2
• Do research	6	4	8	2	4	6	4	5	10	5	7	7	3
• YouTube	4	3	5	0	4	1	6	7	3	4	4	4	4
10 Do you use the library internet to check or send emails?													
• Yes	50	48	54	21	34	49	55	60	58	50	54	49	56
11 How good are you at using computers and the internet?													
• Really good	58	59	58	50	53	58	56	61	64	63	45	61	53
• Good	29	27	30	29	34	33	32	30	21	26	37	27	32
• OK	9	10	8	11	9	9	10	4	11	8	11	8	11
• I am still learning	4	4	4	11	4	0	2	5	4	3	7	4	4
12 Why do you like to use the computers or internet at the library?													
• Because it is free	67	69	65	59	66	67	66	69	71	69	64	70	60
• Because it is safe	34	30	39	36	38	29	32	34	35	33	39	38	24
• Because I can get help from library staff	22	19	25	27	25	23	23	21	19	21	25	19	29
• Other	26	26	26	25	28	19	23	36	24	25	29	24	30
13 Do you have access to a computer or the internet somewhere else?													
• No	9	13	7	5	13	7	10	9	11	10	7	0	34
• Yes – at home	69	68	73	52	71	70	72	75	67	72	70	100	0
• Yes – at school	65	63	70	68	76	66	63	63	61	68	62	67	65
• Yes – at someone else's house	25	26	24	21	34	27	22	29	20	25	26	28	33
• Yes - other	3	3	4	0	1	3	4	5	3	3	4	3	4

Survey question (responses shown are %)	Victoria	Gender		Age group						Main language		Home access to internet	
		Male	Female	8 or 9 years	10 years	11 years	12 years	13 years	14 years	English	Not English	Yes	No
14 Have you asked for help from the library staff when using a computer or the internet?													
• How to connect to the internet	15	16	16	9	24	9	10	18	20	17	11	16	16
• How to use a computer	8	11	4	11	12	5	9	7	5	7	9	7	10
• How to print	28	25	34	34	34	30	29	24	26	27	38	28	33
• For something else	21	17	26	13	28	14	25	27	16	23	16	22	20
15 How easy is it for you to get to use a computer or the internet at the library?													
• Very easy	53	54	52	49	60	51	53	53	52	54	50	53	53
• Easy	27	26	28	35	26	29	25	28	25	29	23	26	29
• It's OK	17	16	18	14	12	14	20	15	20	15	23	17	16
• Not very easy	2	3	2	2	1	5	2	2	1	2	2	3	2
• Very difficult	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	3	1	1

G. Snapshots

G1. Use of library computer and internet services

Drawing on the activity classifications used in *Opportunity for all*, the *Internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries* survey asked about ten types of activity that people might do when they use libraries' computer and internet services. The survey asked respondents whether they did any of these activities and how frequently they did them.

Sixty-eight per cent of people who used library computer and internet services did so for recreation and entertainment purposes. Sixty-three per cent undertook social

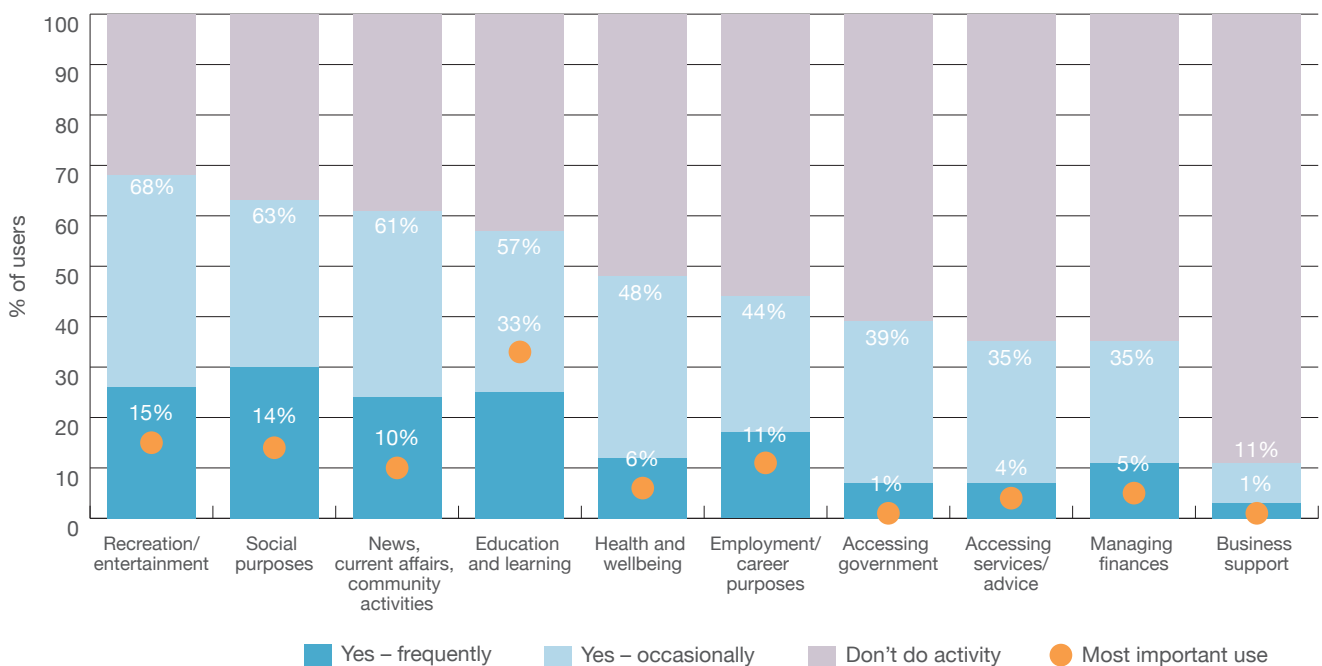
activities, with 61% accessing news, current affairs and information about community activities. On average, respondents said that in the past 12 months they had undertaken activities in four to five of these groups.

When asked to rate which of the ten activities was the most important to them, 33% of respondents nominated activities related to education and learning as the most important, even though this was not the most common activity. Recreation and entertainment activities were most important to 15% of respondents,

with socialisation most important to 14%. While 39% of people used their library's computer and internet services to access government, only 1% said this was the most important thing they did.

This section presents short summaries of the different uses of library computer and internet services, the benefits to library users, and the reasons why users access these services at a public library.

Figure G1. Use of library computer and internet services



Students of all ages – from school to university to vocational education and U3A – use the computers and internet at their public library to access and undertake education and learning programs. They can check out schools, apply for a training course, do their homework and study, access online courses, or undertake personal research into an area of special interest.

Fifty-seven per cent of people use the computers and internet services at their local library for educational purposes, and 33% rate it the most important technology-enabled activity they do at the library. These users fall into two groups.

The first and smaller group is those who are seeking information about educational options. Thirty per cent of people who said they used library services for educational purposes said that in the past 12 months they had researched schools, colleges, TAFE or university. This group includes parents of school-age children, students applying for college, and older workers and people looking to re-enter the labour market and seeking

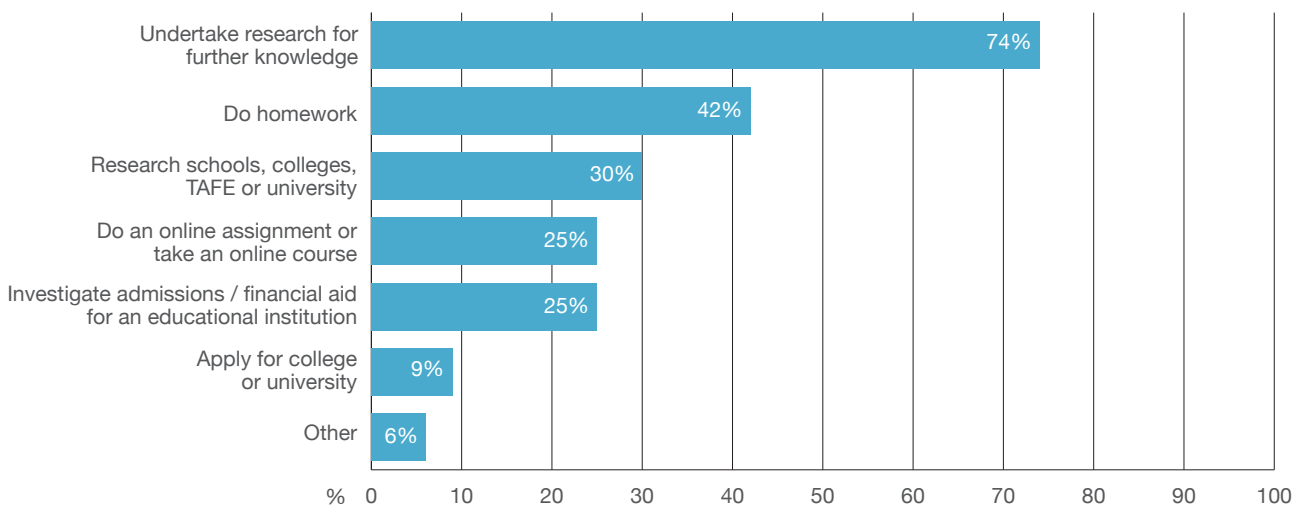
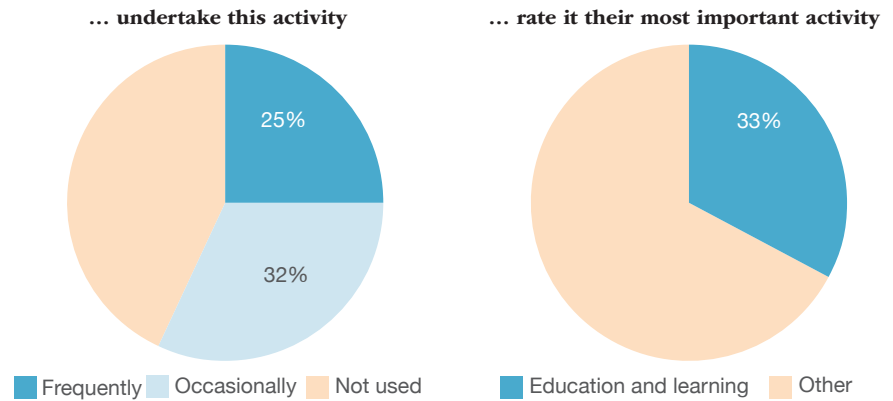
out opportunities to upgrade their qualifications and skills. It also includes older people looking to access training courses for personal interest and enjoyment.

The second and much larger group is those who are actually undertaking formal or informal education and training. It includes school-age children and tertiary students doing homework or study, and people undertaking research for further knowledge (74% of users in this category). Some of these people have computers and internet access at home or work or school. Some do not, or do not have reliable access or internet access of sufficient speed.

In addition to free computer and internet access, for them the library provides a safe, comfortable and convenient study environment:

- Free from the distractions of home, they can focus more effectively on their study.
- By eliminating the need to travel to and from their place of education to access the internet and online resources, they have more time for personal, family, social and recreational activities.
- With wireless internet access, they can bring all of their study material with them on their own device.

% of computer and internet users who ...

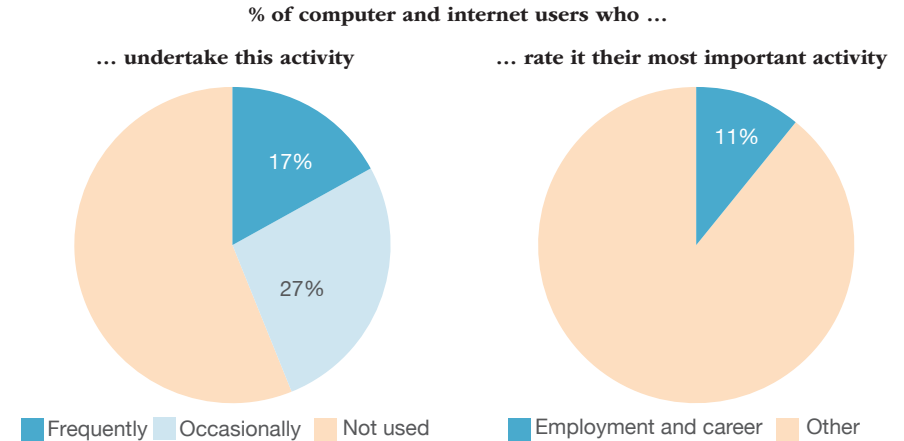


'I live 2 hours each way from my university, so it is much more practical to use the local library for the internet. I have a very small internet plan at home so I use the library's internet when it is convenient to ensure I don't go over my plan. When my computer at home blew up and was unusable for 4 weeks, the internet and computers at the library were a necessity.'

