ALIA INTERNET ACCESS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES SURVEY 2013

April 2013

Contents

Appendix
Survey Monkey questionnaire

Executive summary

High rate of response
Once again, public libraries responded well to the ALIA *Internet access in public libraries survey*, with some 190 participants representing 788 public libraries – 53% of the total. This meant that the sample size was more than adequate for a statistically credible result, and it indicated the degree of importance placed on internet access by library managers.

Number and use of public access terminals in public libraries
There was an average of 8.25 terminals per library in 2013, compared with seven per library in 2011. This growth demonstrates the importance of internet access as a core public library service.

Availability of wifi
More than 70% of libraries provided wifi. Where it was limited, cost and IT technical issues were the primary reasons.

Support staff
IT support was shared between the library staff and council IT department 40% of cases. For 30% of libraries it was handled by a library staff member.

User feedback
Library users loved the fact that they could access the internet in libraries and they could do so for the most part free of charge. However, there were frustrations with slow speeds, insufficient terminals and restrictions or limitations on internet access and use.

Policies
Most libraries had a policy that had been updated in the last three years, was signed off at a senior level and was well publicised.

Time slots
Most libraries had a booking system and imposed time limits for internet use. The favoured time slot was one hour.

Internet training
Public libraries provided a range of internet training, from informal assistance on an ad hoc basis, through to sessions for seniors, toddlers, people whose first language was not English. The sessions went from beginners' classes through to advanced courses.

Complaints
Libraries need to handle complaints about internet content, but for nearly half this is in the region of just one or two per annum. Only 6% experience more than 10 complaints a year and only 2% of complaints are referred to ACMA.

Internet filtering
Some 44% of libraries used filters. Most filters operated at a low to medium level (81%). Only 19% were filtering at a higher level. Most were set to filter out offensive content. Other named items were very large files, file sharing, games and social networking sites.

Services for children
Approximately two in five libraries had separate terminals for children in the library. Parental consent was required for young people to access the internet in libraries, often up to the age of 18, and parental presence was required in 77% of cases until at least 12 years of age.

Monitoring internet use
Some two thirds of libraries (65%) monitored internet use, through visual monitoring by library staff and the collection of system data. Other ways included monitoring use via the PC booking system and library users reporting inappropriate use. Data was used to monitor inappropriate content, for management reporting, to identify popular websites and databases, to review site classification and filtering, for planning, policy and decision-making.

Connection speed and cost
Only 36% of libraries had broadband internet connection; the rest were still using ADSL. Costs of providing an internet service varied from $600 per annum for a single branch, up to more than $5,000, with 42% of libraries at the higher level. While four out of five libraries said this was affordable, it meant that libraries were having to prioritise other activities.

Effect of the National Broadband Network
Half the respondents thought the NBN would increase the number of library users; many saw it as creating change and providing positive benefits in terms of faster internet access, improved services and the opportunity to attract new users. There was concern about its future in a different political environment.

Hardware
Over a third of terminals in libraries were more than three years old and would need to be replaced soon.

Role of ALIA
Nearly all respondents (95%) were aware of ALIA policies on content regulation and internet services in public libraries, and 82% had made use of them.

Summary
The survey painted a picture of a highly-rated, greatly in demand service, which was not without its frustrations for library users. It highlighted the difficult budget and resource issues facing library managers going forward, and the need to revisit strategies and policies on a frequent basis, to keep up with the rapid changes in technology and consumer expectations.

The results were very similar to those of 2011 and a longer gap between reports may be needed to identify significant trends and changes.

1. Introduction

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) *Internet access in public libraries survey 2013* is the seventh in a series of reports, the first published in 2002, which together provide the most comprehensive indication of how public library internet services have been managed, delivered and used throughout Australia over the past decade.

ALIA continues to be active in this space, promoting the strongly held beliefs of its members through its active involvement with the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Environment's Consultative Working Group on Cybersafety and promotion of National Cybersafety Awareness Week. We are also a key stakeholder in the eSmart Libraries program developed by the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, with $8 million in funding from the Telstra Foundation to roll this out nationally across all public libraries over three years.

About the survey

The 2013 survey is based on the same questionnaire used in 2002, 2005, 2008 and 2011, with supplementary questions exploring recent trends, initiatives and government policy.

The survey considered a range of questions relating to the provision of internet access in public libraries including: how internet services are delivered and supported; development and implementation of internet use policy; education and training; complaints from users about internet content; the use of filtering software with specific reference to the use of the internet by children; monitoring of internet use and the likely impact of the NBN.

Requests to complete the online survey (using Survey Monkey) were communicated through the ALIA Public Libraries Advisory Committee networks. The survey contained two strands: one for people answering on behalf of a library service with a number of service locations, and the other for individual libraries.

Results

This report analyses 190 responses representing contributors from every State and Territory, located in metropolitan, greater metropolitan, regional and rural communities.

Survey respondents provide public library services in more than 780 locations that include central libraries, branch libraries, mobile libraries, combined community and school libraries and a range of other library service models.

The survey records responses from approximately 53% of the 1,500 public library service points and it can be concluded that the survey respondents represent the range of public library services available throughout Australia.

The 2013 survey responses represent public libraries serving a total of 5,428,954 registered users; approximately 55% of registered users nationwide.
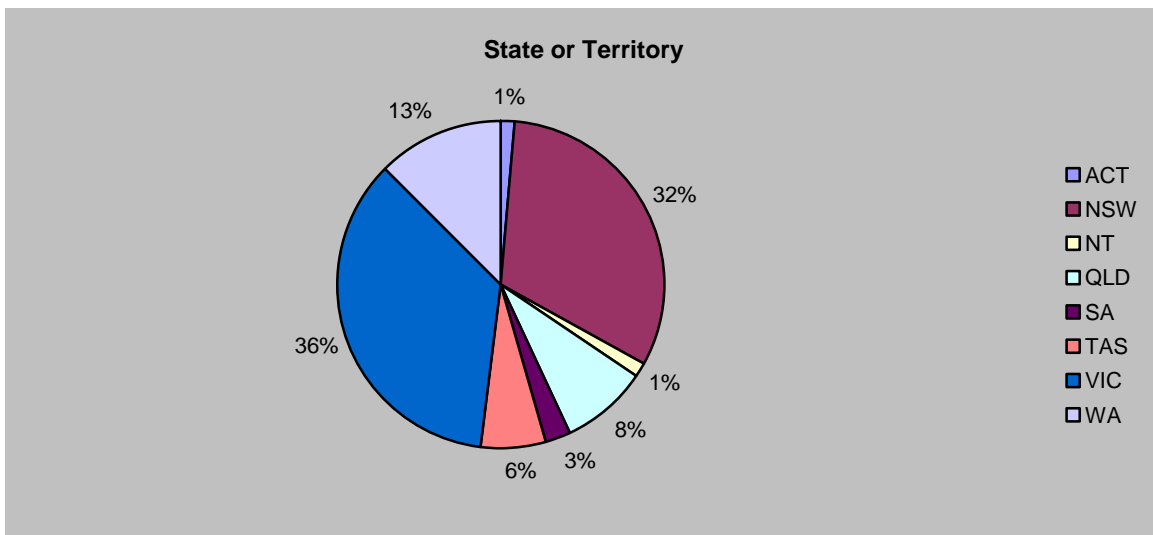
Which best describes your location?
Responses on behalf of 77 library services and 113 individual libraries = 788 public libraries in total

Location of public libraries

- Metropolitan
- Greater Metropolitan
- Regional
- Rural

43%
7%
33%
17%
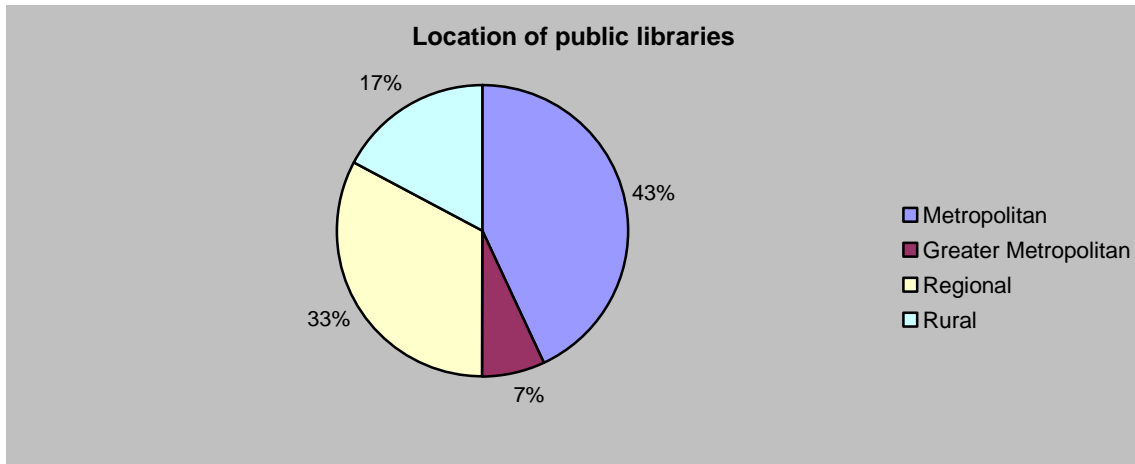
Which State or Territory?
Responses on behalf of 788 public libraries

State or Territory

- ACT
- NSW
- NT
- QLD
- SA
- TAS
- VIC
- WA

1%
32%
1%
8%
3%
6%
36%
13%

Do you participate in National Cybersafety Awareness Week?
Responses on behalf of 650 public libraries

Public libraries participating in National Cybersafety Awareness Week

42%

58%

□ Yes   ■ No
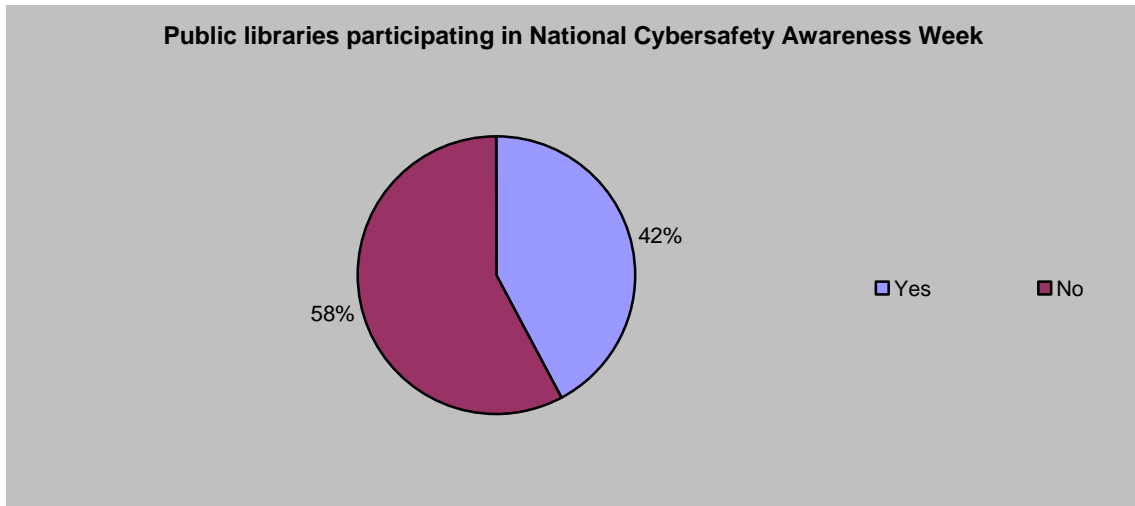
2. Public library internet access

Number and use of public access terminals

Respondents representing 641 public libraries had a total of 5290 internet access terminals, which gave an average of 8.25 terminals per library, compared with 7 in 2011. However, this average is deceptive, as big metropolitan libraries will have far more PCs for public use than small rural branches.

Availability of wifi

More than 70% of libraries provide wifi. Where wifi is offered, in 77% of cases, it is only during library opening hours. In 25% of libraries, this is because of cost; in 29% it is because of technical issues. Other reasons include:

- Ticketed system so can only be operated during opening hours.
- Joint use with school puts limitations on internet use.
- Space issue for mobile libraries.
- Authentication, support and monitoring.
- Safety for people at night in areas around the library.
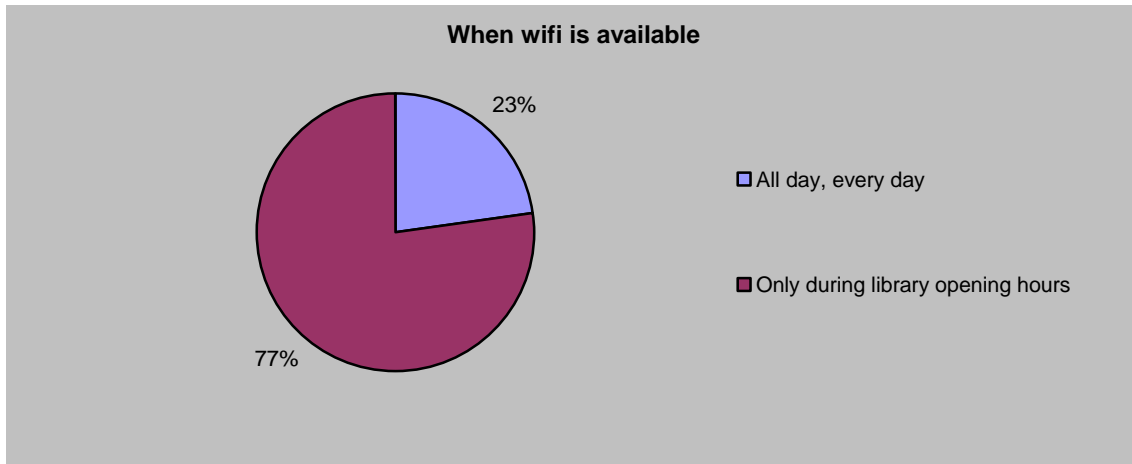- No IT support after hours.

How many of your public libraries offer wireless access?
Responses on behalf of 668 public libraries

Public libraries offering wireless access

29%

71%

☐ Yes   ■ No
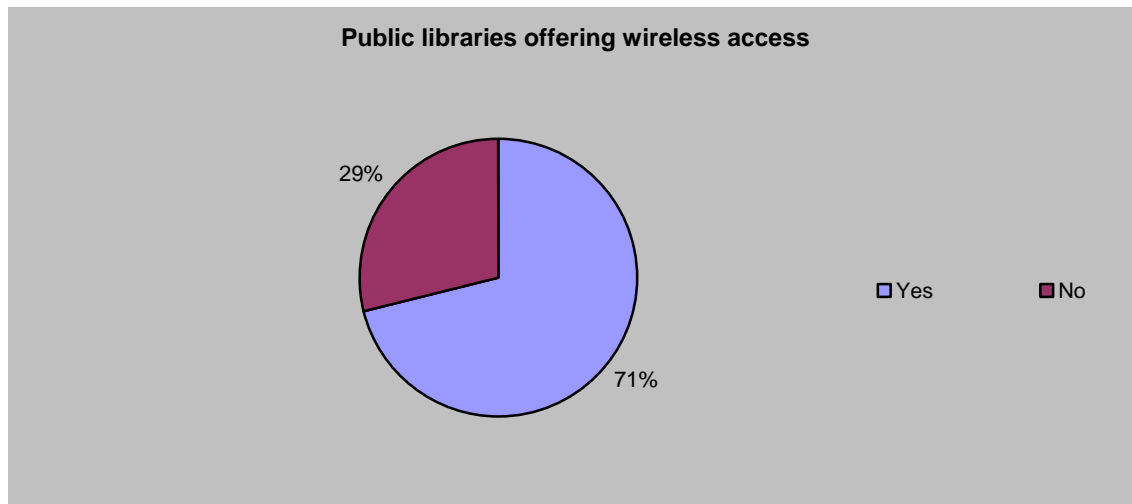
Where there is wifi, when is it offered?
Responses on behalf of 474 public libraries

When wifi is available

23%

☐ All day, every day

☐ Only during library opening hours

77%

If you don't offer wifi in some branches, or it is restricted to opening hours, why is this?
Responses on behalf of 118 public libraries

Reasons for restrictions on wifi availability

16%

30%

☐ Council ruling

☐ Cost

☐ Technical issue

☐ Other

25%

29%
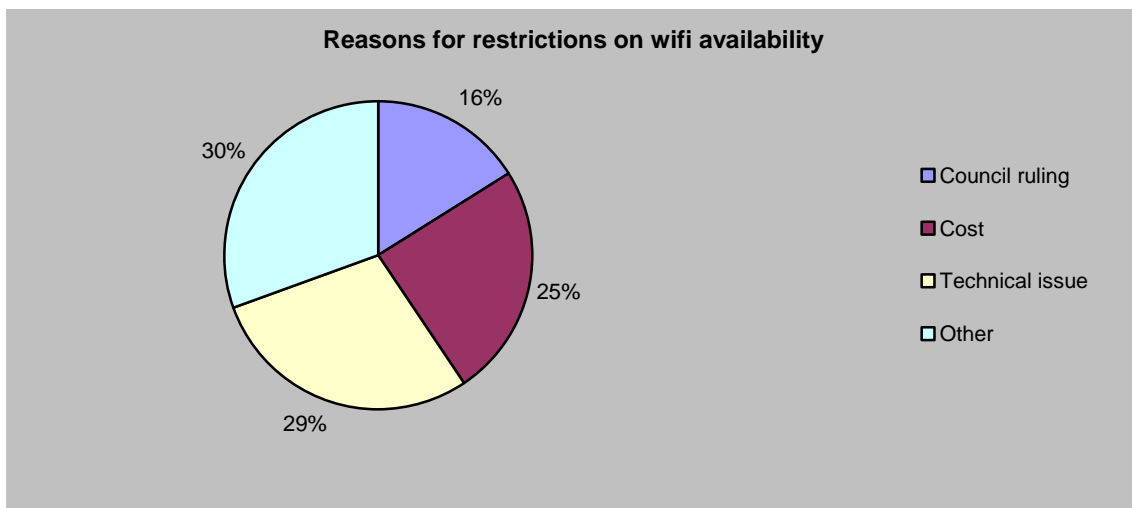
3. Public library internet support

Despite the high level of internet use in public libraries, only half had staff dedicated to supporting internet services. Responses on behalf of 233 libraries gave a total of 1374 hours per week of staff time for IT support. So, while PC bookings are at capacity and users are accessing the internet during all opening hours, on average, there is only dedicated IT support for six hours per week.

