JAMAICA LIBRARY SERVICE BASELINE IMPACT STUDY

Using Technology to Empower Individuals and Communities for Development

Prepared for the Jamaica Library Service
by the Centre for Leadership and Governance

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October 2014

Prepared by
The Centre for Leadership and Governance

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Project Team

The Centre for Leadership and Governance Office
This report is the product of a collective effort under the guidance of the Director, with several research and statistics staff

Director
Dr. Lloyd Waller

Authors
Ms. Anneke Rousseau, Dr. Lloyd Waller and Dr. Dhanaraj Thakur

Research Staff
Gavin Daley, Shinique Walters, Stephen Johnson and Othdane Thompson,

Graphic Designer
Ms. Anya Gloudon

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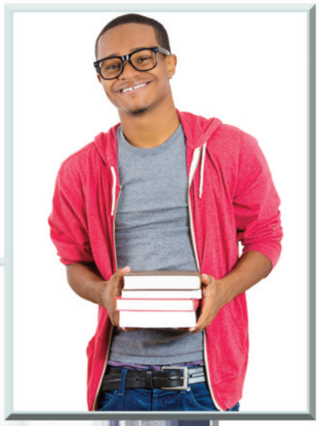

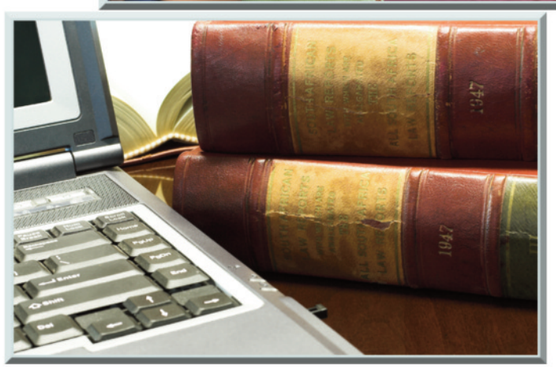

5. CONCLUSION

The library service has been a fundamental component of the Jamaican society and a significant pillar of the Jamaican education system. Its value and importance have been confirmed by this piece of research. The challenge facing the service now is how to remain relevant and central to the lives of Jamaican in a technologically-driven world. Undoubtedly, greater provision of public access computers will be a pull factor in this thrust but it must be coupled with the necessary attributes attendant to modernity.

In this regard, it is worth drawing attention to a couple of the key findings of this research:

Awareness: the level of awareness of the library service is very high. This means that people will use the services of the library without thinking. It does not require effort to get persons through the doors of public library. To capitalise on this high awareness, new programmes and initiatives can be promoted within the space of the library especially if there are budgetary constraints.

User pattern: the main reasons people visit the library are to browse/read books and newspapers, access to the Internet and to use the photocopier or fax machine. When they access the Internet, the main reason is to communicate with family and friends. This creates a captive audience should the JLS want to advertise online. In other words, for example, if the JLS wants to promote a particular service, that service could be the homepage for all computers and the data of users captured (with the necessary consent).

User profile: Fifty nine per cent of respondents were females and 49% males. Forty one per cent were classified as young adults (15-24); 44% were children (8-14) and 15% consisted of adults (25 and over). The vast majority (70.5%) of respondents are students; the next significant category were either unemployed or out of work (11%). This is crucial information for advocacy and planning new services and programmes. For example, the fact that a 57% of users access library services to complete their homework, tailored programmes and services could be developed for this group such as CSEC and CAPE exam sessions and homework sessions. It must be noted that these programmes could have an impact on opening hours.

Community Engagement: As stated in the research, the impact on the community is below average. If the JLS views community engagement as part of its strategic development then ways must be explored to strengthen this area. As a first step, it would be useful for each parish/branch library to map all of its stakeholders especially community organisations and groups. The appropriate engagement plan will need to be developed for the library to be seen as both an important stakeholder and a place where residents can get relevant information on activities in their communities.

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It is important, however, to remember that 71% of respondents are students and so the programme might not have a direct appeal.

Figure 61: JFLL and JLS Partnership

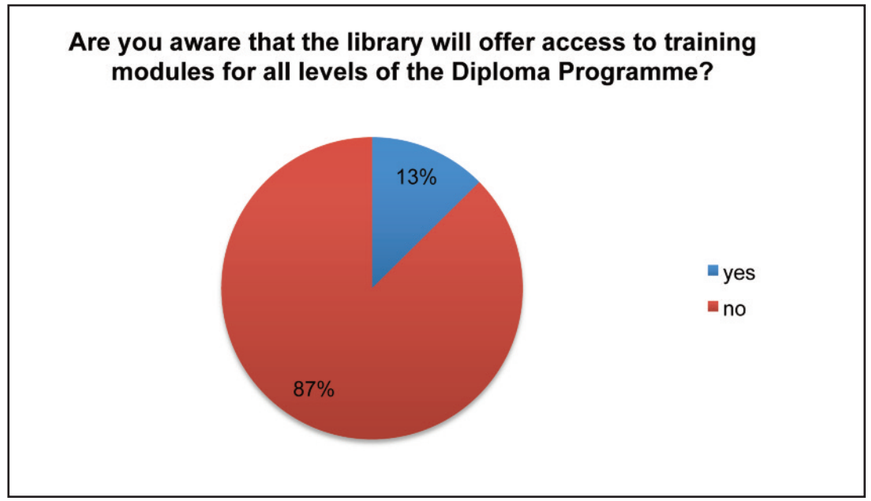
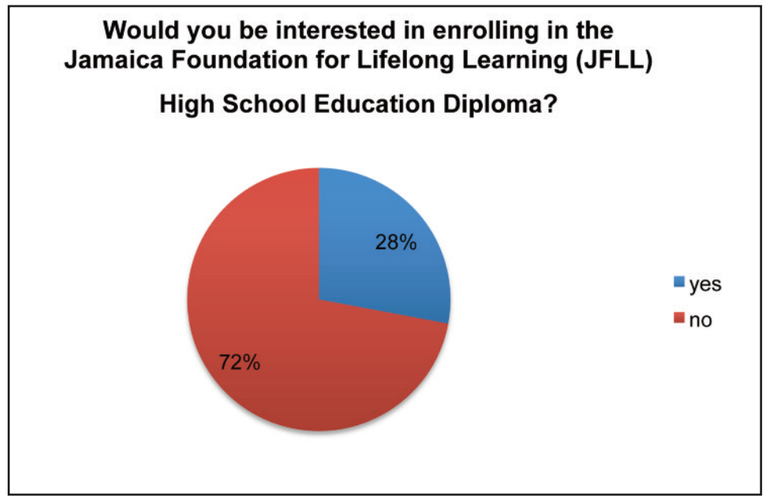


Figure 62: Interest in High School Education Diploma



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2014, the Centre for Leadership and Governance (CLG) conducted research on behalf on the Jamaica Library Service to establish baseline figures for key service areas.

The key findings of the research are:

i Awareness of the library service is very high at 84% and the majority of respondents would go to the library as a first option to borrow a book or use the Internet free of charge.

ii Generally speaking, the majority of library users visit the library at least once per month. 49% of users tend to go more than once per week (49%) or about once per week (23%). When age is compared to library visits, it shows that children represent the most frequent users. Young adults, who are not first time visitors, tend to go about once per month; whilst adults go once a year or less.

iii The main reasons persons visit the library are to browse or read books and newspapers (70%); access the Internet on a PAC or own device (63%) or use the photocopier or fax machine (49%).

iv Persons have evaluated the provision of public access computers as having a positive impact on their ability to use ICTs. Almost three quarters of library users believe that access to the Internet at public libraries has boosted their confidence in using the Internet.

v. Internet use at public libraries is fairly consistent with almost half of users accessing the Internet more than once per week. Persons have used the library for ICT-related activities such as use of social media and communicating with family and friends. In fact 46% say that the public library has allowed them to communicate more with their families and friends. At the same time 44% say they feel more connected to their families and friends because they communicate with them using technology at the public library.

vi Over 90% of respondents view the library as an important institution. In fact, 86% view public libraries as very important and 85% say the library plays an important role in their community. Those who attached unimportance to the library amounted to 7.4%.

vii Users deem almost all of the services of the library as important. They highly value free access to the computers (96%) and the Internet (96%); access to books (94%); books for children (90%); access to photocopiers and printers (93%) and computer and Internet training (89%). Making CDs/DVDs available for loan was seen as the least important service at 47%.

viii The availability of technology at public libraries has had a positive impact on the reading habits of users - more than half of them (56%) agree that they

Awareness of the library service is very high at 84% and the majority of respondents would go to the library as a first option to borrow a book or use the Internet free of charge.

Awareness of a flagship programme of key stakeholder of the JLS – Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL) was also tested. This is of importance to the work of the library service as it is intended that modules of the programme will be offered at public libraries. When asked if they were aware of the JFLL's High School Education Diploma Programme, 26% of respondents said yes but only half that number were aware that the modules will be offered at public libraries. When questioned on their interest in enrolling in said programme, 28% showed an interest.

Figure 59: Awareness of JLS

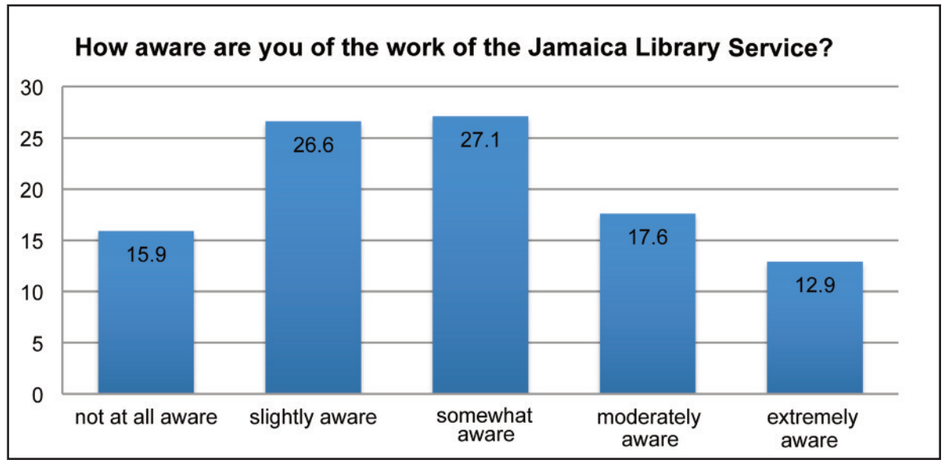
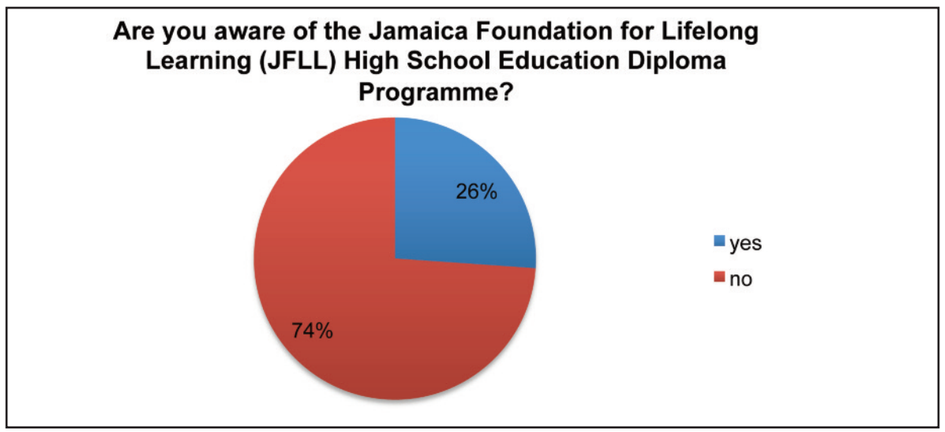


Figure 60: Awareness - JFLL High School Education Diploma



4.10 AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

Over 90% of respondents view the library as an important institution. In fact, Figure 57 shows that 86% view public libraries as very important and 85% say the library plays an important role in their community. Those who attached unimportance to the library amounted to 7.4%.

