The value of IT access in the Library and Information Services of the Metropolitan Borough of Doncaster

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Abstract

Background
Living in an information age where information is available at the touch of a button, via the Internet, has meant that access to information has now become a necessity to all members of society. The task of delivering this access to information has been placed on the shoulders of public libraries, who already serve communities with a variety of different services. Implementation of the People’s Network and the introduction of IT facilities into public libraries are just some of the initiatives that have taken place in order to provide everyone in England with the necessity of access to information with comparative ease.

Aims
This study aimed to investigate the value of IT access in the Library and Information Services of the Metropolitan Borough of Doncaster to end users. It focused on the demographics of users, reasons for use, the benefits and drawbacks of the services and recommendations for improvement.

Methods
Having developed, tested and made subsequent alterations to, a questionnaire was distributed throughout three public library branches in Doncaster. From these three libraries, 64 users of the IT facilities responded to the questionnaire.

Results
The research found that a wide variety of library patrons are using the IT services. Access to the Internet was on the whole the main reason patrons
were using the facilities, whilst the fact it is free was seen as the main benefit. Most respondents stated there were no drawbacks to the services and that no developments were needed.

Conclusion
It is deduced from the results that IT access in the Library and Information Services of the Metropolitan Borough of Doncaster is of value to end users. Recommendations for further research included the possibility of collecting time series data for more reliable results, triangulation, cross-authority research and the appraisal of the monetary value of the IT services.
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1. Introduction

This study has been developed to evaluate the level as to which the commissioning of The People’s Network in 1997 has been effective in providing the public with the means to speedily and readily access greater quantities of quality detailed information; a requirement that is vital in today’s information society.

Like public library services up and down the country, the Library and Information Services of Doncaster have reaped the benefits of the People’s Network, seeing computers and access to the Internet being introduced into all public libraries throughout the borough. The Library and Information Services in Doncaster comprise a large Central Library, as well as twenty five Branch Libraries and a number of Mobile services (Doncaster Council, 2010). Services provided include the usual books, CDs, DVDs and other audio-visual materials, along with information enquiries. All of the library facilities have information technology (IT) access, enabling all library members to connect to the Internet, and the use of software such as likes of Microsoft Office. Patrons also have access to hardware such as scanners, fax machines, photocopiers and printers. There is a charge of £0.17p and £0.42p for black and white, and colour print outs respectively. Access to the Internet is free for the first hour, with a charge of £1.20 per hour thereafter. Exempt borrowers and users who are under sixteen years old are not subject to this charge (Doncaster Council, 2010).

The large town of Doncaster is situated in South Yorkshire, England and has a population of 286,866 (Office for National Statistics, 2003). Over recent years, a number of regenerative developments have taken place; including the introduction of an international airport; an ‘Education City’ campus, of which it is the largest educational based investment in the UK; an extension
to the ‘Frenchgate Shopping Centre’ and transport interchange. This level of regeneration has not only attracted people from within the Yorkshire region and further afield, but has also brought in many individuals from Europe. As a result of recent expansions of the European Union to include countries from the former communist Eastern bloc Doncaster has experienced a surge in the number of migrants settling in the town. As a result this has put even more pressure on Doncaster’s Library and Information Services.

1.1 Overall aim
The overall aim of this study is to investigate the value of IT access in the Library and Information Services of the Metropolitan Borough of Doncaster. The focus is on the impact that the available IT services have within three differing socio-economic suburbs within the Doncaster district. It then aims to provide possible recommendations for improvement of the IT services throughout public libraries in Doncaster.

It is hoped that by achieving these aims it will bring benefit to:

- policy makers within Doncaster council, who would be able to asses and evaluate the value of IT access in public libraries throughout the borough; thus enabling them, on a macro level, to make any necessary changes to the services currently provided.

- public library managers, who would be given an impartial view as to how the library is seen as operating from the eyes of the patrons; allowing for their current services to be evaluated and to plan, on a micro level, for future service improvements.

- patrons of public libraries, who would be empowered with useful information on the full range of services which are at their disposal
within public libraries and made aware of the recommendations made for further improving said services.

1.2 Objectives
The study also has a number of specific objectives which give direction to the work. These are:

- To explore what types of people use the IT services.
- To examine what are the reasons for use of the IT services.
- To research the benefits and drawbacks of the IT services.
- To produce recommendations for the improvement of the IT services.

The study looks at the IT provision in the case-study areas, attempting to examine the extent to which the IT services are used, whilst constructing a profile of the services’ users. This helps to identify whether or not the facilities are having any form of impact.
2. Literature Review

There is a wealth of literature on the subject of IT access within public libraries. The literature review will examine and review the critical aspects of current knowledge and subsequent findings of this particular topic. Although some of the literature is slightly dated the points they make and discussions they put forward are still ever present.

2.1 Background and context

In order for any individual or community to develop both socially and economically access to information and knowledge is essential; never more so has this been true than in today’s economy where manufacturing has taken a backseat to a more service based industry (Coxall, 2006).

The literature shows that the growth and development of a community is linked, fundamentally, with its access to information (Dutta-Bergman, 2005). Hopkins & Thomas (2002) also state that greater access to information can lead to greater social connections, whilst playing a part in the development of the economy.

IT has been used in some UK public libraries from as long ago as 1960 (Line, 1997); ranging from library management systems and online databases, to online public access catalogues (OPACS). This, therefore, has seen library staff become familiar with IT to carry out tasks such as administration, and as a means of answering the queries of library patrons (Eve and Brophy, 2001). As for the use of IT by library patrons; only a small portion of people would have had any chance of using IT within the public library setting until the mid 1990s (Eve and Brophy, 2001). A public library Internet survey (Ormes and Dempsey, 1995) showed that although Internet access was
available in 53% of public libraries, a mere 3% of these points of access were available to the public.

Brining new facilities in into the public library domain in order to meet the demands of the community is nothing new. “...librarians have always relied on the use of tools to fulfil the needs of the communities they serve” (Sierpe, 2004:180).

2.2 Internet provision in public libraries
The traditional role of public libraries has been to provide books within an environment of learning and information. However, with the advent of the Internet, the digitisation of information and the e-book public libraries have had to change (DCMS, 2010). It is therefore important that public libraries adopt the right roles to operate in the ever evolving information age, where information is available at the touch of a button (Dutta-Bergman, 2005). This has contributed significantly to a change in the services provided by public libraries:

“Developments in ICT provision, notably with the introduction of Internet access, have started to change the landscape of public library services within the UK” (Eve and Brophy, 2001).

The launch of the £100 million National Lottery funded the People’s Network in 2000 saw the implementation of 30,000 computers allowing for access to the Internet (DCMS, 2010). A further £70 million was spent on training the 30,000 public library staff (£20m) and digital resources to assist informal learning (£50m) (Chrisbatt Consulting, 2009).

Boughey (2000:143) explains how this investment would allow users to be “connected to a powerful network...offering ICT services in an integrated way with
other, more traditional services”, thus helping to bridge the digital divide. This is referred to as “the troubling gap between those who use computers and the internet and those who do not” (Mehra et al., 2004: 782). A report by the Cabinet Office (2005) stated that the digital divide predominately occurs due to a “...lack of knowledge and confidence”.

One such group that are all too aware of the digital divide and being left behind in the fast paced digital age are older people. They make up a large proportion of the 12.5 million digitally excluded throughout the country (Big Lottery Fund, 2004). Initiatives such as ‘Silver Surfers’ Day’ have been implemented in order to encourage this demographic of people to take the first steps in getting online by taking part in IT events (Big Lottery Fund, 2004).

As well as tackling the digital divide it was also an aim of the People’s Network to:

“Connect every public library to the information superhighway” and provide “funding for the infrastructure...and for the training of all library staff in ICT skills and the development of educational content for the network” (The Library Association, 2000).

It is now the case that 95% of public library authorities provide Internet access in a minimum of one of their sites, with 32% of authorities having access in all of their sites (The People’s Network, 2002). Of the libraries that do provide patrons with Internet access; 41% of them do so with no charge (The People’s Network, 2002).

As well as the expansion of hardware, longer opening hours have opened up greater opportunities for usage. This has resulted in a greater number of
people using the IT services in public libraries. A recent Omnibus survey by the DCMS stated that “50% of people who use the internet in a public space did so in a public library” (DCMS, 2009).

Not only does Internet access attract patrons without home access to the Internet, but also those users who have slow connections at home. Free access to the Internet is also popular with students (MLA, DCMS, & Laser Foundation, 2006). A National Audit Office survey from 2004 found that some 16% of people aged 16 years and over have accessed the Internet via public libraries.

Through the introduction of IT into public libraries the People’s Network scheme aims to achieve a number of objectives, including improving lifelong learning and education, developing further a culturally and politically informed society, and enhancing employment, training and business in order to achieve greater economic development (New Library: The People’s Network, 1997).

Offering digital media in public libraries enables the services to become more accessible to more people, assist in bridging the digital divide, attract new patrons to public libraries, and provide patrons with a greater choice of resources and content (DCMS, 2010).