Do you have staff dedicated to supporting internet services?
Responses on behalf of 673 public libraries

Staff dedicated to supporting internet services in the library

51%   49%

☐ Yes   ■ No
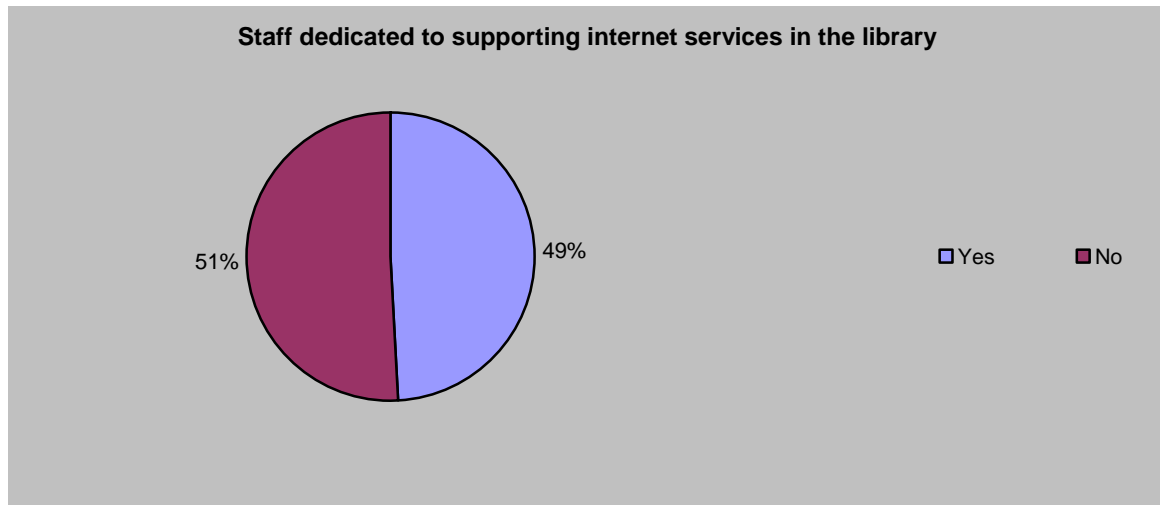
Who is responsible for IT system administration, troubleshooting, support etc for your library?
Responses on behalf of 583 public libraries

Responsible for IT support in the library

30%
41%
29%

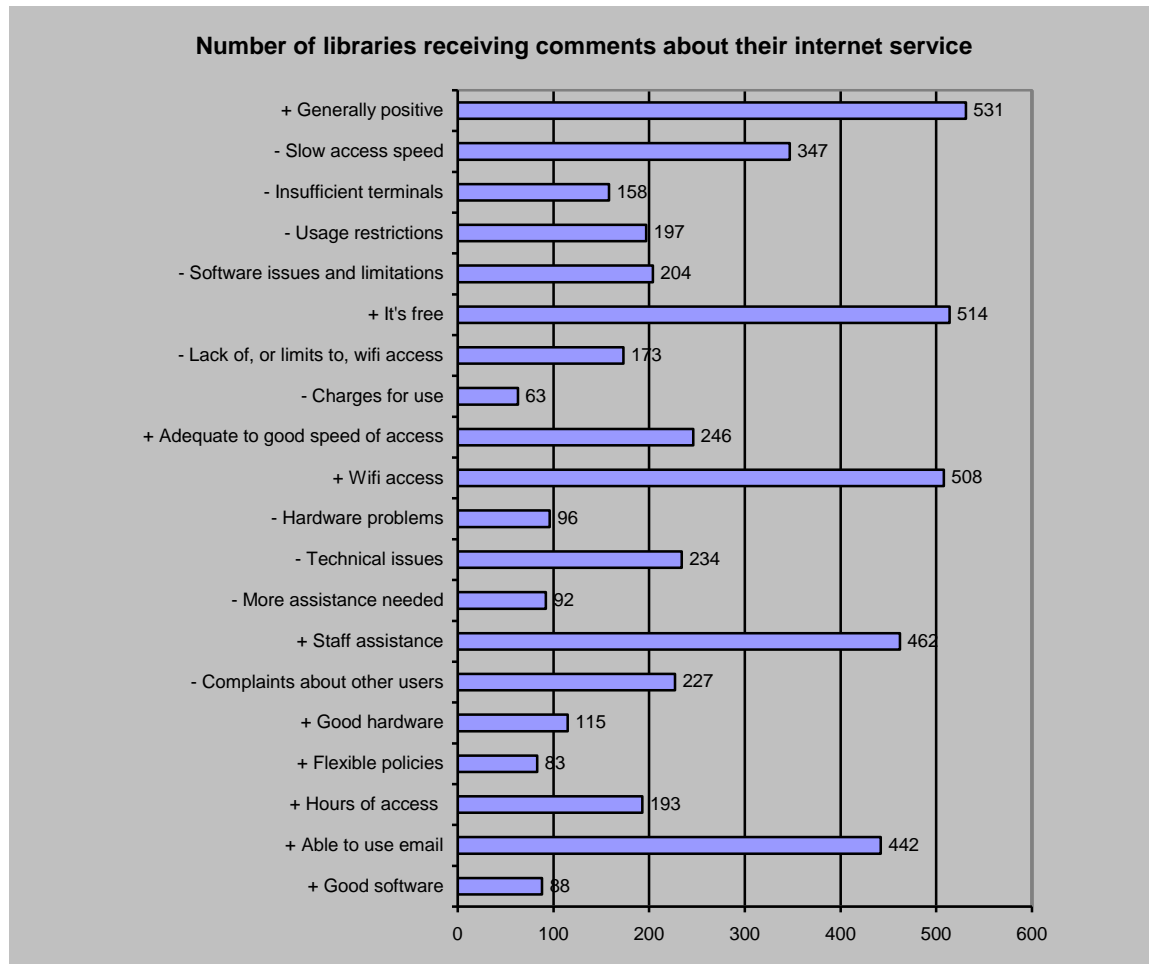☐ Library staff member

■ Council IT

☐ Library staff and council IT
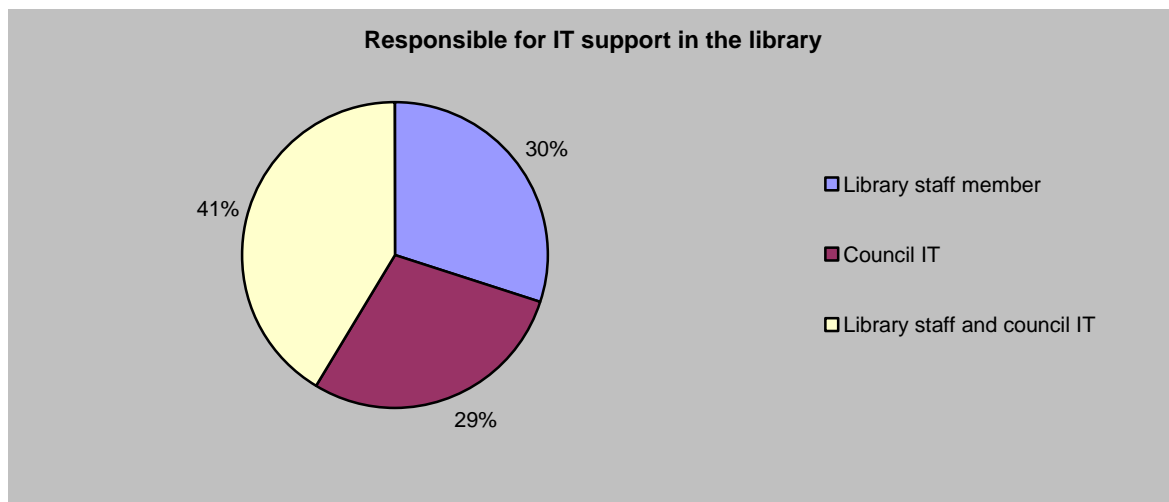
4. Library user feedback

Respondents reported user feedback as being generally positive. However, a significant number of libraries had complaints about slow access speed, insufficient terminals, usage restrictions, software issues and limitations, and lack of, or limits to, wifi access.

People appreciated the fact that it's free and they valued the assistance from the staff.

What has been the user feedback about internet access in the library?
Responses on behalf of 664 public libraries

Number of libraries receiving comments about their internet service

| Comment	Number
+ Generally positive	531
- Slow access speed	347
- Insufficient terminals	158
- Usage restrictions	197
- Software issues and limitations	204
+ It's free	514
- Lack of, or limits to, wifi access	173
- Charges for use	63
+ Adequate to good speed of access	246
+ Wifi access	508
- Hardware problems	96
- Technical issues	234
- More assistance needed	92
+ Staff assistance	462
- Complaints about other users	227
+ Good hardware	115
+ Flexible policies	83
+ Hours of access	193
+ Able to use email	442
+ Good software	88

5. Internet policies

Most libraries (95%) had an internet policy and in 85% of cases it had been reviewed within the last three years. In all cases it covered internet use behaviour, and 91% of library service points publicised the policy with signs near terminals, information on the library website, brochures and other methods. These included users needing to sign an agreement when joining the library or when logging on to library PCs and signing on for wifi access.

Forms of community consultation included suggestion boxes, survey, newspaper ad for comments/feedback and focus groups.
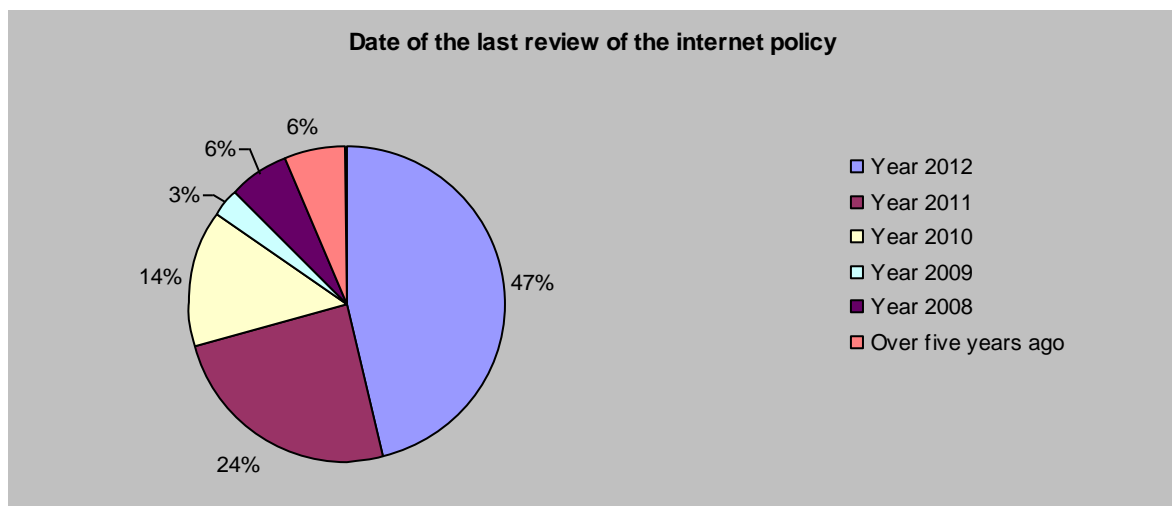
Do you have an internet policy?
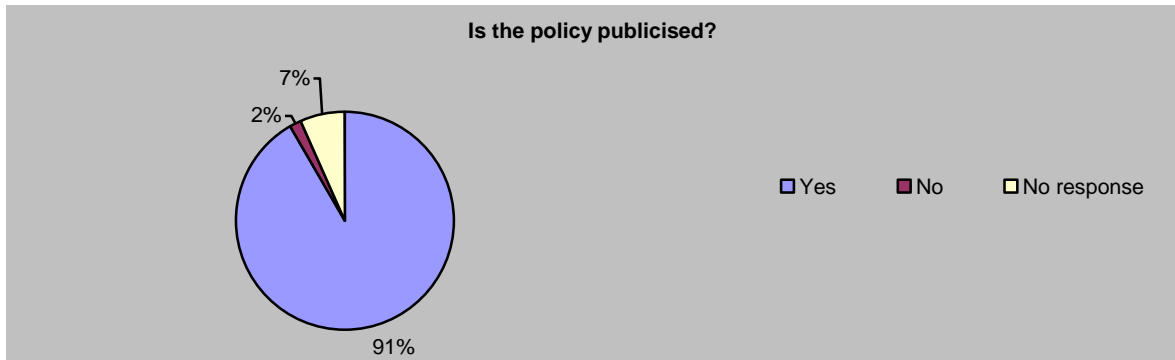*Responses on behalf of 676 public libraries*

Internet policy for the library?

5%

95%

☐ Yes   ■ No
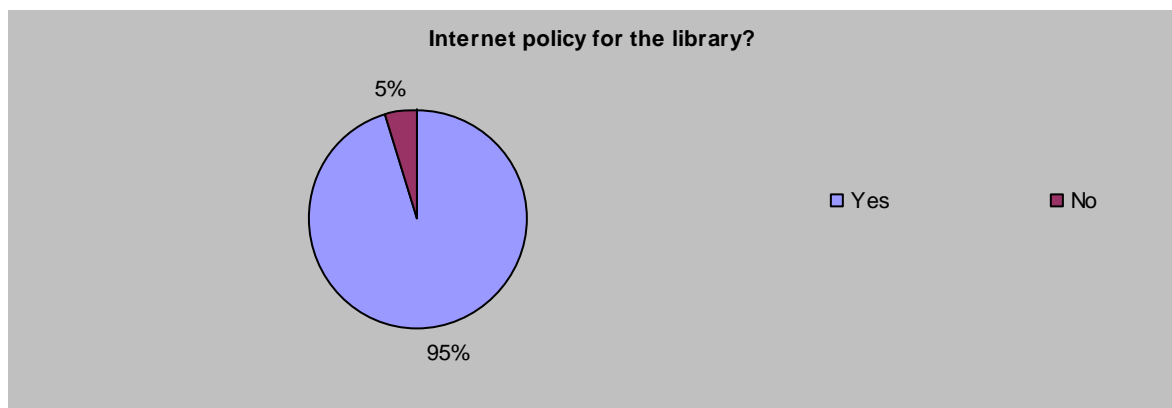
When was it last reviewed?
Responses on behalf of 645 public libraries (answering 'yes' to previous question)

Date of the last review of the internet policy

6%

6%

3%

14%

24%

47%

☐ Year 2012
■ Year 2011
☐ Year 2010
☐ Year 2009
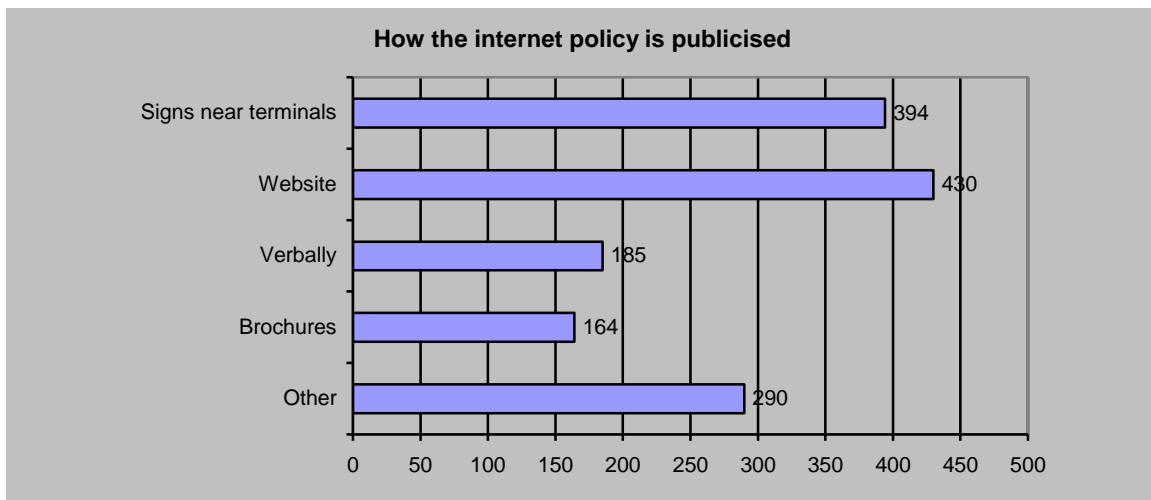■ Year 2008
☐ Over five years ago

Do you publicise your internet policy?
Responses on behalf of 645 public libraries (answering 'yes' to original question)

**Is the policy publicised?**

7%
2%
91%

Yes No No response

How do you publicise your internet policy?
Responses on behalf of 592 public libraries

How the internet policy is publicised

Signs near terminals — 394
Website — 430
Verbally — 185
Brochures — 164
Other — 290

0 50 100 150 200 250 300 350 400 450 500

Was the community consulted about the development or review of the library internet policy?
Responses on behalf of 645 public libraries

Was the community consulted about the internet policy?

