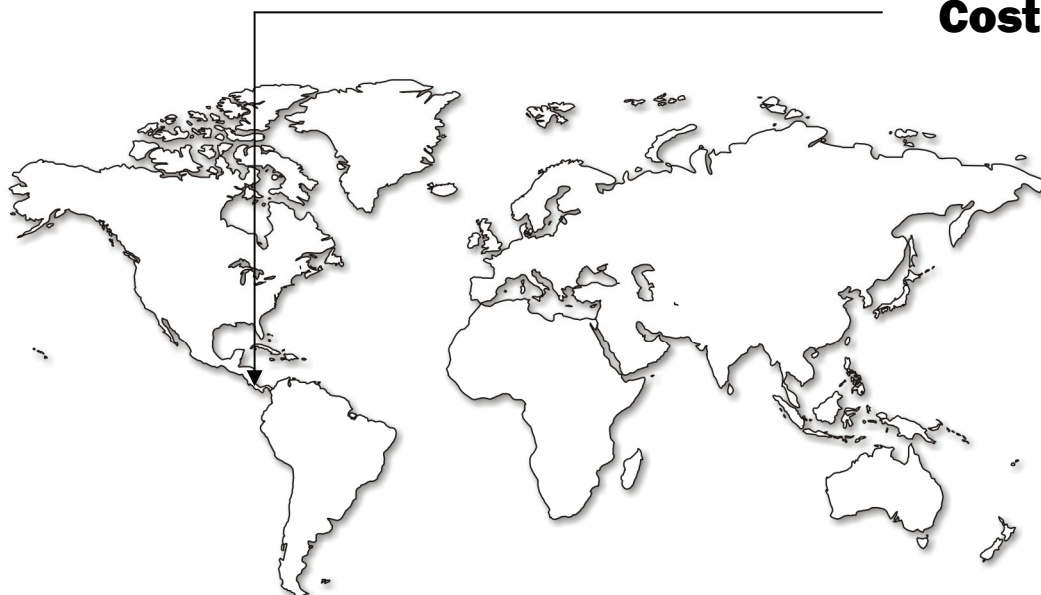


Costa Rica



Responding institution:

Colegio de Bibliotecarios de Costa Rica

Costa Rica has been a regular participant in the World Report since 2001, and reports on 56 public libraries, 15 university research libraries, 523 school libraries and 30 government-funded research libraries. Of these libraries, those attached to universities and government departments and agencies have 81-100% Internet access. Public libraries have less than 20% Internet access and school libraries 21-40%. These statistics have remained unchanged since 2003.

There is an average amount of local content and content in local languages on the Internet, and library users have free access to the Internet in public, university and school libraries, although not in all of them. There is, however, a commitment from the new government to improve the situation, with an emphasis on supporting education through free access to information. Some schools, for example, have a special class for technology instruction. Another government project intends to assist public libraries through a system of computer kiosks to promote the Internet in Costa Rican society.

Costa Rica has a literacy rate of 70% (the 2007 *CIA World Factbook*, however, sets it at 96%).

The library association supports the filtering of information on library Internet terminals to a certain degree for the protection of young children, and because pornography sites result in negative behavioural changes.

There has been no anti-terror legislation since 2005, but the respondent feels strongly that keeping user records would affect the individual's freedom of expression. The use of literature relating to any ideology is not equivalent to terrorism or racism, and library users should feel safe and free from the fear of being targeted as dangerous when they use information of whatever kind.

Libraries attached to universities and the Health Department supply information on HIV/Aids to encourage safety among young people and to reduce discrimination against HIV/Aids patients. Public libraries have provided space for public presentations and information on the topic. There is a strong focus on women's rights and gender equality in Costa Rica and a centre dealing with these issues has been in existence for about 20 years already. Several libraries provide information related to women's special needs.

The library association adopted a code of ethics in 1991, and regularly organises discussions on its implications and revision. The Internet Manifesto has not yet been adopted, but is part of the association's five-year plan. The Glasgow Declaration has been adopted and, in keeping with its spirit and the Costa Rican commitment to democracy, libraries recognise the confidentiality of users and refuse to disclose their records to third parties.

User privacy and anti-terror legislation

No anti-terror legislation has been passed since 2005, but the keeping of user records will compromise freedom of expression. The use of ideological literature

is not equivalent to terrorism or racism, and library users should not be targeted as dangerous when they use ideological material.

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

There have been no incidents since 2005.

HIV/Aids awareness

There is a vigorous programme for dealing with HIV/Aids, which involves university, public and government libraries.

Women and freedom of access to information

Costa Rican society recognises the rights of women and gender equality, and several kinds of libraries promote the provision of information to meet the range of special needs of women.

IFLA Internet Manifesto

This Manifesto has not been adopted, but features in the five-year plan of the association.

IFLA Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom

The library association has adopted this Declaration and it is applied in the daily professional work of librarians in a number of ways.

Ethics

A code of ethics has existed since 1991. The library association regularly discusses the implications for librarians, and constantly revises the code. The code is available at <http://www.cobicr.org>.

Main indicators

Country name:	Costa Rica
Population:	4 133 884 (July 2007 est.)
Main language:	Spanish (official), English
Literacy:	96%
Literacy reported by respondent:	70%

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



Libraries and Internet access

Costa Rica contributed to the World Report series in 2005, 2003 and 2001. The following section compares data and answers from 2007 with the 2005 IFLA/FAIFE World Report and adds context from the respondent's estimates, where possible.

Library services

Estimated number of public libraries*:	56 (2005: 58)
Estimated number of school libraries:	523
Estimated number of university libraries:	15
Estimated number of government-funded research libraries:	30
Source of these numbers:	General Directory of Public Libraries; Ministry of Public Education; National University Council; Directory of Institutional Libraries

Internet access

Population online**:	1 214 400 Internet users as of Aug. 2007 (27.0%) (2005: 27.7%)
Percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20% (2005: Less than 20%)
Percentage of school libraries offering Internet access to users:	21-40%
Percentage of university libraries offering Internet access to users:	81-100%
Percentage of government-funded research libraries offering Internet access to users:	81-100%
In your estimate, how much local content*** is available on the Internet:	Average
To what degree is content on the Internet available in local languages:	Average
Is the library association in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals:	Yes, to a certain degree (2005: Yes, to a certain degree, motivated by the desire to protect children; safeguard national security [e.g. anti-terrorism measures]; safeguard national culture and prevent access to pornography)
Is the use of filtering software widespread in your country's libraries:	Yes, to a certain degree – for the protection of children (2005: No)
Is it free of charge for library users to access the Internet on library computers:	Yes, in public libraries, university libraries and school libraries (2005: Yes, in all libraries)
Has the state or other library authorities made any extra funding available for Internet access in the library system of your country in the last two years:	Yes, in some cases (2005: No)

* Public library service points, including branch libraries.

** Online population numbers are from Internet World Stats (www.Internetworldstats.com).

*** Local content is defined as content that originates in the country.