A comprehensive change in government policy regarding public libraries is the reason for such developments taking place. 1997 saw the electing of a new government that was aware of ‘the information age’ and ‘the potential of the new electronic networks’ (Chrisbatt Consulting, 2009). Their intentions were made clear with the implementation of the People’s Network. The willingness of this new government to make such large scale investments in public libraries saw some library authorities jumping on the
bandwagon and implementing IT services and access to the Internet without a full understanding of the reasoning and implications behind it (Eve and Brophy, 2001).

2003, the first full year of operation of the People’s Network, saw public libraries make 44 million hours of free Internet access available to the general public, and some 11.7 million session on the IT services (Chrisbatt Consulting, 2009). This resulted in 85,000 users developing new skills and/or accessing formal education programmes, and in excess of 100,000 IT classes were taught (Chrisbatt Consulting, 2009).

The provision of IT access and lifelong learning, such as IT classes, in areas which are socially and economically deprived is an important issue for public libraries. Funding to support this issue is available via the Learning Centre Initiative to provide centres for learning in such areas. The fund offered £250 million, with the aim of establishing some 700 centres for learning (Eve and Brophy, 2001). Those public libraries that are providing IT services within deprived areas are eligible for funding for maintaining and improving those buildings which house IT facilities.

Over the years as the delivery of IT services into public libraries was being established a number of programmes have help to fund several initiatives. The Wolfson Libraries Challenge Fund, which ran between 1999 to 2000, in conjunction with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport provided public libraries with £3 million for the development of the infrastructure of IT projects (DCMS, 2000). An £80 million investment throughout 58 library authorities made by the Big Lottery Fund aimed to invigorate and transform public libraries into centres for community activity (DCMS, 2010).
Similar to this is the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which provides funding for IT training services in public libraries within deprived areas in the UK. As of 2005 the foundation has donated around £3 million towards the opening of 46 IT training labs within public libraries and contributed two more computers to over 320 public libraries (Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2005).

The Library and Information Commission (2000) stated of public libraries that:

“By their very nature libraries and information services already embody the values necessary to contribute to a socially inclusive society.”

However, evidence gathered as regards this statement is mixed. Leeds Metropolitan University carried out research which looked at how, and more importantly, if public libraries tackle the issue of inclusion and how it challenges the view that public libraries are institutions that are ‘democratic’ (Muddiman et al., 2000).

Similar research suggests that the level of provision to ethnic minorities may well be below that which is both required and/or expected of public libraries (Eve and Brophy, 2001). A study in Public Libraries, Ethnic Diversity and Citizenship indicated that the “public library service has not yet manages to engage freely with ethnically diverse communities,” and that the structure of the public library service “is restrictive in terms of service access and denies ethnic minorities a stake in the public library system” (Roach & Morrison, 1998). The report warns that ethnic minorities may be left behind and become socially excluded:
“Efforts should be made to lock community sector organisations into the growing information technology networks and to develop the capacity of those organisations currently seeking to address needs not being met by the public library service.” (Roach & Morrison, 1998:173).

Many other projects, of which some have received awards from the ‘Libraries Change Lives’ scheme, have also recognised the need to address the requirements of specific groups within society (Library Association, 2000). More often than not such projects involve IT usage.

It has been argued by some that public libraries are striving too hard to become “all things to everybody” (Comedia, 1993). Kinnell and Sturges (1996) state that:

“At the heart of the issues surrounding public libraries, from their inception up to the present day, has been an imprecise formal definition of their role. Should they be a medium of education and instruction, an information source, a cultural focus for communities, or an addition to people’s leisure pursuits through the lending of fiction? … There is so much that (public) libraries do and so much that they could do.”

The introduction of IT facilities into public libraries has not been universally accepted as bringing an improvement. This is particularly true of library staff who, in some instances, fear for their livelihood with the traditional roles provided by public libraries being slowly eroded (Coxall, 2006).

Not only is there that issue, but some public library staff see “some activities as social or recreational [which] can result in them being misconstrued as worthless or a waste of time” (Schofield et al., 2004:165). This can be the case when younger
library patrons are accessing the Internet to play online games and visit social networking websites.

2.3 Governmental public library policies and policy objectives

The Library and Information Commission (LIC) was established in 1995 to assist the government with the development of policies regarding the country’s public library services (Eve and Brophy, 2001). Examining the potential benefits of the introduction of IT into public libraries was one of the LIC’s first tasks. As a result the following vision statement was therefore produced; ‘New Library: the People’s Network’ (Library and Information Commission, 1997). The LIC concluded that in order for IT to have its intended impact within the public library sector then a “re-equipping (libraries) and reskilling their staff.....” must occur “.....so that they can continue to fulfil their widely valued role as intermediary, guide, interpreter and referral point” (Library and Information Commission, 1997).

An immediate recommendation of the LIC was that of establishing a dedicated network, which would see all public libraries being interconnected; along with the development of a Public Library Networking Agency to assist in the setting up of a programme overseeing staff training, the development of services and content, and the infrastructure of the network itself (Eve and Brophy, 2001).

At the same time, an independent report by the Audit Commission also called for public libraries to focus on the provision of IT in order to open up greater access to their services and collections (Audit Commission, 1997).

These recommendations, specifically those made by the New Library report, were met with great enthusiasm by the government (DCMS, 1998). Said
developments were published in a report entitled Building the New Library Network, which set out a comprehensive strategy for putting into place the network, and any possibilities for funding (Library and Information Commission, 1998). The report also suggested that a body which would oversee the development the project was established, thus providing the required strategic focus. As a result, The People’s Network was created, which is now part of the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries (Library and Information Commission, 1998). The team at The People’s Network is responsible for supporting and offering guidance in the use of IT within public libraries.

New Labour took office in May 1997, and since have received a number of recommendations as to how public libraries should play a part in dealing with the issue of social exclusion (Library and Information Commission, 2000) and encouraging lifelong learning (Library and Information Commission, 1999). After all:

“Public libraries are already used by 58 per cent of the population. They are a first stop for information, they are widely used by children and young people as an adjunct to formal learning, and their reputation for supporting the knowledge-seeker is unparalleled. Their unique combination of resources, services and personal support attracts some 1.3 million visitors every working day, and 10 million users visit frequently - at least once a fortnight. Library staff respond to over 50 million enquiries each year, on a universal range of topics” (Library and Information Commission, 1997).

The report, ‘Our Information Age’, set out the plans of the government to take full advantage of the benefits that the information age is to bring (Central Office of Information, 1998). The paper focused on initiatives such as the development of IT services; in order to provide the public with access to
facilities which are essential in the digital age, and the opportunities for training and learning (Central Office of Information, 1998).

The report also went on to state that public libraries are perfectly positioned to assist the government with their aims of providing IT facilities to the socially excluded, and as to act as community information centres (Central Office of Information, 1998):

“Libraries also have a major part to play in widening access to essential services for those who could not otherwise afford them. Just as public libraries brought knowledge through books in the 19th century, they can do so through information and communications technology (ICT) in the 21st century” (Central Office of Information, 1998).

Funded by the New Opportunities Fund (NOF), the Community Access to Lifelong Learning (CALL) fund was established in 1999. It provides funding to develop and support the running of a national IT network of learning centres with access to the Internet; community-based grids for learning, providing content for adult learners; and provide support to the People’s Network, which will see all public libraries linked via the Internet, the National Grid for Learning and community websites (Big Lottery Fund, 2006).

The government are also trying to do more in the future to help “everyone who wants to be online to get online, do more online and benefit from the advantages of being online” with ‘The National Plan for Digital Participation’ (BIS, 2010). This will see an investment of £30 million.

Although the significant investment made by the government into the People’s Network and Internet access for all has been implemented under the
guise of the government’s inclusion plan; Goulding (2001: 3) argues that there is an ulterior motive to this:

“a primary, if not the ultimate, aim of government investment in ICT is to benefit the economy through the ‘upskilling’ of the populace and by enabling businesses to take advantage of new markets brought about by the information economy”.

2.4 The value of public library IT services

The governmental policies previously mentioned have ensured that IT services within public libraries have evolved and expanded at a significant rate over the past few years, providing the public with new opportunities for learning, access to information and many other services.

They are now considered as key points for delivering IT access to the public and contribute to the community in a number of ways. Beenham & Harrison (1990:3) indentified that public libraries aimed to provide for the development of education at all levels; promote culture and the arts; enable individuals to easily access information and encourage a meaningful use of recreational and leisure time. In a time when almost 80% of the countries’ population is online, access to the Internet is now seen as a necessity as opposed to something that is ‘nice to have’ (DCMS, 2010).

A survey by the MLA in January 2010 regarding access to the Internet in public libraries is testament to the role they play in providing communities with Internet access. The reported found that some 86% of public libraries claimed to have helped unemployed patrons to get online and over 76% supported job searching online (MLA, 2010).
The standards consultation paper of The Department for Culture, Media and Sport considers that “ICT development is a key issue”, however, they concentrate their standards on “.....the importance and popularity of print-based services and community resources” (DCMS, 2000). Also included in the standards is a measure for the annual number of visits a library’s website receives. It is, however, difficult to reliably collect and interpret this type of data, due to the fact that visits to websites do not necessarily relate to that site being used, and instead may merely highlight the fact that the URL (Uniform Resource Locator) has been well promoted to search engines rather than any other reason (Eve and Brophy, 2001). Often it is the case that such statistics in fact reveal very little in the way of the usefulness of information gathered, user satisfaction etc.