10%

☐ Yes   ☐ No

90%
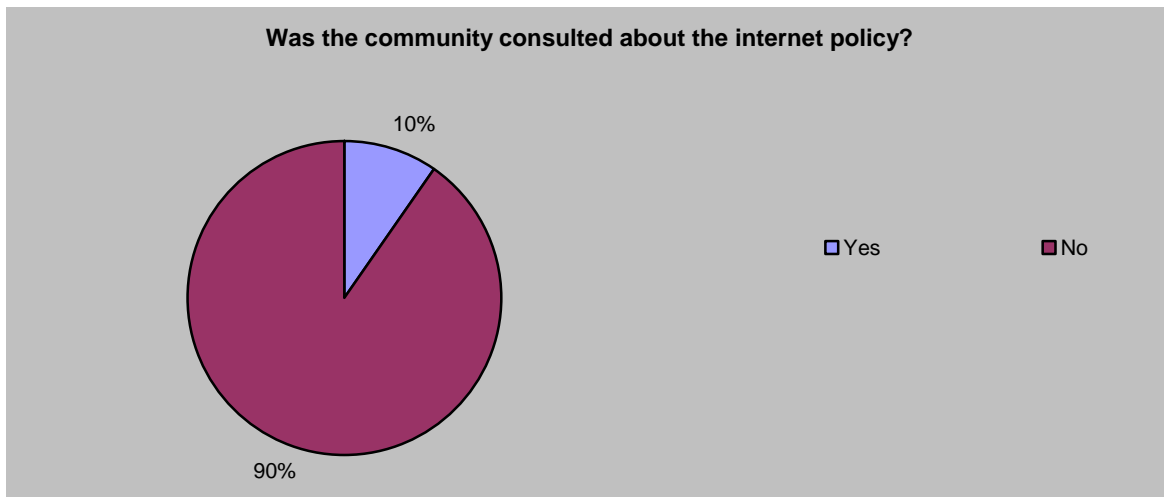
What form did the consultation take?
Responses on behalf of 103 public libraries

Form of community consultation to develop library internet policy

Form	Value
Suggestion box	68
Survey	24
Other	22
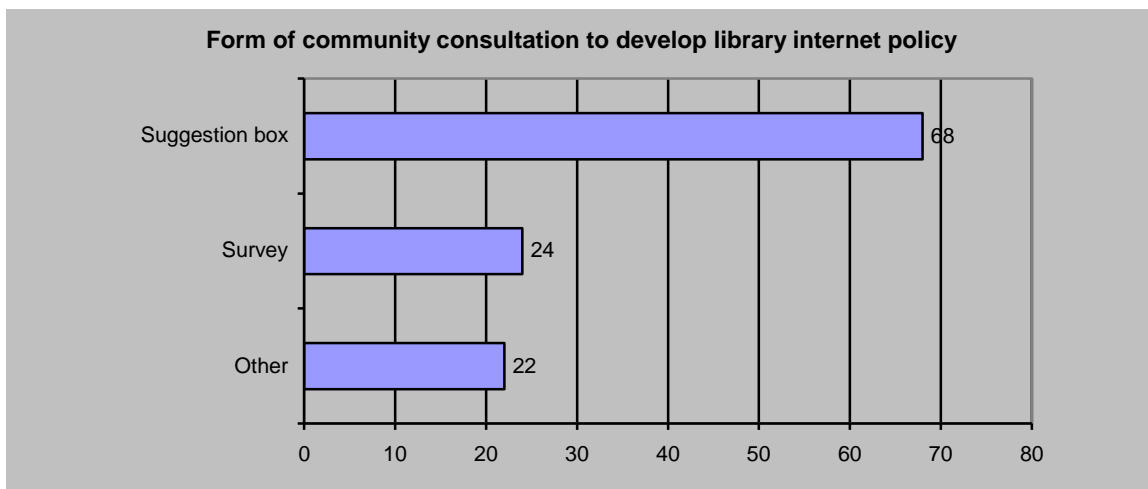
At what level was the library internet policy endorsed?
Responses on behalf of 633 public libraries

Level at which the internet policy was endorsed

14%   16%

22%

48%

- ☐ Council
- ■ Council management
- ☐ Library management
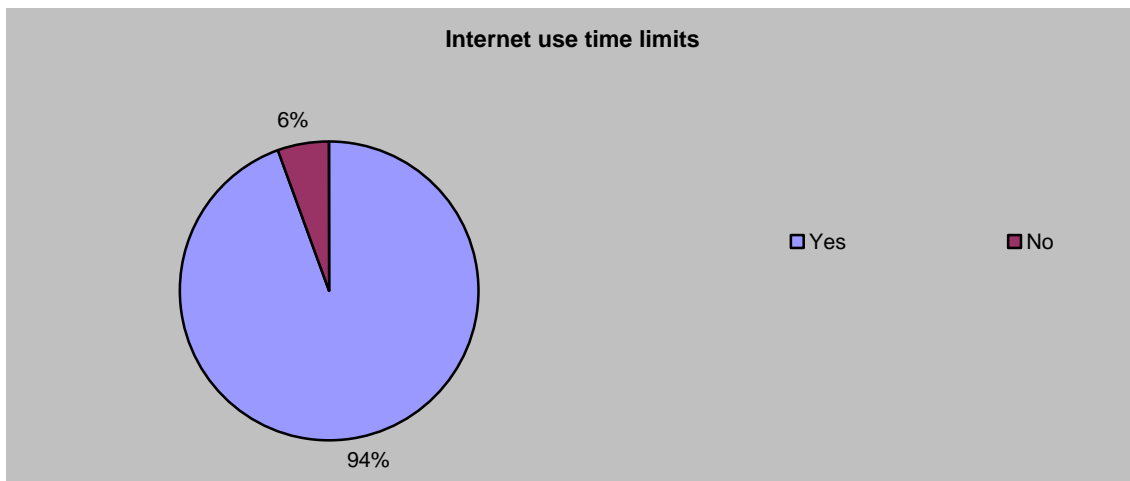- ☐ Regional library committee or library board
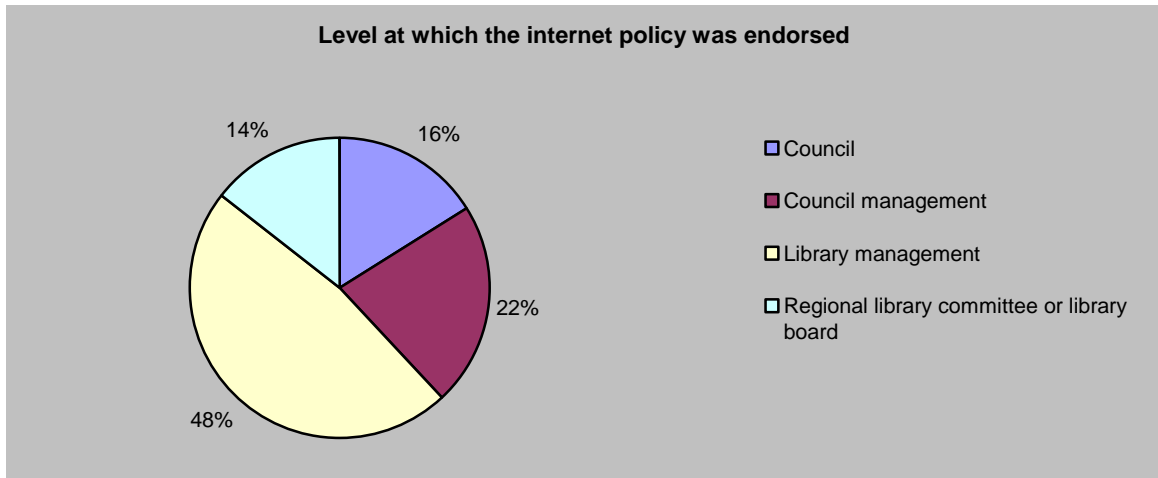
6. Time slots

Most respondents (94%) said that time limits were applied to internet use. Often, libraries applied different time limits to terminals in the same location. The favoured time limit was one hour. 86% of libraries had a booking system.
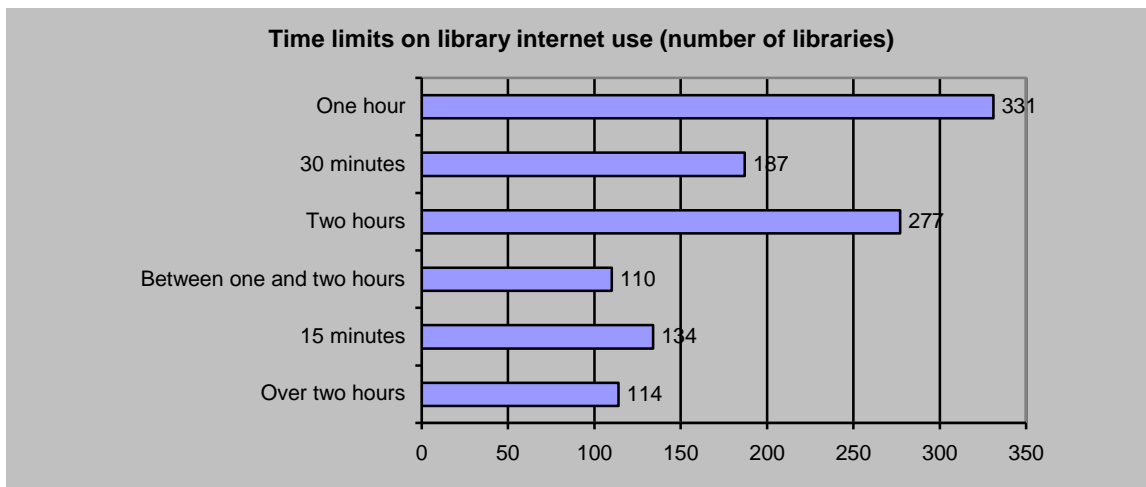
Are time limits imposed for internet use?
*Responses on behalf of 611 public libraries*

Internet use time limits

6%

□ Yes   ■ No

94%

What are the time limits?
Responses on behalf of 577 public libraries

Time limits on library internet use (number of libraries)

One hour	331
30 minutes	187
Two hours	277
Between one and two hours	110
15 minutes	134
Over two hours	114

0   50   100   150   200   250   300   350

Is there a booking system for internet use?
Responses on behalf of 676 public libraries

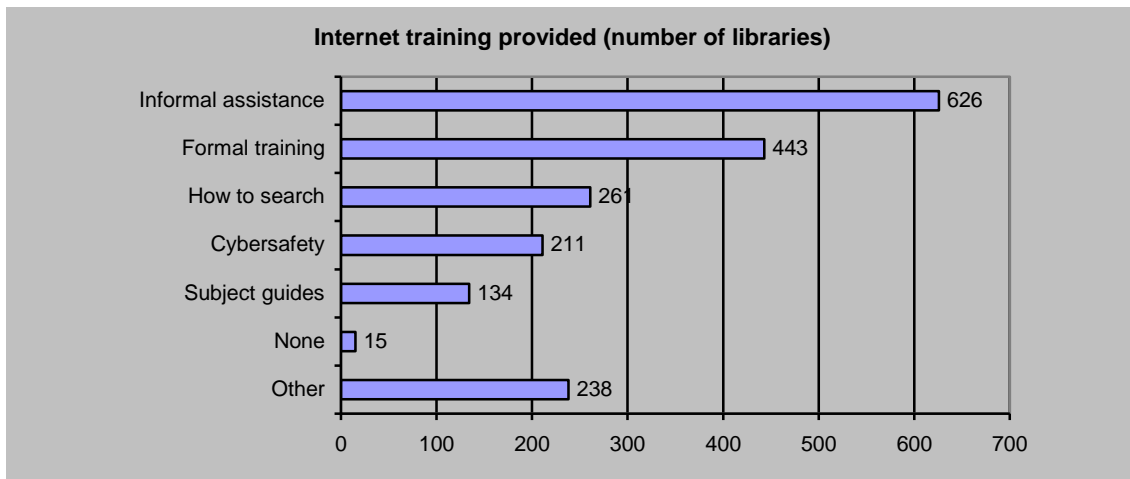**Booking system for internet use**

14%

86%

☐ Yes   ☐ No
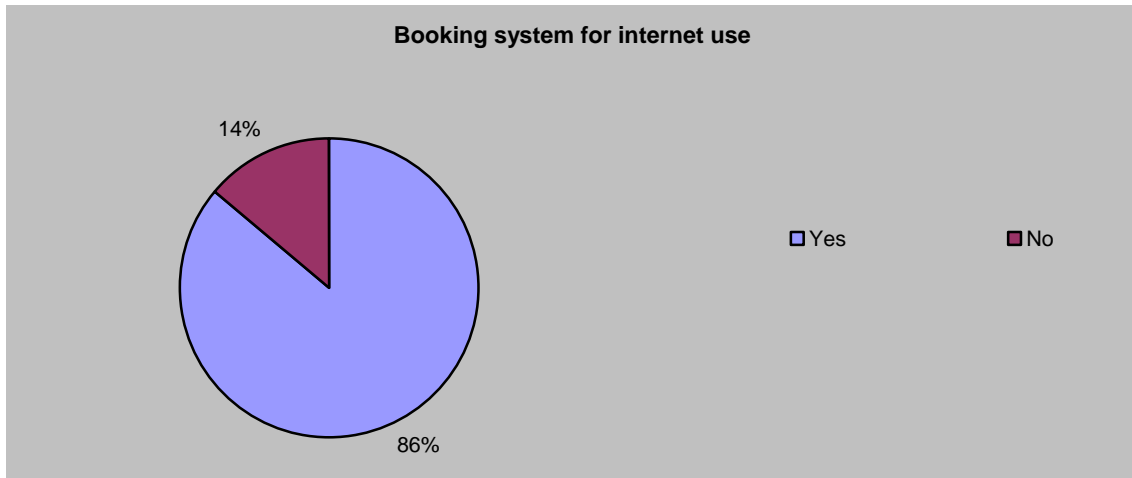
7. Internet training

Informal assistance was by far the most common form of internet training in libraries (93%), with formal training in 66% of libraries. Training aimed at parents and children was offered in many libraries, taking the form of cybersafety, homework and tutoring, and parenting information. Training for seniors was offered in 79% of libraries. This was mainly at an introductory level: computer use, email, social networks and internet search skills.

There was a broad range of training on offer, including internet for beginners, emailing, social media use and research. There was also training provided in languages other than English.