Figure 57: Importance of the Library

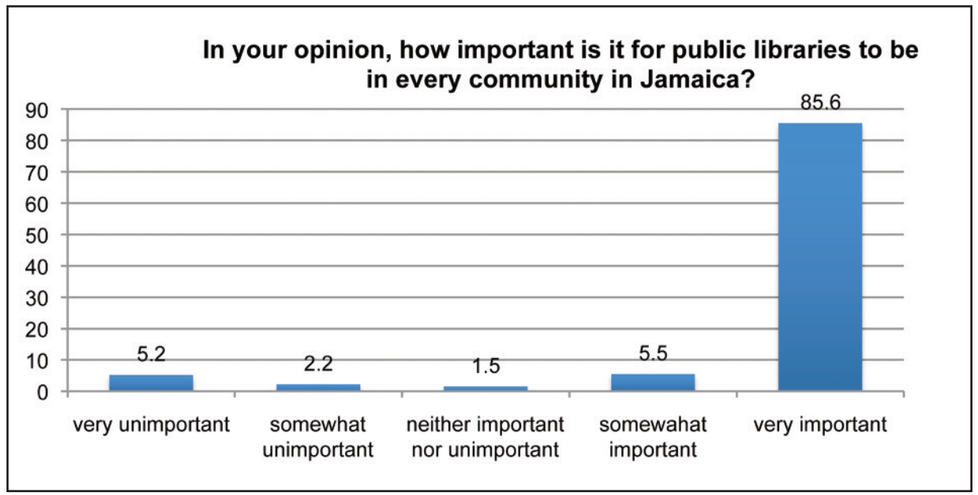
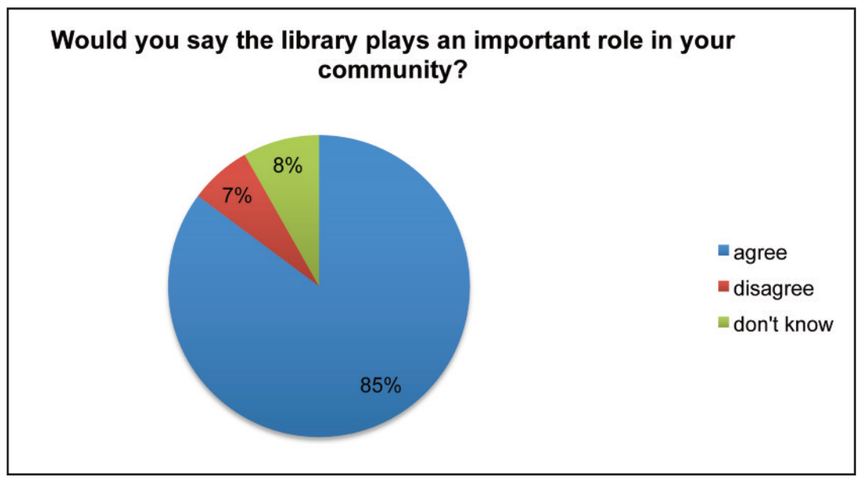


Figure 58: Role in the Community



read more because of access to technology at public libraries.

ix Forty six per cent of respondents have observed that as a result of public library services they have seen improvements in their academic performance especially in rural parishes.

x Despite the positive impact on reading habits and on academic performance, only 10% believe that as a result of resources, information, and opportunities they accessed using public library services, they are better qualified to get employment and 8% said they have had increased earnings as a result of resources, information, and opportunities they accessed using public library services. Nonetheless a significant majority 71% view the library as a place they go to learn about subjects in which they have an interest.

xi In terms of digital inclusion, the library has had the biggest impact on people's ability to conduct a basic search on the Internet for information – 35%. Twenty five per cent are able to use social media as a result of public library services. Twenty five per cent and 22% are able to do basic things such as use a mouse and turn a computer on and off respectively because of skills they acquired at the library.

xii The impact of the library on communities is below average. According to respondents, the impact on overall awareness in the community is 32%; civic activities 30% and the promotion of recreational activities 27%.

A small percentage (28%) have used the ICT services of the library to search for informal education resources and over half of users (57%) use the public library services to complete their homework.

xii Respondents are not likely to do an online course at the library. When asked if they had completed such a course using the resources at public library, only 9% agreed. It was a similar response when they were asked if they were able to participate in informal learning opportunities by using public library services – 10 % agreed. An even smaller number (5%) said they obtained postsecondary admission after applying to a postsecondary programme using technology at the public library.

xiv People use public library services to search for and share health-related information. Importantly, 27% have actually used the information they found and a similar percentage say that this has informed their health decisions and 29% have seen improvements in their health conditions. This is also the case for persons with whom they have shared the information.

xv In relation to government and governance, probably the biggest impact of the library is on the citizen's rights, whereby close to 1 in 5 believe that they are better able to exercise their rights based on the use of public library services.

INTRODUCTION

The Jamaica Library Service (JLS) is an agency of the Ministry of Education. Through its programmes and services the JLS seeks 'to enable national development through the creation and support of a knowledge-based society of culturally aware lifelong learners by providing universal access to information.' The JLS anticipates that by 2017 it would have enhanced its services to the public through the provision of more access to computers and other information and communication technologies, training for staff and users, and general improvements to libraries across Jamaica.

In its quest to enhance the quality of the services and programmes, the JLS secured a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation which has been matched by the Government of Jamaica to implement the project entitled ***"JLS: Using Technology to Empower Individuals and Communities for Development"***. The project entails a Needs Assessment, a Baseline Impact Study and two subsequent Impact Studies to guide the direction and development of the library service in Jamaica especially in the areas of digital inclusion and education. The Centre for Leadership and Governance (CLG) has been contracted to undertake this important research.

Objectives

This report is the first Baseline Impact Study which seeks to

- audit understanding and perceptions of the JLS – its purpose, awareness;
- assess the impact the library has had, and the extent to which users feel positively or negatively about JLS; and
- form an evidence-base for the development of services and programmes for the JLS

Two subsequent Impact Studies will be done in 2015 and 2016. The 2015 Impact Study will be undertaken during the second year of the project and will provide evidence of the impact of the JLS since the implementation of the project. The Final Impact Study in 2016 will provide information on the overall impact of the project indicating whether the stated objectives and projected outcomes have been achieved.

Figure 55: Found a Job – Government

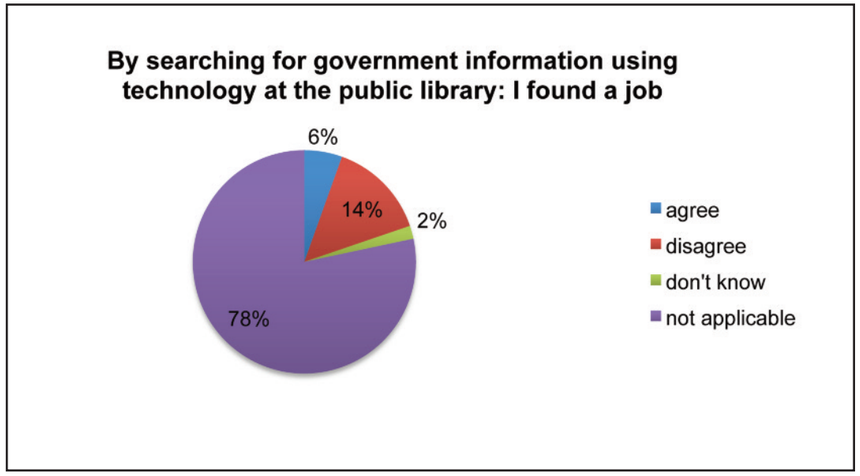
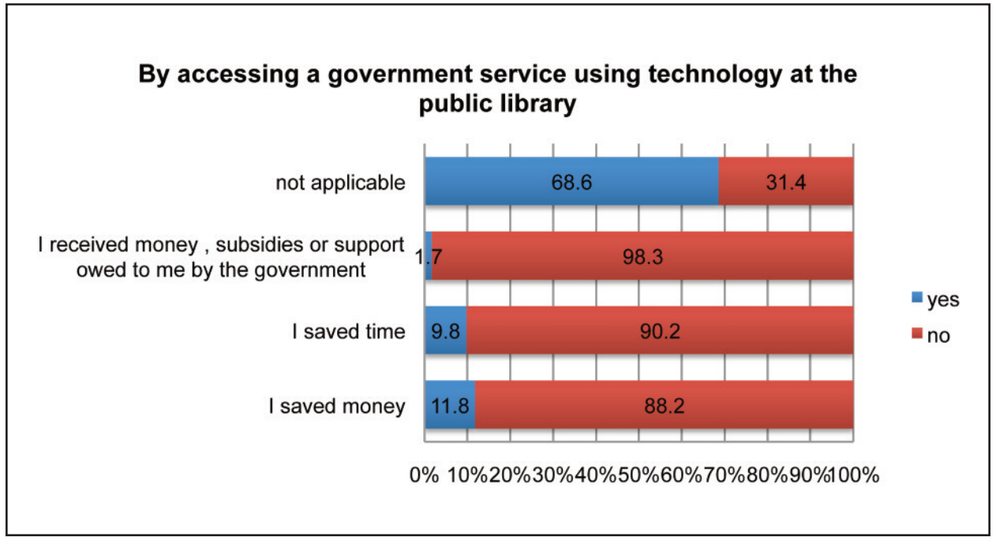


Figure 56: Accessing Government Service



4.9 GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE

In relation to government and governance, probably the biggest impact of the library is on the citizen's rights, whereby close to 1 in 5 believe that they are better able to exercise their rights based on the use of public library services. Eighteen per cent have share government information that they found at the library and 6% have found a job. Some persons, as shown in Figure 56, where applicable have saved money (12%) and time (10%) by accessing government services at the public library.

Figure 53: Impact on Citizens' Rights

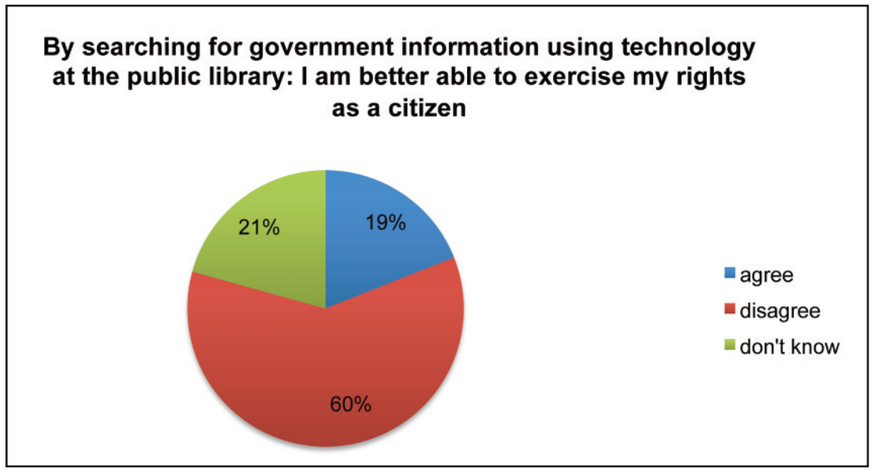
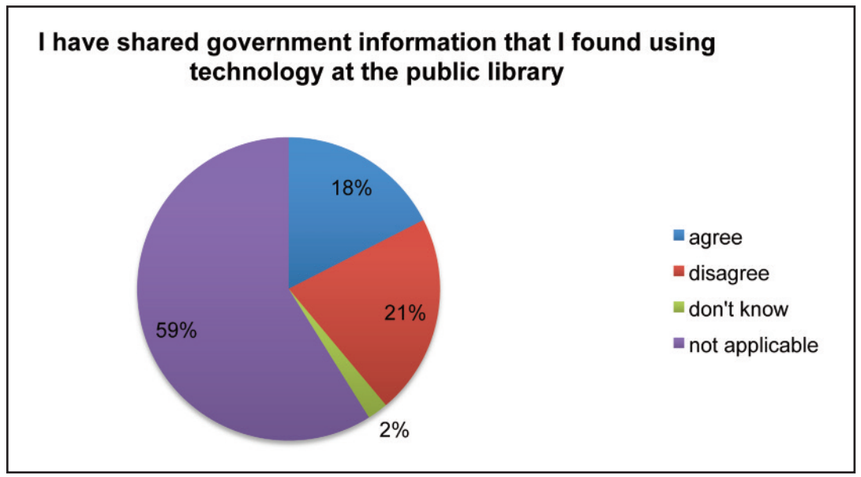


Figure 54: Share Government Information



3. METHODOLOGY

The sampling of library users for the baseline study was relatively straightforward. From a total membership/user population of 499,597,[1] a margin of error of 4% and a confidence level of 95%, a sample size of six hundred and two (602) library users across all parishes were used.