Therefore, qualitative evaluation methods are required to adequately evaluate the value of public libraries. An example of this is the 2000/2001 performance indicators of the Audit commission which take into account the level of user satisfaction (DETR, 1999). It is a requirement of all public libraries that they participate in the Best Value programme; providing “a duty of best value on local authorities to deliver services to clear standards by the most economic, efficient and effective means available” (DETR, 1999). The Best Value programme evaluates services, which sees consultation with users as a key tool for bringing about improvements; something that is very familiar within the public library sector (Liddle, 1999). This indicates that user satisfaction, along with the quantity and quality of the services provided have become of increasing concern to public libraries.

2.5 Conclusion
The surroundings in which public libraries today find themselves are one of significant change, with an ever increasing emphasis on the use of IT. It is the
expectation of the government that IT can be used as a tool for delivering a number of its services; a view that has been mirrored by companies and organisations in the commercial sector. More and more people, whether they are users of public libraries or not, are developing a greater level of IT literacy, thus leaving those who for whatever reason are less literate to become socially excluded.

The government has recognised the role that public libraries, potentially, can play in assisting a number of initiatives, with considerable amounts of funding being made available for training staff, software and hardware, and the development of networks. As yet, however, there is little in the way of evidence as to the value and impact that the significant levels of investment in public library IT services are having on the users of these facilities.
3. Methodology

The libraries where the research was conducted include the Central Library, which is situated in the heart of Doncaster town centre; Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre, based in a more deprived suburb of Doncaster; and finally Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service Centre, located in a more affluent part of the town.

At an early stage it was important to plan the methods which were to be used in the study as they will determine the outcome of it (Powell & Connaway, 2004). Stringent planning also helped to avoid the possible problems of bias, ensuring the data were significant, and that the results were of value.

3.1 Research approach

It was often the case that when conducting research within the area of library and information studies that quantitative survey techniques were deemed the “only way to collect data” (Gornan & Clayton, 1997:43). However, Gorman & Clayton (1997) also state that qualitative approaches to research, and their search for meaning, are now becoming more common place, with many studies adopting it “as an appropriate investigative paradigm.” Mellon (1990:151) also stands by the notion that a qualitative approach to the collection and analysis of data in the library environment can be appropriate:

“Library programmes and services are notoriously hard to evaluate statistically for several reasons. First, they are complex...Second, they are designed by people for people. And...people are unpredictable. Third, statistics on library services and programmes are unreliable.”
The main approach to this study centres around inductive reasoning and is based on grounded theory, as it does not examine a pre-determined hypothesis. “...grounded theories are likely to reflect the complexity of what is studied rather than oversimplifying it” (Powell & Connaway, 2004:202). Adopting this approach will mean that “themes will emerge from the data” (Chaplin, 2002). It is important that this be considered, as it is an area that is both emotive and complex (Coxall, 2006).

The approach to the research was also a naturalistic one whereby the study examined everyday real-life situations as they naturally occur, with no attempt to manipulate the surroundings, and a “lack of pre-determined constraints on outcomes” (Patton, 1990:40).

The data, which is predominately qualitative, was collected, examined, with a conclusion drawn up on the beliefs, feelings and perceptions of those completing the questionnaire.

The content of the study referred to the thoughts and opinions of the users on what they consider to be the value of IT access in the library. Although the libraries in the three different case studies are all within the same library authority, nonetheless there may be differences in the way the individual libraries are managed, raising questions as to the validity of the hypotheses based on these finding.

In order to gain any sort of value from the study, it was approached with an open-mindedness and objectivity (Hart, 1998).

3.2 Methods of data collection
This involves the use of a structured questionnaire, of which the wording and sequence of each the questions remained identical for each respondent
(Mellon, 1990:1). Powell & Conway (2004:84) refer to this approach as “considered to be more appropriate for studying personal factors.”

The questionnaire obtained information at a broad level in the library branches it is distributed in. The questionnaire was used in three different libraries previously mentioned. By using the questionnaire method it ensured that standardised questions are asked and that respondents can consider their replies.

When designing the questionnaire, the work of Fowler (1995) was studied in order to construct the best possible survey. He claimed that for a question to be deemed a good question “all the people understanding it should understand it in a consistent way and in a way that is consistent with what the researcher expected it to mean” (Fowler, 1995: 2). During this process elements such as leading questions and bias were addressed. The number of respondents to the questionnaire was dependent on the “goodwill and availability of subjects” (Bell, 1993:82). The response rate was determined by those individuals that are “available and willing at the time” (Bell, 1993:82). It was, therefore, the intention to make the questionnaire as unambiguous and short as possible.

Each of the questions posed to respondents on the questionnaire aimed to provide information in order to meet each of the study’s objectives, and thus assist in determining the value of IT access in the Library and Information Services of the Metropolitan Borough of Doncaster.

The questionnaire was examined not only by my supervisor Professor Peter Willett, but also Ben Corbridge of the Central Library for pre-approval prior to it being used within the Library and Information Services of Doncaster. Examining and testing the questionnaire was necessary in order to check that all aspects were clear and understandable. It was also important to “see
whether the wording and format of questions will present any difficulties when the main data are analysed” (Bell, 1993: 84). As a result a number of minor alterations were made to the questionnaire. Despite all of this, however, there were some issues with interpretation and understanding of some questions, especially amongst respondents for which English was not their first language.

3.3 Ethical considerations
When designing the study ethics had to be considered. The process of careful planning of the data collection methods can help to address any ethical issues, such as that of bias, which may arise (Powell & Conway, 2004).

Flick (2006) talks about confidentiality issues. There may be the potential of respondents to the questionnaire producing responses that they would not wish library staff to be able to attribute to them in fear of their library account being revoked (Coxall, 2006). Therefore, the questionnaire did not require any individuals to give personal details such as name or address. Instead, codes will be used in order to distinguish between them. An information sheet was attached to the front of the questionnaire giving the respondents an insight into what was being asked of them, and whether or not they agree to take part in the study (Coxall, 2006).

3.4 Research limitations
There are a possible number of limitations with a study of this kind. However, all these have been considered during the planning process in order to try and minimise their effects.

Firstly, there are the issues of avoiding pre-conceptions and bias. However, as Mydral (1983:43) states, this is not always as thought:
As social scientists we are deceiving ourselves if we naively believe that we are not as human as the people around us that we do not tend to aim opportunistically for conclusions that fit prejudices markedly similar to those of other people in our society.”

The issue of extreme responses was also a very real problem. After all, the kind of people “who are highly opinionated regarding the subject of a questionnaire are more likely than others to complete and return it” (Powell & Conway, 2004:126). This, therefore, needed to be taken into account when analysing the findings from the questionnaires.

As a result of the large number of immigrants living in Doncaster, some of the respondents not were unable to understand the questionnaire due either to a poor level of literacy, or more likely, as a direct result of English not being their mother tongue.

3.5 Practicalities
There are a number of practicalities that needed to be considered before the study could be carried out.

Firstly, was that of the distribution of the questionnaires. There were a number of options available here, including individually handing them to users of the IT facilities and asking them if they wish to participate. However, this may have proved to be time consuming and gives place to the possibility of some individuals not being spotted and thus not given the opportunity to take part in the study. The option of having the library staff hand out the questionnaires to IT users instead was another one that could be considered. There are some problems, however, associated with this method. Members of staff would have no incentive to distribute the
questionnaires, and may not have time for this activity as they already busy dealing with other library users and such. After careful consideration it was decided that I would take it upon myself to approach users of the IT services in the three participating libraries and ask patrons if they would like to fill out the questionnaire.

Having already produced the questionnaire, there now comes the job of printing enough copies so that all individuals who wish to take part in the questionnaire can do so. Contacting staff at the Doncaster Library and Information Services, as to an indication of the number of users of the IT facilities at each of the three different libraries per week, will help to avoid a situation whereby the questionnaires run out. The actual process of printing out the questionnaires will be done at my local library as I do not have access at home to printing facilities.

Finally, there is the practicality of travelling between the three different libraries in order to conduct the research. If it is decided that I will hand the questionnaires out myself then I intend to travel between the different libraries on different dates. However, if it is the case that the library staff are going to hand out the questionnaires then I can travel between them on the same date, thus ensuring that all research is conducted during the same time period.
4. Results

The purpose of this chapter is to produce a summary of the data obtained from the study. This is presented using a variety of table, charts and graphs. Respondents were required to provide details of the library branch they were at, a few personal details and details of their usage of the IT services.

These results depended solely on the “goodwill and availability of subjects” and so the response rate was determined, in the majority, by patrons who were “available and willing at the time” (Bell, 1993: 82). Therefore an ‘opportunity sample’ of 64 respondents was collected from those patrons in the three libraries at the time of my visits.

Even though the size of the sample is relatively small, Patton (in Erlandson et al, 1993) states that by using a “small purposive sample, and by not attempting to over-generalise from it, the research can do much to allay fears about inadequate sample size.” Illustrating that accumulating a sample of just 64 responses is not necessarily that much of an issue.