What internet training is provided in the library?
Responses on behalf of 676 public libraries

Internet training provided (number of libraries)

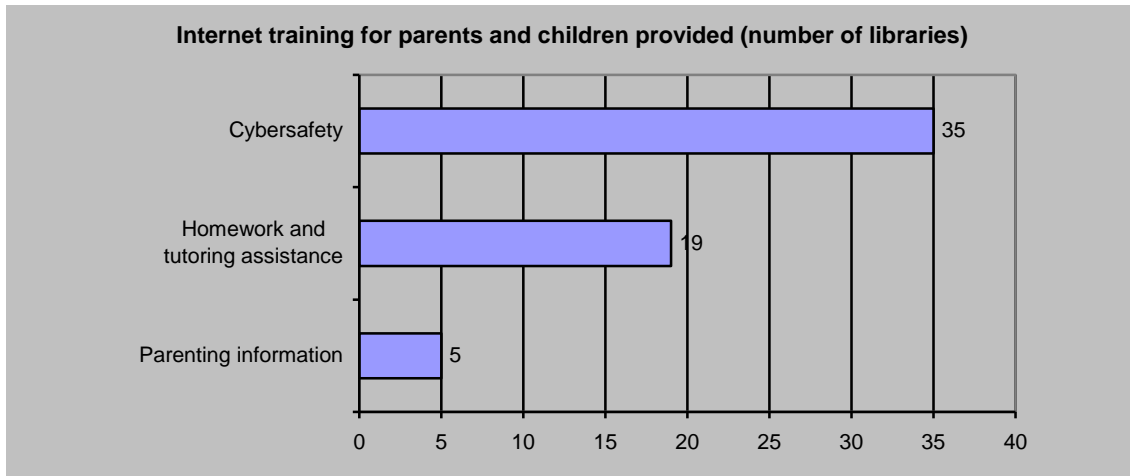| Category	Number
Informal assistance	626
Formal training	443
How to search	261
Cybersafety	211
Subject guides	134
None	15
Other	238

Do you provide internet training for parents and children?
Responses on behalf of 658 public libraries

Internet training for parents and children

- Yes: 84%
- No: 16%
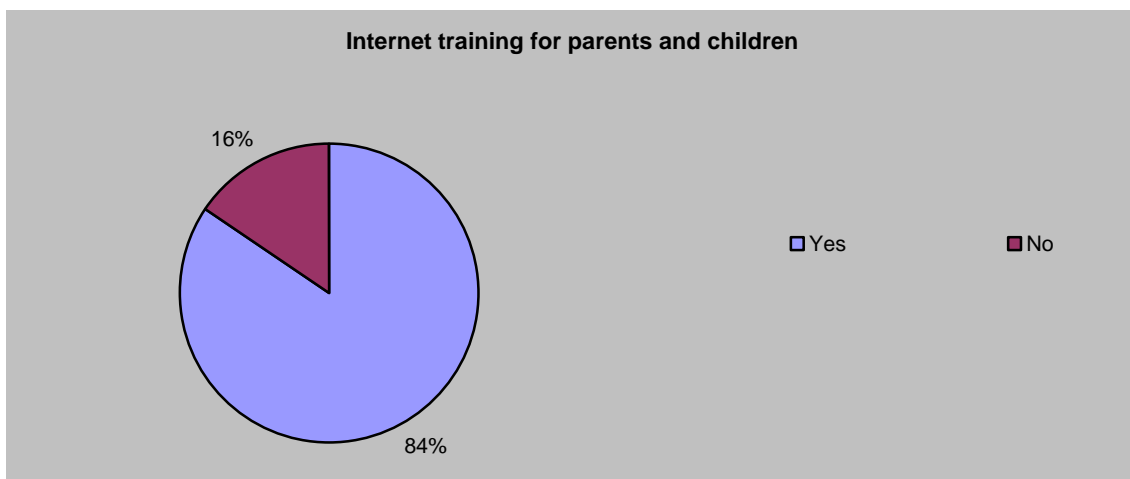
What kind of internet training for parents and children?
Responses on behalf of 50 public libraries

Internet training for parents and children provided (number of libraries)

Category	Number
Cybersafety	35
Homework and tutoring assistance	19
Parenting information	5

Do you provide internet training for seniors?
Responses on behalf of 655 public libraries
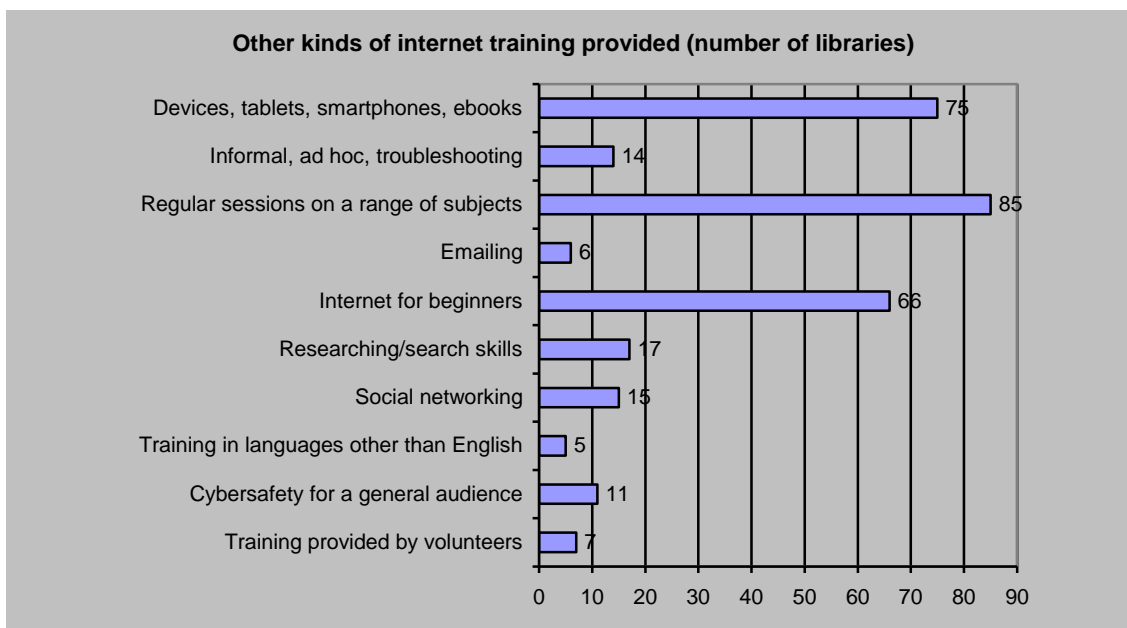
Internet training for seniors

- Yes: 79%
- No: 21%
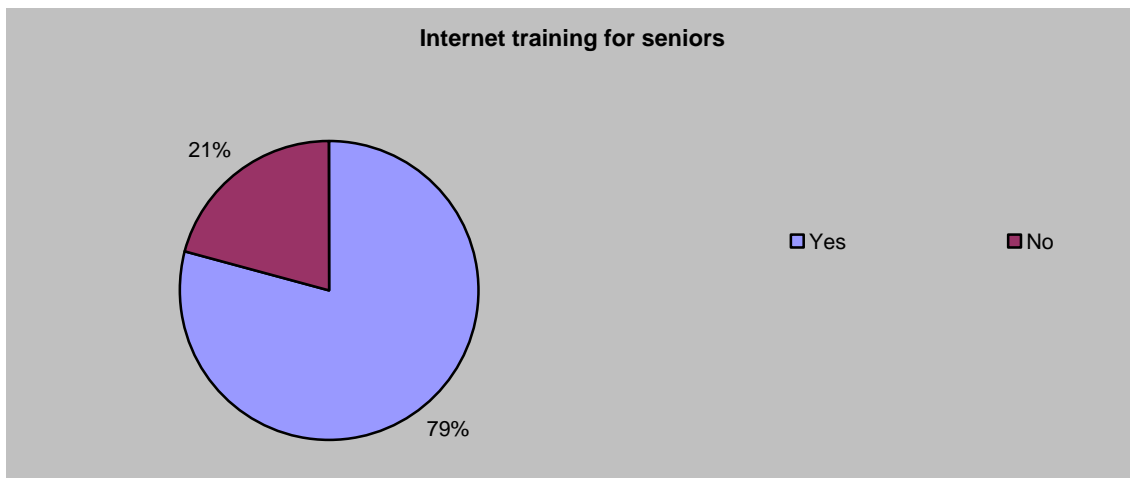
Do you provide other kinds of internet training?
Responses on behalf of 498 public libraries

Other kinds of internet training

27%

73%

☐ Yes   ☐ No
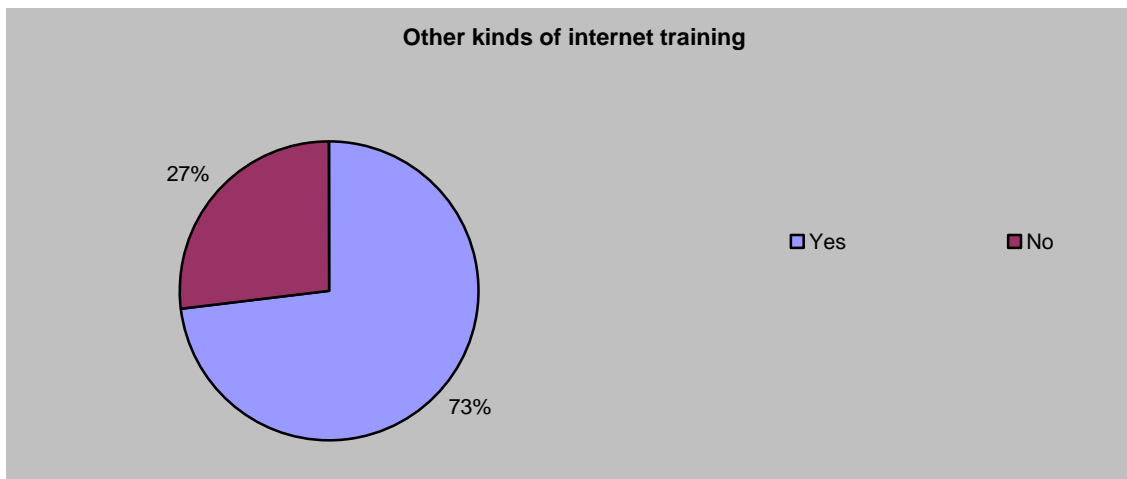
What other kinds of internet training do you offer?
Responses on behalf of 364 public libraries

Other kinds of internet training provided (number of libraries)

Category	Number of libraries
Devices, tablets, smartphones, ebooks	75
Informal, ad hoc, troubleshooting	14
Regular sessions on a range of subjects	85
Emailing	6
Internet for beginners	66
Researching/search skills	17
Social networking	15
Training in languages other than English	5
Cybersafety for a general audience	11
Training provided by volunteers	7

Is internet training free to the library user?
Responses on behalf of 608 public libraries

Internet training free to library users

7%

22%

Yes No Some free, some paid for

71%
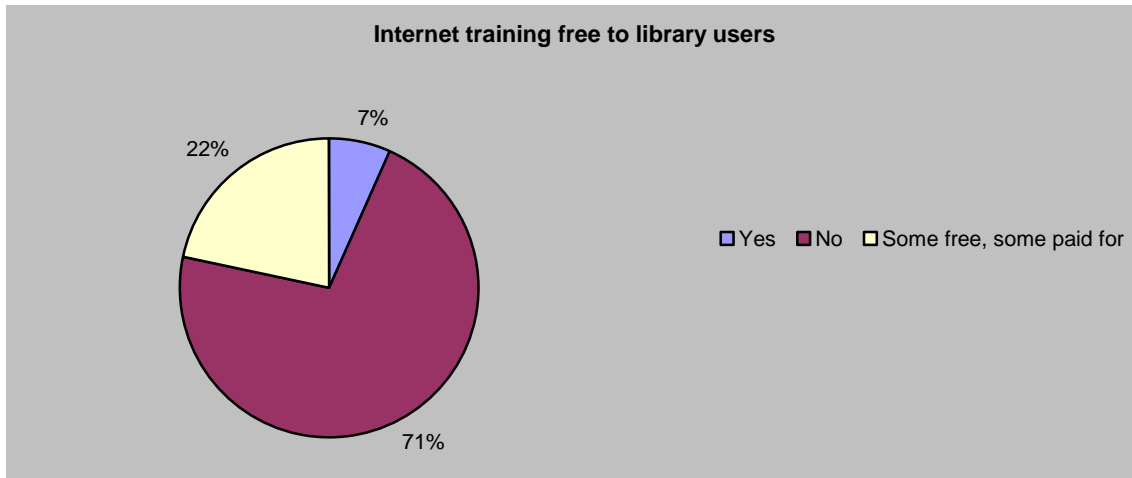
8. Complaints

Libraries need to handle complaints about internet content, but for most (48%), this is in the region of one or two per annum. Out of 144 responses, 48 individual libraries and library services said they had received complaints (33%). Only 6% experience more than 10 complaints a year. Only 2% of complaints are referred to ACMA.

Percentage of responding libraries which received complaints
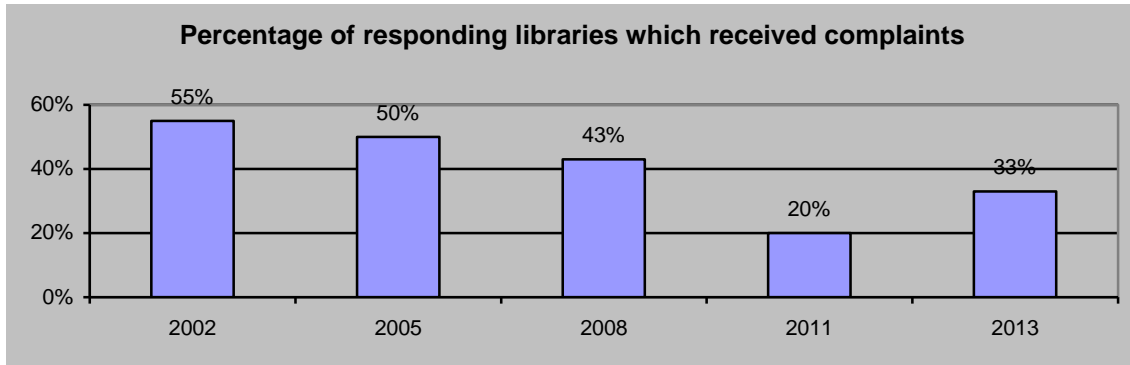
Does your library have a formal complaints procedure?
Responses on behalf of 650 public libraries

Public libraries having a formal complaints procedure
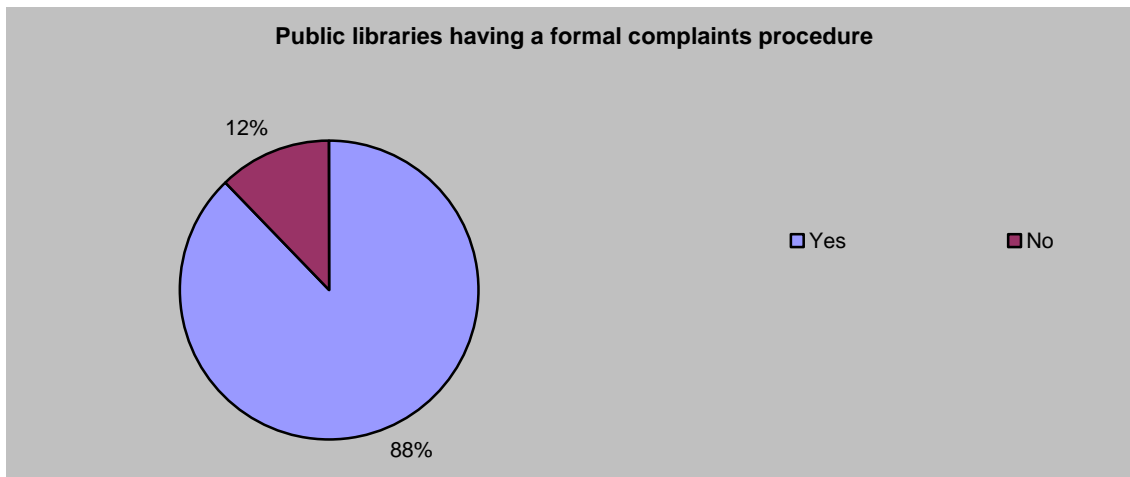
Does your library have a behaviour or values charter for library users?
Responses on behalf of 648 public libraries

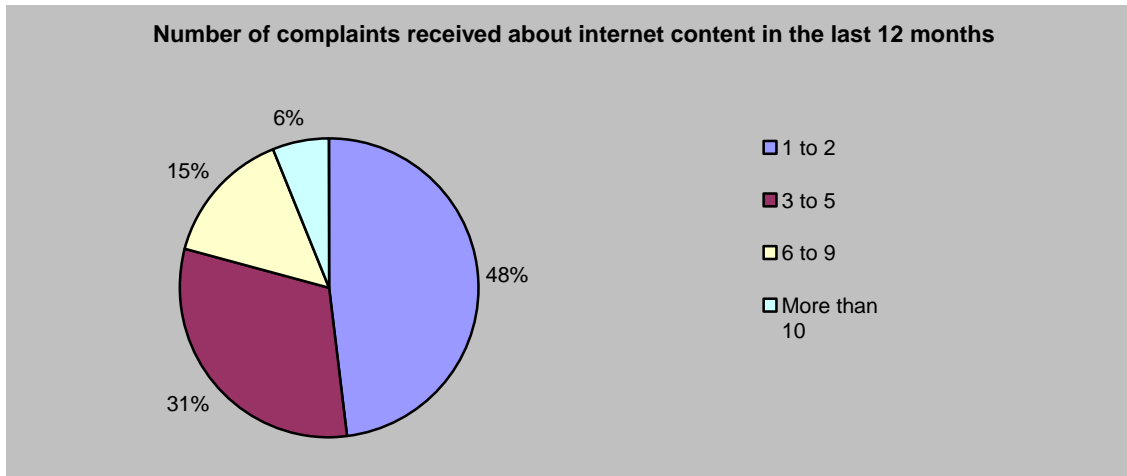**Public libraries having a behaviours or values charter for library users**

30%

70%

☐ Yes　　☐ No
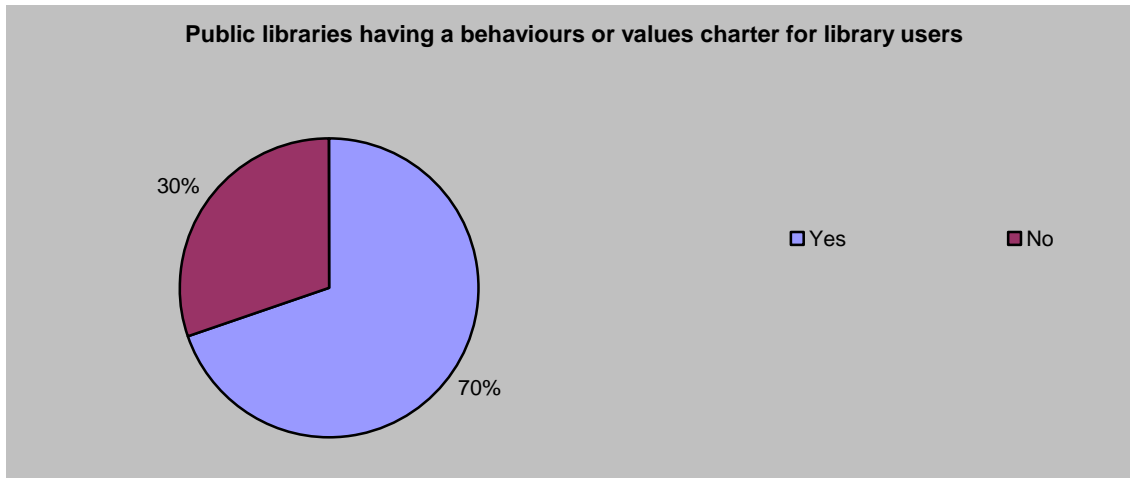
Has the library received complaints about internet content?
Responses on behalf of 655 public libraries