Consistent with the Terms of Reference (TOR), the study focused on the perceptions of users who fall in the following categories:

- Children - A representative sample of Jamaican children (aged 8 to 14)
- Young Adults - A representative sample of the Jamaican population (aged 15 to 24)
- Adults - A representative sample of the Jamaican population (aged 25 and over)

The data for the baseline study was collected 03-24 September 2014 solely by paper survey/questionnaire. Questionnaires were self-administered to participants on library location/ site (sample 'A') and in the communities (sample 'B'). 50% (n=300) were done at the libraries and 50% (n=302) were house-to-house surveys. A random sampling design constitutive of quota sampling components in the initial stage, and a probability technique in the final phase, were used in the selection of the sample of library users. The steps in the selection of participants for the library site locations survey involved the stratification of the island in parishes, library type, gender and age group.

In order to ensure the island-wide coverage/ dispersion of sample of users, all fourteen (14) parishes were included in both sampling processes. The next step involved the selection of libraries[2] from which the subset of users was selected.

As stated, the CLG achieved country-level, proportional distribution of library users in the sample in terms of gender and age.

In this design, the Primary Sampling Unit was the libraries in the various parishes. Accordingly, library users located at the various libraries were listed in this stage and classified according to gender and age. The distribution of library users according to gender and age were then determined and the appropriate ratio established to ensure proportional representation of users according to these characteristics in the sample of six hundred and two (n=602) library users.

1. Data sourced from JLS as at March 2014.
2. Source: Jamaica Library Service

Figure 51: Shared Health Information

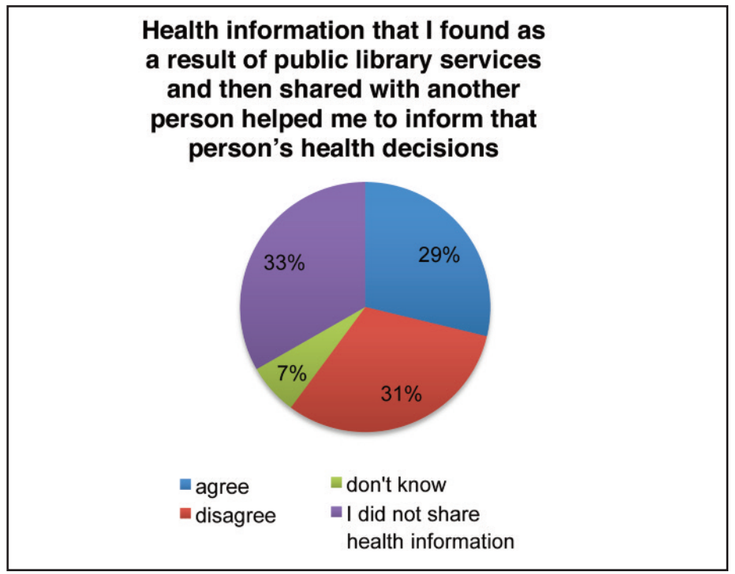


Figure 52: Age vs Health Breakdown

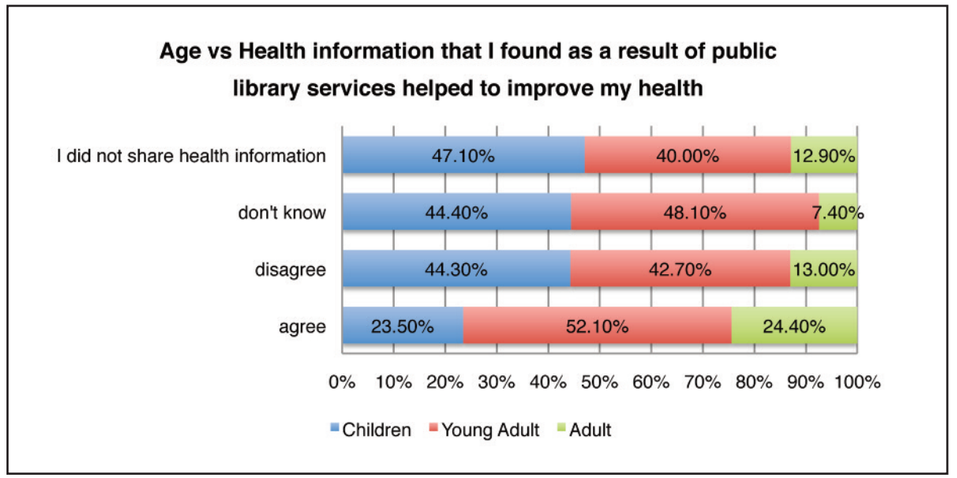


Figure 49: Health Decision-making

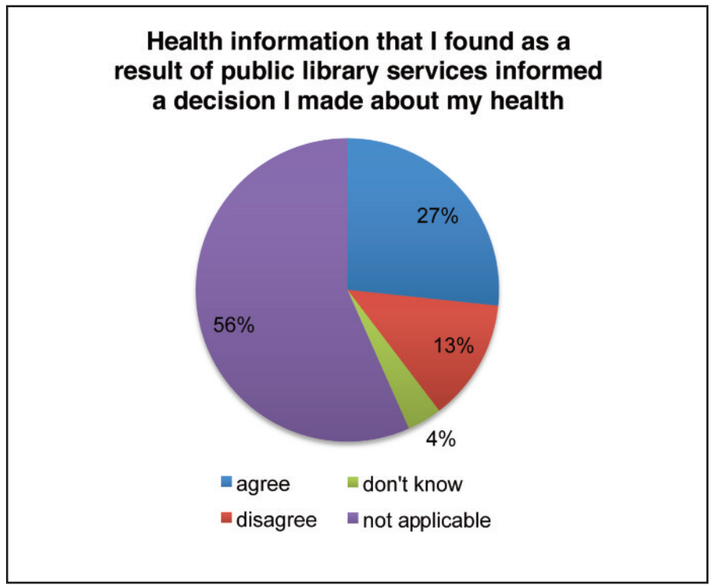
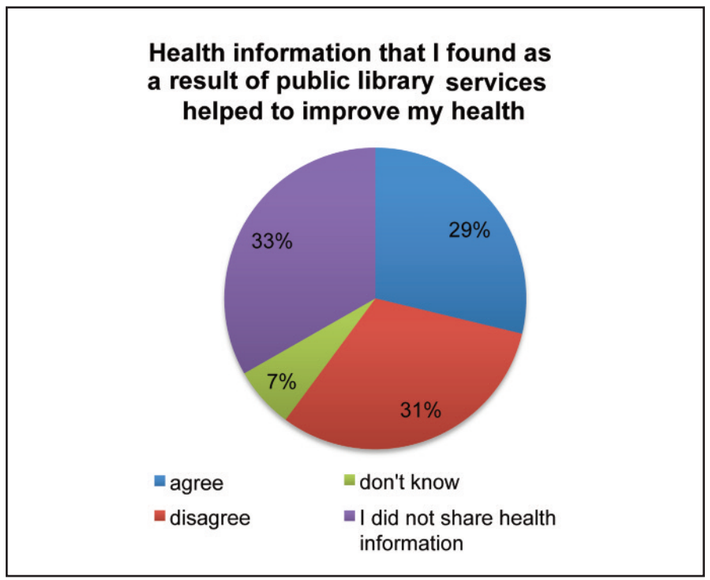


Figure 50: Improved Health



4. KEY FINDINGS

In this section of the report, the key findings are presented and analysed.

4. 1 DEMOGRAPHICS

Fifty nine per cent of respondents were females and 49% males. Figure 1 shows that 41% were classified as young adults (15-24); 44% were children (8-14) and the remainder consisted of adults (25 and over). Figure 2 shows that a vast majority (70.5%) of respondents are students; the next significant category were either unemployed or out of work (11%).

Figure 1: Age Distribution

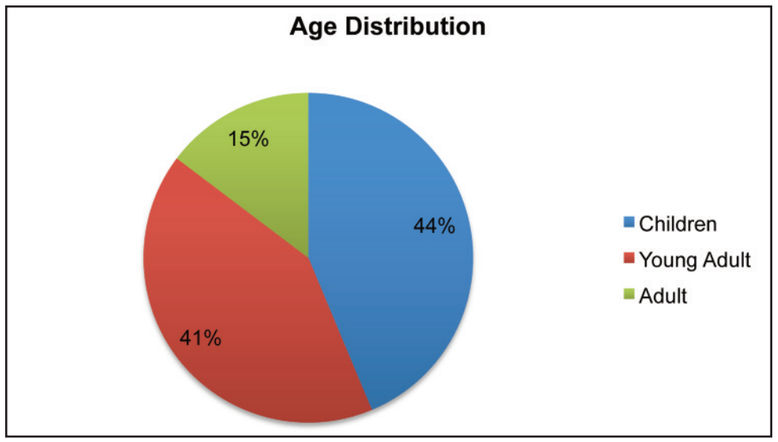
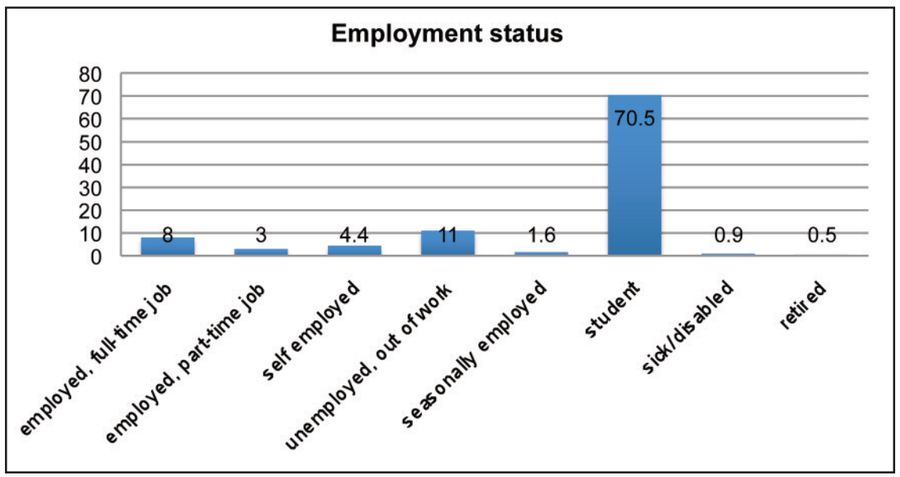


Figure 2: Employment Status



4.8 HEALTH

Based on the data, it is reasonable to deduce that people use public library services to search for and share health-related information. Figure 47 provides a breakdown.