4.1 Library responses

- **Library branch**

In all there were 64 respondents to the questionnaires (see Appendix). 42% of the responses came from the Central library, 33% from the Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre and 25% from the Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service Centre. The number of patrons responding to the questionnaire from each of the three individual libraries is shown in table 4.1.
The number of responses from each of the three libraries was fairly evenly spread. The majority of responses were from the Central Library; a finding that is expected as not only does it cater for the large town centre, but also for Doncaster as a whole. Also, those people who live in the inner city are generally those who find themselves socially excluded and thus more likely to use the IT services provided by the Central Library. This is also true of the patrons of the Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre; hence the relatively large number of respondents. The lowest number of responses was from the Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service Centre. This may, in part, be explained by the fact that residents of this area are more affluent and thus more likely to have access to IT either at work or home, and do not have time to visit libraries as they are more likely to be in employment.

### 4.2 User characteristics

- **Gender**

Table 4.2 illustrates the gender breakdown of respondents in all three libraries in terms of percentage. There is a predominance of ‘Male’ respondents (36) compared to ‘Female’ respondents (28). Of the 28 ‘Female’ respondents one was ‘Transgender’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Library</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service Centre</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 Percentage of male and female respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 27 respondents at the Central Library 15 (56%) respondents were ‘Male’ and 12 (44%) respondents were ‘Female’. At the Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre 9 (43%) of the respondents were ‘Male’ and 12 (57%) of the respondents were ‘Female’; of which one was ‘Transgender’. Within the Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service Centre 11 (73%) respondents were male and 4 (27%) respondents were female. This is shown in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Percentage of male and female respondents in each library

The proportion of male to female respondents was fairly evenly matched on the whole. Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre was the only library whereby the number of female respondents outnumbered male respondents. There are a whole host of reasons for why this was the case. In a socially and
economically deprived area such as Bentle females are more likely to be housewives than to pursue a career and so have time to visit the library, and less likely to have IT facilities of their own.

- **Occupation**

As part of the questionnaire respondents were asked to specify their occupation. These were later categorised into five different groups, consisting of ‘Employed’, ‘Unemployed’, ‘Student’, ‘Retired’ and ‘Other’. 23 (36%) of all the respondents were ‘Employed’, 16 (25%) ‘Unemployed’, 8 (12.5%) were classed as a ‘Student’, 4 (6.25%) ‘Retired’ and 13 (20%) categorised as ‘Other’. The ‘Other’ category consisted of responses such as “Housewife”, “Disabled” and ones that were left blank. Table 4.3 illustrates this categorisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the Central Library 7 (26%) respondents were ‘Employed’, 11 (41%) were ‘Unemployed’, 4 (15%) were categorised as a ‘Student’, 1 (3%) was ‘Retired’ and 4 (15%) came under the ‘Other’ category. At the Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre 7 (33%) of respondents were ‘Employed’, 3 (14%) were ‘Unemployed’, 1 (6%) was classed as a ‘Student’, 3 (14%) were ‘Retired’ and 7 (33%) were categorised as ‘Other’. The Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service Centre had 9 (56%) of respondents classed as
‘Employed’, 2 (12.5%) ‘Unemployed’, 3 (19%) ‘Student’ and 2 (12.5%) ‘Other’. None of the respondents at the Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service Centre were ‘Retired’. Figure 4.2 shows this breakdown.

Figure 4.2 Percentage of respondents in each occupation category in each library

The outcome of the questionnaire illustrated that the two most common employment status types were ‘Employed’ and ‘Unemployed’. It is naive to conclude simply from the results, however, that the vast majority of public library patrons are either employed or unemployed. However, it can be concluded that the results appear to indicate that public libraries are somewhat succeeding in attracting one group of people who can find themselves socially excluded; the unemployed.

The kind of employment the respondents were in varied greatly; from manual jobs to more customer service based roles. Many did, however, have in common the fact that IT use may not figure greatly in their jobs and thus do not have access to such facilities at work. This may explain why such a large proportion of respondents were classed as ‘Employed’ yet still used the
IT services at the library. The findings that the IT services are used by a larger majority of ‘Employed’ patrons rather than ‘Unemployed’ ones is supported by Chaplin (2002) and the Cabinet Office who revealed that:

“There is a higher resistance to the use of new technologies among people who receive benefits than amongst the general population. Forty six percent of those receiving benefits are not willing to try any technologies they do not currently use, compared with a quarter of the general public. This pattern is consistent across a range of technologies, including...e-mail, and Internet access” (DTI, 2000).

Although my research did not find a low participation rate of the IT services by the unemployed at the three libraries; there are reasons for why a greater number of ‘Unemployed’ patrons are not using the facilities. A lack of IT training or use of IT as a result of not being in employment can pose a barrier to ‘Unemployed’ patrons using the IT services. This may leave some patrons with a fear of breaking the machines or appearing ill-educated as they not familiar with IT. It may also be the case that the IT facilities are associated with informal learning by the unemployed (Proctor & Bartle, 2002: 98) thus highlighting the possible issue of a negative perception.

- **Age band**
Table 4.4 illustrates the percentage of all respondents that fit into specific pre-determined age bands. 18 (28%) of all the respondents fell into the ’16-24’ age band, 18 (28%) were in the ’25-34’ category, 7 (11%) were inside the ’25-49’ group, 5 (8%) were classed as being in the ’50-54’ band and 16 (25%) were in the oldest age group of ’55 and over’.
Table 4.4 Percentage of respondents in specific age bands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age band</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-24</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-49</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 and over</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 27 respondents at the Central Library 11 (41%) were ‘16-24’, 6 (22%) were ‘25-34’, 3 (11%) were ‘35-49’, 4 (15%) were ‘50-54’ and 3 (11%) were ‘55 and over’. The 21 respondents at the Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre consisted of the following; 3 (14%) ‘16-24’, 7 (33%) ‘25-34’, 3 (14%) ‘35-49’ and 8 (37%) ‘55 and over’. There were no respondents between the ages of ‘50-54’. At the Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service Centre the 16 respondents were made up of 4 (25%) ‘16-24’, 5 (31%) ‘25-34’, 1 (6%) ‘35-49’, 1 (6%) ‘50-54’ and 5 (31%) ‘55 and over’. Figure 4.3 shows this.

Figure 4.3 Percentage of respondents in specific age band at each library
It can be expected that predominately the IT services in public libraries are used by younger members of society. The results support this premise as most respondents were in the ‘16-24’ and ‘25-34’ age thresholds. However, there was also a large proportion of respondents from the ‘55 and over’ age band. Chaplin (2002), Proctor & Bartle (2002), and Raven (1998) also encountered the same trend in similar studies. One reason for this is due to the fact that the ‘55 and over’ age band is inclusive of a larger number of ages than the ‘16-24’ and ‘25-34’ age groups which only allow for age spans of 8 and 9 years respectively. Another reason, as stated by Proctor & Bartle (2002: 40) is that with an increase in age comes an increase in the frequency of library visits. If this statement is true then it is the case that elderly patrons do not necessarily represent the largest group, but were simply more likely to be questionnaire respondents. Dutch and Muddiman (2001: 184) state one reason for high take up of the IT services by the elderly being that “Working class pensioners predominantly rely on the state pension and means tested benefits.” Therefore putting this demographic of public library patrons in a position where they are more likely not to own a home computer due to the associated costs.

- **Nationality**

The final part of the questionnaire looking at the personal details of the respondent asked their nationality. The vast majority of the respondents were ‘British’ 48 (75%). This includes the respondents who classed themselves as ‘English’. 9 (14%) were ‘European’, 2 (4%) ‘African’, 2 (4%) ‘Asian’ and 1 (3%) ‘Other’.
Table 4.5 Percentage of respondents of specific nationalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the Central Library 16 (59%) of the respondents were ‘British’, 8 (30%) were ‘European’, 2 (7%) were ‘Asian’ and 1(4%) was Brazilian and so classed as ‘Other’. There is a predominance of ‘British’ respondents 17 (90%) at the Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre, 1 (5%) ‘European’ and 1 (5%) ‘African’. Again the respondents at the Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service Centre were in the majority ‘British’ 15 (94%) and 1 (6%) ‘African’. 2 respondents declined to provide details of their nationality. This is illustrated in figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4 Percentage of respondents of specific nationality in each library

It was expected that the vast majority of respondents would be ‘British’. The ever expanding European Union, which is now made up of 27 member
states, has seen a large migration of Easter European residents into the United Kingdom. Such people tend to be categorised as having low incomes and are likely to find themselves socially excluded. This would explain why Europeans more likely than any other nationality to use the IT services of public libraries.

A small percentage of the respondents were ‘African’, ‘Asian’ or ‘Other’. The one ‘Other’ was from South America. The low number of these respondents using the IT facilities may be due to the fact that within Doncaster there are fewer residents of such nationalities. It may also be the case that as these continents represent some of the poorest regions of the world, the residents coming from these countries have no level of computer literacy as they have little or no experience of using IT.