Complaints about internet content
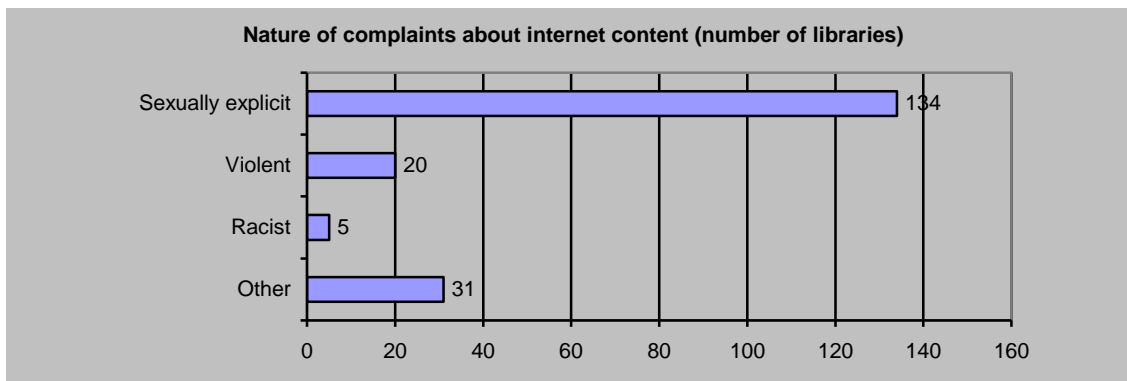
44%

56%

☐ Yes　　☐ No
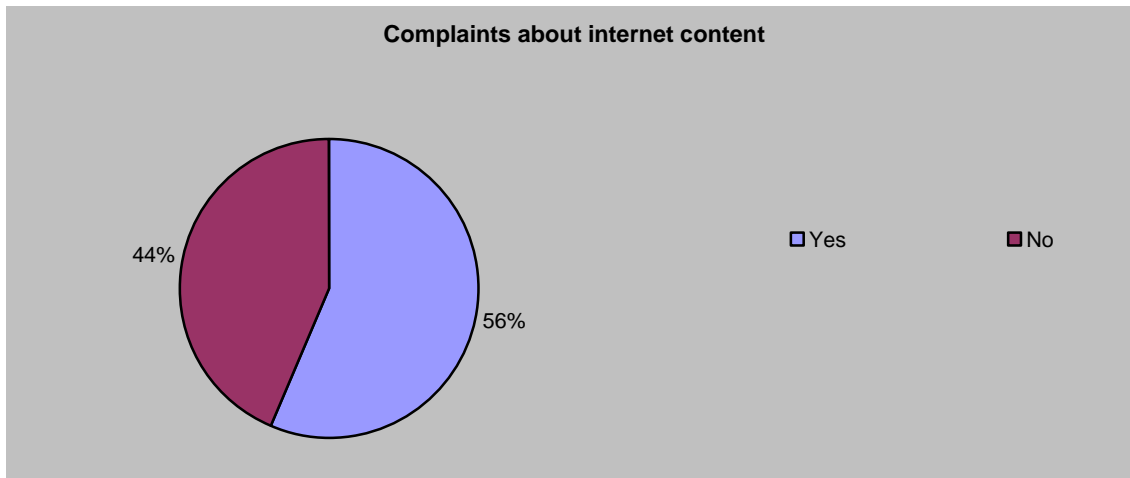
How many complaints about internet content?
Responses on behalf of 250 public libraries

Number of complaints received about internet content in the last 12 months

6%
15%
48%
31%

- 1 to 2
- 3 to 5
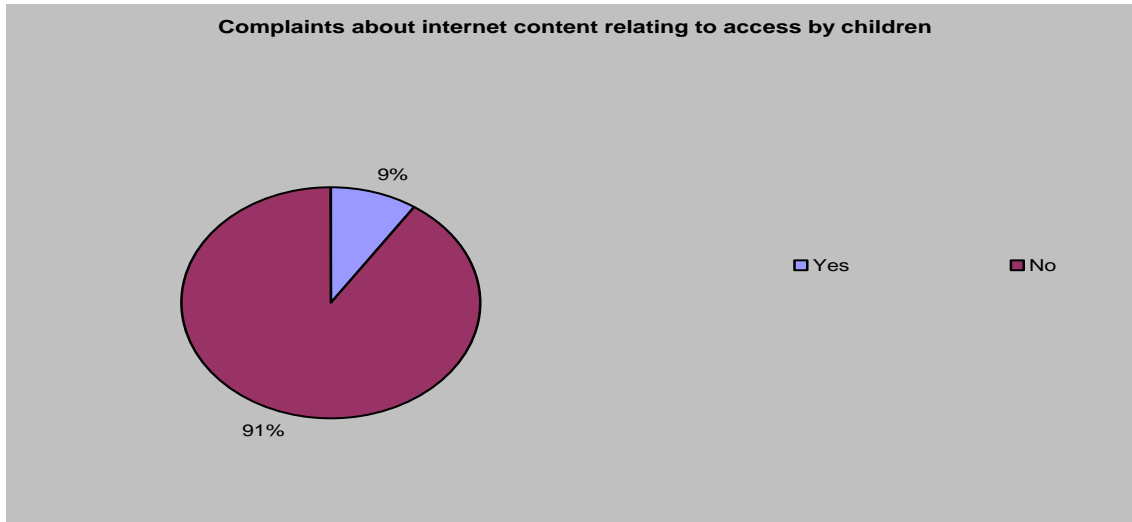- 6 to 9
- More than 10

What were the subjects of the complaints about internet content?
Responses on behalf of 190 public libraries

Nature of complaints about internet content (number of libraries)

Subject	Number
Sexually explicit	134
Violent	20
Racist	5
Other	31

0   20   40   60   80   100   120   140   160

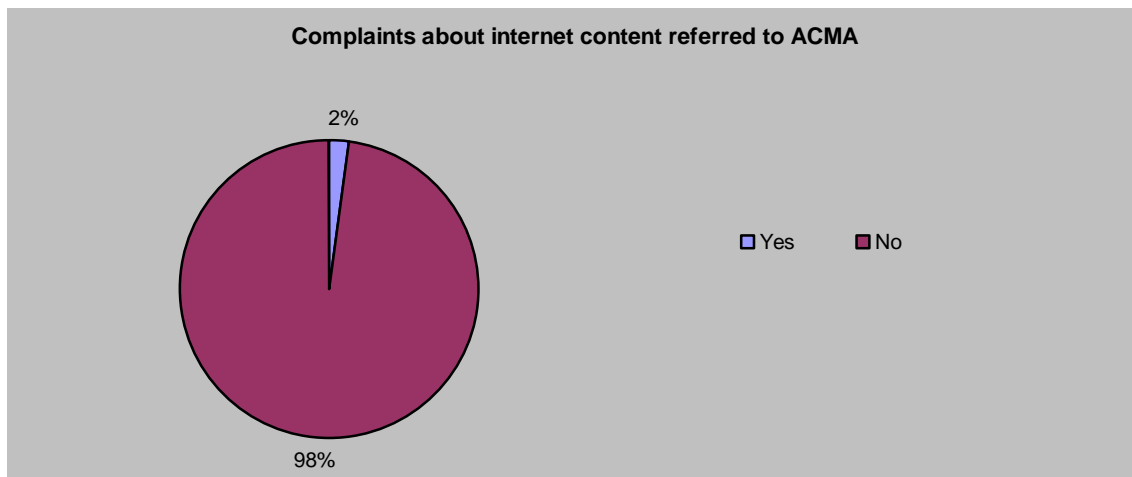**Did complaints about internet content relate to access by children?**
Responses on behalf of 190 public libraries

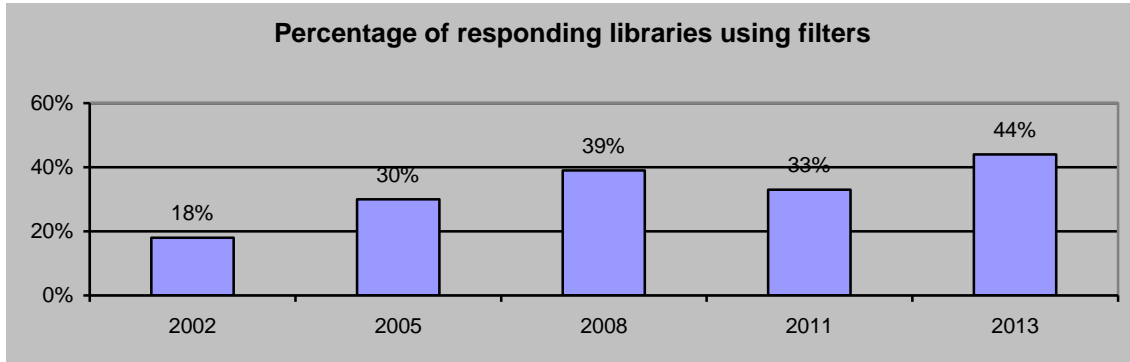**Complaints about internet content relating to access by children**

9%

□ Yes   ■ No

91%

Were complaints about internet content referred to ACMA?
Responses on behalf of 190 public libraries

Complaints about internet content referred to ACMA

2%

□ Yes   ■ No

98%

9. Internet filtering

More than two in five libraries (44%) said they used filters. Filtering software included: WebMarshall, Symantec, Web Gateway, Websense, Content Keeper, Surf Control, Net Nanny, IronPort, Norton's Internet Security.

Percentage of responding libraries using filters

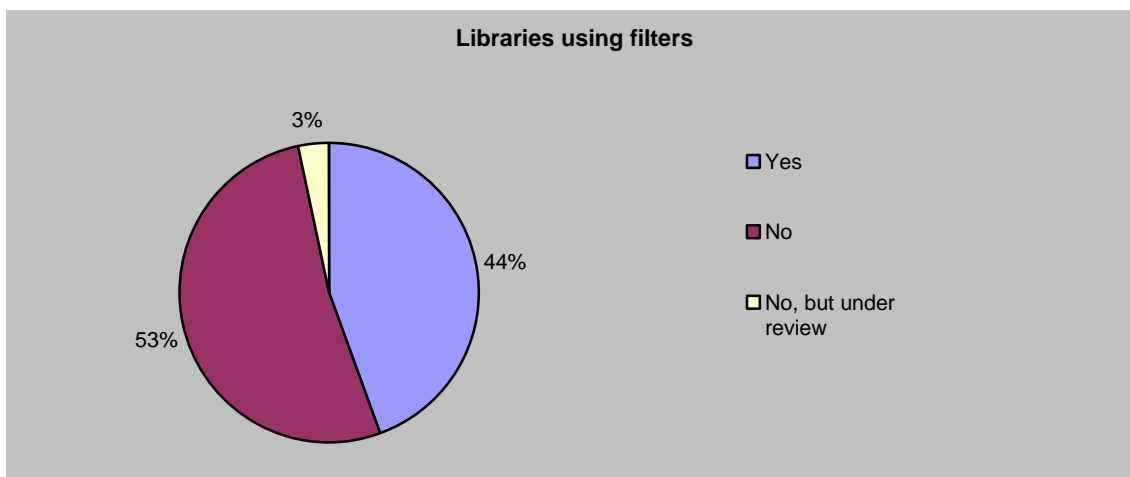| Year	Percentage
2002	18%
2005	30%
2008	39%
2011	33%
2013	44%

Most filters operated at a low to medium level (81%). Only 19% were filtering at a higher level. Most were set to filter out offensive content. Other named items were very large files, file sharing, games and social networking sites.

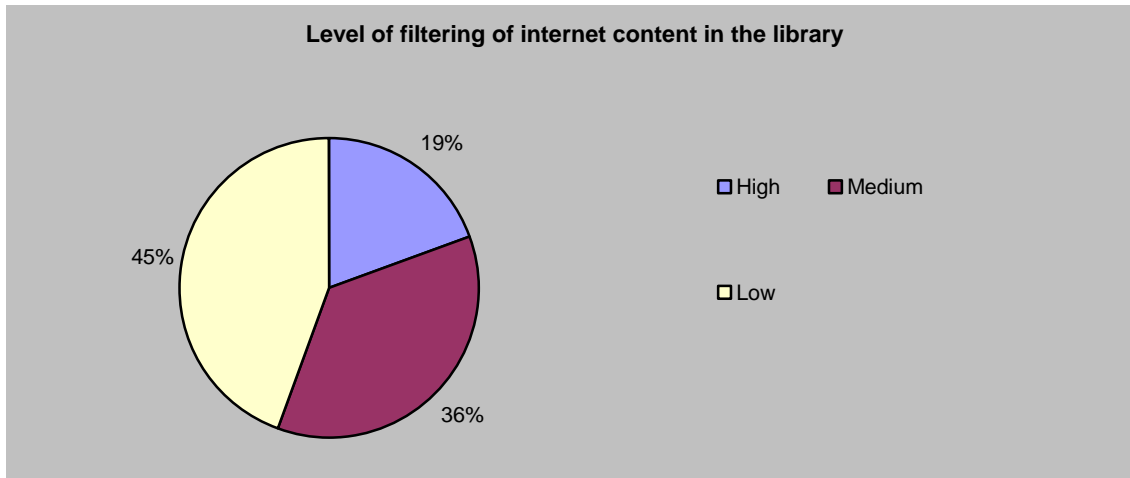Complaints about filtering included:

- Filters too restrictive and auto filtering of valid sites.
- Blocking social media sites, facebook, YouTube.
- Blocked access to health and banking websites, also government forms.
- Download limit too small.

Does your library use filters?
Responses on behalf of 653 public libraries

Libraries using filters

- Yes — 44%
- No — 53%
- No, but under review — 3%

At what level are the filters set?
Responses on behalf of 160 public libraries

Level of filtering of internet content in the library

19%

□ High   ■ Medium

45%

□ Low

36%

What do you, or what might you, filter?
Responses on behalf of 288 public libraries

Internet content filtering (number of libraries)

Category	Number
Offensive content	272
Very large files	144
File sharing	137
Games	80
Social networking sites	29
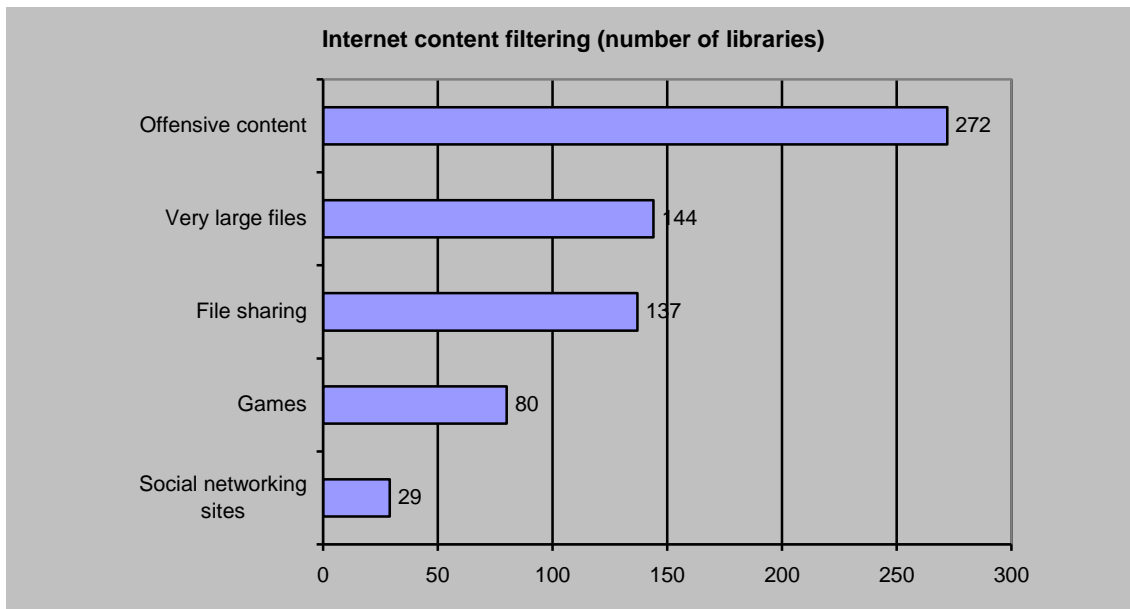
Do you have, or are you planning to have, unfiltered terminals for adults to use?
Responses on behalf of 305 public libraries