Importantly, 27% have actually used the information they found and a similar percentage say that this has informed their health decisions and 29% have seen improvements in their health conditions. This is also the case for persons with whom they have shared the information.

Figure 47: Last 12 Months – Health

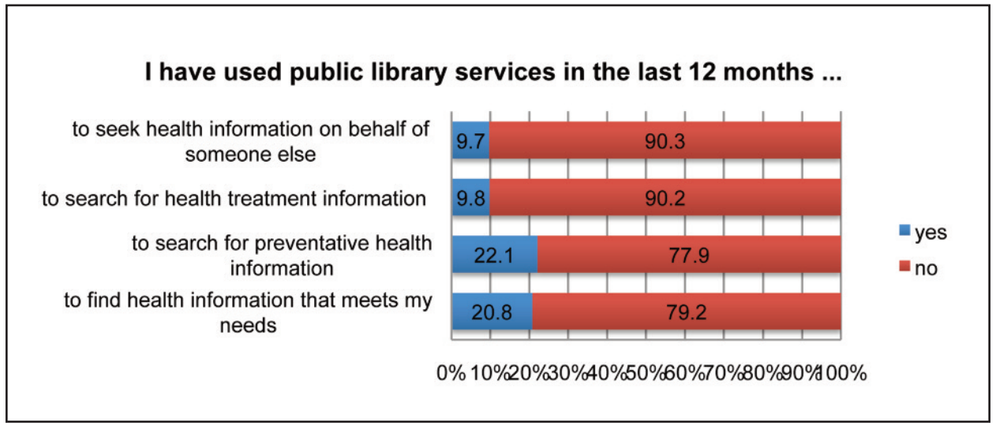


Figure 48: Health Information

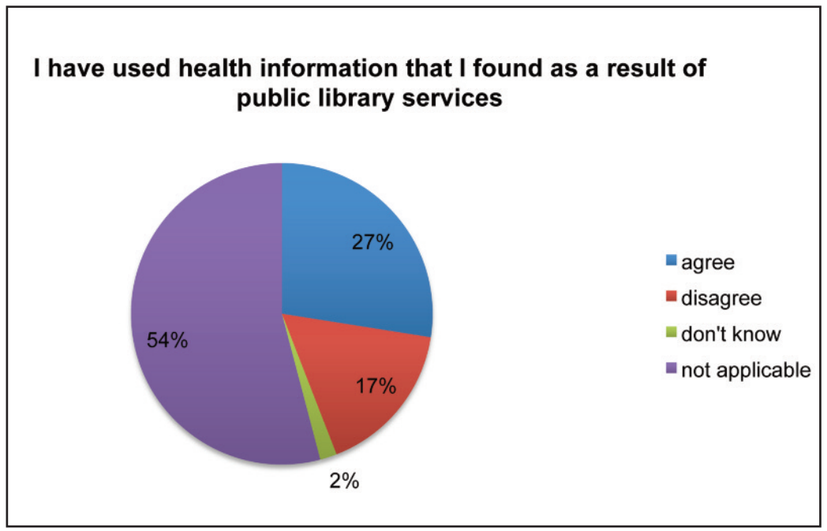


Figure 45: Buying Products and Services at Libraries

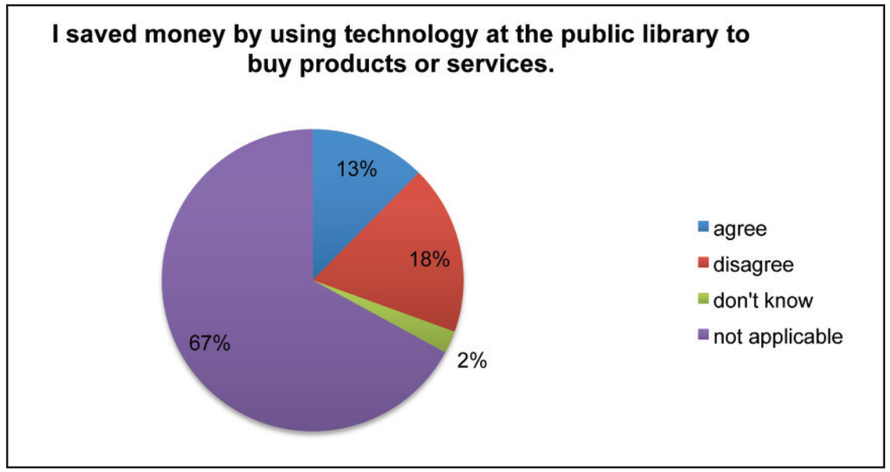
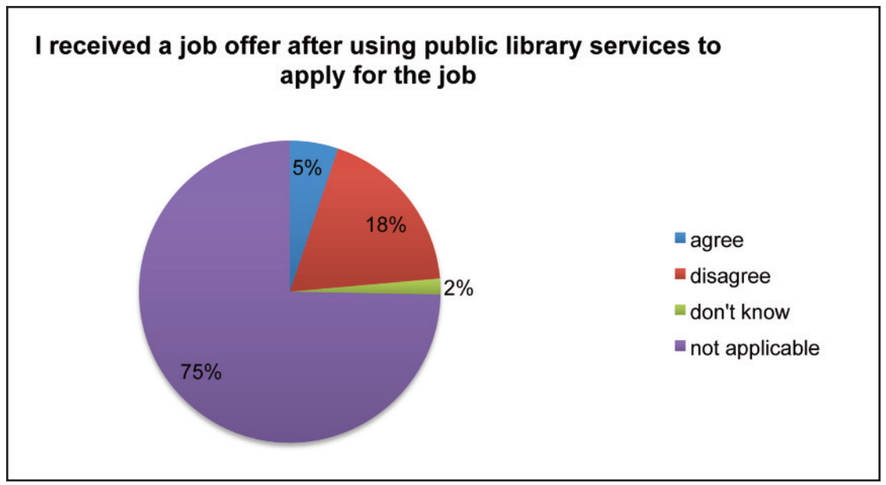


Figure 46: Job Offer



Most respondents have had some form of education – 26% completed primary/ preparatory school; 37 % attended all age school or had some amount of secondary education while 24% completed secondary schooling. As regards disability, only 3% indicated they had a disability but 2% preferred not to disclose this information.

Most respondents live in urban areas (61%). High numbers lived in Kingston and St Andrew - 14% St Catherine – 10.5% and in St James 10.5%.

Figure 3: Education

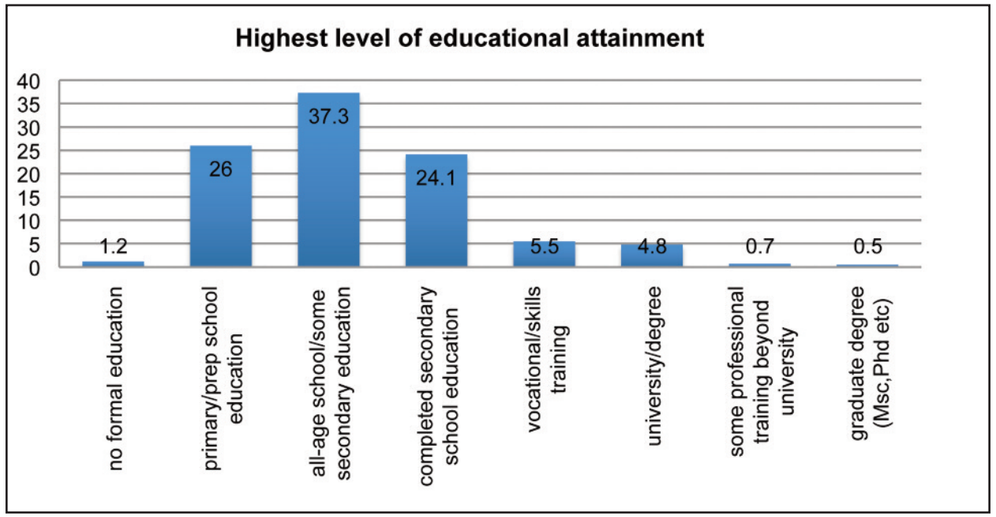


Figure 4: Rural vs Urban

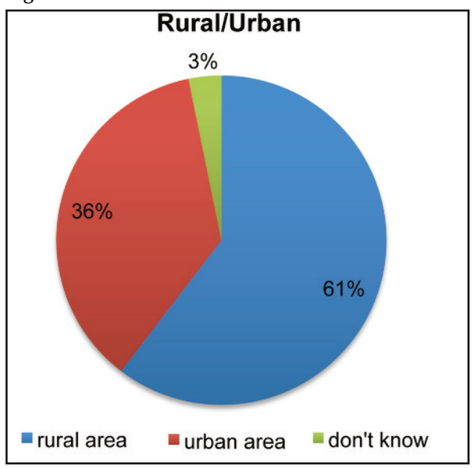
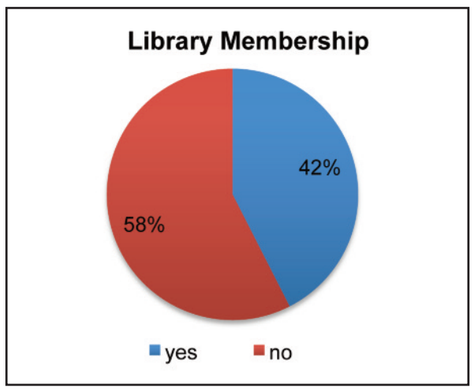


Figure 5: Library Membership



4.2 MEMBERSHIP

Of the 602 users surveyed, 42% said they were members of a library. As Figure 6 shows, women (65%) are more likely to be members of a library compared to men (35%). A myriad of reasons were given as to why people became members of a library. Common reasons were – the love of books and reading, influence of parents (mothers) and teachers as well as access to the Internet and computers. When asked as to what would encourage more persons to become library members, responses include – a wider variety of books, greater access to the Internet and computers, more activities and advertising the services of the library

Further analysis of library membership reveals that persons in rural areas are slightly more likely to be members than people in the urban areas. See Figure 7.

Figure 6: Library Membership According to Gender

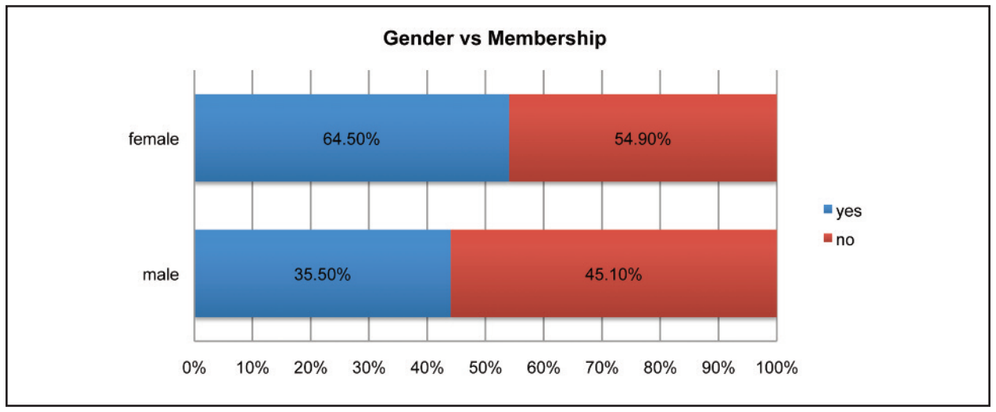
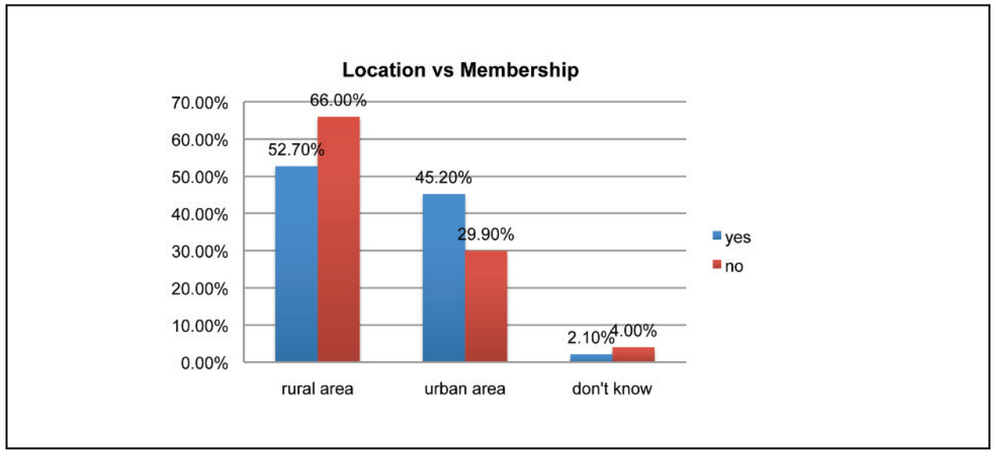


Figure 7: Membership Rural vs Urban



Three per cent of respondents have seen a positive impact on their agricultural productivity and agricultural income. At the same time Figure 45 shows that 13% have saved money by using technology at public libraries to buy products and services. A smaller percentage – 5, indicated that they received a job offer after using library services to apply for a job.