'I have a limited income (don't we all!) and only a 2GB limit on my internet plan. And I live in a slow-speed rural area. I find the availability of the library internet service invaluable to enable me to enjoy online study in my retirement. I am 81 yrs of age. In return I help other older members of the community to experience what I enjoy.'

With job classifieds now more likely to be found online than in the daily newspapers (at sites such as JobSearch, Seek and MyCareer), and many companies expecting job applications to be submitted online (not via the post), the internet is an essential tool for anyone wanting to find full-time, part-time or even casual work. The internet is the place to go to research career options, find out what jobs are available, gather information about a prospective employer, put together a résumé and apply for a job.

On average 44% of people use the computers and internet services at their local library for employment and career-related purposes, although the proportion is much higher for the unemployed (73%, and the unemployed are also a group with a disproportionate number of people born in countries where English is not the main language), and people aged 25–34 years (62%) and 35–44 years (54%). Overall, 11% rate employment activities as the most important technology-enabled thing they do at the library, with 28% of unemployed

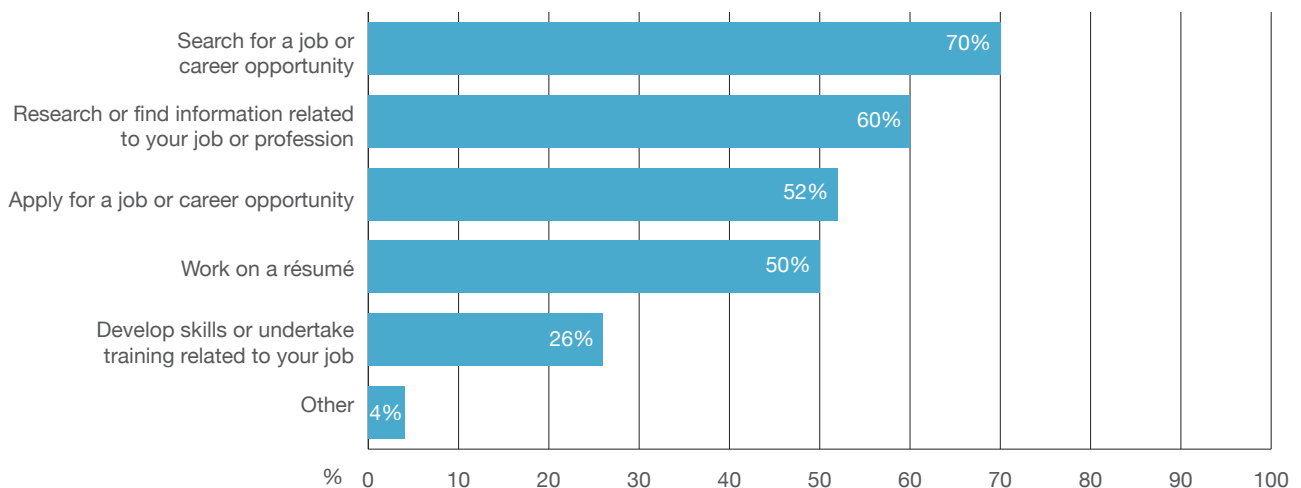


people rating online employment/career activities as the most important activity they undertake at the library, ahead of education and learning (25%), social activities (16%) and recreational activities (11%).

Of those who use the computers and internet services at their local library for employment and career-related purposes, 70% have in the past 12 months used the internet to search for a job or career opportunity, 60% have undertaken research related to their job or profession, 52% have applied for a job or career opportunity online, and 50% have used the library computers to work on their résumé or print

job descriptions, résumés and other work-related material.

There are two other groups who use library computers and the internet for employment and career activities. The first is those who use the internet to develop skills and undertake training for their current job via online or computer-assisted education and training programs. The second is the self-employed or micro-business owners who use the library (sometimes between jobs) to check work emails, correspond with clients or colleagues, seek out potential clients or promote their skills and services online, print contracts, and write and send invoices.



‘I was able to apply for different jobs there after browsing through the vacancies. I could send and check emails without wasting time getting home and doing it through my shared connection. There is no question that I got a job because of the easy access available for a long time in the libraries.’

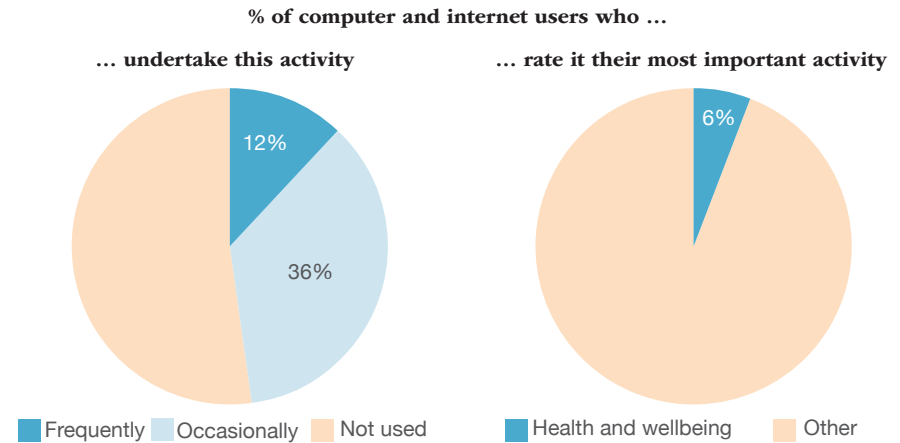
‘Before I had internet at home this was the only way I could connect to the internet. I spent a lot of time searching for employment using the library’s wi-fi connection and was able to print out CVs and application forms at a low cost.’

‘I arrived in Melbourne 7 weeks ago from the UK. I now have a job which I applied for at the library.’

Forty-eight per cent of people use the computers and internet services at their local library for health and wellbeing purposes. Six per cent rate it the most important technology-enabled activity they do at the library. These are more likely to be middle-aged and older people (55% of those aged 45–64 years) than people aged 15–24 years (where only 31% checked out health and wellbeing issues).

The use of library computer and internet services for health and wellbeing purposes is thought to be not unlike the way the general population might support their information needs in this area. However, the profile of use is distinctive across different age groups.

Overall, 70% of people who use the computers and internet services at the library for health and wellbeing purposes said they use the internet and online databases to learn about illness, disease or medical conditions, sometimes for themselves but often for a family member with a specific condition (e.g. a child, partner or parent). But the proportion of users in this group

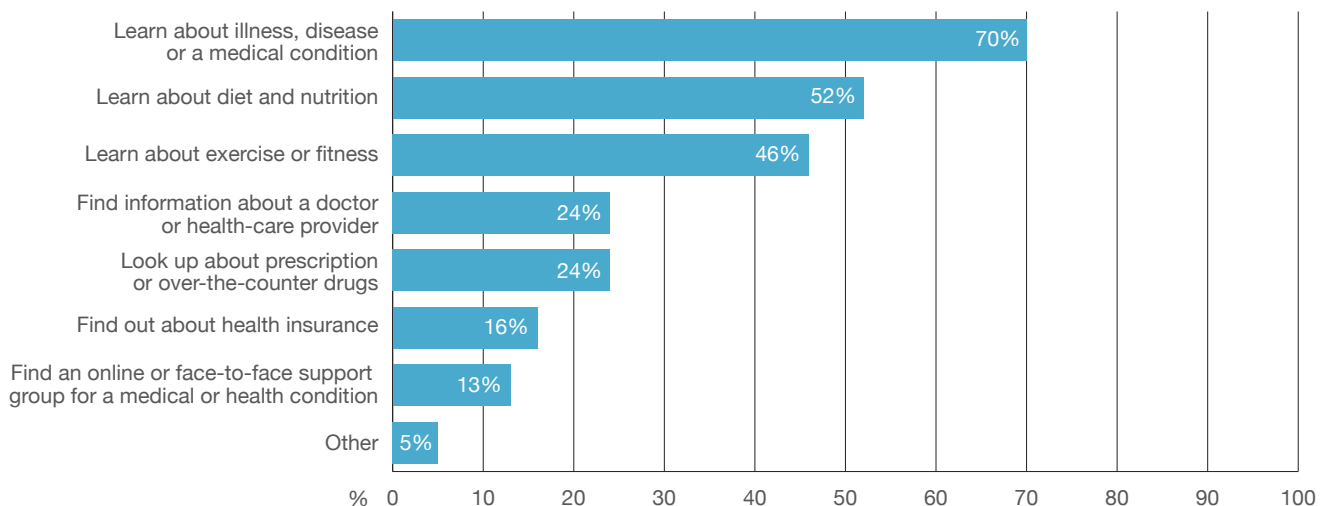


is much higher among people aged 45 years or more (77%) than for those aged under 35 years (58%).

Similarly, while on average 24% of people in the 'health and wellbeing' user group use the internet to look up information about prescription or over-the-counter drugs, the proportion is significantly higher for people aged 45 years and over (30%) than for those aged under 45 years (18%). Conversely, people aged under 35 years are much more likely to use libraries' computer and internet services to learn about diet and nutrition (58% vs 51%) or exercise and fitness (58% vs 36%) than people aged 55 years or more.

People on annual incomes of \$60,000 or higher are more likely than those on incomes less than \$30,000 to be using the internet to find out about health insurance.

The range of health and wellbeing purposes mentioned by different library internet users includes: finding information about natural remedies and natural health protocols; accessing 'self-help' and medical advice websites; researching the latest medical and scientific advances; checking dosage effects; and one young student trying to find a support group for gay teens.



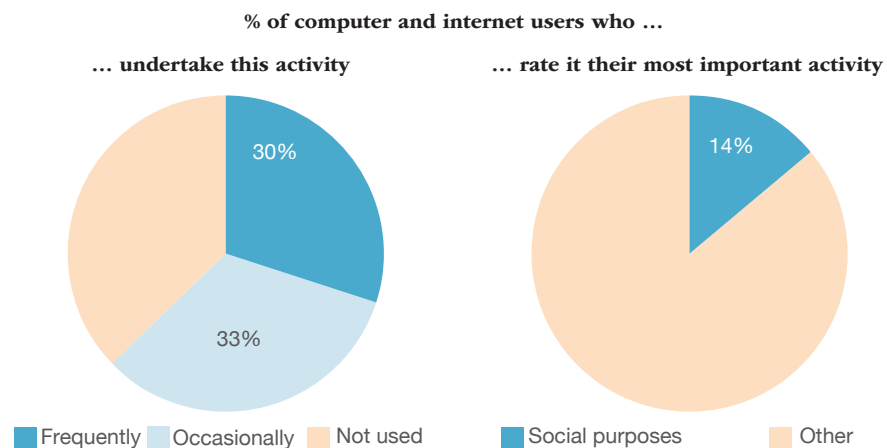
'On many occasions I require a lot of internet access, especially for information on medical problems which need extensive personal research. On these occasions my own internet account is not adequate.'

'I am able to send information to work such as medical certificates that I would have to send through the post, which would take too long to get there.'

Using library computers and the internet for social purposes is the second most common activity (63%) behind recreational and entertainment purposes (68%), although social usage is much more common among people aged 15–24 years (76%) than people aged 55 years or more (51%). For 14% of users, social activities are also the most important technology-enabled activities they do at the library.