Unfiltered terminals for adult library users

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

10%   10%

80%
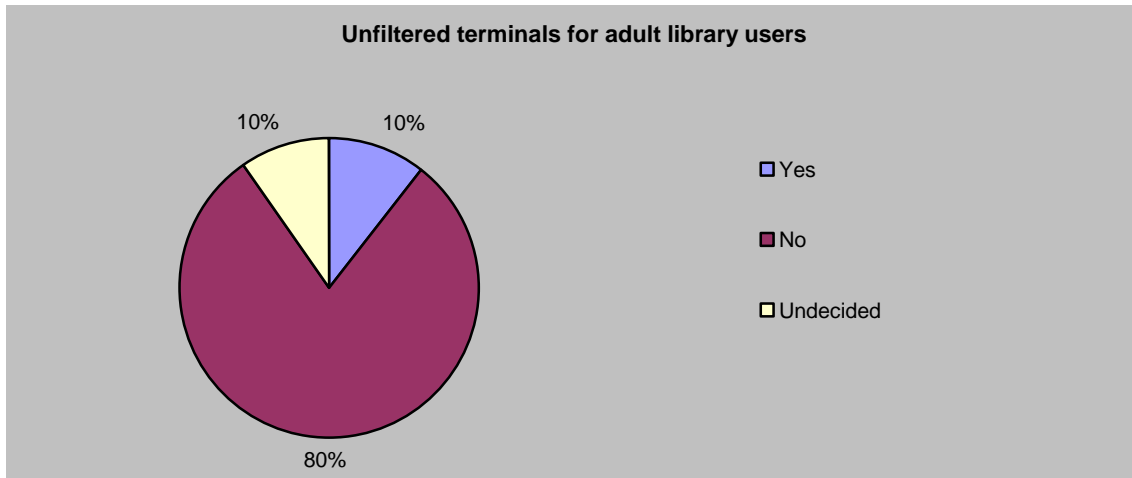
Have you received complaints about the use of filters?
Responses on behalf of 284 public libraries

Complaints from library users about the use of filters

- Yes - No

50%   50%
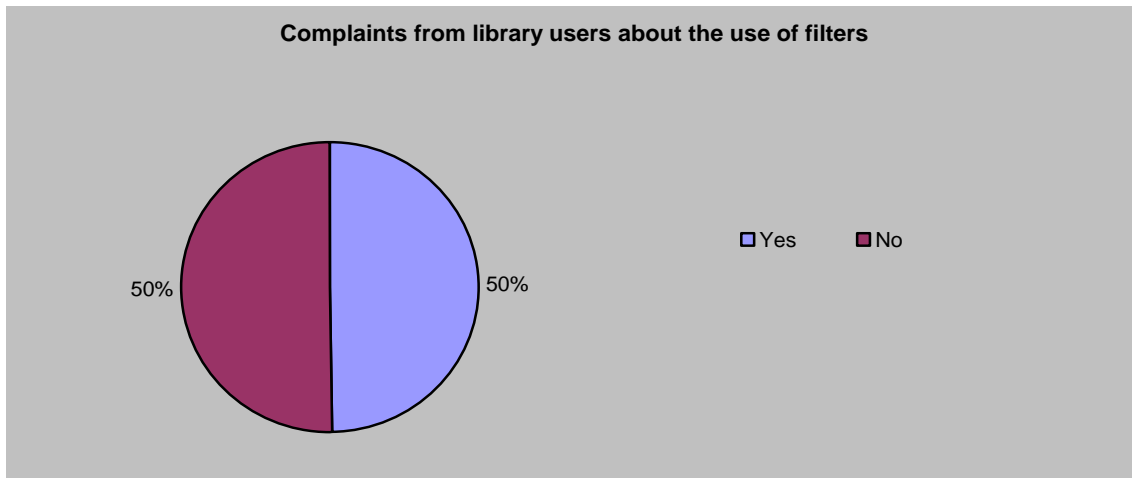
10. Services for children

Approximately two in five libraries had separate terminals for the use of children and 65% linked to third party content recommended for children and young adults.
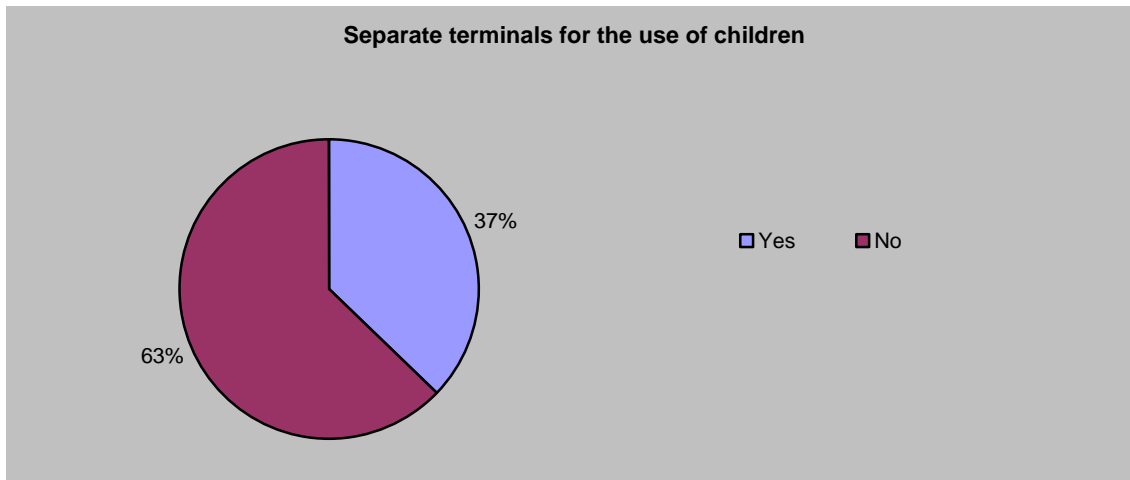
In most libraries parental consent was required for children to use the internet on library terminals, and this was generally up to the age of 18. Parental supervision was generally required up to the age of 12.

Does your library have separate terminals for children?
Responses on behalf of 670 public libraries

**Separate terminals for the use of children**

37%

63%

☐ Yes ☐ No

Does your library have websites for children and young adults that link to third party material?
Responses on behalf of 646 public libraries
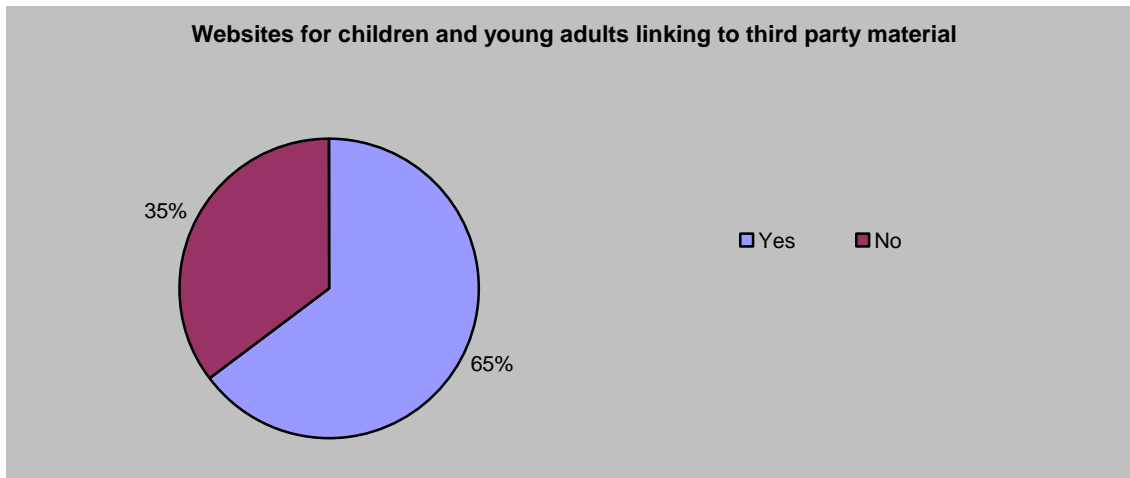
Websites for children and young adults linking to third party material

35%

65%

☐ Yes ☐ No

Is parental consent required for children to access the internet?
Responses on behalf of 652 public libraries

Parental consent required for children and young adults to access the internet

10%

☐ Yes   ■ No

90%
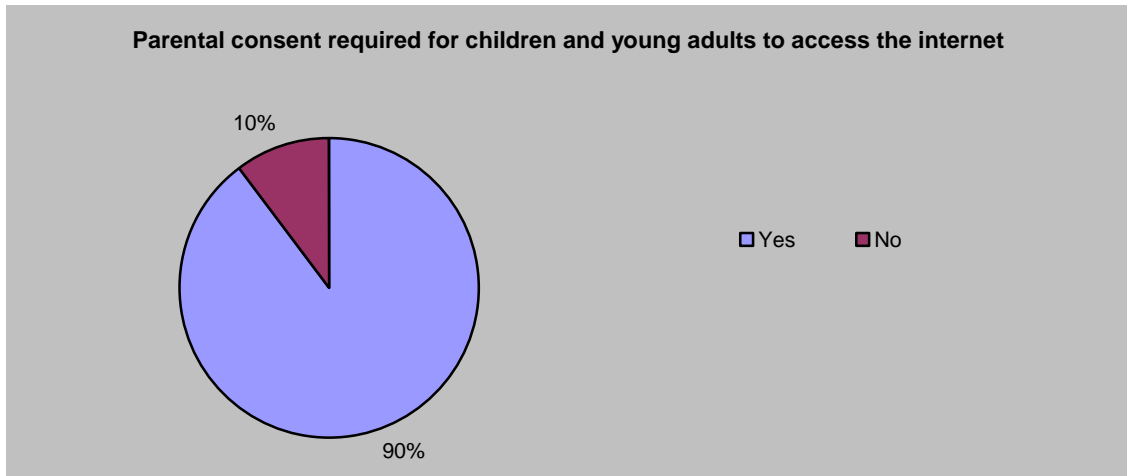
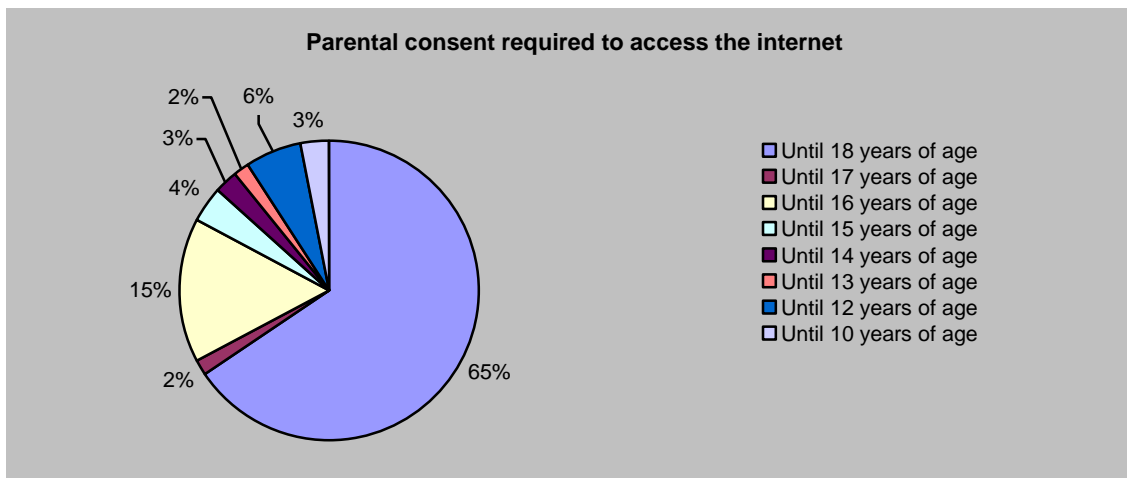**Up to what age is parental consent required for children to access the internet?**
Responses on behalf of 584 public libraries

Parental consent required to access the internet

2%   6%
3%   3%
4%
15%

2%

65%

☐ Until 18 years of age
■ Until 17 years of age
☐ Until 16 years of age
☐ Until 15 years of age
■ Until 14 years of age
■ Until 13 years of age
■ Until 12 years of age
☐ Until 10 years of age

Is there an age requirement for parents to be present with children who are using the internet?
Responses on behalf of 602 public libraries

Parents to be present for children to access the internet

31%

69%

☐ Yes ☐ No
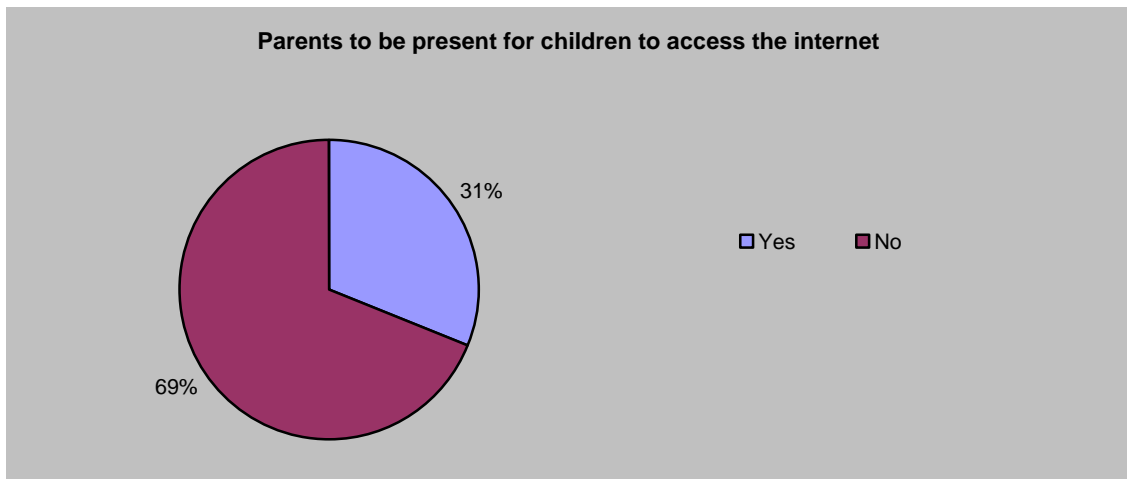
Up to what age must parents be present for children to access the internet?
Responses on behalf of 139 public libraries

Parental consent required to access the internet

2% 6% 2%
1%
12%
14%
6%
23%
34%

☐ Until 18 years of age
☐ Until 16 years of age
☐ Until 15 years of age
☐ Until 13 years of age
☐ Until 12 years of age
☐ Until 10 years of age
☐ Until nine years of age
☐ Until eight years of age
☐ Until six years of age
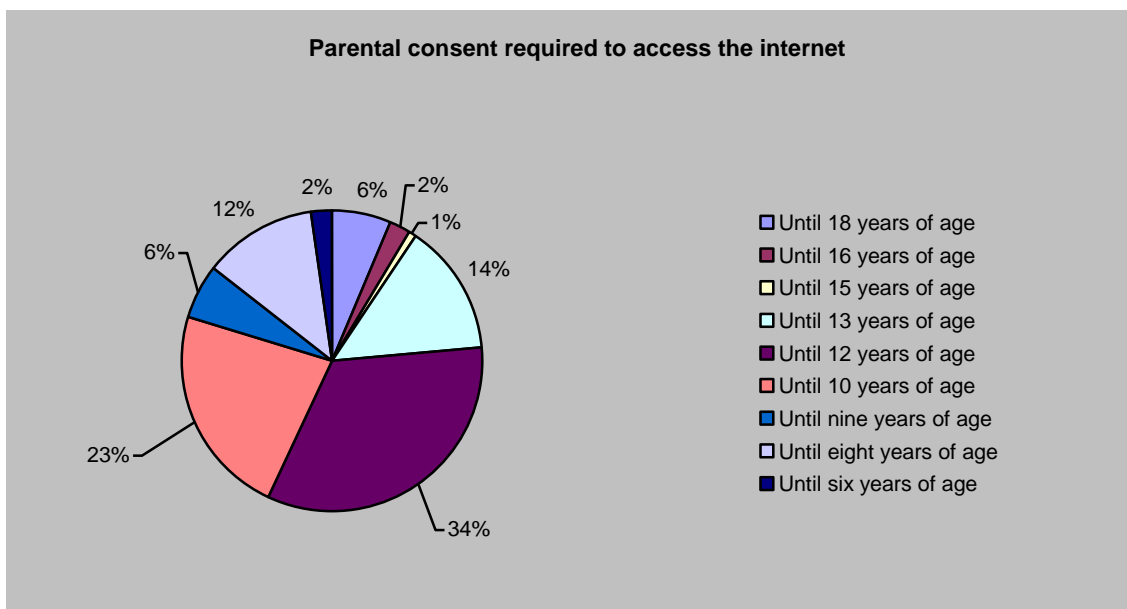
Do you use the ACMA Cybersafety help button on terminals?
Responses on behalf of 664 public libraries

Using the ACMA Cybersafety help button on terminals

7%

17%

76%

Yes

No

Intending to add it in the
next three months
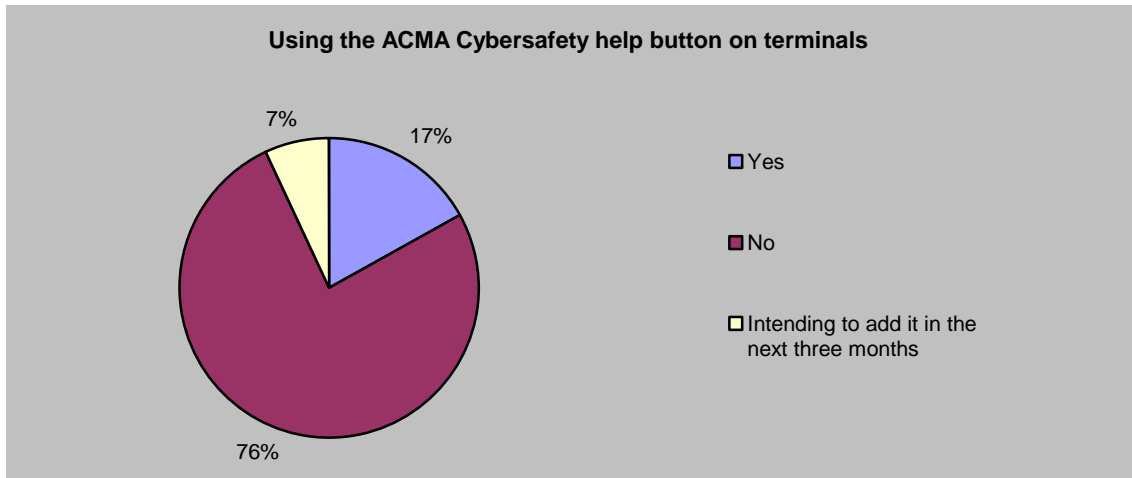
11. Monitoring internet use

Some two thirds of libraries (65%) monitored internet use, through visual monitoring by library staff and the collection of system data. Other ways included monitoring use via the PC booking system and li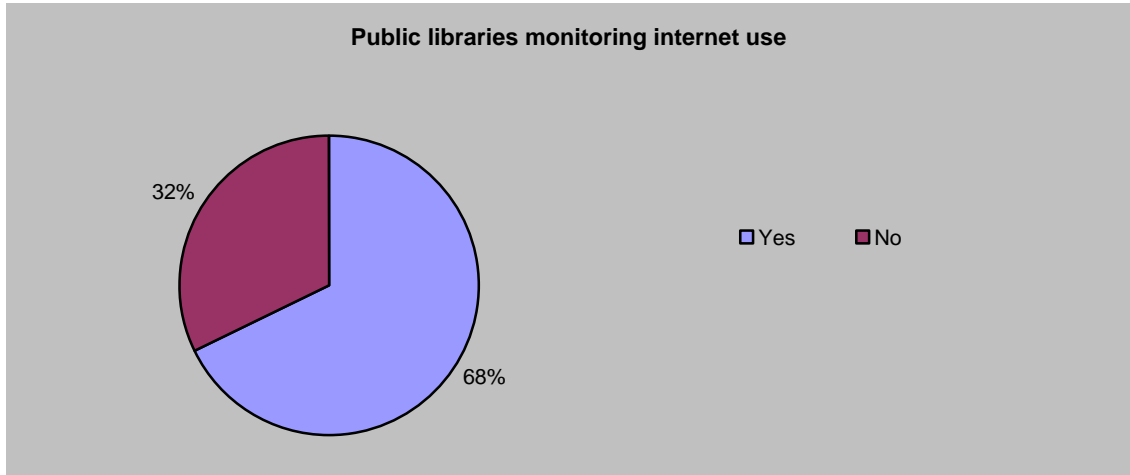brary users reporting inappropriate use. Data was used to monitor inappropriate content, for management reporting, to identify popular websites and databases, to review site classification and filtering, for planning, policy and decision-making.