Figure 43: Agricultural Productivity

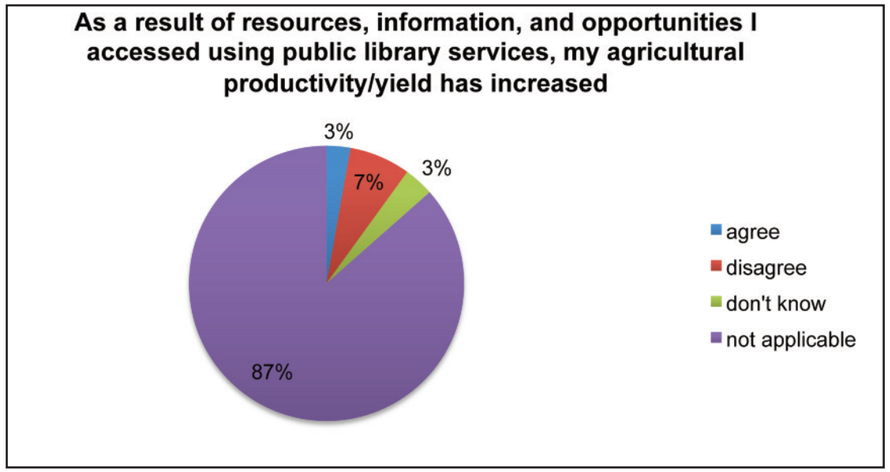
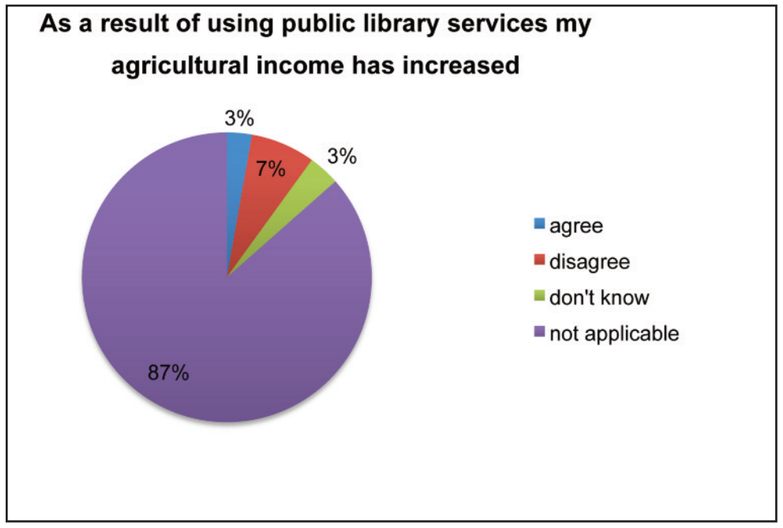


Figure 44: Agricultural Income



Fourteen per cent of respondents say they have saved time by using technology at the public library for business communication with 4% and 3% affirming that their business has grown and profits increased respectively as a result of using public library services. It must be observed that these questions had a high percentage on not-applicable responses.

Figure 41: Business has Grown

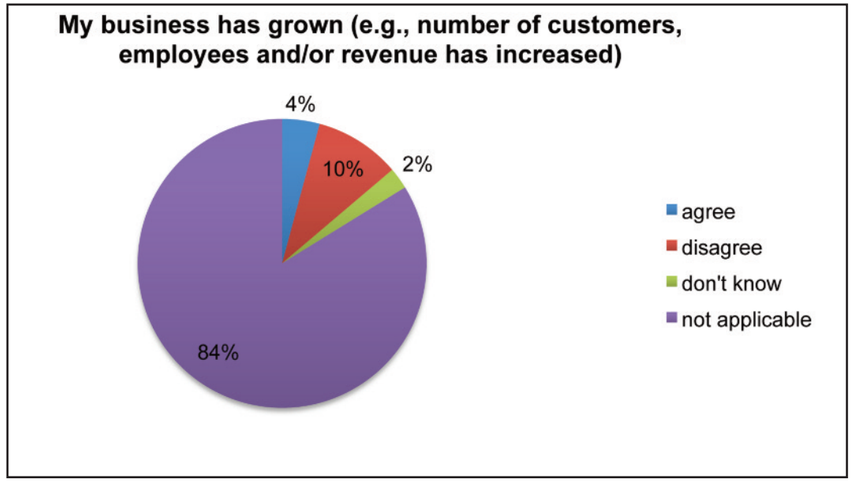
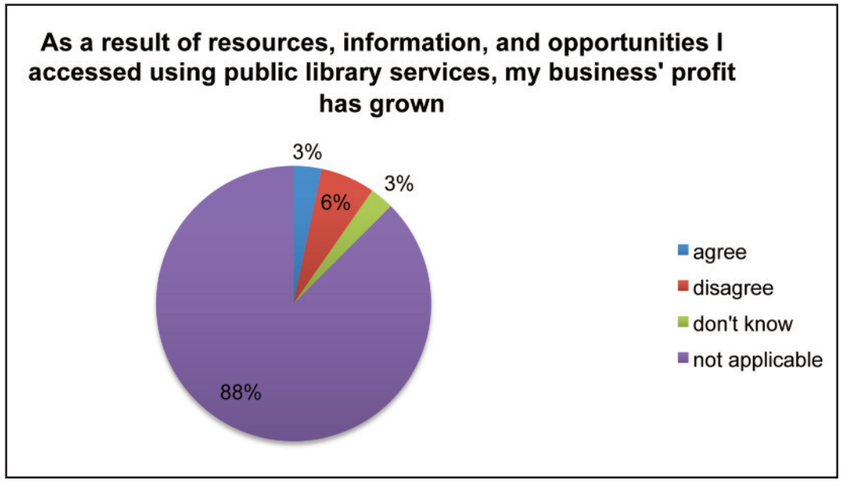


Figure 42: Profit has Increased



People visiting the library tend to go more than once per week (49%) or about once per week (23%). Generally speaking, the majority of library users visit the library at least once per month.

When age is compared to library visits, it shows that children represent the most frequent users. Young adults who are not first time visitors tend to go about once per month; whilst adults go once a year or less.

Figure 8: General Library Visits

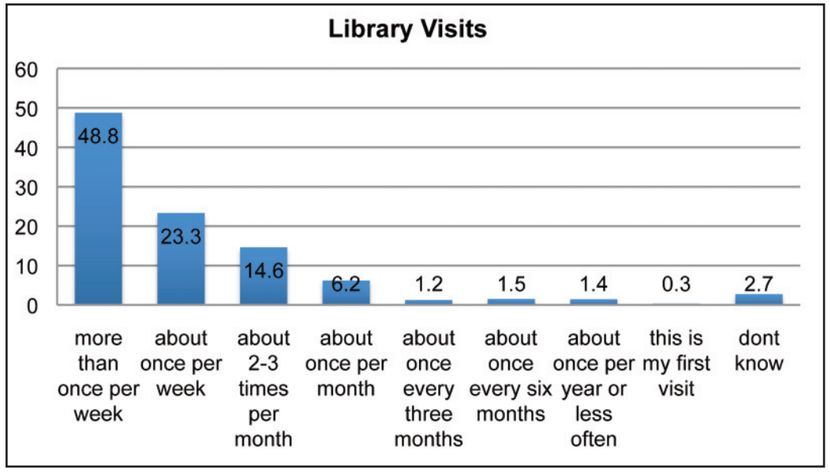
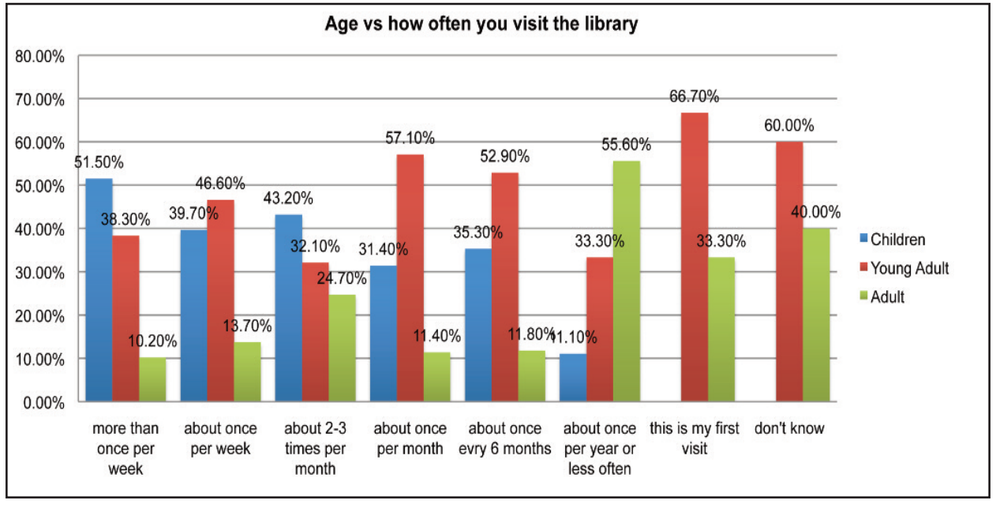