Socialisation involves keeping in touch with family or friends through a range of technological applications, with the two most common means of engaging in social activities through libraries' internet services having a distinct age differential:

- emailing family and friends – undertaken by 87% of the 63% people in the social activity group (55% of all survey respondents), and an activity undertaken at a broadly similar level across all demographics except for school-age students (78%)

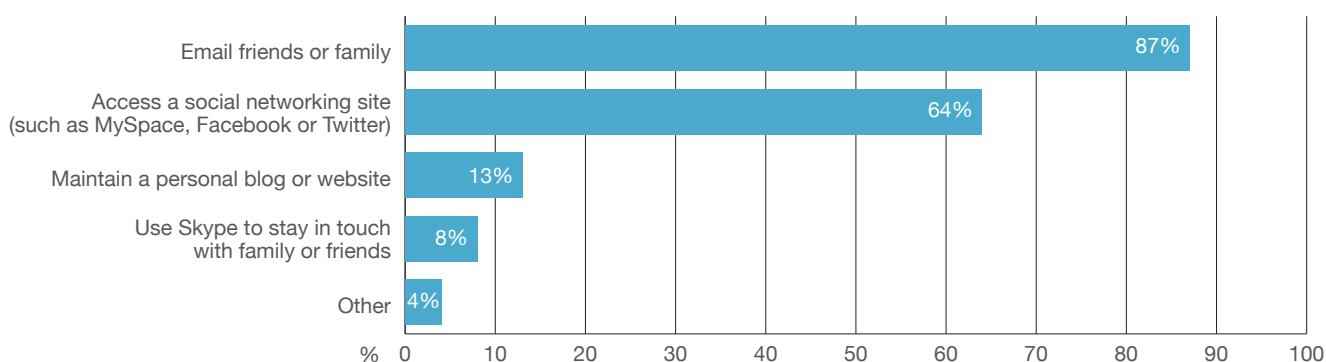


- accessing a social networking site such as Facebook or Twitter – undertaken by 64% of people in this group (40% overall), and an activity having a significant correlation with age (being used by around 82% of people aged 15–34 years, and only 40% of people aged 55–64 years and 27% of people aged 65 years and over).

Although it is not a service offered at all public libraries, about 8% of all survey respondents in this group said they use Skype at the library. Skype use is most common (18%

of users) among people for whom English is not the main language spoken at home. Where available, they use Skype at the library to keep in touch with family and friends overseas and interstate.

Beyond these common social uses of the internet, people said they use the internet at the library to: access internet dating sites and introduction agencies; contact, participate in or run social websites (e.g. playgroups, mothers' groups, religious groups); access chat sites (e.g. MSN, Google Chat); and participate in online communities (e.g. fantasy football).



'Kept contact with my 23-year-old son holidaying/working overseas. He left 1 June 2011, it's now 2 April 2012.'

'Socialising through the internet using websites such as Facebook and Twitter, video streaming through YouTube, includes entertainment and watching foreign news broadcast.'

'Having access to the library resources meant staying in touch with friends and family, and a space to study and relax when living in shared accommodation became too much.'

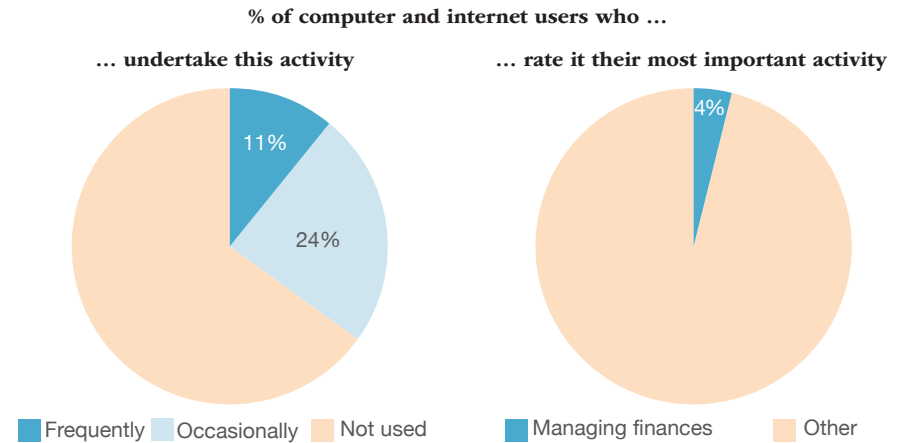
'By keeping in touch with friends and relatives you do not become isolated and depressed. Improve yourself and try to be a better person.'

Over the past ten years banks and financial institutions have encouraged customers to undertake more of their financial management activities online (e.g. banking, share trading). Energy companies, insurance companies, state and local government agencies and many other service providers encourage online bill-paying for efficiency and environmental reasons.

Online shopping is becoming commonplace, and eBay has 100 million global users and a value of sales in 2011 of \$69 billion.

Thirty-five per cent of people use the computers and internet services at their local library for financial management purposes, and 4% rate it the most important technology-enabled activity they do at the library. However, the nature of the activities undertaken varies across different demographic groups and life stages.

Seventy-two per cent of this group do some of their banking online at the library – notably a higher proportion of people aged 25–34 years (85%), people responsible for home duties (84%)



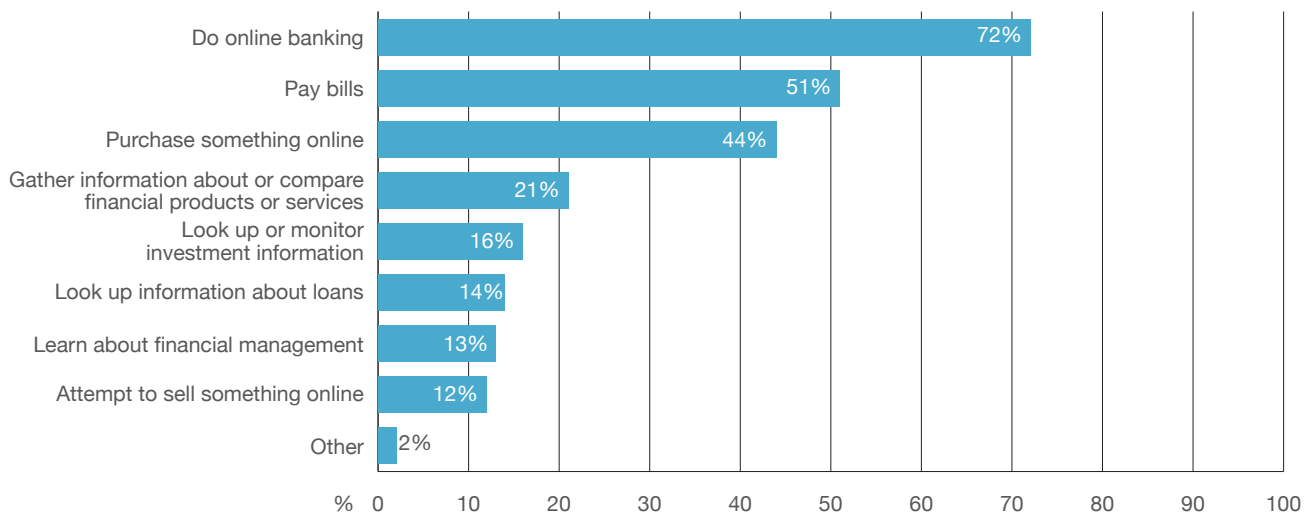
and females (75%), as well as full-time employees (79%), people with annual incomes of \$60,000 or more (80%) and more highly educated people (77%). These groups are also more likely to pay bills online at the library than older people and retirees.

Older people and retirees are also much less likely than average to buy or sell things online. Yet in this group, 36% of retired people and those aged 65 years and over (particularly men) use the internet at the library to look up or monitor investment information (e.g. accessing share-trading and investment websites, watching the

ABC's *Inside business* program online), compared with around 10% of people aged under 35 years.

The online shoppers and sellers (44% of this group shop online and 12% attempted to sell something online from a library computer in 2011) have a relatively high proportion of young people aged under 25 or those aged 35–44.

One retired woman mentioned that she had needed the internet to sell the house of her elderly mother who had lived and died in America – an activity she was able to manage from her local library.



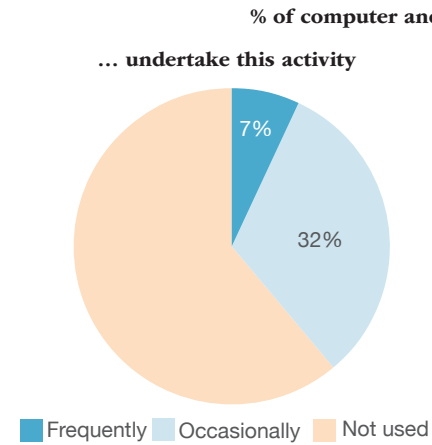
'I do not have my computer connected to internet. I have greatly benefited from accessing the computer at the library for doing net-banking and paying bills and booking online tickets.'

'Kept payments and banking up to date when not able to access from home/work.'

Commonwealth, state and local governments publish a lot of information about programs and services on their websites, and for many people in regional, rural and outer suburban areas government websites are the only convenient place to access forms.

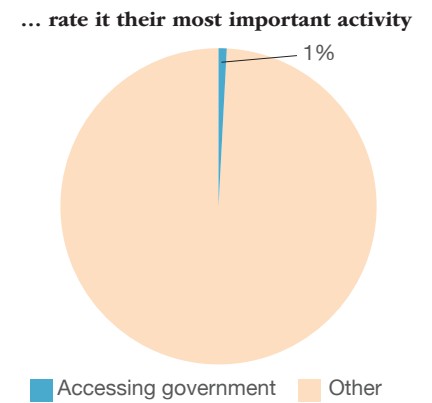
Overall, 39% of survey respondents said they access government services, learn about government programs and regulations, get government forms and get information about licences and permits online at the library. Other than younger students and persons aged 65 years and over, who are less likely to be undertaking these activities at the library, the spread of usage is fairly even across demographic categories, although the actual use varies depending on the type of information or service accessed.

That is, unemployed people use the library internet to access Centrelink and get and submit forms. Self-employed people indicated that they use the library to access the Australian Taxation Office's website and research information about

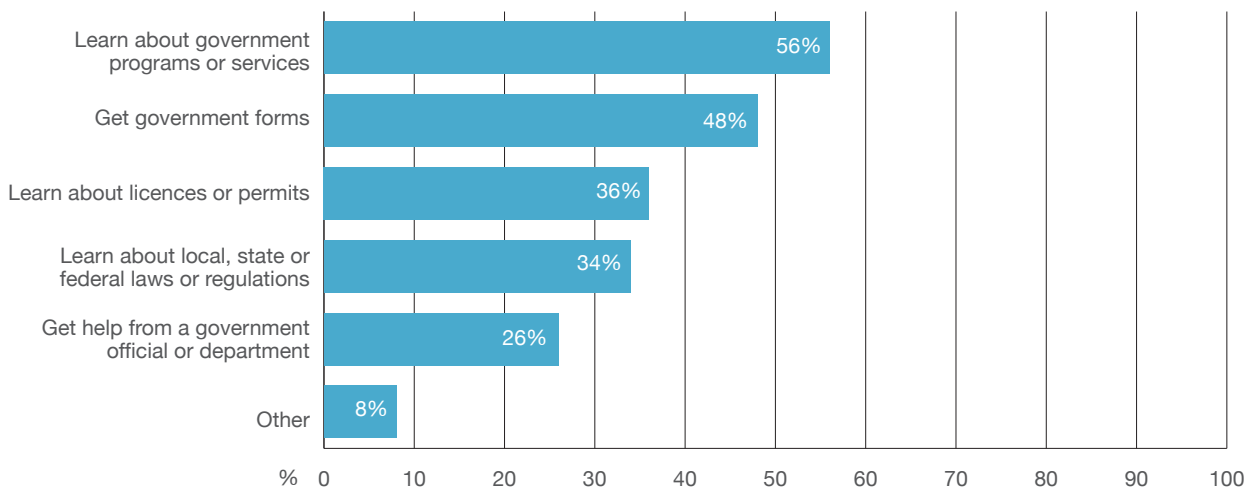


government programs and licences related to their business. Forty-eight per cent of 15–24-year-olds in this group, and 42% of those aged 25–34 years, went online to learn about licences and permits (especially driver's licences and car registration, and notably a higher proportion of males than females). Seeking information about local by-laws (e.g. pet registration, planning permits) was also noted, as was using the internet to find out about visa and citizenship issues by people from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

While 39% of libraries' computer users access government information



and services online, only 1% (and no more than 3% in any demographic group) rate this as the most important technology-enabled activity they undertake at the library.

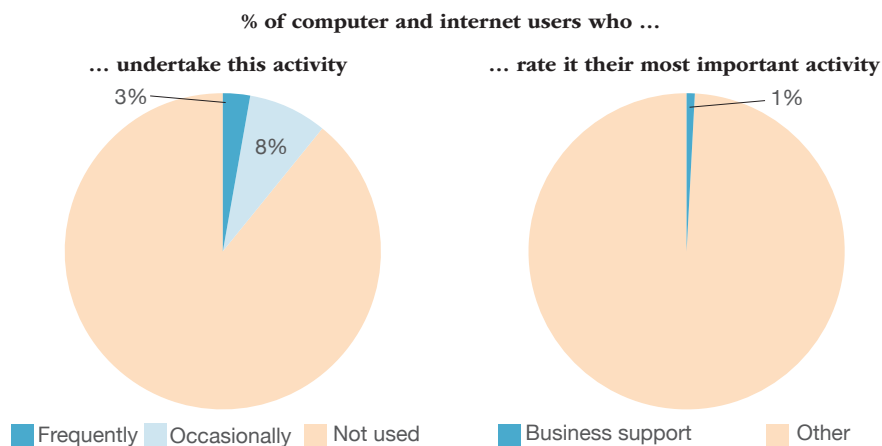


'I am able to contribute more effectively to local government issues and use government programs.'