Does your library monitor internet use?
Responses on behalf of 664 public libraries

Public libraries monitoring internet use

32%

68%

☐ Yes   ■ No

How does your library monitor internet use?
Responses on behalf of 450 public libraries

Methods of monitoring internet use (number of libraries)

Method	Number
Visual monitoring by library staff	407
Collection of system data	221
Other	125
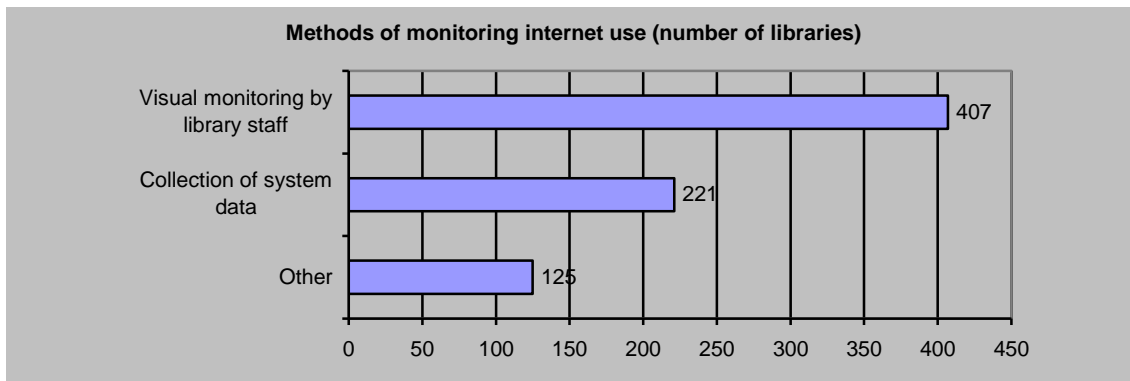
As part of the monitoring activity, do you collect data?
Responses on behalf of 450 public libraries

Public libraries collecting data on internet use

50%   50%   ☐ Yes   ■ No
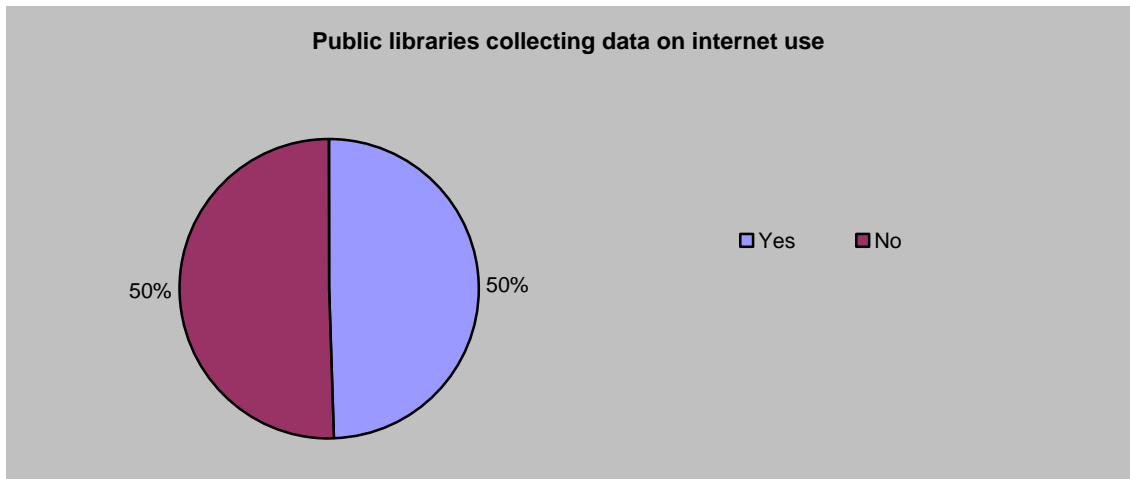
What do you collect data on?
Responses on behalf of 223 public libraries

Collection of data on internet use (number of libraries)

Category	Value
Sites accessed by all users	222
Sites accessed by children	6

0   50   100   150   200   250
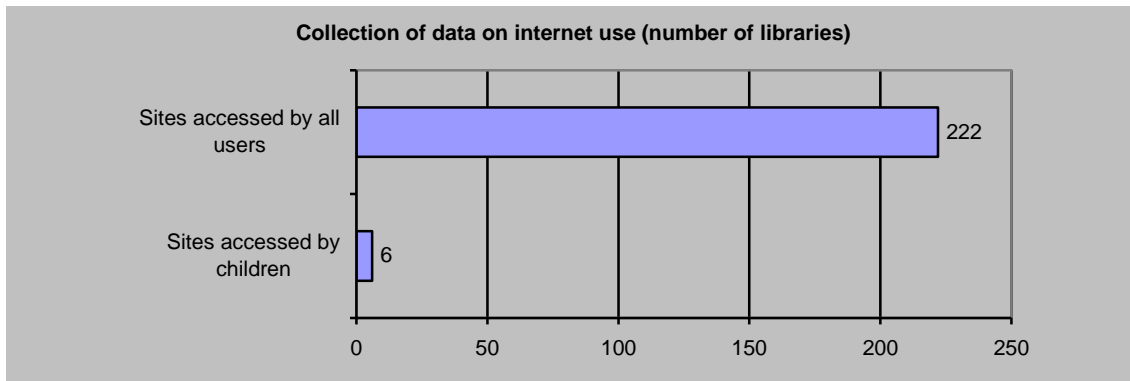
How is monitoring information used?
Responses on behalf of 223 public libraries

How public libraries use internet monitoring information (number of libraries)

| Category	Value
Monitoring inappropriate internet access	169
Management reporting purposes	142
Insight into popular websites and databases	61
Reviewing site classification and filtering	9
Internet policy and decision-making	48
Planning purposes eg bandwidth	166
IT capacity management	146
Data collected but not used	18
Data not collected	106

12. Connection speed and cost

Only 36% of libraries had broadband internet connection; 64% were still using ADSL. Costs of providing an internet service varied from $600 per annum for a single branch, up to more than $5,000, with 42% of libraries at the higher level. While 83% said this was affordable, it meant that libraries were having to prioritise other activities.

What sort of internet connection does your library have?
Responses on behalf of 674 public libraries

Type of internet connection in libraries

36%

64%

□ ADSL ■ Broadband
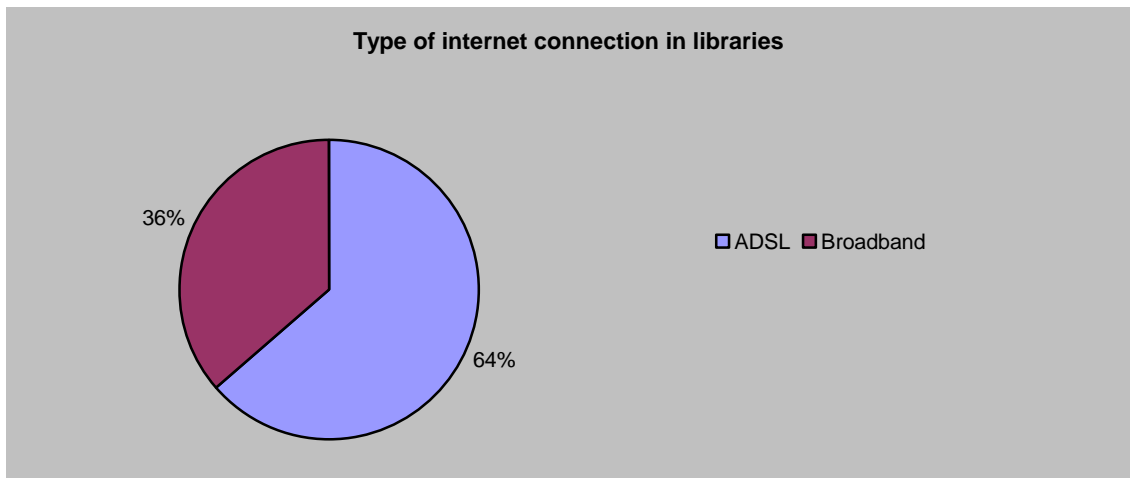
What is the speed of your internet connection?
Responses on behalf of 417 libraries

Speed of internet connection in libraries

6%

22%

38%

16%

10%

8%

□ ADSL1

■ ADSL2

□ Less than 8 Mbps

□ Between 8-12 Mbps

■ Between 13-20 Mbps

□ Above 20 Mbps
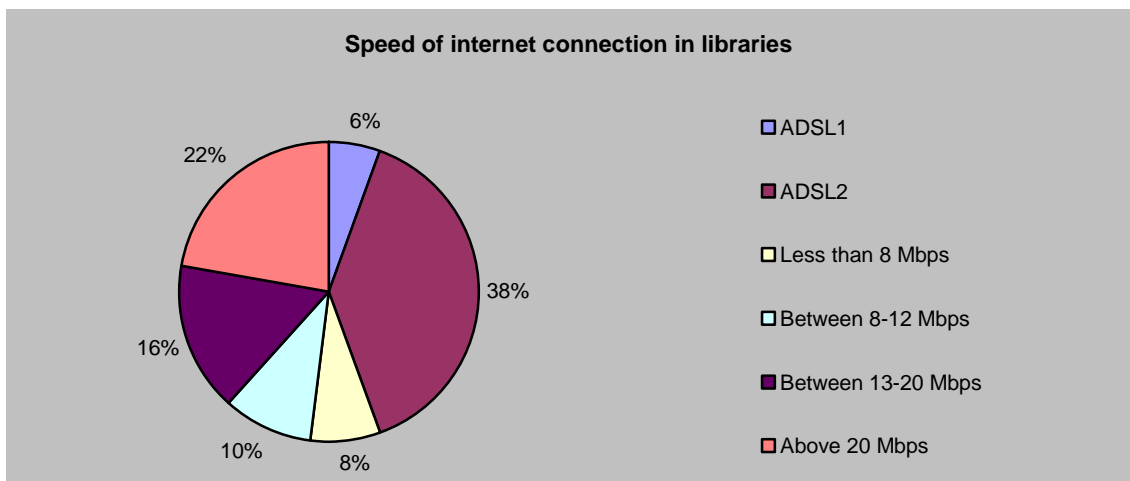
How would you describe the ongoing cost of offering internet access to library users?
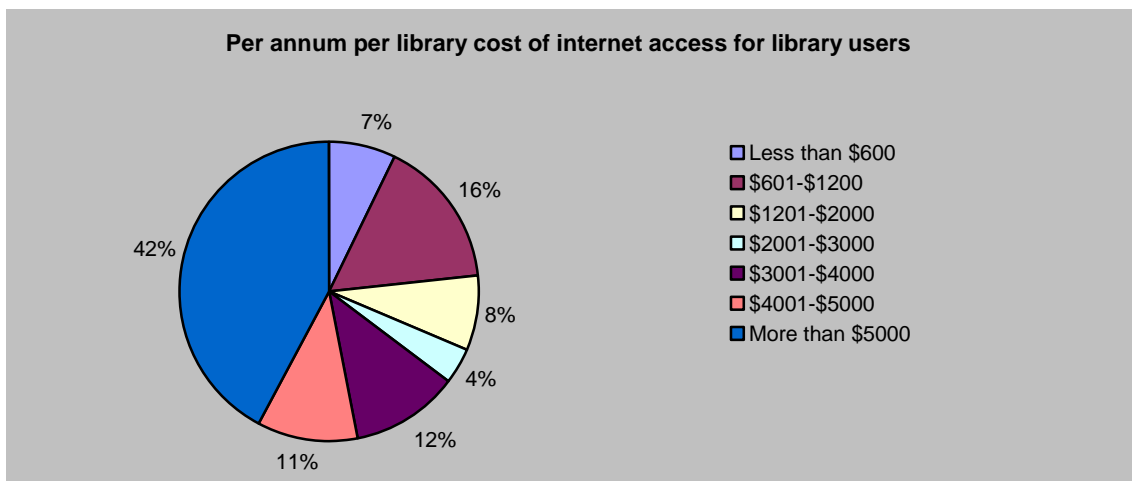*Responses on behalf of 510 public libraries*

The ongoing cost of offering internet access to library users

- 9%
- 8%
- 83%

☐ Easily affordable

☐ Affordable

☐ Hardly affordable
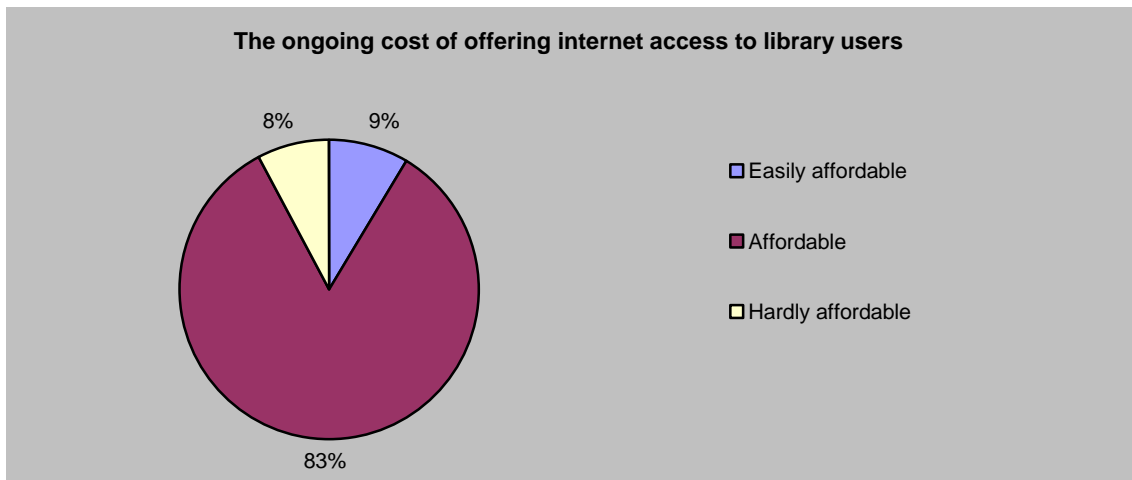
What is the per annum per library cost of offering internet access to library users?
Responses on behalf of 277 public libraries

Per annum per library cost of internet access for library users

- 7%
- 16%
- 8%
- 4%
- 12%
- 11%
- 42%

☐ Less than $600
☐ $601-$1200
☐ $1201-$2000
☐ $2001-$3000
☐ $3001-$4000
☐ $4001-$5000
☐ More than $5000
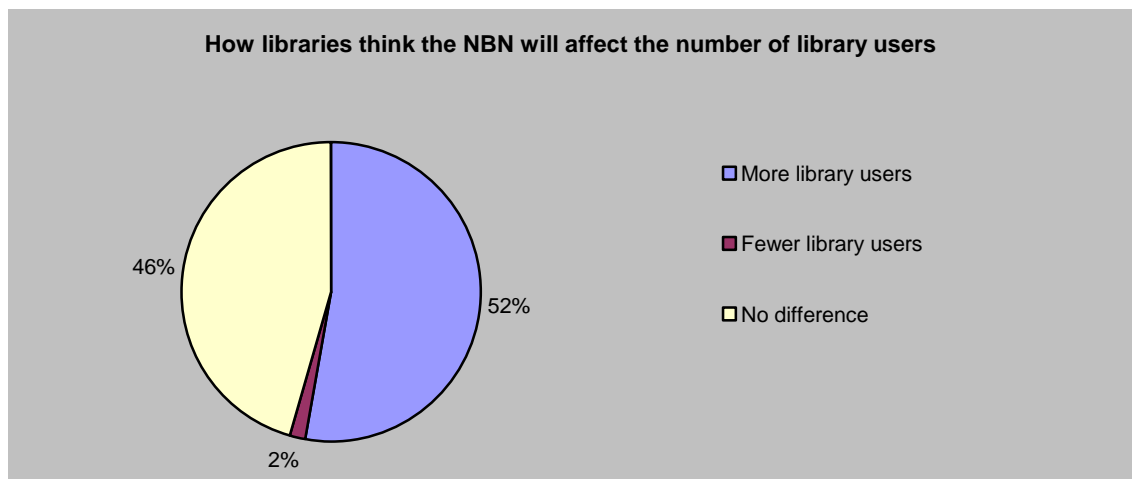
13. Effect of the National Broadband Network

Half the survey respondents felt that the NBN would increase the number of library users, while 46% felt it would have no difference. Only 2% thought it would reduce the number of library users.