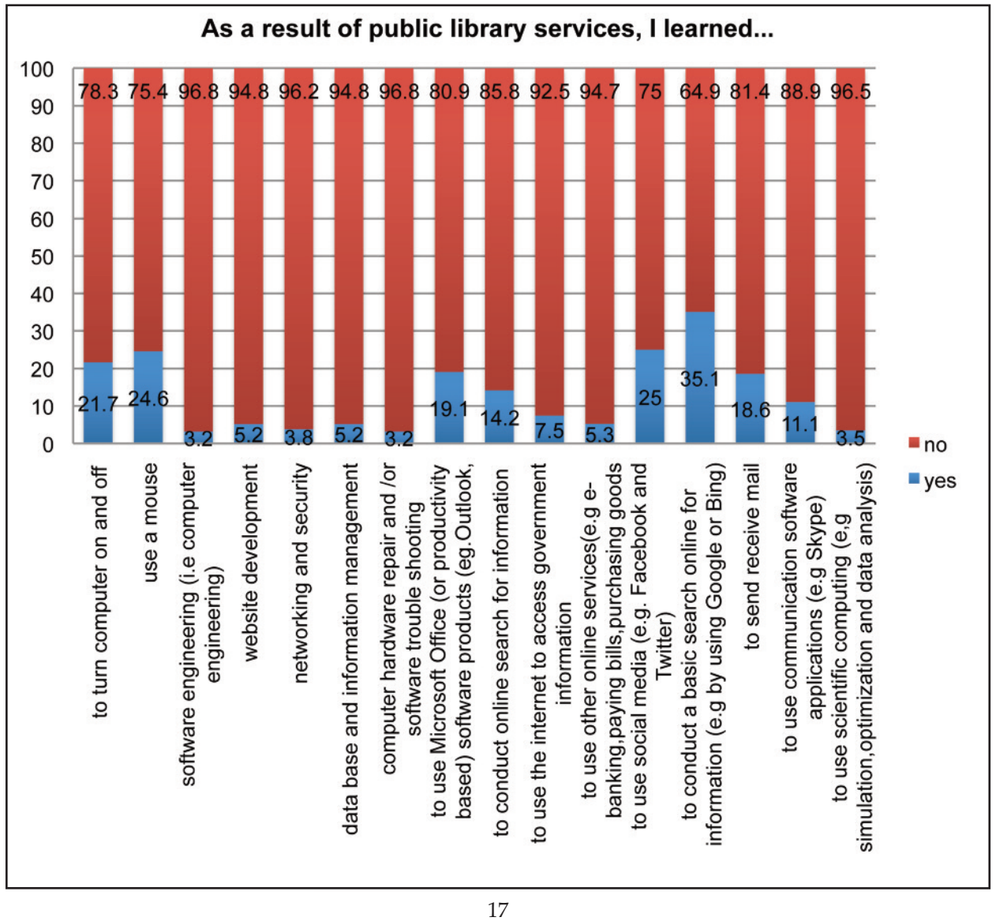
Figure 9: Frequency of Visits by Age



4.3 DIGITAL INCLUSION

In terms of digital inclusion, the library has had the biggest impact on people's ability to conduct a basic search on the Internet for information – 35%. Twenty five per cent are able to use social media as a result of public library services. Twenty five per cent and 22% are able to do basic things such as use a mouse and turn a computer on and off respectively because of skills they acquired at the library.

Figure 10: ICT Skills and the Library



4.7 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A review of the data indicates that in general terms, persons have not been using the public library services for economic activities. In this regard looking at the last 12 months the only economic activity of significance is the 10% of users who used public library services to communicate with others for business purposes. Also, 11% have found agricultural information using the library's technology and 10% have shared that information.

A second set of questions yielded marginally more positive results as outlined in Figure 40.

Figure 39: Last 12 Months - Economic Development

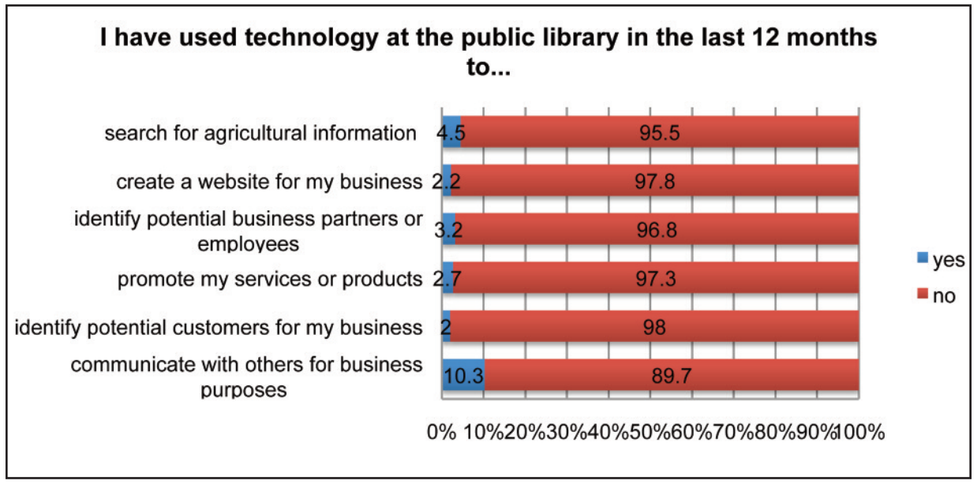
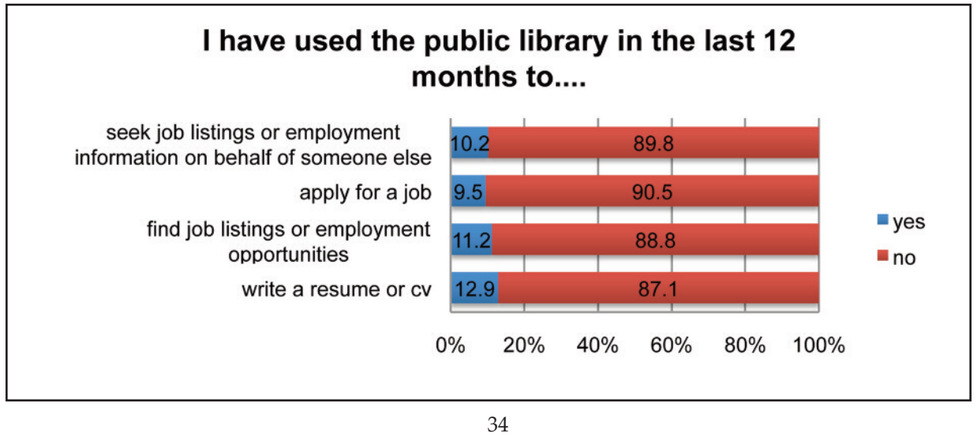


Figure 40: Last 12 Months - Economic Development



4.6 COMMUNICATION

As stated earlier persons mainly use public library technology to communicate with their families and friends. In fact 46% say that the public library has allowed them to communicate more with their families and friends. At the same time 44% say they feel more connected to their families and friends because they communicate with them using technology at the public library.

As Figure 38 illustrates, the impact is basically the same in rural and urban areas.

Figure 37: Communication Impact

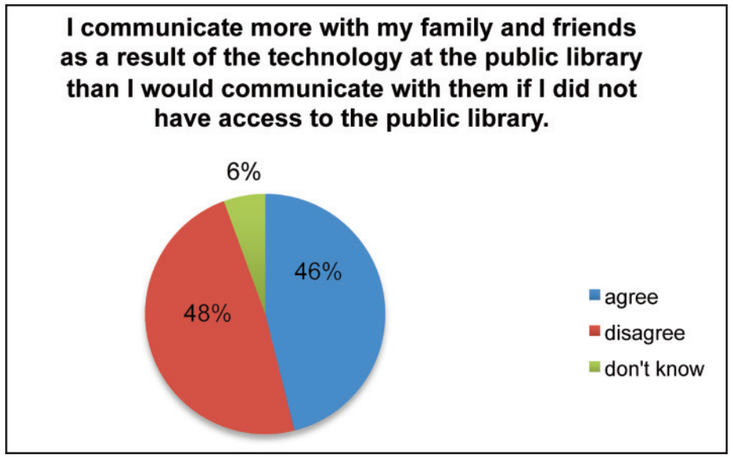
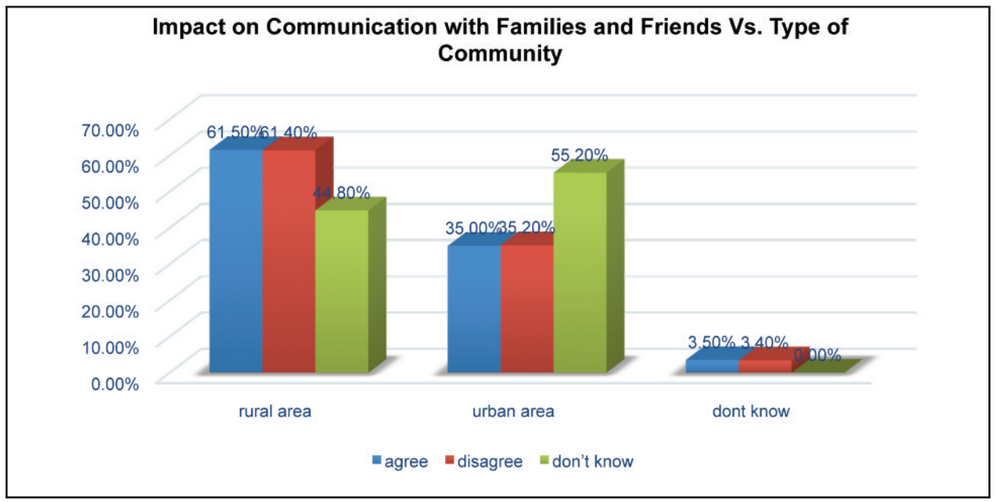


Figure 38: Impact on Communication vs Community



It is important to highlight that only 25% of respondents received formal ICT training. Of this number, a trained individual is likely to be a young female living in the rural areas. Additionally, as Figure 12 shows, this person is likely to be a student. Of the vast majority who have not had any training, they are likely to be in parishes such as Kingston and St Andrew, St Catherine and St James.

Figure 11: Formally Trained by Parish

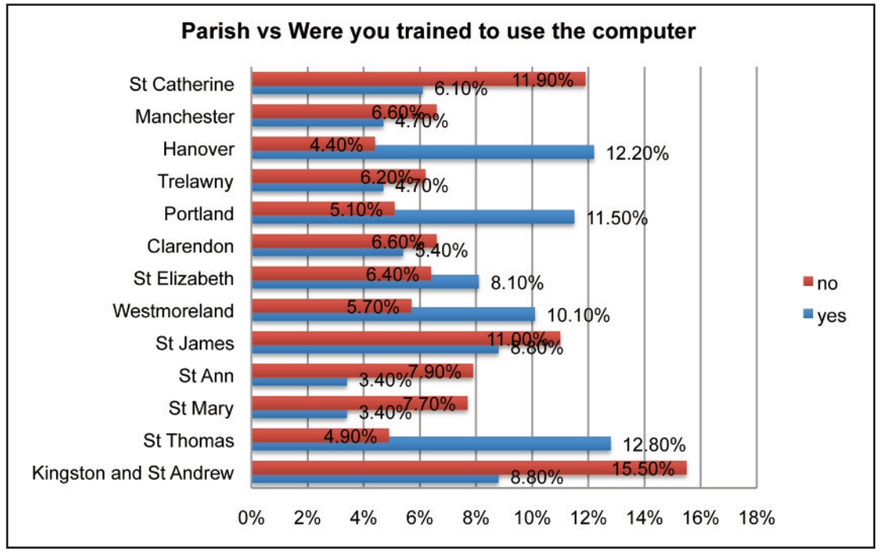
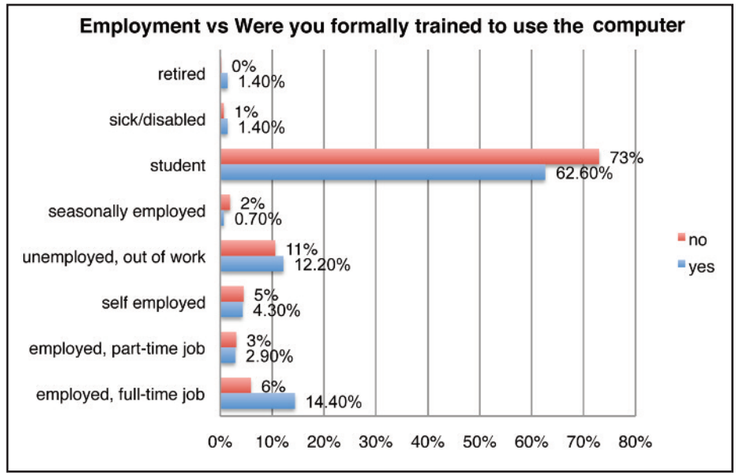


Figure 12: Formal Trained by Employment Status



Given the foregoing as regards formal ICT training, it is unsurprising that most persons were introduced to the Internet and computers at home. The library has introduced a quarter of respondents to Internet and 20% to computers. Please see Figures 13 and 14 for details.