Only 11% of people who use library computers and the internet do so for business support. But while this is clearly the least frequently undertaken activity among survey respondents, and overall only 1% rate it the most important technology-enabled activity they do at the library, internet access at the library is very convenient for its primary user group: people who are self-employed and those who run micro-businesses.

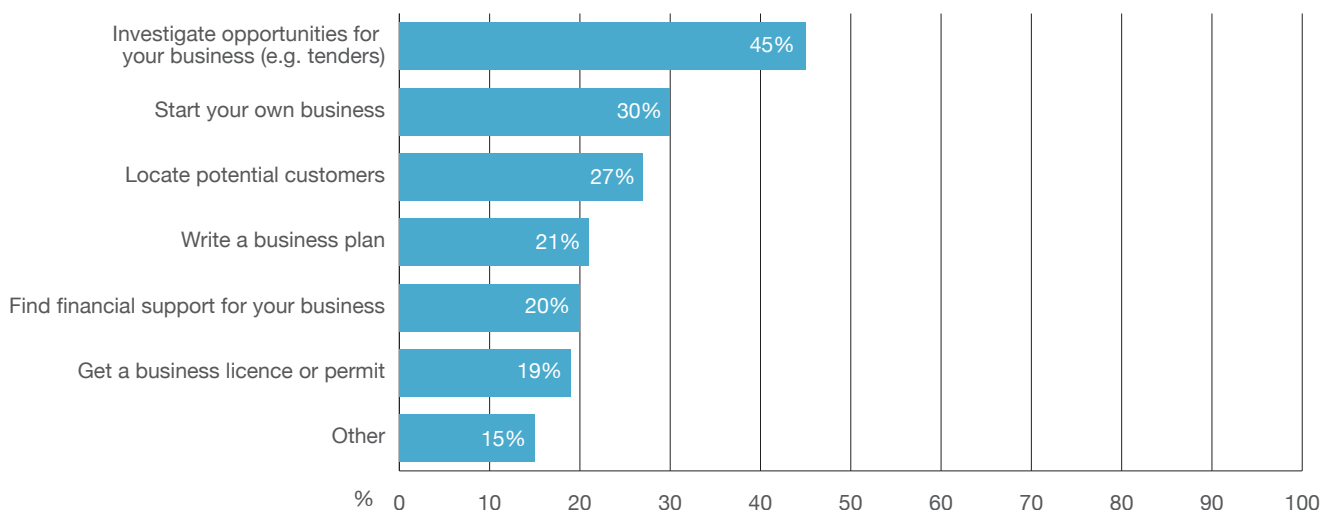
Among self-employed persons who use libraries' computer and internet services, 35% (or one in three) use these services to support the running of their business (12% frequently, 23% occasionally). The opportunity to access free internet services at the library is often critical to them being able to successfully run their small- and micro-business endeavours:

- investigating opportunities for their business (e.g. tenders) and researching competitors



- locating potential customers and contacting clients
- writing a business plan and registering business details online
- designing business cards
- managing business finances (e.g. completing tax returns and BAS statements, managing a self-managed superannuation fund) and finding financial support for their business.

A second group of library users who engage in this space are people conducting research into business start-up and potential business opportunities, such as arts and research grants, and the like. This group tends to be younger in age, more often less than 35 years of age.



'It is a valuable resource for me in terms of preparing invoices and using the internet – both to receive and send emails.'

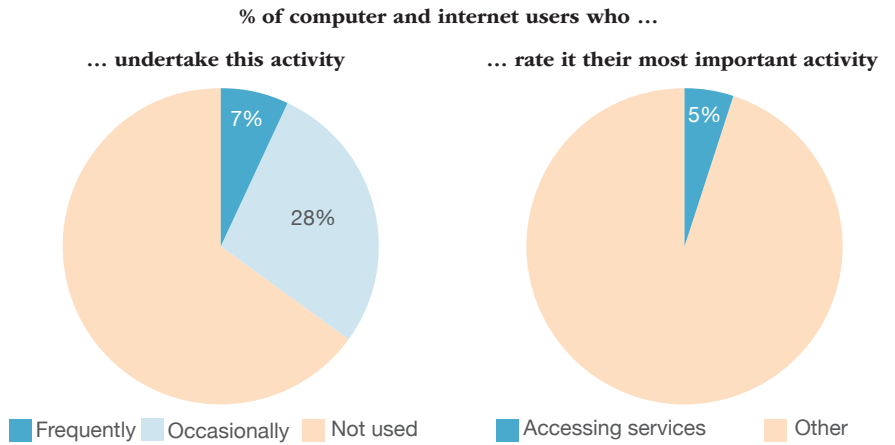
'I have been able to start my own Avon business.'

'It works as a cheap accessible office with no rent. The state government could do itself, the congested transport system and the rest of us a favour if it would sponsor the establishment of places where people who can telecommute can gather to work locally.'

Thirty-five per cent of people using the computers and internet services at their local library do so to access general services and advice (e.g. investigating real-estate options, obtaining legal advice, finding information about community services and support). Five per cent of users rate this as the most important technology-enabled activity they do at the library.

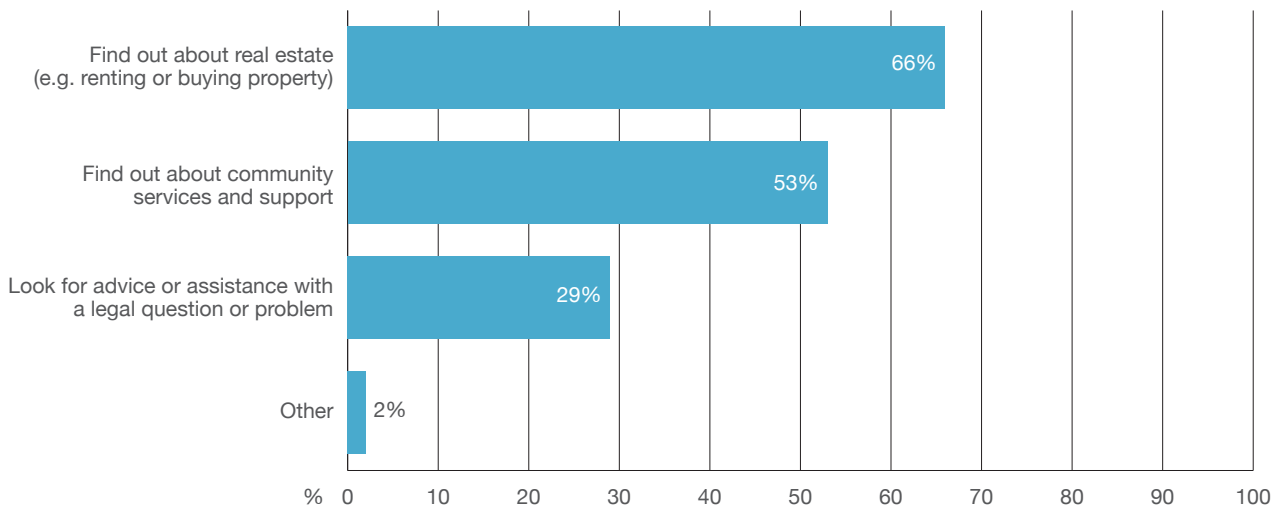
The three different activities identified through the survey tended to be more strongly connected to particular groups:

- 66% of people in this group use the library internet to find out about real-estate options (e.g. buying and renting property, building regulations, consumer rights and rental bonds) and use of the internet for this activity is highest among younger persons entering the rental and property



- market (74% vs 46% for 65 years and over), and among the self-employed (75%) and full-time employees (71%)
- 53% use the library internet to find out about community services and support, an activity more common among older people (63% of people aged 65 years and over) and retirees (58%) than people aged 25–34 years (42%)

- 29% use the library internet to look for advice or assistance with a legal question or problem. While this response is generally consistent across most demographic groups, it is higher among the unemployed (36%), higher among males (35%) than females (25%), and lower for people aged 65 years and over (21%).



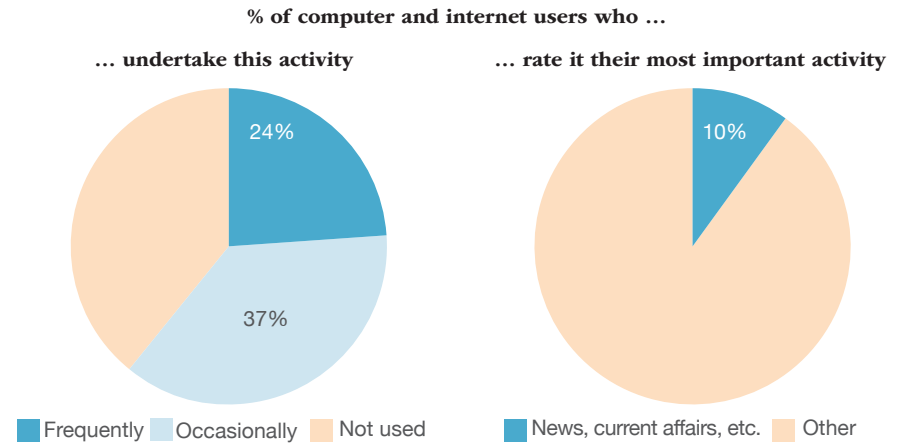
‘I have recently moved to Melbourne for uni and I have managed to find work, find a house, find a removalist, and get organised for uni, pick my courses and begin my studies at the library until I had an internet connection set up in my home.’

‘Large number applications for jobs. Being able to fill out forms for business or voting and fax interstate. Able to research and purchase items of necessity (car AC/DC inverter), swimming pool opening times, costs and location. Checking weather for day or week ahead. Communicating with personal or business aspects. Checking locations on satellite images.’

‘Finding jobs and rental properties, housemates.’

Activities related to news, current affairs and community engagement are undertaken by 61% of survey respondents, with 83% of people in this group (50% of all respondents) using their libraries' computer and internet services to keep up with current events through a news website. The demographic groups with a higher propensity to access these websites are aged between 35 and 54 years, are in full-time employment and have higher-order tertiary qualifications. Older people are relatively less likely to access news and current affairs through the internet than younger library users, preferring alternative, more traditional means of keeping up to date with local and world events (e.g. newspapers, television and radio news).

While 20% of library users in this group note that they have used the library internet to learn about a political activity or candidate, the response was relatively higher among students (26%), males (26%),

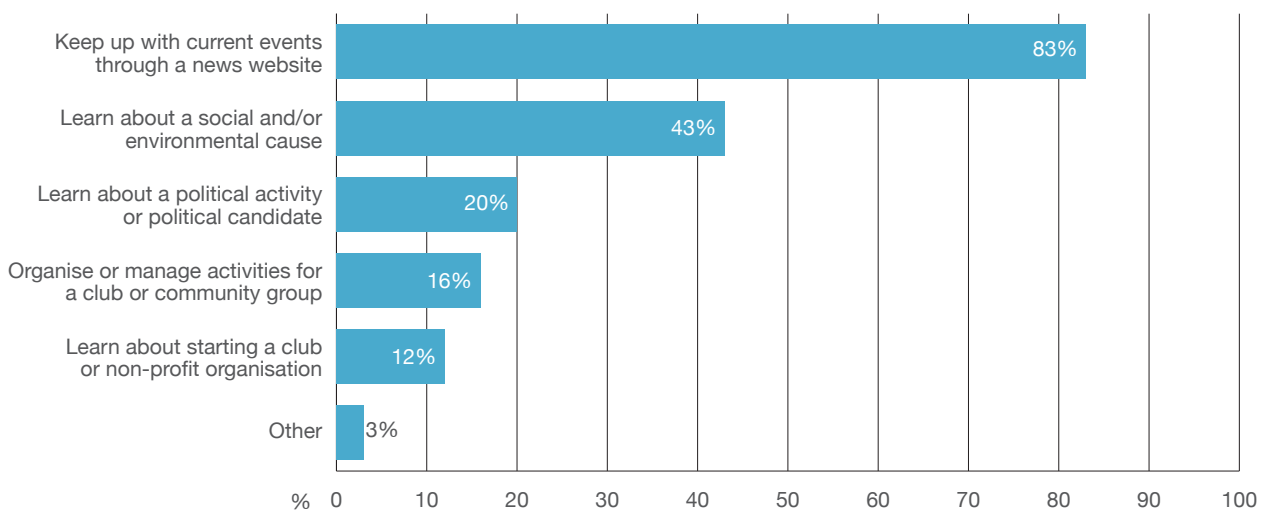


the unemployed (25%) and people aged 15–24 years (24%). Interest in social and/or environmental causes is relatively higher among students and the self-employed than other demographic groups.