4.3 Use of IT

- *How often do you use the IT services at the library?*

The first part of this section of the questionnaire asked respondents to identify how often they use the IT services. Table 4.6 shows that 31 (48%) respondents are using the services ‘Often’, 22 (34%) using them ‘Sometimes’, 10 (16%) using them ‘Very Little’ and just 1 (2%) respondent was using the facilities for the first time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of use</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Little</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Time</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the Central Library 15 (56%) respondents claimed to use the IT services ‘Often’, with 10 (37%) stating they use them ‘Sometimes’ and 2 (7%) ‘Very Little’. Within the Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre 11 (52%) respondents are using the IT services ‘Often’ and 10 (48%) are using them ‘Sometimes’. None of the respondents stated that they were using the facilities ‘Very Little’ or for the ‘First Time’. 5 (31%) respondents at the Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service Centre are using the services ‘Often’, 3 (19%) ‘Sometimes’, 7 (44%) ‘Very Little’ and 1 (6%) was using them for the ‘First Time’.

Figure 4.5 Percentage frequency of IT usage at each library

Both the Central Library and the Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre had a high proportion of respondents who either used the IT services ‘Often’ or ‘Sometime’. This may be due to the fact that there were also a large number of respondents from these libraries who were either unemployed or housewives, therefore allowing respondents plenty of spare time to use the IT services, and more likely not to be able to afford IT equipment or an Internet connection. The overwhelming majority of respondents at the
Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service Centre were in employment and so can either afford a connection to the Internet of their own or have access to IT facilities at their place of work.

When examining the results it must be noted that the definitions of the different frequency of usage are ambiguous and thus open to interpretation. For example, a patron who uses the IT services twice a week may consider their usage to be ‘Often’, whereas another may think of this as only being ‘Sometimes’.

- **What are your reasons for using the IT services at the library?**

Respondents were asked to state their reason(s) for using the IT services at the library. The vast majority stated that the use of the Internet as their primary reason for using the facilities. “Internet access”, “To use the Internet” were typical responses to the above question. Those who specified the specific aspects of the Internet they were using on the whole stated “Getting info” / “Research...”, “Checking emails”, and “Job searching” were the most common responses. Some of the other Internet based reasons given for using the IT facilities included “…social networking...”, more specifically “Facebook”, “…booking tickets”, “…browsing”, “Catch up with friends”, “…to read the papers” and “Looking for a home”. Surprisingly, not one respondent stated they used the Internet for common Internet based activities such as online shopping or online banking which may indicate perceived issues of security, or lack thereof, with the IT facilities within public libraries. However, it may also be the case that such activities are not carried out as many of the respondents are not in employment and so may not be able to afford to shop online.

Some of the responses given for Internet usage may be deemed by library staff and other library patrons as less “worthy” (Coxall, 2006: 24). However,
just because an activity is seen as not “worthy” (Coxall, 2006: 24), it is not to say that it is not worthwhile. For example, in ‘The modernisation review of public libraries: A policy statement’ (DCMS, 2010) the government recommend that all public libraries allow users to access social networking websites such as ‘Facebook’ as they recognise that they are “valuable communication tools and part of our cultural infrastructure”.

“Access to email services” is important for the 25% of respondents who were not ‘British’ as it may be the only means of keeping in contact with relatives back home etc.

The use of the Internet within the IT services of public libraries is clearly a popular activity. It was claimed by the government in 2005 that increased visits to public libraries were purely as a result of the introduction of the People’s Network which “has given the public library network a new lease of life” (DCMS, 2005: 13).

For those respondents who did not solely use the IT services “To go onto the Internet...” the main reasons for usage included use of hardware such as printers and scanners. “Printing CVs and.....application forms”, “Print off airport bookings” and “Scanning documents” were just some of the responses given to this question. Other responses, which could be deemed more “worthy” (Coxall, 2006: 24), include “To learn the computer”, “...doing home work”, “...coursework” and “...amend any changes (to CV)”. The vast majority of respondents still used the IT facilities for the Internet as well as the reasons mentioned above.

It was the case in a number of instances that this question was slightly misunderstood by respondents. The question was interpreted by some as asking why they are using the public library IT services rather than what
they are using them for. “I don’t have a home computer”, “Convenience”, and the fact that use of the services are “Free” were the responses given as to why patrons were using the IT facilities. Such responses would be more appropriate for the question “What do you see as the main benefits of the IT services at the library?” Another response to the question of reasons for usage was “To get away from my family and help me concentrate on my work”.

Of those respondents that answered this question, at the Central Library, almost all stated that the reason they use the IT services were to use the Internet, “Mainly Internet access”. The reasons for using the Internet varied greatly. “Research and to read the papers”, “Check emails & go on facebook”, “…job search & general browsing” were just a small number of the responses given. The higher proportion of unemployed respondents at the Central Library would explain why access to the Internet was popular as such individuals would less likely to have Internet access of their own due to lack of income and lack of opportunity as they are out of work.

Other reasons given by the patrons of Doncaster’s Central Library include the fact that the services are free of charge; the use of printing facilities, “I mostly use for printing CVs” and that a small number of respondents are without computers of their own, “Not got own computer”.

At the Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre the vast majority of respondents stated that the main reason they use the IT services was to access the Internet, “To go onto the Internet”, “To use (the) Internet”. Of the activities the Internet was predominately used for included checking emails, “…I can check my emails”, job searching, “Looking for job”, and for research reasons, “To research on the Internet”. Other Internet based activities included “Facebook”, “Booking tickets”, “Car insurance” and to “See what is happening in
The fact that searching for jobs was a popular activity is due to the high proportion of respondents who are unemployed.

The popularity of Internet usage would suggest that a high proportion of respondents have no home connection to the Internet or access through any other means. The high number of unemployed respondents would mean that many would not be able to afford an Internet connection and associated costs. The responses given by a number of patrons confirm this view, “Haven’t got Internet access at home”, “Not got Internet at home”, “Save on my phone bill”, “...lack of home Internet connection”.

Not only do many respondents not have access to the Internet, but some also do not have access to computers, “Mine (computer) at home is not working”, “I don’t have a home computer”. This is also true of other hardware such as printers, “Print my CV” which would suggest respondents do not have access to these facilities either.

Other reasons respondents at the Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre gave for using the IT services included “Convenience” and the desire to learn, “To learn the computer”, “To learn more”.

Most respondents at the Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service Centre stated their main reason for using the IT services as being the use of not the computers but the other hardware available, such as printers and scanners. “Printing off work”, “...use of hardwares such as printers, scanners etc” and “Scanning documents” were some of the responses given. The emphasis on these pieces of hardware may suggest that the patrons from this more affluent part of Doncaster have computers and Internet access of their own, but just lack other hardware such as the aforementioned printers and scanners. There was only one respondent who said that as well as using the
facilities for printing and/or scanning they also used them for accessing the Internet.

There were a large number of respondents stating that access to the Internet was the main reason they used the IT services. “Internet access”, “Finding something out on the Internet” were some of the responses given. Where respondents stated specific use of the Internet they mostly stated they used it for job searching, “Finding a jobs for myself”, “Looking for work”, “Internet needed to find a job”. Those respondents not in employment are clearly eager to find employment and active in their search for it. Lack of employment, and thus lack of money can go some way to explain why the unemployed are using accessing the Internet in public libraries and not in their homes. The only other uses stated for use of the Internet were to retrieve emails and “Ancestry search”. This would suggest that most respondents have Internet access of their own as none were using it for browsing and/or social networking which are popular Internet based activities.

Other reasons given for using the IT services include the ease and convenience, and that they are free of charge, “If my PC is broken. Or away from home”, “No home PC. Free access very important”.

- What do you see as the main benefits of the IT services at the library?
This question aimed to find out why respondents were using the IT services at the library and what they saw as the benefits. The overwhelming majority of respondents claimed that they see the main benefit of the facilities being that they are “Free”. 17 (30%) of the 57 respondents who answered this question stated that the single benefit of the IT services is “That it is free to use”. Some respondents who mentioned “Free usage of (the) Internet” as a benefit also noted how this opened up the services to all members of society;
“It’s available to everyone as it’s free”, “Provides access to the Internet for those unable to afford home access”. It is the intention of the government to, under section 8(2)(b) of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, prevent any public library from charging for access to the Internet as of April 2011 (DCMS, 2010).

This is also true of respondents who mentioned “Accessibility of modern technology” such as printers and scanners as a benefit. They noted that this too benefits everyone within society; “Helps people who don’t have the necessary equipment at home”, “Accessibility of modern technology to those who would otherwise go without”.

Similar to the fact that access to the IT services is free, is the ease of use and convenience of the facilities. As public libraries are not only places for borrowing books, and are now instead ‘Customer Contact Centres’ and are incorporated within ‘Neighbourhood Service Centres’ then the services which they provide are becoming more convenient as patrons are increasingly visiting public libraries to make use of services other than those traditionally associated with libraries. Responses to this question, regarding ease of use and convenience include; “Easy to come in and use”, “Open all day”, “Can access (the) Internet when away from home or work”. Therefore, not only are the IT services providing for those who would not otherwise be able to afford access, but also for those who may not be technology savvy. For the latter, public libraries provide them with a space where computers and other pieces of IT are set up and ready to be used is the only way they would use such facilities. This view is supported by one response which stated that they view the main benefit of the IT services as allowing them “To learn the computer”.