Figure 13: Introduction to the Internet

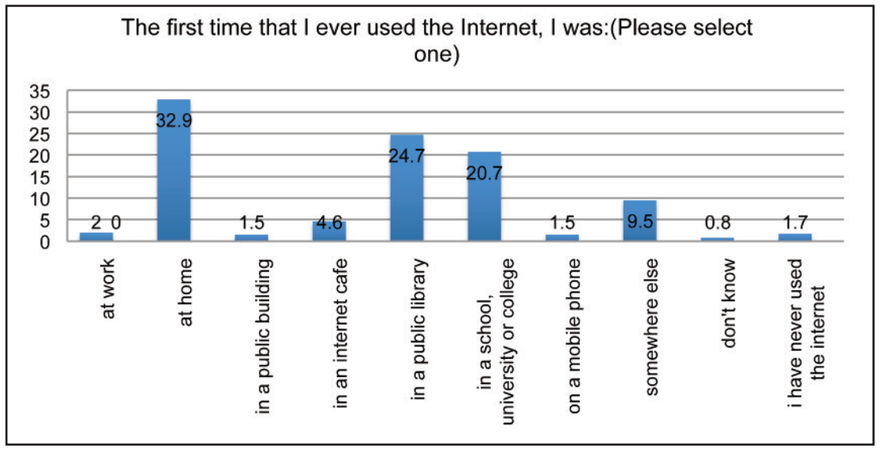
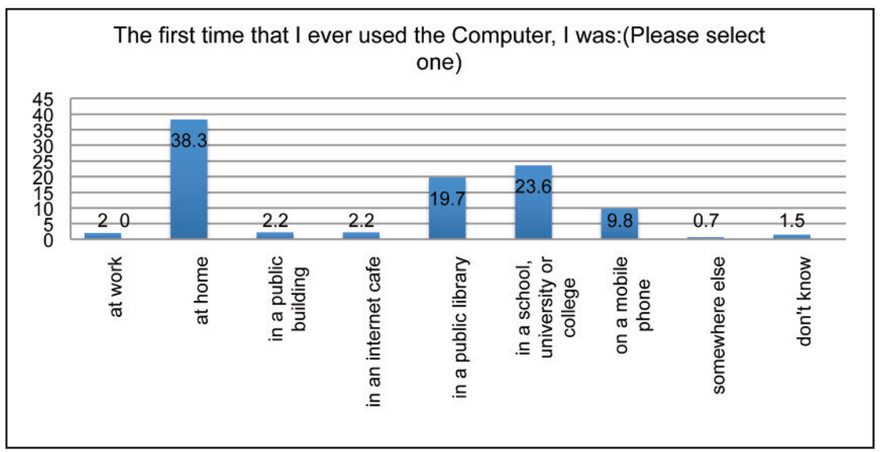
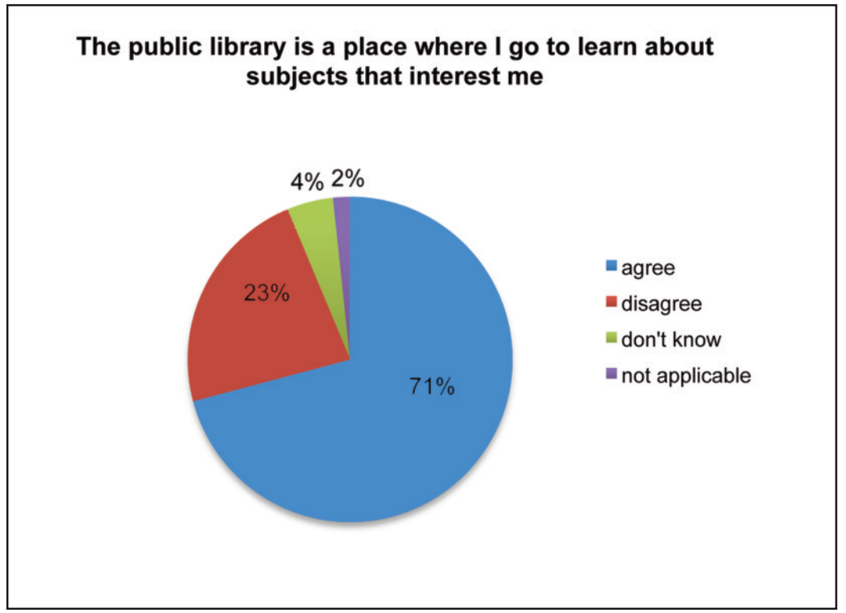


Figure 14: Introduction to Computers



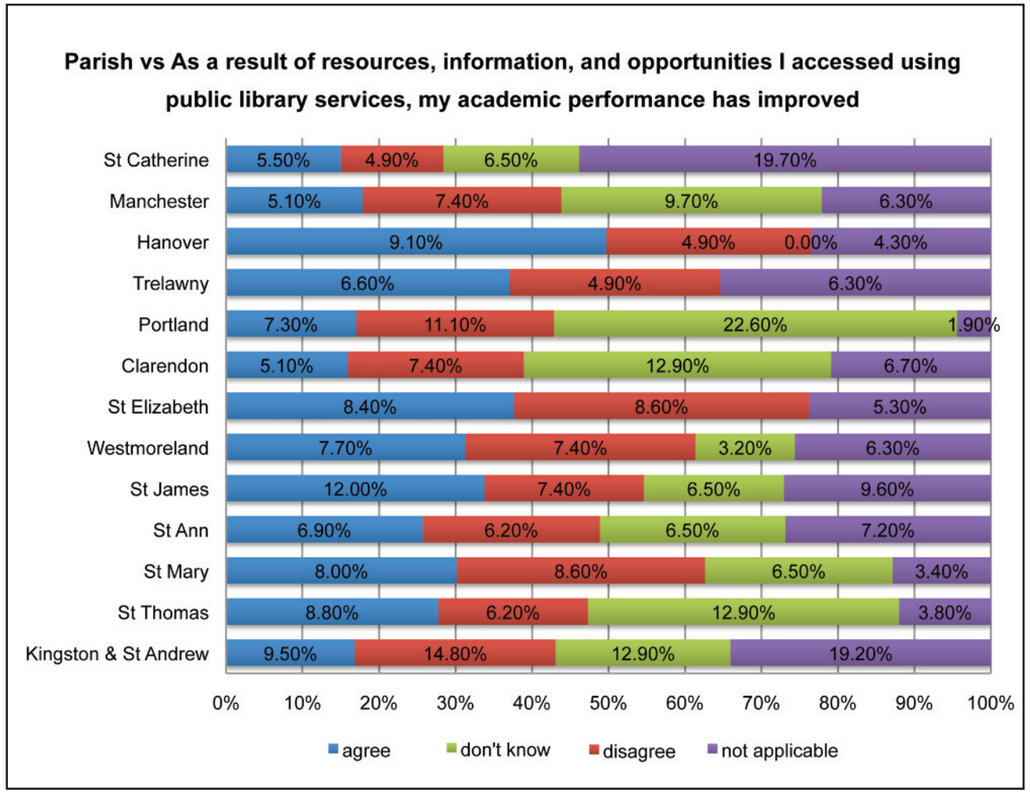
Despite the positive impact on reading habits and on academic performance, only 10% believe that as a result of resources, information, and opportunities they accessed using public library services, they are better qualified to get employment and 8% said they have had increased earnings as a result of resources, information, and opportunities they accessed using public library services. Nonetheless a significant majority 71% view the library as a place they go to learn about subjects in which they have an interest as shown in Figure 36.

Figure 36: Place to go to Learn about Interests



Forty six per cent of respondents have observed that as a result of public library services they have seen improvements in their academic performance. Figure 35 shows that this is likely to be the experience more so in rural parishes.

Figure 35: Academic Impact by Parish



The main reasons persons visit the library are to browse or read books and newspapers (70%); access the Internet on a PAC or own device (63%) or use the photocopier or fax machine (49%). As Figure 15 shows, other activities of signifance are to use the computers, to borrow or return bookes or other materials such as DVDs, CDs, Videos or CD-ROMs and to use other facilities such as a toilet.

In the general scheme of things, users deem almost all of the services of the library as important. Making CDs/DVDs available for loan was seen as the least important service – 47% attached some form of importance to this service. This is in stark contrast to services which enable access to ICTs. As outlined in Figure 16 users highly value free access to the computers (96%) and the Internet (96%); access to books (94%); books for children (90%); access to photocopiers and printers (93%) and computer and Internet training (89%).