Beyond standard news-gathering and browsing, the types of activities undertaken by these library users include checking out information about the weather, sports, horseracing, support groups, church news and overseas events. Seeking out and/or participating

in local community activities is also mentioned.

Overall, 10% of users of library internet services rate access to news and current affairs as the most important technology-enabled activity they do at the library. There are clear correlations between the importance of access to news and current-affairs information and age, education and income (the higher the age, educational qualification or income, the more important the access to news).



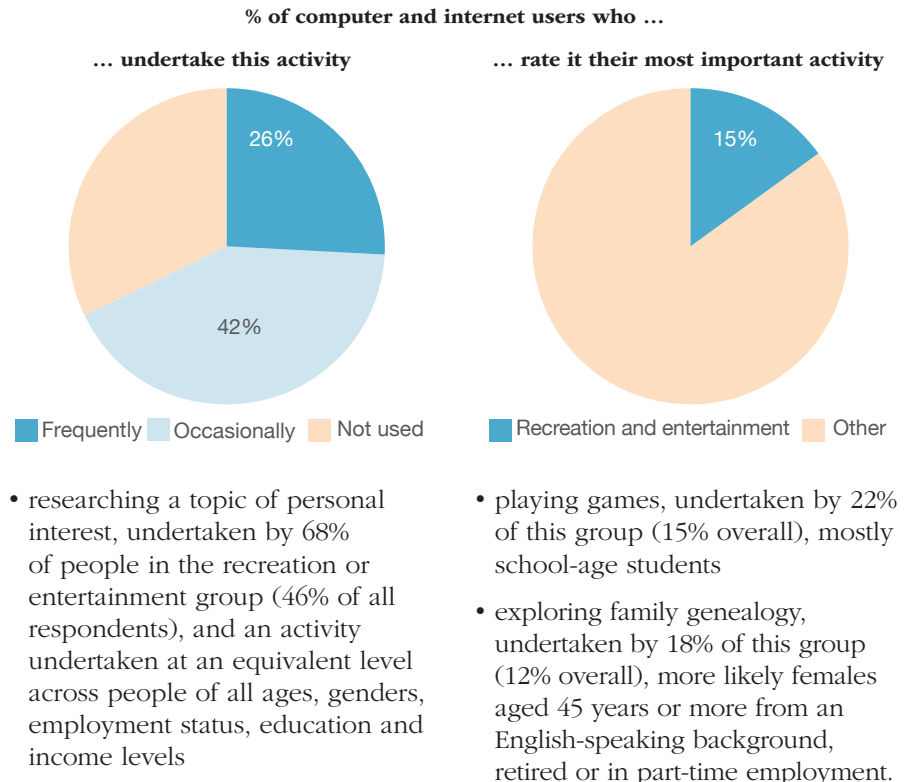
'I have become more informed about the world, national and local events.'

'Improved knowledge about events ... to be among members of the public who are also looking at various topics I never thought about.'

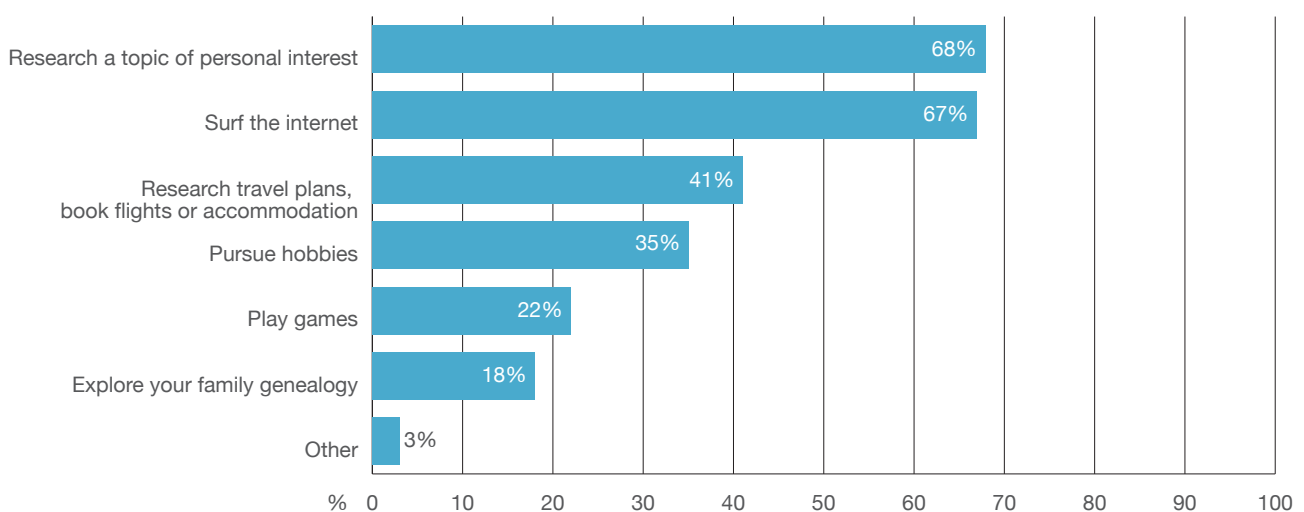
Sixty-eight per cent of survey respondents said they use library computers and the internet for recreation and entertainment purposes, making it the most popular of all technology-enabled activities undertaken at public libraries. Fifteen per cent of users said this is also the most important technology-enabled activity they do at the library.

In addition, the children's survey shows that three of the 'big four' activities that children do on library computers are in the recreation and entertainment space: playing games (51% of children aged 8–14 years), using Facebook (25%) and surfing the internet (21%).

Use of library computers and the internet is fairly consistent across most demographic groups, although engagement is relatively higher among younger people (especially school-age students), and relatively lower among older and retired users, the self-employed, people on higher incomes and people with higher levels of education. Across all of the 'fun' things people do, four types of recreational activity stand out:



Other types of recreational or entertainment purposes for using the internet at the library include: accessing movies, TV shows and/or music via YouTube, iTunes and overseas websites (especially US and UK TV series); participating in AFL or other football Dreamteam, Supercoach or fantasy leagues; and accessing internet dating sites.



'It allows me to download game modifications to increase game-play enjoyment for the computer games Morrowind and Oblivion. Mum and I downloaded Oblivion modifications onto a thumbdrive and gave it to Dad for Christmas. He really loved it. Only now he keeps talking on and on about them.'

'Enables me to participate in activities that I would otherwise not be able to afford and so keep up with the things my friends talk about. Gives me relaxing downtime away from the family environment.'

G2. Why people use computer and internet services at the library

The main user survey from the *Internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries* study asked respondents why they come to the library to use the computers and internet.

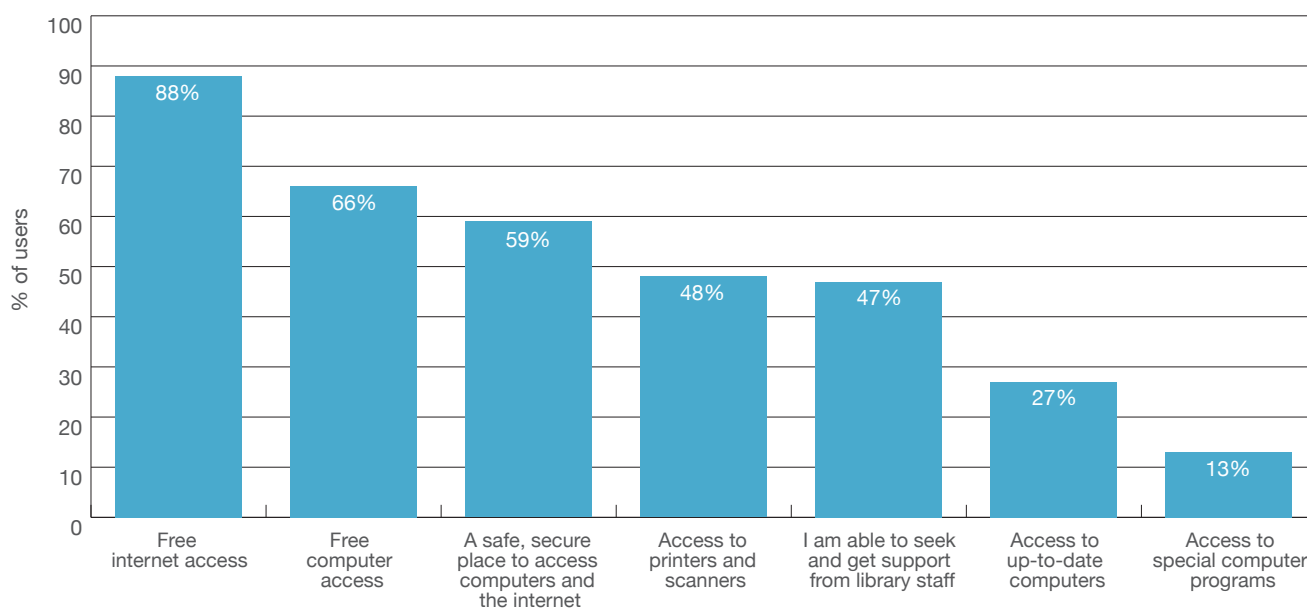
The responses to this question, the written feedback to a number of open-ended questions and the telephone interviews suggest that the answer to the question ‘Why do people come *to the library* to access computer and internet services?’ comes in five interrelated parts:

1. because it's free or cheap internet access
2. because the quality of internet connection, computers and peripherals is better than the alternatives
3. because the library is a safe, convenient and comfortable place to use the internet
4. because library staff (or even other library users) can help out if help is needed
5. because the library can aggregate demand to make access to specialist information affordable.

Similarly, the children's survey found free access to computers in a safe public environment to be the major reasons for children coming to the library to access these services for homework and recreational purposes.

This section presents short summaries of the particular and unique benefits that public libraries have to attract users of computer and internet services.

Figure G2. Why people use the computers and internet at the library



The main reasons why people come to *public libraries* to access computer and internet services is because they offer free internet access (88%) and free computer access (66%).

Across all demographic categories – even people in the middle to high income brackets – free internet and computer access at the library was the major drawcard. However, it was the survey comments of unemployed library users and those on incomes less than \$30,000 per year that most strongly put the case for free or cheap public access to computers and the internet.

While, on average, 21% of Victorians do not have access to the internet at home, this was the case for 45% of users of library internet services. And while, on average, 18% of Victorians do not have access to a computer at home, this was true for 33% of users of library computers. Overall, one in four survey respondents felt that the internet at the library was their only point of access: not home, not work, not an internet cafe or a friend's house – just the library.

Public libraries provide free access to computers and the internet for those who cannot afford it themselves – people who are at risk of being marginalised from society without this access.

The unemployed, people in low-paying employment, pensioners and some tertiary students typically commented on the difference free internet and computer access made to their lives, because without it they would not be able to afford to be connected – and would miss out on the benefits that this brings.

Aggregate economic measures of a nation's prosperity (e.g. high standards of living, economic growth, 5% unemployment) do not recognise that there is a significant portion of the population who have low levels of discretionary income once the rent, the mortgage, and the supermarket, energy and petrol bills have been paid. Despite the fact that internet access is on the way to being an essential (not optional) part of life in contemporary society, there

are people for whom the monthly cost of internet access, the cost of purchasing a computer or mobile device, and the cost of buying and maintaining a printer could only be met by cutting back on other essential items in the individual or family budget.

With the cost of living ever increasing, library users on low incomes have found that the total cost of internet connection and computer access is prohibitive. The prospect of faster download speeds on minimum-cost multi-year internet plans, and more processing power and better graphics on entry-level computers, do not make the cost of entry to the digital age any more affordable or attractive. Therefore, as much as many unemployed people, low-income earners, pensioners and tertiary students would like to have internet access at home, they go without – and instead choose to come to the library.