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As the Internet is becoming more predominant in everyday life, the need to have access to this powerful tool is seen as a necessity. 13 (23%) respondents stated the main benefit of the IT services as being “Access to the world wide web” and/or being able to conduct Internet based activities such as “To keep in contact with people” and “Being able to look for work”.

Other benefits given include the fact that public libraries allow for quiet and calm use of IT facilities; “You spend time on the computer without any distraction”, and a place whereby those who are not computer literate can make use of IT and associated technologies without fear of encountering difficulties; “Helpful staff when in difficulties”, “…always someone to assist you if you have a problem”.

A number of patrons did not respond to this question. Therefore, it can either be taken that the respondents could be bothered to answer the question, or simply that they could not think of, or see any benefits that the IT services provide.

It must, however, be considered that these few benefits mentioned are not the only ones of the IT services in public libraries. These simply indicate the benefits that patrons themselves are aware of, whilst at the same time there are a whole host of other benefits from the services they are reappearing but are all too unaware of them.

At the Central Library the most popular benefits were access to the Internet and that said access is free of charge. Respondents stated that “Usage of the Internet” and “Access to the World Wide Web” were the main benefits of the IT services at the library. Of those respondents that said free access was the main benefit, they stated “...it’s free to use”, “Free usage of Internet” and that “It’s available to everyone as it’s free”. It was therefore apparent that a number
of respondents are aware how this can benefit other library patrons other than themselves.

The fact that the library provides a quiet space for patrons to use the IT services, and the convenience and ease of use of the facilities were seen as benefits by a large number of respondents. Some of the respondents who commented on the quiet environment at the library said “You spend time on the computer without any distraction”, “It is always a quiet environment”. Those respondents who mentioned the convenience of the services stated that they are “Easy to come in and use”.

Some respondents did not answer this question, yet had answered other questions on the questionnaire so it is to be interpreted that these respondents could not identify any benefits of the IT services.

Other benefits mentioned by respondents at the Central Library include the help and support of library staff, “Always someone to assist if you have a problem”, access to certain pieces of hardware, “Printer” and to assist in improving computer literacy, “To learn the computer”.

Of those respondents that answered the question at the Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre the two most popular benefits were the convenience and ease of use of the IT services, and the fact that it provides a quiet place to use the facilities. Several respondents stated that the facilities were “Easy to come in and use”, “Easy to use”, “Quick and reliable”. Regarding the quiet space the library provides, respondents said that “It is always a quiet environment”, “It is quiet in the library”, and that patrons can “...spend time on the computer without any distraction”.
The use of the Internet facilities was also seen as one of the main benefits of the IT services. This may be due to the fact that, as previously described, many residents in this area are without home connections to the Internet or are in some cases even without computers. “It helps people to use the Internet that can’t afford to have it at home”, “…use Internet”, “…computer/Internet access…”.

A few respondents also noted how free access to the IT services was a benefit, “Free use”, “It’s free” and how this opens up the services to all “Open to everybody”.

Other benefits include “To learn the computer”, to use the other facilities “Printer”, and the fact there are trained staff to assist users “Handy- always someone to assist if you have a problem”.

Again the main benefit as seen by respondents at the Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service Centre was access to the Internet and that the IT services are free. “Can access Internet when away from home or work” and “It’s free” were typical of the responses given to this question.

A small number of respondents stated the fact the library provides them with “equipment” they wouldn’t otherwise have access to, such as “…a printer”. Other benefits include “Good Internet speed” and “Ease of use”.

• What do you see as the main drawbacks of the IT services at the library?

Establishing what respondents deemed as the main drawbacks with the IT services at the library was the aim of this question. The majority of respondents that answered this question (39%) identified there as being no problems with the IT facilities. “None that I am aware of”, “No obvious drawbacks”, “None as far as I am concerned” were some of the comments given
in response to this question. There were a small number of responses to this question that were left blank whilst all other question on the questionnaire were answered. This suggests that the respondent could not identify any drawbacks, rather than the simple fact that they did not respond to the question.

The large number of respondents stating that there are no identifiable drawbacks to the IT services can possibly be explained by the fact that because they use the facilities they clearly have no problems major problems with them, otherwise they would not use them. Therefore, it may have been more appropriate to question those library patrons who were not using the IT services as to why they were not.

A large number of patrons also have issues with times; either the amount of time allocated for use of the facilities and/or the opening and closing times of the library branches. Although there are no time limits for the use of computers, there is however a charge of £1.20 per hour after the first hour of usage. This, therefore, is where the problem lays for patrons who stated this as a drawback. “Having to pay for extra time...” is understandable problem during peak hours; however, “Having to pay after 1st hour when library (is) quiet” is bound to be a major bone of contention with patrons, specifically those who are unemployed and searching for work. The Adam Smith Institute (1986: 32), however, makes a case for the charging of fees within public libraries:

“...there seems no good reason why the state should be expected to provide leisure and entertainment facilities of one kind free of charge to the user when it does not do so for others such as films or football”.

43
Charging for Internet access is in direct conflict with the government’s agendas for social inclusion and lifelong learning (Davies, 2008: 20).

The operating hours of public libraries is deemed by many respondents as being insufficient; “Libraries are not open long enough or late enough”. Some respondents even mentioned specific days that they have problems with regarding opening and closing hours; “Not being available on Thurs(days) or Saturdays after 1 pm”, “…closing times – especially Sundays”. CIPFA statistics from 2008 show that just 3.2% of public library service points in England are open for more than 60 hours per week. This, as mentioned by respondents, is clearly insufficient. This issue is addressed in a report by the DCMS (2010) who propose that opening hours need to be flexible in order to meet the needs of library patrons and that all public libraries should review their opening hours to ascertain whether or not they meet local needs. IT concludes simply by stating that “Opening hours should reflect customer demand” (DCMS, 2010).

Problems with software and hardware, or in some cases the lack of such items, was also a popular drawback identified by the respondents. “Outdated computers”, “Slow out-dated software”, “(Computers) out of action too many times” were some of the responses given regarding the issue of inadequate facilities. Not only did respondents have problems with the technologies that are already available but also had issues with the lack of hardware such as there being “…no fax machine available” and no facilities to “…burn CDs”. However, these problems were few and far between as they are very specialist and only applicable to specific people or groups or people. Other drawbacks with the software is that Internet usage is censored, with certain websites being blocked; “Some chat website are blocked…”. The final issue regarding hardware is the fact that patrons have to pay for printouts. There is a charge of £0.17p
and £0.42p for black and white, and colour print outs respectively, which some respondents deem as being “...expensive”.

A number of respondents believe there is a lack of computers, “Not enough computers”, and so does not always guarantee patrons access to the IT services; “Availability of computers, they aren’t always available”. Privacy and issues of noise were also a problem with a number of respondents. The following statement indicates the problem some patrons have with privacy: “It’s very open so people can see what you are on, therefore it’s not very private especially when there is confidential information on the screen.” Public libraries are often busy, open places so problems of privacy are ones that are very real. The fact that they are public libraries encompass open spaces with lots of people can lead to them becoming noisy which for some patrons can be a problem. “Noisy kids/parents” and “Mobile phones” were indicated as the worst offenders for disrupting the otherwise serene setting of the library.

At the Central Library the majority of respondents could not identify any drawbacks to the IT services. It was either the case that the response given to answer this question was “None” or that it was simply left blank.

Of the drawbacks mentioned, the main one stated by respondents was regarding the time limits based on Internet usage. As accessing the Internet is a popular activity at the Central Library it understandable why this would be an issue. “Not enough time” and “Set time limit” were typical of the responses given. However, at the heart of this was the issue that once users reach the time limit they have to pay per hour for usage of the Internet, “Having to pay after 1st hour”, “Limited time allowed free”.

Similar to this is the problem of the operating hours of the Central Library. A small number of respondents said that they saw the limited opening hours of
the library as the main drawback, “Hours of access”, “…closing times – especially Sundays”.

Some respondents mentioned how the lack of privacy when using the IT facilities as a drawback. “People next to you can see what your doing” and “It’s very open so people can see what you are on, therefore it is not very private…” were the responses given regarding this issue. With the Central Library being busy with lots of other patrons using the IT services in close proximity it is understandable why this may pose an issue for some.

The rest of the drawbacks were made by individual respondents and included “Not enough computers”, “Noise”, “My own computer literacy”, “Printing can be expensive” and “(Computers) Out of action too many times…”. The wide and varying answers given in response to this question are representative of the diversity of the respondents.

All most all respondents at the Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre could not find any drawbacks with the IT services. Respondents either did not answer the question of simply stated “None”, “No obvious drawbacks” or statements of a similar nature. The vast majority of respondents at the Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre are using the IT facilities to access the Internet, and so providing there is access they have issues with the services.

The only other drawback that a small number of respondents had in common was the issue of the time limits in place when using the computers and accessing the Internet. “Time to(o) short”, “You should get more free time…”, “The time limit when on the computers” were the comments made in response to this question. This can pose an issue in a library where Internet usage is so predominant and where a high proportion of respondents are unemployed and thus less likely to be able to afford the cost of extra Internet use.
The other drawbacks mentioned were made on an individual basis and included “Censorship”, “Noisy kids/parents”, the inability of a patron to watch their baby the same time they were using the services, and slow Internet speeds.