Other changes were foreseen in terms of faster internet access, greater focus on online resources, changes in the way the internet was used in libraries, and the potential to attract new user groups, including business people. Library managers were optimistic about the new opportunities that could emerge from the NBN:
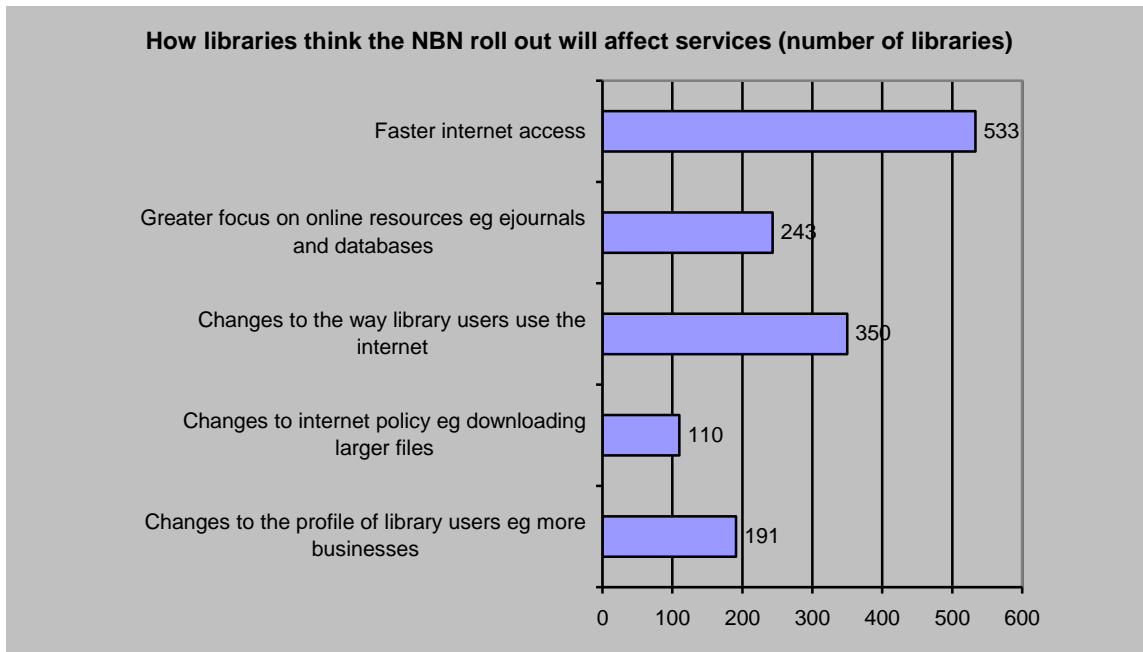
- Greater range of online services and formats.
- Reduced cost of service.
- Maker spaces and increased focus on digital literacy.
- Collaborative workspaces showcasing technology.
- Developing more local content.

**What do you think the result of the NBN will be in terms of the number of people using your library?**
Responses on behalf of 580 public libraries

How libraries think the NBN will affect the number of library users

46%

52%

2%

☐ More library users

■ Fewer library users

☐ No difference

How do you think the NBN roll out will affect what your library offers?
Responses on behalf of 548 public libraries

How libraries think the NBN roll out will affect services (number of libraries)

| Category	Number
Faster internet access	533
Greater focus on online resources eg ejournals and databases	243
Changes to the way library users use the internet	350
Changes to internet policy eg downloading larger files	110
Changes to the profile of library users eg more businesses	191

Have you begun to develop your strategy for the arrival of the NBN?
Responses on behalf of 594 public libraries

Have libraries begun to develop their strategy for the arrival of the NBN?

Yes: 29%
No: 71%
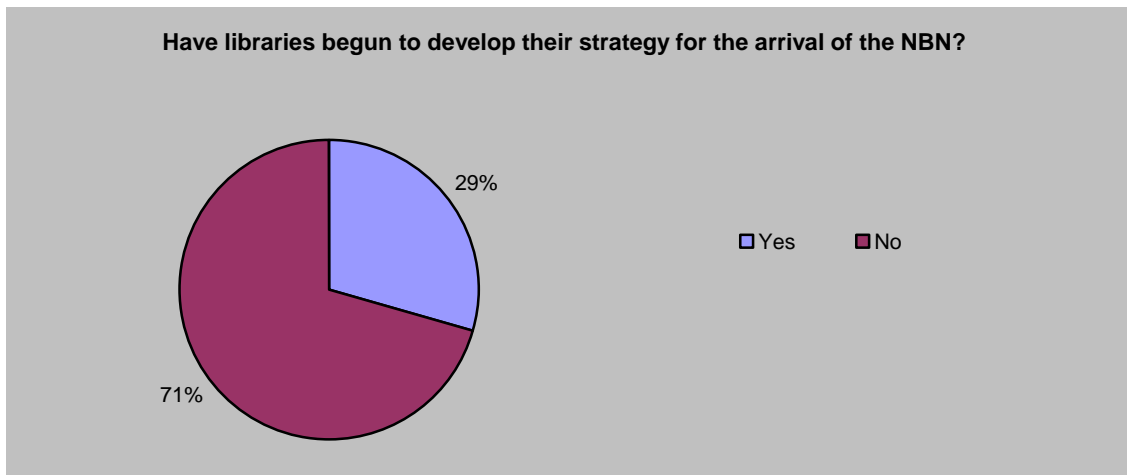
Have you been in discussions with council or other bodies about the NBN coming to your area?
Responses on behalf of 594 public libraries

Discussions with council and other bodies about the arrival of the NBN?

46%

54%

Yes   No
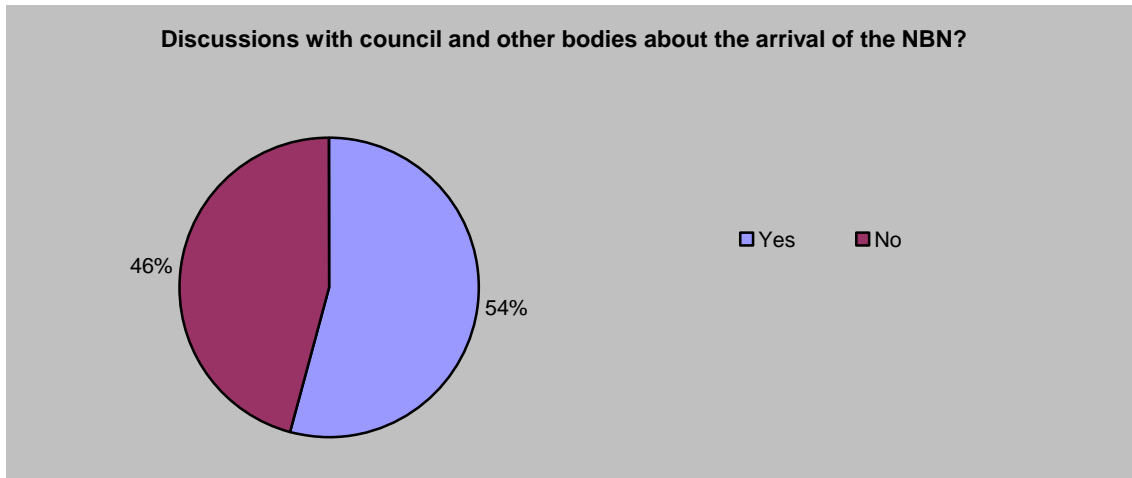
14. Other comments about internet access in libraries

In response to an open question about internet access in public libraries:

There needs to be a library IT person. The role is currently filled here, but if that person left there would be an issue.

We are pretty happy with the range of terminals we have in the library, as well as the speed delivered. I appreciate that the internet will be leant on more and more in the future eg kids coming to the library to do school assignments, members downloading audiobooks to their devices, downloading ebooks and so on.

Patrons require larger downloads and quicker speeds in the remote area.

This library is very bound by corporate decisions and procedures which are very tight, so these impact on public use.

It is a well used service in this community.

It's great to be able to support our community in this way; important to ensure staff are well trained to offer support to the public.

We are aware that we need to improve staff knowledge of the internet and cyber safety. We anticipate that this will be incorporated into future patron training.

Internet access in public libraries is key to redeveloping library services. More flexible policies that reflect the rapidly changing technologies and applications are required.

Some people that live in our Shire have patchy access and have been told that it will take three years for the network to come to them. People come in to print things off on the public computers because it is cheaper than buying a printer.

We have no time limits for customers using the wifi, just a generous download limit.

It is a heavily used resource and important to our community

We are frustrated with trying to meet community needs and not having any capacity to improve services. IT are supportive of what we want to do but hampered by old hardware and poor security, and lack of resources to effect improvement.

It is vitally important. We still have many households who have nil or inadequate access. Even those who have access at home use the library access for all sorts of reasons: speed, convenience, hardware broken, colour printing, exceeded home allowance and many more.

Absolutely critical to those who lack adequate access from home - filtering is too restrictive for general term searching and therefore is not considered an option.

We need a model that assists in forecasting usage patterns and provides some solid standards for provision. Currently we have no hard and fast measures to show to inform the budget.
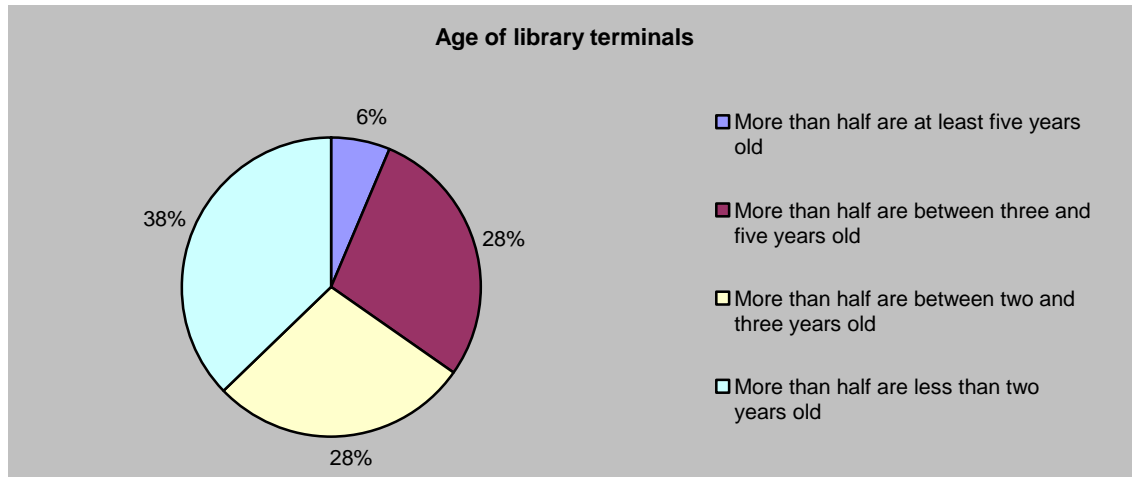
It is just part of what we do but the variety of devices that clients use can be challenging especially if they need assistance. We are often the only location where people without internet access can go and they may need more assistance than other users.

15. Hardware

Over a third of terminals in libraries were more than three years old, which suggests that a significant investment will be required in computer hardware over the next 12 months.

How old are your terminals?
Responses on behalf of 592 public libraries

Age of library terminals

6%

38%

28%

28%

☐ More than half are at least five years old

■ More than half are between three and five years old

☐ More than half are between two and three years old

☐ More than half are less than two years old

16. The role of ALIA

Most respondents were aware of ALIA policies on content regulation and internet services in public libraries, and 82% had made use of them.

Are you aware of ALIA policy on content regulation and internet services in libraries?
Responses on behalf of 640 public libraries

Awareness of ALIA policy on content regulation and internet services

5%

95%

☐ Yes   ■ No
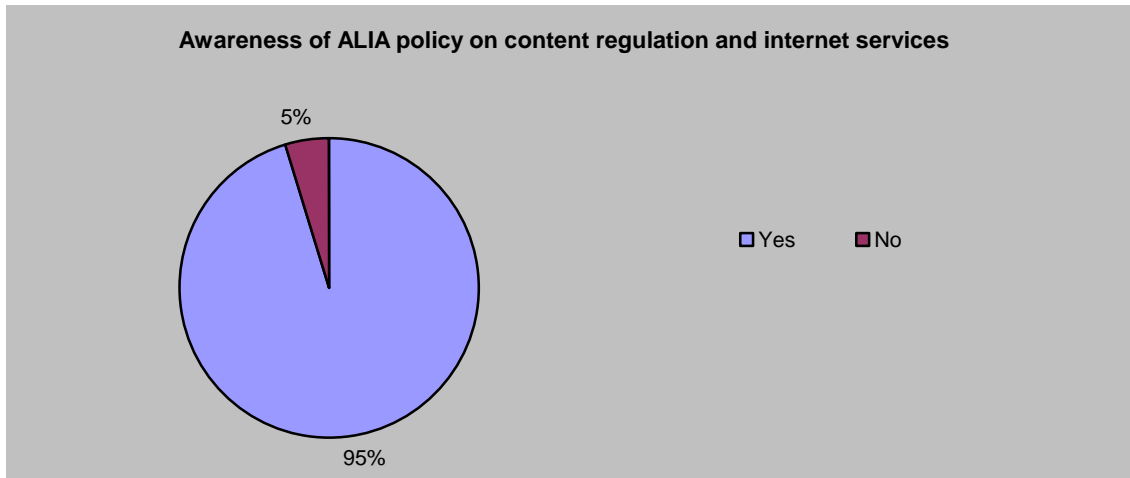
Have you made use of the ALIA policy on content regulation and internet services in libraries?
Responses on behalf of 665 public libraries

Use of ALIA policy on content regulation and internet services

18%

82%

☐ Yes   ■ No
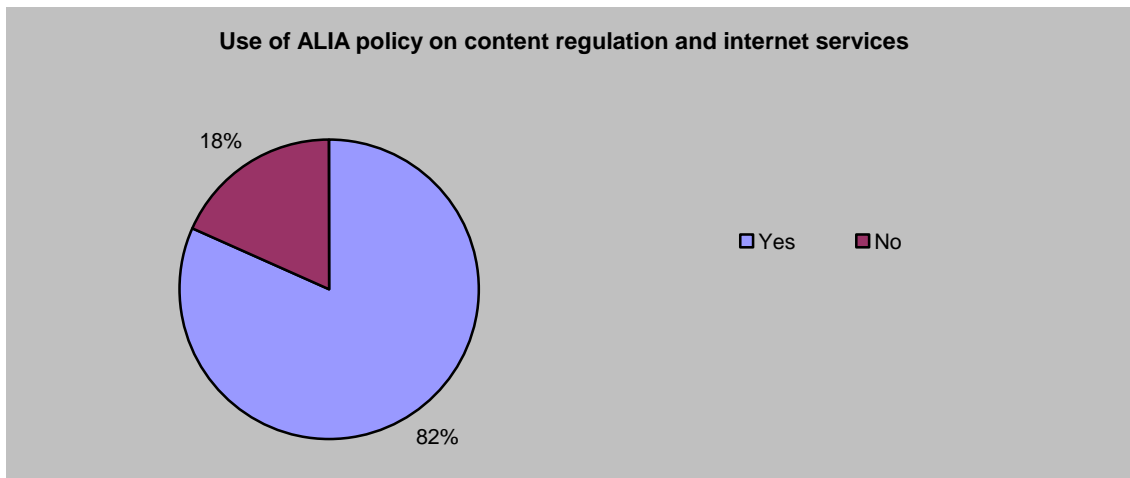
17. Conclusion

Internet access in public libraries has become a core offering, providing equity of access for people without the benefit of a PC at home, and the demand from library users has been on a consistently upward trend for more than a decade.

The responses to the 2013 survey, in common with those of 2011, suggested that libraries will continue to face a tough juggling act to deliver what library users want and need, within the limitations of their current budgets and within the capacity of their existing staff.

The National Broadband Network provided exciting potential, but there were concerns about its future in the light of a potential change of government within 12 months.

Acknowledgements

ALIA would like to thank its Public Library Advisory Committee for its assistance in compiling this survey and the 190 respondents for taking the time to complete it.