'If I had to pay I would not be able to afford it. I don't have the internet at home as it is too costly. I don't even have a landline phone connection at home.'

'Landline and telephone bills have skyrocketed so that pensioners no longer can afford the luxury of a home telephone.'

'I work in child care, I'm broke! No internet or phone bills make a big difference in my budget!'

'Being unemployed I am unable to access the internet at home, as I do not have a working phone line. This is my ONLY means of accessing the internet.'

'Art is rewarding – not financially though. I frequently find myself broke and with a job that needs internet access in order to be completed.'

'I am a writer on a low part-time sales income and a community activist. It's a cheap and reliable computer, internet, networking and printing and photocopying service in a pleasant community environment.'

'I use the library's printer. It saves me the expense of buying inks. Ink is massively more expensive than buying a new printer so I print what I want to at the library.'

Public libraries provide internet access for people who do not currently have access to reliable internet services, especially people in rural and remote areas.

There are people who use the internet and computers at the library for whom access is not the issue. They have internet access at home – it is just unreliable and slow and keeps dropping out. This was most notably reported by library users in rural and regional areas, although there are also some newer suburbs in outer metropolitan areas (e.g. Point Cook) that currently have limited access to the internet. High-speed broadband may be part of Australia's future, but for those living in the present it is not always available.

There are also some people on low incomes whose monthly download limits are not always sufficient to guarantee that their

connection will not drop out frequently or be enough to cover peak usage times (e.g. when downloading an operating system or software upgrades, or during exam study times).

There is also a broader access issue in households where there is only one computer. Children may be competing with one another to access the computer and the internet to do their homework, and when the homework is done there is competition for Facebook or game time. Similarly, in share households there can be competition for access to limited devices. Then there are households where the computer is five years old, it's still using MS Office 2003, and the graphics card doesn't run the new computer games.

For people in these situations, the fact that the library provides free internet access is not the primary

drawcard: it is that the library provides reliable internet access (and even in areas where the library's internet speed is not as good as it might be, it is usually superior to that which many users experience at home). When they come to the library they can book a computer, or bring their own device, and know that they will be able to get online and do what they need and want to do, quickly and efficiently.

Despite feedback from some library users that the speed of their library's internet connection could be faster and that the library computers are not up to date with the latest software (all of which is true), for some people the computer and internet access that the library can provide is much better than they can actually get where they live or can afford.

'Access to high-speed internet for online study purposes instead of using slow connections from our farm.'

'My internet access is slow and drops out frequently. I find the library computer much better in this regard. I live 20 km from the closest town, and being able to have access at a convenient time is a bit of a problem.'

'I have not got an internet connection at my home, not because I can't afford it but because it is NOT AVAILABLE in my area. My friends in Europe enjoying the latest and fastest internet facilities ask me which "village" I live in and I answer them shamelessly that my "village" name is Australia, where the internet is not available in all areas. I live in a "newly built" area and (have been) living there for last three years now, but Government could not provide the internet and Telstra can't put the line in yet. Maybe my grandchildren will be able to use the internet at home if I kept on waiting for it like this.'

'I have a very small internet plan at home so I use the library's internet when it is convenient to ensure I don't go over my plan. I live two hours each way from my university so it is much more practical to use the local library for the internet. Additionally, when my computer at home blew up and was unusable for four weeks, the internet and computers at the library were a necessity.'

'Library computers and printers are reliable. For some time my home printer hasn't worked and I don't intend getting it fixed until I can afford to. Very grateful to have access to a library computer.'

Public libraries provide a safe, convenient and comfortable environment in which all people can access computers and the internet for study, employment, wellbeing, information, service and recreation purposes.

Public libraries are well known to be safe places for information, reading and learning in the community that are welcoming to all (e.g. the *Libraries building communities* research). These traits hold true for users of computer and internet services in public libraries, with the added benefits of convenience and (despite what some library users may say) access to spaces that are quiet and conducive to focusing on study and work. In most libraries it is not too difficult to find someone with a wi-fi-connected laptop hidden in a quiet spot up the back taking advantage of the library as 'a place to do the things [they] need and want to do'.

The *Internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries* study found that among the 59% of survey respondents who commented on the library as a safe, convenient and comfortable place to access the internet were:

- tertiary students
- employed people undertaking further study and people acquiring skills to re-enter the workforce
- people running a small business or micro-business and people working from home (or not in their usual place of employment)
- people on the move.

Some tertiary students love being able to use the internet at their local library, as it saves them an hour each way in travel in and out of the city to their campus library (and is quieter than their shared accommodation). Mature-age students studying prior to re-entering the workforce and employees doing further study to upgrade their skills find the library to be a place where they can work in peace in the quiet areas, focused on their study and away from other distractions. With the increased emphasis on e-learning across all levels of education and training, public libraries uniquely combine accessible online connectivity with an environment conducive to study. Self-employed people running micro-businesses that take them from place to place can drop in at a library between appointments

to prepare and send invoices and research potential customers.

These people almost universally have access to computers and the internet somewhere other than at a library (e.g. at home, at work, at TAFE or university), but they choose to come to the library because it is an environment that allows them to do what they are doing more quickly, more conveniently and/or in a more relaxed way. The reported benefits include better-quality time with family and friends, more hours in the day (by removing or reducing commuting time to work or study), and a better quality of work or study output.

The children's survey found the library to be a safe place where children can come after school to do their homework – alone or with their friends, but better than being home alone. Older school-age students also use the library computers for homework, recreational and social purposes.

And everyone is welcome to use the internet at the library – without fear of exclusion or discrimination.

'It's been a great place to study for a few hours at a time, away from the distractions of home life. It's easier to focus on distance ed. uni assignments and essays when at the library.'

'A very quiet and safe environment to study. No distractions, which therefore results in a higher chance to receive high marks at university.'

'I have been able to do homework and complete many assignments, as well as start researching my next step in moving to a new city as I'm pursuing my dream goals. I've been able to work in an environment that is peaceful and relaxing so I can maintain a great work area.'

'I find I study better away from home (and distractions like washing, dishes, etc.) and the library provides a safe place to study with a fairly quiet and almost comfortable space to work.'

'I had a space away from children to study my final year of a grad. dip.'

'I am working as an interpreter. I move from one suburb to another. I can use the computer at any public libraries whenever I have spare time between appointments during the working day.'

Public libraries provide access to library staff who can support people who are not confident in their ability to use computers, search for information or transact online.

Forty-seven per cent of survey respondents in the *Internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries* study said that one of the benefits of coming to the library to access the internet and computers is that they can seek and get support from library staff.

For people who are less confident in their computer skills (in particular, persons aged 55 years and above, retirees and people with educational qualifications at certificate or diploma level), having someone close by who will endeavour to help out when assistance is needed is a source of great comfort. When they asked a question at the library, of a staff member or the friendly person sitting at the next computer, they got an answer that helped them out and they were not made to feel inadequate. This is one of the special advantages of the library that is not guaranteed in other places

they might access computers and the internet (e.g. an internet cafe).

Despite the fact that 55% of survey respondents rated their skills and confidence in using computer and the internet as high (with only 7% saying they had a low level of skills), when asked if they had in the past 12 months received assistance from library staff for any of a range of technology-related activities, 67% of respondents said they had.

The nature of this support varies and it is all greatly appreciated, although there is a greater emphasis on support for specific functional technology uses (e.g. how to print or connect to the wi-fi network, how to use a piece of software) than there is for general information-related activities (e.g. searching the internet, accessing library databases, transacting online). Among the users of libraries' computer and internet services:

- 31% had received support and assistance in printing or scanning documents
- 21% had received support on how to access the library's internet wi-fi

- 19% had received support on using library databases for research
- 12% had received support on how to search on the internet
- 7% had received support in using specific word-processing or spreadsheet programs.

Twenty-two per cent of respondents to the children's survey said they had received support and assistance from library staff in accessing and using computers and the internet.

Every library service in Victoria offers some informal and/or formal assistance to library users accessing the computers and internet, with more than two-thirds offering training programs to help people build their confidence and skills. 'Computer Savvy Seniors', 'How to surf the internet', cybersafety programs, 'Appy Hour' (for the iPad) and PC training for groups in languages other than English are just some of the programs that libraries run to help people bridge the digital divide.

'Whilst looking for a job it has given me a constant place to report to, keep an appointment, keep in touch and interact with others. It can be depressing to be looking for a job but conversation and interaction with library staff keeps my self-esteem positive.'

'I have gained more skills in learning how to use the computer as I have forgotten a lot of what I learned many years ago. The staff have been teaching me how to use a flash drive, how to save information and a lot of other information. It is wonderful for me to gain information because I am a person with disabilities.'

'I kept up to date with modern technology (at the library). Had Library Instructor classes and Senior Savvy Computer personal class.'

'Obviously because it is free! Also, having a librarian available for assistance when required.'

I can't afford to subscribe to my favourite database

Snapshot no. 15

When libraries provide free, reliable, convenient internet access and support they do so without regard to what the user wants to do online (as long as the activity doesn't breach the library's conditions of use). However, some people use the library computers because they want to access specific information or databases that are more easily, more cheaply or only accessible through the library.

Public libraries aggregate demand for specialist information (e.g. library and genealogical databases, service portals) to make it affordable for people to use.

The most common example of this is the genealogist – a library user well known to staff in all public libraries. Twelve per cent of survey respondents in the *Internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries* study said (with great satisfaction) that they had used

library services to explore their family genealogy. The cost for an individual to purchase basic access to genealogical databases such as Ancestry.com starts from around \$200 per year, and then there is the cost of additional software and, potentially, access to more specialised information. For hobbyists wanting to find out more about their family tree, the costs can quickly add up. Through library subscriptions to these databases, many people get the opportunity to access this information.

Similarly, there are other specialist online databases and resources (e.g. online language courses) that libraries are aware of and can access that are out of reach of the ordinary citizen. Being information professionals, some Victorian public libraries have produced their own information packages on topics of interest (e.g. local history, culture) to make it convenient for users.

By identifying and aggregating community demand, public libraries are able to significantly reduce the unit cost for people to access a range of specialist information databases and resources (which are useful to library users for homework, study and personal research purposes), and they can package up and direct people to information resources they know to be of interest to targeted groups in the community.

Libraries are unique in that they have the skills and capacity to aggregate demand for specialist information (e.g. library and genealogical databases, service portals) to make it more accessible and affordable for most people to use.

'There are genealogy websites that I can access freely via the library which I would have to pay for if I used my home computer.'

'Being able to use free genealogy programs has saved me costs.'

'By accessing Ancestry.com (library edition) at no cost to me.'

Of the children using computer and internet services at a public library, 59% of those aged around 8–9 years come to the library every week, with the rest coming a couple of times a month. They are always accompanied by another person – usually a parent or carer, another family member (e.g. grandparent or sibling) or a friend.

When these children come to the library they don't always use the computers: about 50% use them once a week, with 40% using them a couple of times a month. The children often do something else at the library, such as borrowing a book.

When the eight- and nine-year-olds do get to use the library computers, the thing they like to do more than anything else is to play computer games – something many don't get to do at home:

- 73% of eight- and nine-year-olds use library computers play games on the computer
- 30% use the computers to help them with their homework
- 21% use the library computers to check emails and keep in touch with friends
- 4% surf the internet.

Like most of the children in the *Internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries* survey, 59% of eight- and nine-year-olds said they like to use the computer or internet at the library because it is free. Thirty-six per cent said the library is a safe place and 27% liked to get help from the library staff.

While ABS data shows that of all Australian households with children aged under 15 years, 95% have access to a computer at home and 93% have home internet access,

only 52% of the children using computers at the library have access to computers and the internet at home. Although most have access to computers at school as part of their education, if they want to use computers or the internet for homework or recreational purposes, 48% of children have to look for an alternative access point: their local library or a friend's house.

With technology access critical to young people for education, social and entertainment purposes, these young children are maximising their opportunity to use a computer.

Eight- and nine-year-olds ...	Home internet access?	
	Yes	No
(who use library computer and internet services)		
Come to the library every week	45%	74%
Come to the library with a parent or carer	62%	70%
Use the library computers every week	38%	65%
Do other things when they come to the library	93%	81%
Use the library computers to play games	62%	85%
Use the library computers to do homework	31%	30%
Come to the library because it is free	59%	59%
Come to the library because it is safe	45%	26%
Come to the library because they can get help from library staff	21%	33%

Of the children using computer and internet services at a public library, 60% of those aged 14 years come to the library every week, with 28% coming a couple of times a month. Thirty-nine per cent of 14-year-olds said they usually come to the library alone, with the remainder coming with one or more of parents, family members (e.g. older or younger brothers and sisters) or friends.