A number of respondents at the Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service Centre stated that there are no drawbacks to the IT services, “None”.

The time restrictions placed on usage of the machines and the operating times of the library itself was also a bone of contention amongst respondents. “Limited time”, “The times the library is open” and “Libraries not open long enough or late enough” were just some of the drawbacks mentioned in response to this question.

Access, or more to the point, lack of guaranteed access to the IT facilities is also seen as a drawback by respondents, “Availability of computers, they aren’t always available”, “Not always guaranteed you get a computer”. This library produced the lowest number of respondents due to lack of library patrons visiting the library so it is difficult to see why this is an issue.

Other drawbacks mentioned include “There is no fax machine available”; censorship of the Internet, “Some chat websites are blocked...” and the “Low technical skill of the staff”.

- What developments would you like to see of the IT services at the library?

The vast majority of respondents could not find any problems with the IT services; “Everything is ok with (the) IT services”, “I can’t say any specific. In my opinion the service at (the) library is good”. It was also the case that a large number of respondents left this question blank. Where respondents had
answered all other questions then this was interpreted that there were no developments they could suggest.

Those respondents who did answer this question suggest developments that would solve the ‘drawbacks’ they had mentioned in the previous question. These therefore included the problems of library opening hours, time limits placed on computers, outdated software and hardware, insufficient numbers of computers and lack of privacy.

A large proportion of respondents would like to see both longer opening times and longer time allowances when using the computers. “Longer opening hours”, “More time for each individual session”, “Longer time allowance”, “More time” were some of the responses given regarding developments involving time allowance and operating hours. Carrying out such developments would open the IT services of public libraries up to more people; both existing library patrons and library non-users.

A significant number of respondents would like to see developments of the software and hardware used. Some patrons are very specific in what software packages etc. they would like to see introduced, whilst some simply stated the need for “up-grading of computers”, “Newer software” and “Faster broadband”. “Increased access to software i.e. Fireworks, Flash, Dreamweaver” was the response given by one patron. Although such packages are of a speciality, there is a need for those more widely used software packages to be kept up to date. If the facilities become out dated there is the distinct chance that patrons will no longer use the IT services.

Despite quite a few respondents stating lack of computers as a drawback only a small number said they would like to see more computers being introduced into the libraries. This suggests that this is not such a big issue.
amongst library patrons. “More computers for usage at busy times” and “More computers” were some of the responses given by patrons.

The lack of privacy, as previously mentioned by respondents, could be combated by “Perhaps special areas where computers can be used...”. Providing specialist computer suites for IT usage, where patrons can use the facilities without fear of disturbing other library patrons and with greater space would allow for “More room between desks” and to “…segregate the computers to ensure privacy”. Specialist computer suites would assist in providing a space with the possibility of introducing IT classes. This would help to improve computer literacy amongst library patrons, thus allowing them to make the most of the facilities. This was a development mentioned by only one respondent, “…have classes to help people with little knowledge of computers”.

It was also mentioned by a sole respondent that they would like to see “Staff becoming better trained”. This would suggest that the staff within public libraries are incompetent and so makes for quite a troubling recommendation for a development. However, the fact that only one respondent made this comment then this should not be seen as a major issue. As part of the development and introduction of the People’s Network all public library staff were trained in order to achieve the Standard of the European Computer Driving Licence, so patrons should find that all staff have “good basic competencies in the use and exploitation of the new ICT resources” (Chrisbatt Consulting, 2009).

There also may however be other developments that patrons would like to see but simply forgot to mention or were conscious of financial and logistical limitations as to what can and cannot be developed, and so did not state any.
The majority of respondents at the Central Library could not suggest any developments for the improvement of the IT services. Patrons did either not respond to the question are simply stated “None”. One respondent elaborated and said “I can’t say any specific. In my opinion the service at the library is good”.

The need for quiet, private areas where patrons can use the IT services is a development suggested by a number of respondents. This goes some way to dealing with the drawback as previously mentioned by respondents at the Central Library of privacy. “You could segregate the computers to ensure privacy”, “Quieter areas” and “More room between desks” were some of the responses given.

It was also suggested by a number of respondents that users ought to be given longer periods of free Internet access. “Back to 2 hours of free Internet”, “More time for each individual session” and “More time” were the responses given to this question.

Other developments sited by respondents include “…more ground floor PC’s”, “IT learning classes” and “Increased access to software i.e. Fireworks…”.

Most respondents at the Bentley Library and Customer Service Centre sited there as being no developments of the IT services they would like to see. Answers given in response to this question include, “None”, “Nothing comes to mind”, “Everything is OK with IT services”. In many cases respondents did not write anything in response to this question.

A number of respondents also called for newer and updated software to be installed onto the computers, suggesting that the current software is not meeting the distinct needs of some respondents at the Bentley Library and
Customer Service Centre. “A updated Microsoft package...”, “Better software...”, “Newer software” were just a few of the answers given in response to this question.

A few respondents stated that the development they would like to see would for there to be more computers introduced in the library. This would suggest there is a problem with access computers, something that was mentioned in response to the drawbacks of the IT services. The responses included, “…it would be beneficial to have some additional PC’s…”, “More computers” and “More computers fir usage at busy times”.

The only other developments mentioned were “More time” and the removal of Internet censorship.

Most respondents at the Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service failed to identify any developments of the IT services. The question was either left blank or respondents stated about any developments they would like to see that there were “None”.

The only other common development that respondents at the Sprotbrough Library and Customer Service would like to see would be for more computers and extended opening hours. “Longer opening hours. More computers” and “More PC’s. Longer opening times” were a couple of the responses given for this question.

There was a variety of single developments stated by respondents, ranging from the upgrading of software and hardware, as well as the introduction of new pieces of IT; a greater number of computers to improve access; classes for those users who are less computer literate; and IT suites where the facilities can be used away from other library patrons.
5. Conclusions and recommendations

Through the commitment and hard work of all the staff at the three libraries where the research was conducted, as well as the programme of work, the study has succeeded in achieving its aim and objectives.

It is necessary to keep in mind that the conclusions and recommendations drawn up are based on a limited number of responses and so are not indicative of the Library and Information Services of Doncaster and the patrons who use them as a whole.

5.1 Conclusions

The aim of this study is to investigate what value, if any, IT access in the Library and Information Services of the Metropolitan Borough of Doncaster has. This is done by answering a number of objectives. The research gathered states the following about each objective:

➢ To explore what types of people use the IT services.

It can be deduced from the results that, within the three libraries where the research was conducted, a wide and varying range of patrons are using the IT services of Doncaster’s public libraries.

In most cases it is those which are deemed socially excluded, such as women, the unemployed and the elderly, that make up a large proportion of patrons using the IT services.

As a number of questionnaires (16%) were not fully complete, regarding the personal details of the respondents, then the results and subsequent conclusions drawn from this data cannot be deemed wholly representative of all the library patrons questioned.
➢ To examine what are the reasons for use of the IT services.

The results indicate that for most respondents the main and, in some instances, the sole reason for using the IT services of Doncaster’s public libraries is to gain access to the Internet. The most common Internet based activities include email, information gathering and job searching. However, some patrons are using the Internet for less “worthy” (Coxall, 2006: 24) reasons such as social networking.

For those patrons not using the IT services for Internet access, use of hardware such as printers and scanners featured highly. Other uses include doing work, updating CVs and becoming computer literate. It is activities such as these, that are classed less “worthy” (Coxall, 2006: 24), which patrons are doing least.

➢ To research the benefits and drawbacks of the IT services.

Benefits, as revealed by the research, are the free use of the services, in particularly usage of the Internet and other facilities such as printers and scanners. Therefore, the main benefit of the IT services of Doncaster’s public libraries is that use of the facilities is free.

The ease of access and use of the IT services is seen as another popular benefit amongst respondents. Other reasons include the fact that public libraries are places where IT facilities can be used quietly without distraction and with help and assistance at hand.

The majority of respondents do not have any problems with the IT services of Doncaster’s public libraries and were, therefore, unable to identify any drawbacks. Of those respondents that did have issues
with the facilities, the operating times of the libraries and the time allocation regarding usage of computers were the biggest problems.

Other drawbacks include privacy issues, problems with slow and outdated software and hardware, and the fact that patrons are not always guaranteed a computer due to there being a lack of machines.

One interesting drawback, as mentioned by a single respondent, was that only library members can use the IT services. Therefore excluding some of the most needy and vulnerable members of society; those who are without a permanent place of residence and so cannot become library members.

➢ To produce recommendations for the improvement of the IT services.
Once again the majority of respondents found there to be no room for improvement of the IT services of Doncaster’s public libraries.

The recommendations that were suggested by the respondents all involve the drawbacks as previously mentioned. These recommendations aimed to eradicate the problems highlighted such as updating the software and hardware, increasing the operating hours and providing specialist IT suites where patrons have more space and privacy to use the facilities.

In answering the objectives it is clear to see that the public library patrons using the IT services place great value on them. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a value to IT access in the Library and Information Services of the Metropolitan Borough of Doncaster.