These children are confident technology users, with 64% rating their skills as 'really good' and 21% rating themselves 'good' on computers. When these children come to the library they don't always use the computers – about 49% use them once a week, and 24% use them a couple of times a month. The children often do something else at the library, such as borrowing a book.

Fourteen-year-olds often use the library computers and internet for homework. With one-third not having home internet access, the ability to conduct research at the library is really useful:

- 57% of 14-year-olds use library computers to do their homework
- 58% use the library computers to check emails
- 40% of 14-year-olds use library computers to Facebook with their friends
- 33% surf the internet
- 26% use the library computers and internet to play games.

Like most of the children in the *Internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries* survey, 71% of 14-year-olds said they like to use the computer or internet at the library because it is free. Thirty-five per cent said the library is a safe place

and 19% like to get help from the library staff.

While ABS data shows that of all Australian households with children aged under 15 years, 95% have access to a computer at home and 93% have home internet access, only 67% of the children using computers at the library have access to computers and the internet at home. Although most have access to computers at school as part of their education, if they want to use computers or the internet for homework or recreational purposes, 33% of children have to look for an alternative access point: their local library or a friend's house.

With technology access critical to young people for education, social and entertainment purposes, these children are maximising their opportunity to use a computer and the internet.

14-year-olds ... (who use library computer and internet services)	Home internet access?	
	Yes	No
Come to the library every week	52%	77%
Come to the library with a parent or carer	36%	15%
Use the library computers every week	39%	70%
Do other things when they come to the library	89%	64%
Use the library computers to play games	25%	30%
Use the library computers to do homework	56%	60%
Use the library computers to access Facebook	35%	49%
Come to the library because it is free	75%	62%
Come to the library because it is safe	39%	28%
Come to the library because they can get help from library staff	19%	19%

G3. Real stories

Through the telephone interviews conducted as part of the study, the people who use libraries' computer and internet services were able to tell their stories about why they go to the library to access the internet and computers. Collectively these stories demonstrate the diversity

of use, the diversity of user, and the diversity of benefit that makes public library provision of computer and internet services so valuable to different groups within the Victorian community.

Twenty-five real stories are told (in brief) in the following pages. The names used are not the interviewees' actual names. As respondents to the children's survey were not interviewed, composite stories have been created based on survey responses.

Table G1. Real stories by category

Library user	Type of use									Why at the library					
	Education and learning	Employment and career	Health and wellbeing	Socialisation	Managing finances	Accessing government	Business support	Accessing services and advice	News, current affairs, community activities	Recreation and entertainment	Can't afford access	Unreliable/limited access	Safe convenient place	Staff support	Access to specialist information
Aaron's story	✓	✓		✓							✓				
Alison's story		✓	✓		✓						✓		✓		
Alysha's story*	✓			✓						✓	✓	✓	✓		
Christine's story			✓	✓					✓	✓	✓				
David's story		✓		✓								✓			
Deirdre's story		✓		✓						✓	✓		✓		
Elizabeth's story			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓			✓	
Elsie's story	✓									✓		✓	✓	✓	
Emily's story	✓			✓								✓	✓	✓	
Emma's story										✓			✓		
Gayle's story	✓												✓		
Geraldine's story							✓					✓			
Gillian's story	✓	✓						✓				✓			
James' story				✓							✓				
Jean's story			✓		✓					✓	✓		✓	✓	
Jessica's story		✓				✓				✓	✓				
Kaihan's story	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓			✓				✓
Karen's story		✓		✓							✓		✓		
Kevin's story							✓						✓		
Mark's story		✓					✓				✓				
Mary's story										✓					✓
Matthew's story	✓			✓						✓		✓			
Max's story*										✓		✓			
Ming Na's story				✓						✓	✓		✓	✓	
Patrick's story			✓	✓	✓					✓	✓			✓	

* Story compiled from responses to the children's survey

Aaron's story

Aaron is an artist and student and lives in a share house. He lives off his art, doing part-time jobs when he can, but he has a limited budget and low discretionary income. If he paid to have the internet at home there would be less left over for art supplies and learning. So Aaron chooses to go to his local library three or four times a week to use the free internet: to research painting and artists, to study, to find jobs, to email friends and to stay connected via Facebook.

Alison's story

Alison is 40 years old and had to give up her full-time high-powered job due to chronic illness. She is now on a disability pension and at present can't afford the internet at home. She goes to the library four times a week as it forces her 'to get out of the bed in the morning'. When online she researches her condition and alternative treatments, purchases health supplements from overseas, and does all of her shopping as she is physically unable to get to the shops. She has recently been working on her résumé and applying for part-time jobs. 'I would be in trouble if the library didn't have computers with the internet.'

Alysha's story

Alysha is 14 years old and likes to visit her library a couple of times a week. As the library is close to her school she finds it easy to pop in on her way home. Alysha does not have the internet at home, although there is a computer that she shares with her 12-year-old brother. Alysha likes to do her homework at the library where she can access information easily using the internet, and get help from the library staff if she gets stuck. Once she has finished her homework Alysha likes to update her Facebook, access her emails and download the latest music onto her iPod.

Christine's story

Christine is a retired midwife who lives alone. She has a computer at home but no internet access. She meets her friends at the library and uses the internet to do all the things that give her life meaning: researching recipes and food (her favourite hobby), purchasing things online, researching travel and booking flights back to England, reading English newspapers online (which prevents homesickness), and keeping up to date on her professional interests (such as drugs, dementia and child welfare). She looks up support groups for her grandson, who has Asperger's syndrome, and takes him on outings to the library to use the computers.

David's story

David is 80 years old. He lives on a farm 20 km from the nearest town in Gippsland. He has the internet at home, but the speed is atrocious and the line keeps dropping out. There are 14 houses on his road, and the occupants of nearly all the houses use the internet at the library because it is more reliable. Instead of getting up at midnight when the speed is fastest at home, he goes to the library to research farm activities, order equipment and Skype with his children interstate and overseas.

Deirdre's story

Deirdre is 37. She has a computer at home but no internet access. She works full time, but doesn't think it appropriate to use her work internet for personal use. She goes to the library after work four times a week to access her emails, Facebook and an online dating website ('to find a mate'). At the library she is also researching other work opportunities and applying for new jobs – things she could not do at work. She has used internet cafes in the past but doesn't feel that she or her online information are safe there. Being a single woman, she 'always appreciates the library's physically safe environment'.

Elizabeth's story

Elizabeth has recently had to give up full-time work to care for her elderly mother who suffered a stroke and has dementia. Living off a carer's pension, Elizabeth can no longer afford the internet at home, and because she was forced to give up work she feels isolated and cut off from people: 'Cancelling the internet was like losing an old friend'. At the library she uses the internet to research stroke and dementia and check out the council website, which has lots of good information about disability services. She does all her banking online, sends and receives emails, and checks out tourism websites. Elizabeth and her mother get lots of human contact at the library.

Elsie's story

Elsie is 81 and lives in northern Victoria. She has limited income and a 2 GB limit on her internet plan. She uses the library to access free U3A courses online, and works as a volunteer helping elderly people to use the internet: 'The men love to look at eBay and the women love to look at gardening advice'. She also helps CWA members research topics for presentations. Elsie thinks the internet is a valuable tool for seniors: 'They get out of their house and into the community and learn a new skill. Other people in my situation have had family members set them up with a computer at home, but they are too scared to use it. At the library they can get help from staff or a volunteer like me.'

Emily's story

Emily is 15 years old and lives on a rural property 30 minutes from the nearest small town and more than an hour from her former school. She no longer attends school but is studying Year 10 via distance education. Living in an isolated location, her family 'can't access the internet at home'. Once a week she travels to the library and spends a whole day there, using the internet when she can to research information and complete assignments. When her study is done, Emily Facebooks with her friends, checks emails and stays in touch with relatives and friends overseas. The library is a convenient and safe place, with staff who are always willing to help her out.

Emma's story

Emma is 17 years old and studying Year 12. She has the internet at home, the use of which is strongly monitored and controlled by her parents as they want it to aid and not interfere with her studies. Emma is OK with that. Once a fortnight her parents take her to the library (a safe place, with free but time-restricted internet sessions) so that she can access her favourite recreational outlet: anime fan-fiction websites. 'This is the only time that I really switch off from my study.'

Gayle's story

Gayle works full time, but her employer gives her one day off a week to study and improve her qualifications and skills. She has the internet at home and can afford to use it, but a new baby and the distractions of housework affect her ability to focus. She goes to the library and hides up the back with her laptop, where for the whole day her main and only focus is her online study. With that done, she can spend her time at home 'just being Mum'.

Geraldine's story

Geraldine is a young mother who distributes Avon products as a part-time job. Her family has recently moved and she does not currently have the internet at home. She goes to the library to place product orders via the internet, which is 'much more efficient than the long and tedious process over the phone'. Even when she gets home access to the internet, Geraldine still expects to use the library's internet when she brings her daughter to Story Time.

Gillian's story

Gillian moved from the country to Melbourne to study at university. She was tech-savvy but didn't have access to the internet. Using the internet at the library she managed to find a house, find a removalist, find work, get organised for uni, pick her courses and begin her studies until she had an internet connection set up at home. She still goes to the library more than once a week to study, using the library computers and the wireless internet on her laptop.

James' story

James is 60 years old and retired on the Mornington Peninsula. He has a computer at home but can't afford the internet, so he goes to his local library. James runs one blogging group for the Men's Shed and another on wildlife photography, and runs footy-tipping comps for his different interest groups. This all helps him stay in touch with a diverse range of people and gives him a sense of purpose, connection and camaraderie, which is shared by the group members.

Jean's story

Jean is a disability pensioner with limited mobility and limited income. At home in her country town she has no home computer or internet, so she rides her scooter to the library a few blocks away. She has a large collection of teddy bears and uses the internet to research her hobby, and MS Word to itemise the contents of her collection (and her unit) for insurance purposes. She also uses the library internet to further her knowledge: researching the artist who painted a picture she bought at an op shop, and learning about her medical condition. With the large-print screen on the library's 'seniors computer', the height of the table, and a chair with arms, the library is a comfortable place for someone with arthritis in her arms and joints. The library staff are always helpful, having taught her how to use Excel, use the internet and save documents to a flash drive. Jean lives alone and is somewhat isolated, so she enjoys the interaction she has chatting with other people when she goes to the library.

Jessica's story

Jessica is a young mum with two small kids. She does not work and her partner is unemployed; they can't afford the internet at home. At the library the children play games on the computers while Jessica prints income statements, Auskick registration forms and photos of the kids. She also looks up things on the Centrelink website. Her partner searches job websites and completes Centrelink reports online. 'The free internet access at the library gives me some control over my life. Lots of places, like Centrelink, expect you to have the internet to complete their forms.'

Kaihan's story

Kaihan is a 39-year-old Afghani refugee. He is studying but does not have the internet at home. Kaihan is learning English at the library through the online IELTS (International English Language Testing System) website, which is accessed via the library website and his library membership. Kaihan prefers to work through IELTS at his own pace rather doing a course at the local community centre. He also uses the internet to look for jobs, do online banking, access government forms, and check rental property and legal issues.

Karen's story

Karen is a social worker based in Melbourne's western suburbs. She works closely with newly arrived refugees aged 16 to 24, who are often from war-torn countries. In her work Karen has helped these young adults to access the internet at their local library, write résumés and search for jobs online. Karen has seen Facebook become the main way for the young people to stay connected with their families around the world, and an aid in establishing networks within Australia. They often use Facebook to keep in touch with other refugees they have met in detention centres, or to locate family they have lost contact with when they moved away from their home country. Karen feels that this group desperately needs libraries to provide them with computers and the internet, as this enables them to regain access to the world and establish themselves in a new country.

Kevin's story

Kevin is 65 years old. As a self-employed translator, his job takes him from one suburb to another as he undertakes translation services on behalf of his clients. While travelling between jobs Kevin uses the computers and the internet at several different library services to access his emails, write up invoices and maintain the financial records needed to run his small business. Carrying his work documents on a portable memory stick allows him to maximise the value of his work day.

Mark's story

Mark is a self-employed author and recently published his first book for young adults. He has a computer but does not have the internet at home. He uses the library to scour the internet for retailers and independent bookstores to stock his book, emailing and communicating with potential outlets. He also uses the internet to run a blogging site and Facebook page where he talks to his readers.

Mary's story

Mary is retired and uses the library to access two subscription-only genealogical databases: Ancestry.com and Findmypast. She also accesses the library's Digger indexes, census records and parish records as she researches her family tree. She thinks the library is very generous in allowing her free access to the genealogy databases so that she doesn't have to pay the 'expensive' subscription prices.

Matthew's story

Matthew is a Year 11 student living on a farm in rural Victoria. He has the internet at home but the satellite connection is slow and expensive. In addition to his schoolwork, Matthew is undertaking some university subjects and uses the library computers to access university websites and do research for his assignments. He downloads podcasts of lectures and large data files to a USB stick (which would take forever at home) so that he can listen to or use them later. He also checks emails, researches TV shows, watches YouTube clips, and visits sports websites to find out about upcoming competitions in his area.

Max's story

Max lives in a small town in central Victoria. He is ten years old and has three younger brothers. Once a week after school their mum takes them to the library to borrow books and access the computers. Max and his brothers love to play games on the library computers – something that is hard to do at home because their computer is too old for the new games and they have to take it in turns. Max loves to look up things that interest him on the internet, and will often read game 'walk-throughs' to help him solve a difficult puzzle in a game.

Ming Na's story

Ming Na is 60 years old. She uses the library's internet to stay in touch with family and friends in China and interstate via email and Facebook. She loves watching and researching tennis, and looks up websites and follows matches on YouTube. She can't afford the cost of 'skyrocketing phone bills' so her internet access is limited to the library or a friend's house. The librarians 'help her with anything she asks'. She finds the library a safe, friendly place, free from the discrimination she has experienced elsewhere.

Patrick's story

Patrick is 78 years old. He tracks everything he spends against his aged pension, and cannot afford the internet. He uses the library internet to monitor his budget and access gardening websites to learn about propagating olive trees, special growing conditions and pest control. He is also taking part in medical trials, so he likes to keep up to date with medical research in this field. Patrick emails family and friends and keeps in touch with his son living in Paris and his daughter who is travelling in Europe. The library staff are very helpful when he needs assistance.

H. Research Methodology

Background

In 2005, the landmark *Libraries building communities* research reports were published. These reports, and the research process used for them, helped to shape the strategic direction of Victorian public libraries and assisted public libraries in their advocacy efforts with key stakeholders in government by demonstrating how public libraries support the government agenda in the area of community strengthening.

Another landmark piece of work on the value of public libraries was delivered in April 2011, via the *Dollars, sense and public libraries* report. This project focused on demonstrating and communicating the economic benefits of public libraries to those who give weight to arguments around the economic benefit of initiatives they are asked to support.

Decision-makers require the benefits of the services and programs they are asked to support to be explained and articulated in a variety of ways for different purposes. The need for material that Victorian public libraries can use for advocacy purposes with government and other potential funding agencies is urgent.

The *Australian public libraries statistical report 2008–09*, published by national and state libraries of Australasia, showed that Victorian public libraries are among the least funded in Australia. The 2008–09 expenditure per capita in Victorian public libraries was \$35.89, well below the national average of \$40.34 and a long way behind

South Australia (\$45.97) and Western Australia (\$44.69).

For the State Library of Victoria (SLV) and Public Libraries Victoria Network's (PLVN) current triennium of Statewide Public Library Development Projects (2011–14), a requirement for further research to support library advocacy was identified. A study around usage of personal computers and the internet in Victorian public libraries was proposed. Information about the use of library-supplied equipment (e.g. PCs, printers) and customer-supplied devices that use library-supplied wireless internet (e.g. laptops, iPads) is critical to support discussions around public library service obligations to the public.

Project objectives

SLV and PLVN sought to undertake a study of internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries. Inspired by the US study *Opportunity for all: how the American public benefits from internet access at US libraries* (April 2010), but smaller in scope and size, the objectives of the project were to:

- survey customers of all Victorian public library services to establish who uses the internet and PCs in public libraries, what tasks they perform and the benefits of free access to computers, the internet and related services in public libraries
- deliver a report that would expand the understanding among funding decision-makers of the value of internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries to library

customers and communities. The report would:

- expand and amplify information already supplied through the *Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries, Libraries building communities* and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) *Internet access in public libraries* report
- provide library service managers and CEOs with new information for benchmarking the performance of their services and advocating for continued and increased investment.

Project requirements

The *Internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries* study was required to:

- be familiar with relevant Australian and international reports and similar studies
- develop a methodology for data collection to elicit the required information (e.g. through surveys, interviews and/or case studies)
- deploy the agreed methodology in conjunction with Victorian public libraries
- produce a statewide report of publishable quality that included an executive summary of key findings, overview of the methodology, analysis of collected data and tables of responses by library service, as well as case studies, to illustrate the importance of internet and PC access through public libraries

- present key findings to stakeholders, including the Public Libraries Advisory Committee, PLVN, and the Ministerial Advisory Council on Public Libraries.

Methodology

I & J Management Services was appointed to conduct the study of internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries. The project methodology comprised six key elements from January to June 2012:

1. project planning
2. literature review
3. desktop analysis of library service provision of computer and internet services
4. user surveys
5. user interviews
6. report.

1. Project planning

In planning the study, I & J Management Services worked with the More Knowledge for Library Advocacy Workgroup and the State Library of Victoria's project manager to develop and agree to a project work plan. As part of this process, the workgroup:

- clarified and confirmed for the consultants the scope and coverage of the study
- considered the findings from the literature review
- reviewed draft versions and endorsed final versions of the survey of people who use public library computer and internet services
- encouraged all Victorian public library services to participate in the advocacy project.

2. Literature review

A review of local, Australian and international literature and studies on library provision of computer and internet services was conducted to inform development of the methodology for the study, and to understand the political and social environment in which advocacy by Victorian public libraries would take place. The questions addressed through the literature review included:

1. What can we learn from previous studies of computer and internet use in libraries?
2. What are the trends in household access to computers and the internet?
3. What are the vision and strategies of government for investment in internet and technology?
4. What role can public libraries play in this evolving digital landscape and the future potential uses envisaged for the internet?

The US study *Opportunity for all* was a central reference in the literature review.

The findings from the literature review are presented in Section A. Data published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics about trends in household access to computers and the internet are presented in Section B.

3. Desktop analysis of library service provision of computer and internet services

Victoria's 44 public libraries and Vision Australia's Information Library Service participate in an annual survey process to compile benchmarking statistics on library services and programs, collections and resources, membership and finances. The aggregate results, data for each library service and

a selection of key indicators are published as the *Annual Survey of Victorian Public Libraries*.

Within this dataset is information about the provision of computer and internet services in Victorian public libraries (e.g. the number of public-access PCs, the number of PC bookings and the total hours booked, the number of wireless internet sessions). This data was analysed to identify trends in library provision of computer and internet services; the results are presented in Section C.

As part of the study of internet and PC usage in Victorian public libraries, additional information was collected from library services in relation to:

- access to library services
 - PC booking systems and time limits
 - wireless internet access
 - filters on internet content
 - computer and internet services for people with a disability
 - charges for computer and internet use
- hardware, software and connections
 - public-access printers and scanners
 - internet connections and speeds
- support
 - IT system administration, troubleshooting and support
 - provision of computer and internet training for library users
- computer and internet policies and protocols.

The results from this supplementary data collection are also presented in Section C.

4. User survey

I & J Management Services and the More Knowledge for Library Advocacy Workgroup developed a survey of users of libraries' computer and internet services, drawing on the questions in the lengthy telephone survey used as part of *Opportunity for all*.

The aim of the survey was to capture detailed information about:

- who used the computer and internet services offered in Victorian public libraries
- what they did when they used the computer and/or internet
- what benefits they got from undertaking these activities

and MOST IMPORTANTLY ...

- why they did this *at a public library* (as opposed to anywhere else).

Two surveys were produced. The main survey was targeted at people aged 15 years and over, and had an average completion time of around 12 minutes. The second, much shorter and much simpler survey (with average completion time of four and a half minutes) was for children aged eight to 14 years.

The surveys were designed to be completed online. Given the focus of the study (on computer and internet use) it was thought that this would be both an appropriate and an efficient way of conducting the survey. The surveys were developed using Survey Monkey. The main survey contained skip logic so that respondents were guided efficiently through the questions, skipping irrelevant questions based on their response to a preceding question. A small number of library services chose to offer a print-based version, which their staff then entered into the online survey.

All Victorian public library services were invited to participate in the study by encouraging users of their computer and internet services to complete the online surveys.

Briefing material and FAQs provided to each library service (reinforced at briefings of library service managers prior to the release of the survey) suggested that a link to the surveys be placed on the library's website. Responses could be further encouraged by:

- directing users to the surveys
- displaying posters promoting the surveys (provided to each library service)
- having a dedicated 'survey' PC for library users to complete the survey prior to or within their computer booking time.

Overall response numbers were anticipated to be at least 4000, and ideally up to 8000. There were no response quotas set for each library service, although minimum and 'aspirational' targets were set based on the total municipal population and the total hours booked on library computers in 2009–10 (the latest available data at the time of planning the survey release).

The surveys were officially released on Sunday 25 March and remained open until the last week of April. Library service managers were progressively kept informed of response rates. In the end nearly 4000 survey responses were used in the study:

- 3088 responses to the main survey were used in the analysis for this study
 - There were 3214 responses to the main survey (after removing duplicate and incomplete responses). A further 126 responses from library services with a relatively high number of survey responses (i.e. Maribyrnong, Geelong,

Boroondara) were randomly removed from the database to reduce any bias from the profile of computer and internet use in those libraries.

- 623 responses to the children's survey were used in the analysis for this study
 - There were 733 responses to the children's survey (after removing duplicate and incomplete responses). A further 110 responses were removed to reduce any bias related to over-representation of responses from library services with a relatively high survey response rate (i.e. Maribyrnong, Brimbank).

The aggregated results from each of the surveys are presented in sections D1 and D2, shown against each of the questions in the survey. Analysis of the data from the two surveys can be found in Section E.

5. User interviews

Survey respondents were asked if they were willing to participate in a 10–15-minute telephone interview with the consultants to explore in more depth their responses and the benefits for them, their family and their community from access to computers and the internet at the public library. More than 900 respondents (30%) said they were willing to be contacted for an interview.

Interview candidates were identified through reading individual survey responses and selecting people who covered a range of demographic and location characteristics, but more importantly who populated a matrix of different uses of library computers and the internet. Only survey respondents over the age of 16 years were selected for the interviews.

Around 80 interview candidates were contacted during late April and early May 2012, and 62 interviews were completed. Taking into account the survey responses of each

interviewee, the interviews focused on three broad questions:

- When you use the computers and internet at the library, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
- What BENEFIT do you get from this activity?
- Why do you do it AT THE LIBRARY?

The detailed feedback gathered through the interviews has been incorporated into the main report on the study. It was also a primary source of information in the development of the snapshots in Section G.

6. Report

The final stage in the project methodology is the production of the report on the findings of the study. As described in the introduction to this technical report, the final summary report is presented as a concise statement of the findings from the study in relation to the advocacy purposes for which the study was undertaken. The detailed findings from each of the other elements of the methodology – the literature review, the desktop analysis, the user surveys, the user interviews – are presented in separate sections of this report.

The project findings will be presented to stakeholders, including the Public Libraries Advisory Committee, PLVN, and the Ministerial Advisory Council on Public Libraries, in the latter half of 2012.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ADSL	asymmetric digital subscriber line
AFL	Australian Football League
ALA	American Library Association
ALGA	Australian Local Government Association
ALIA	Australian Library and Information Association
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
AV	audiovisual
BTOP	Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (USA)
CALD	culturally and linguistically diverse
CV	curriculum vitae
CWA	Country Women's Association
DSL	digital subscriber line
ESL	English as a second language
FAQ	frequently asked question
GB	gigabyte
ICT	information and communications technology
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IT	information technology
ISDN	integrated services digital network
JAWS	Job Access With Speech
kbps	kilobits per second
MB	megabyte
Mbps	megabits per second
NBN	National Broadband Network
NDES	National Digital Economy Strategy
NTIA	National Telecommunications and Information Administration (USA)
p.a.	per annum
PC	personal computer
PLVN	Public Libraries Victoria Network
SLV	State Library of Victoria
SMTP	simple mail transfer protocol
TAFE	technical and further education
TB	terabyte
U3A	University of the Third Age