The response to the first objective indicates that the thoughts of the government regarding public libraries as perfect locations to reach those
groups who suffer from social exclusion and those for which IT usage is low are well-founded (DCMS, 1998: 1).

5.2 Recommendations for future research
The scope and time restrictions of the study did not allow for repeat studies to be undertaken. If this were possible it would have allowed for time series data to be collected, thus producing a more reliable set of results.

The validity of the research could also be strengthened by the use of triangulation. Rather than simply collecting data via one research instrument, such as the questionnaire survey used in this study, the use of other research methods enables comparison and the reinforcing of findings, thus producing results of a greater certainty.

Although comparisons were made between libraries within a single authority, there has been no examination of how public libraries in other parts of England act as a point of access to IT. It would be expected that the value the IT services of public libraries offer patrons in different authorities throughout England differs where different populations are catered for.

This study was not designed to ascertain the value for money or to appraise the cost-benefits of government investment in public library IT services. Such analysis would require the expertise of economists and alike. Any study which could provide such information would act as a valuable tool to the government and local library authorities.

Word count: 16,475
References


Chaplin, E. (2002). *The impact of public library ICT facilities on people living in areas of social exclusion*. MSc, University of Sheffield.


Coxall, O (2006). *A study of library staff attitudes to IT and the provision of public access to IT and the People’s Network in public libraries*. MSc, University of Sheffield.


Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (2010). Role of public libraries in supporting and promoting digital participation. Leicester: CFE.


http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadKeyFigures.do?a=3&b=276792&c=Doncaster&d=13&e=16&g=363688&i=1001x1003x1004&o=1&m=0&enc=1 [Accessed 10 May 2010].


Appendix A - Questionnaire
A study of the value of IT access in the Library and Information Services of the Metropolitan Borough of Doncaster. MSc Information Management dissertation information sheet.

1. **What is the project’s purpose?**
The study’s objective is to examine what value access to IT in the Library and Information Services of the Metropolitan Borough of Doncaster has. It will analyse the results and thus make recommendations for the improvement of the services.

2. **What do I have to do, and what happens to the information I provide?**
Simply fill in the questionnaire overleaf, and return in once complete. The information you provide in the questionnaire will be used for research purposes only, and dealt with in the strictest of confidence.

3. **What if something goes wrong?**
If you wish to make a complaint then this can be done so by contacting project supervisor, Professor Peter Willett, through the Department of Information Studies at The University of Sheffield Tel: 0114 222 2630. For complaints that wish to be taken further then the Registrar and Secretary can be contacted via the Main University Switchboard Tel: 0114 222 2000.

4. **Who has ethically reviewed the project?**
A review based on the Department of Information Studies ethics review procedure has been conducted on this project. This delivery and application of this procedure is monitored by the university’s Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.
# IT Services Questionnaire

Set out below are a number of questions designed to assist in evaluating the Doncaster Library and Information Services.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the following survey. *(Tick where appropriate √)*

## LIBRARY

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<td>Balby Library &amp; Customer Service Centre</td>
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<td>Bessacarr Library</td>
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<td>Central Library</td>
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## PERSONAL DETAILS

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### Occupation:

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### Age Band:

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<td>16-24 years</td>
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<td>25-34 years</td>
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<td>35-49 years</td>
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<td>50-54 years</td>
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<td>55 and over</td>
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<td>Prefer not to say</td>
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### Nationality:

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### IT USAGE

<table>
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<tr>
<th>How often do you use the IT services at the library?</th>
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<td>Often</td>
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<tr>
<th>What are your reasons for using the IT services at the library?</th>
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<th>What do you see as the main benefits of the IT services at the library?</th>
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<th>What do you see as the main drawbacks of the IT services at the library?</th>
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<tr>
<th>What developments would you like to see of the IT services at the library?</th>
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Appendix B - Response samples

## I.T. Services Questionnaire

Set out below are a number of questions designed to assist in improving the Doncaster Library and Information Services.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the following survey. *(Tick where appropriate)*

### Library

**Library branch:** Doncaster

### Personal Details

**Gender:**
- Male
- Female
- Trans-gender
- Prefer not to say

**Occupation:** Sixth-form student

**Age Band:**
- 16-24 years
- 25-34 years
- 35-49 years
- 50-54 years
- 55 and over years
- Prefer not to say

**Nationality:** British
## I.T. USAGE

### How often do you use the I.T. services at the library?

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### What are your reasons for using the I.T. services at the library?

To use the Internet.

### What do you see as the main benefits of the I.T. services at the library?

Free usage of Internet.

### What do you see as the main drawbacks of the I.T. services at the library?

None.

### What developments would you like to see of the I.T. services at the library?

None.
# I.T. Services Questionnaire

Set out below are a number of questions designed to assist in improving the Doncaster Library and Information Services.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the following survey. *(Tick where appropriate)*

## LIBRARY

| Library branch: | Doncaster Central |

## PERSONAL DETAILS

<table>
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<th>Male</th>
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| Occupation: | Unemployed |

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<th>35-49 years</th>
<th>50-54 years</th>
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| Nationality: | English |

69
# I.T. Useage

**How often do you use the I.T. services at the library?**

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<td>Very Little</td>
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<td>First Time</td>
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**What are your reasons for using the I.T. services at the library?**

Research and to read the papers.

**What do you see as the main benefits of the I.T. services at the library?**

That it is free to use.

**What do you see as the main drawbacks of the I.T. services at the library?**

None.

**What developments would you like to see of the I.T. services at the library?**

More time for each individual session.
I.T. Services Questionnaire

Set out below are a number of questions designed to assist in evaluating the Doncaster Library and Information Services.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the following survey. (Tick where appropriate)

LIBRARY

Library branch: Bentley

PERSONAL DETAILS

Gender:  
- Male  
- Female  
- Trans-gender  
- Prefer not to say

Occupation: Care Assistant

Age Band:  
- 16-24 years  
- 25-34 years  
- 35-49 years  
- 50-54 years  
- 55 and over years  
- Prefer not to say

Nationality: British
### I.T. USEAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you use the I.T. services at the library?</th>
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<td>Often</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are your reasons for using the I.T. services at the library?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haven't got internet access at home.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>What do you see as the main benefits of the I.T. services at the library?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It helps people to use the internet that can't afford to have it at home.</td>
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<tr>
<th>What do you see as the main drawbacks of the I.T. services at the library?</th>
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<tr>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<th>What developments would you like to see of the I.T. services at the library?</th>
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<tr>
<td>More computers for usage at busy times.</td>
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I.T. Services Questionnaire

Set out below are a number of questions designed to assist in evaluating the Doncaster Library and Information Services.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the following survey. *(Tick where appropriate)*

**LIBRARY**

| Library branch: | Bentley Branch |

**PERSONAL DETAILS**

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| Occupation:      | Housewife |

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<td>50-64 years</td>
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<td>55 and over years</td>
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| Nationality:     | British White |

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## I.T. USEAGE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you use the I.T. services at the library?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Often: [ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### What are your reasons for using the I.T. services at the library?

To go onto the internet, so I can check my emails and e.t.c.

---

### What do you see as the main benefits of the I.T. services at the library?

You spend time on the computer without any distraction.

---

### What do you see as the main drawbacks of the I.T. services at the library?

None.

---

### What developments would you like to see of the I.T. services at the library?

Everything is ok with the services.
I.T. Services Questionnaire

Set out below are a number of questions designed to assist in evaluating the Doncaster Library and Information Services.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the following survey. *Tick where appropriate.*

**LIBRARY**

| Library branch: | SPROTBOUCH |

**PERSONAL DETAILS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender:</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Trans-gender</th>
<th>Prefer not to say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬠</td>
<td>⬠</td>
<td>⬠</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Occupation:               | POSTGRADUATE STUDENT |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Band:</th>
<th>10-24 years</th>
<th>25-34 years</th>
<th>35-49 years</th>
<th>50-54 years</th>
<th>55 and over years</th>
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</table>

| Nationality:             | ENGLISH |

75
## I.T. Usage

### How often do you use the I.T. services at the library?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Little</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What are your reasons for using the I.T. services at the library?

- Internet and use of hardwares such as printers, scanners etc.

### What do you see as the main benefits of the I.T. services at the library?

- Free Internet access to all Library members.

### What do you see as the main drawbacks of the I.T. services at the library?

- Low technical skill of staff. Slow out-dated software.
  - Having to be a member to use facilities.

### What developments would you like to see of the I.T. services at the library?

- Up-grading of computers. Staff becoming better trained.
I.T. Services Questionnaire

Set out below are a number of questions designed to assist in evaluating the Doncaster Library and Information Services.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the following survey. *(Tick where appropriate)*

### LIBRARY

Library branch: Spratbrough

### PERSONAL DETAILS

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STAFF NURSE</td>
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<table>
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### I.T. USAGE

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What are your reasons for using the I.T. services at the library?

To get away from my family and help me concentrate on my work.

What do you see as the main benefits of the I.T. services at the library?

- At least *Your free*
- *good internet speed*
- Printing facilities are available although at *op a copy I cannot afford to print much.*

What do you see as the main drawbacks of the I.T. services at the library?

- there is no fax machine available

What developments would you like to see of the I.T. services at the library?

Fax services please
- *Cheaper printing*