Figure 15: Activities at a Public Library

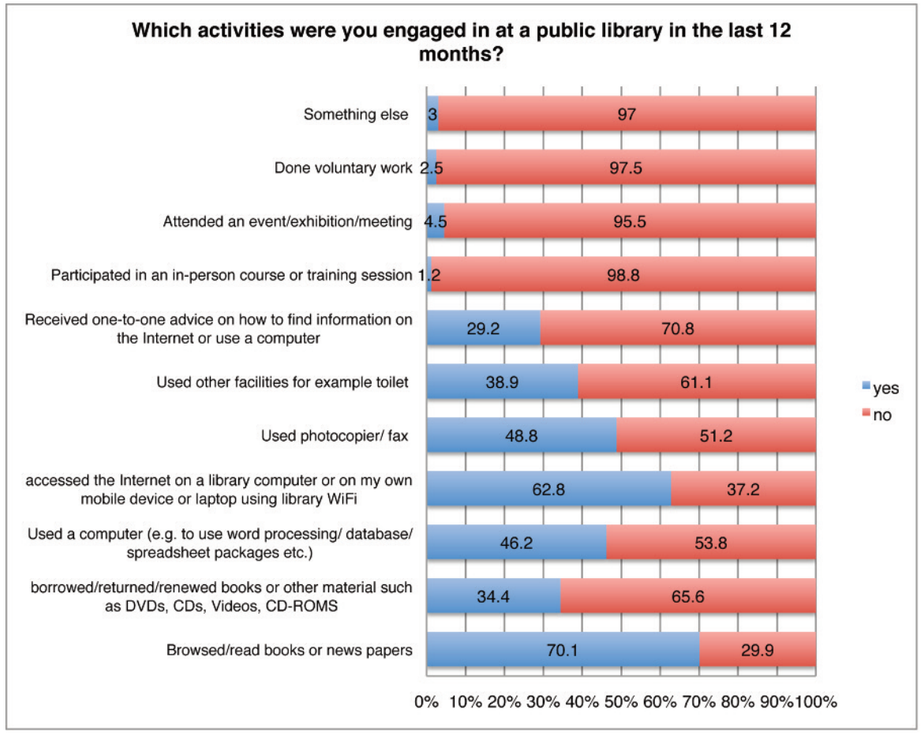


Figure 16: Importance of Library Services

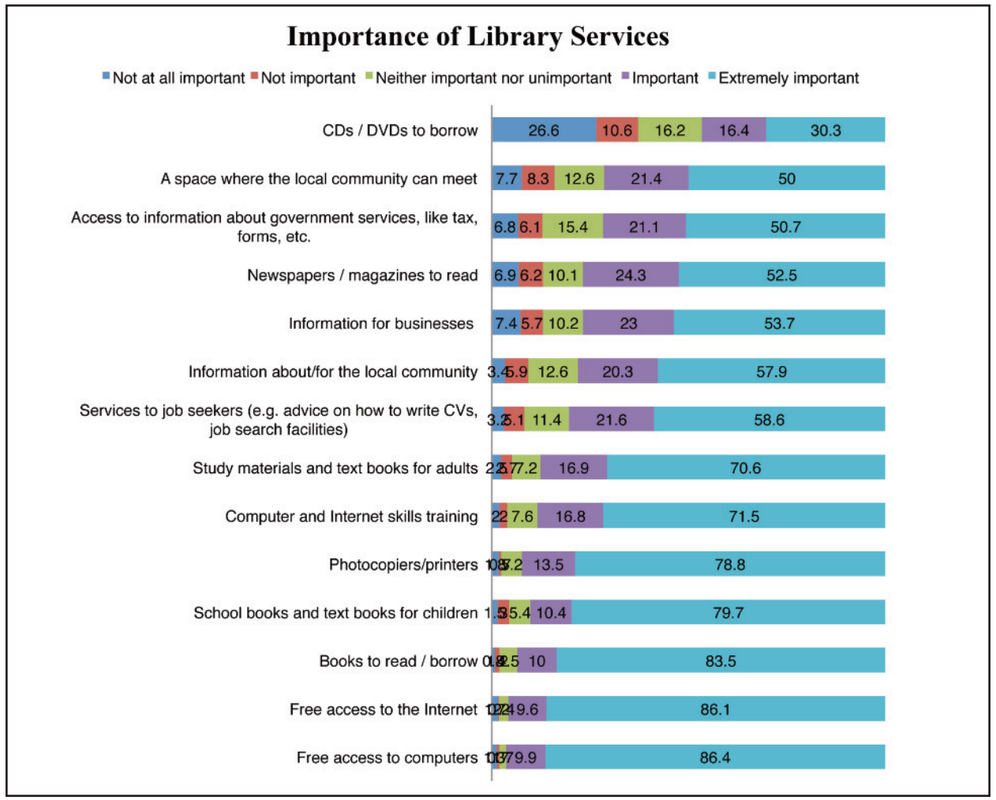
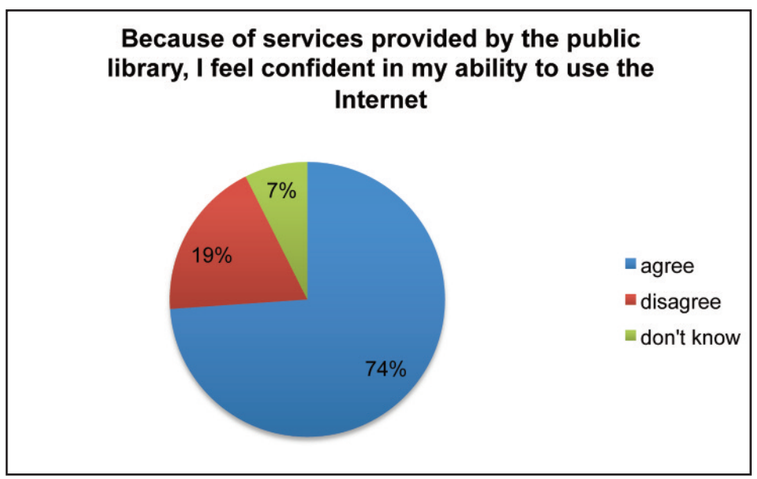
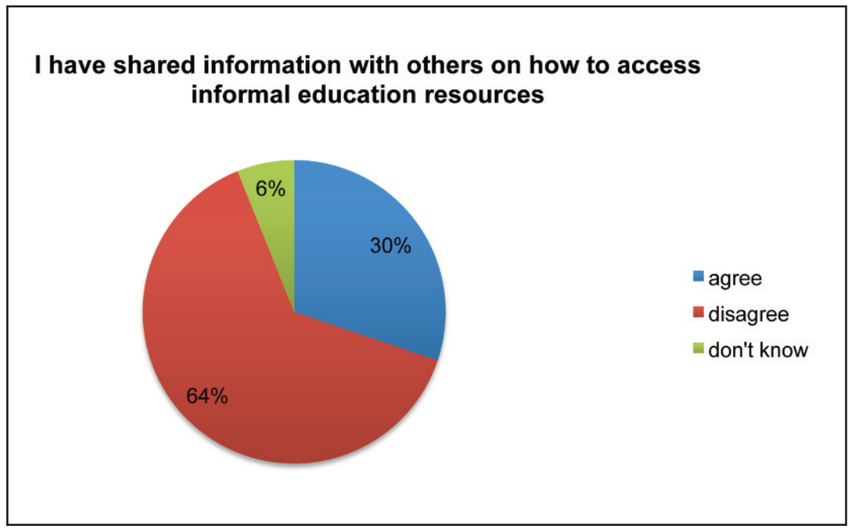


Figure 17: Impact of Public Library on Internet Skills



Of the users who have searched for informal educational resources (27.5%), it must be observed that almost a third of them (30%) shared information gathered with other persons. However, respondents are not likely to do an online course at the library. When asked if they had completed such a course using the resources at public library, only 9% agreed. It was a similar response when they were asked if they were able to participate in informal learning opportunities by using public library services – 10 % agreed. An even smaller number (5%) said they obtained postsecondary admission after applying to a post-secondary programme using technology at the public library.

Figure 34: Sharing of Educational Resources Information



4.5 EDUCATION

Within the context of education and the options presented to respondents, most persons, albeit a small percentage (28%) have used the ICT services of the library to search for informal education resources – See Figure 32.

Importantly, over half of users (57%) use the public library services to complete their homework.

Figure 32: ICT - Educational Purposes

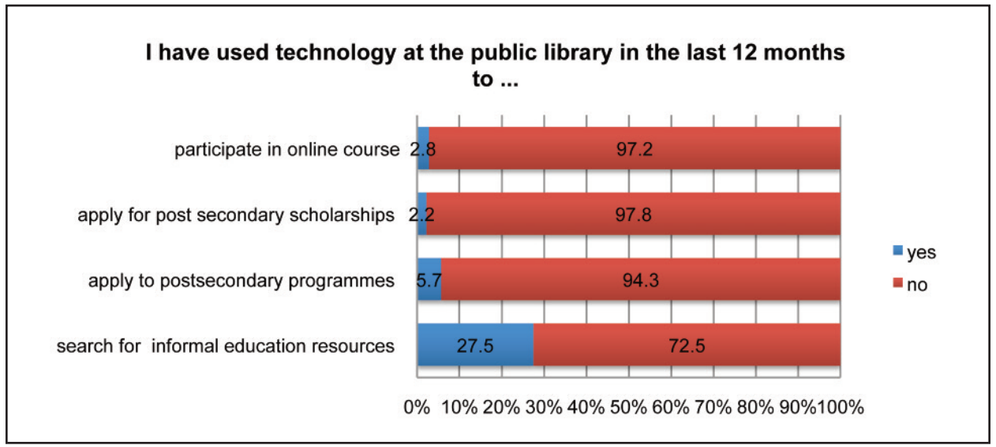
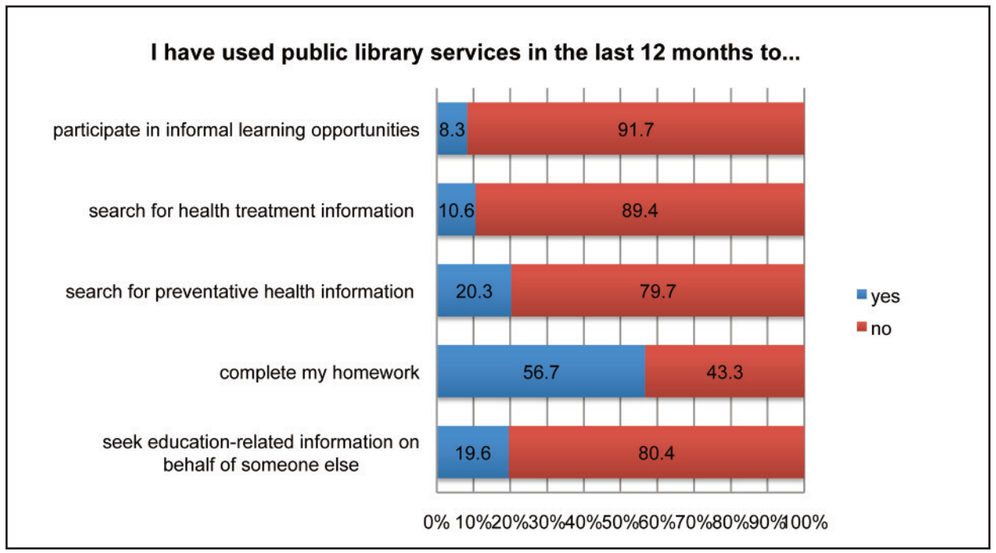


Figure 33: Public Library Services - Education



Persons have evaluated the provision of public access computers as having a positive impact on their ability to use ICTs. Almost three quarters of library users believe that access to the Internet at public libraries has boosted their confidence in using the Internet. This has also resulted in great use of technology (see Figure 19). Figure 18 provides a breakdown of the impact of access to the Internet at public libraries based on socio-economic status.

Figure 18: Socio-economic Breakdown

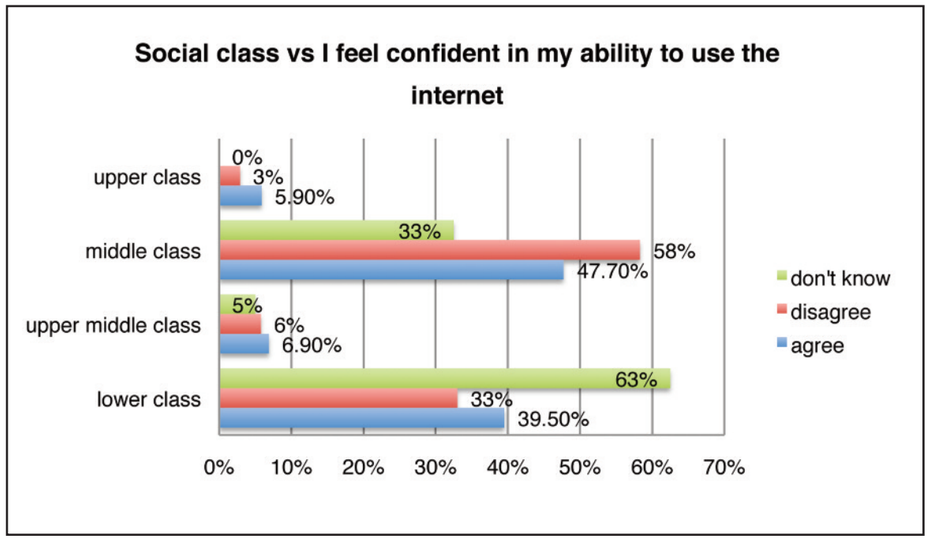
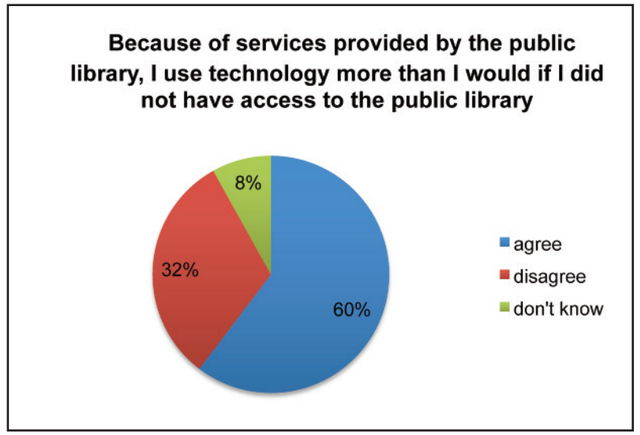


Figure 19: Access to Technology at Public Libraries



Internet use at public libraries is fairly consistent with almost half of users accessing the Internet more than once per week. Figure 20 provides details of frequency of use. Consistent with this pattern, Figure 21 shows that in the last 12 months, persons have used the library for ICT-related activities such as use of social media and communicating with family and friends.

Figure 20: Internet Use in the Last 12 Months

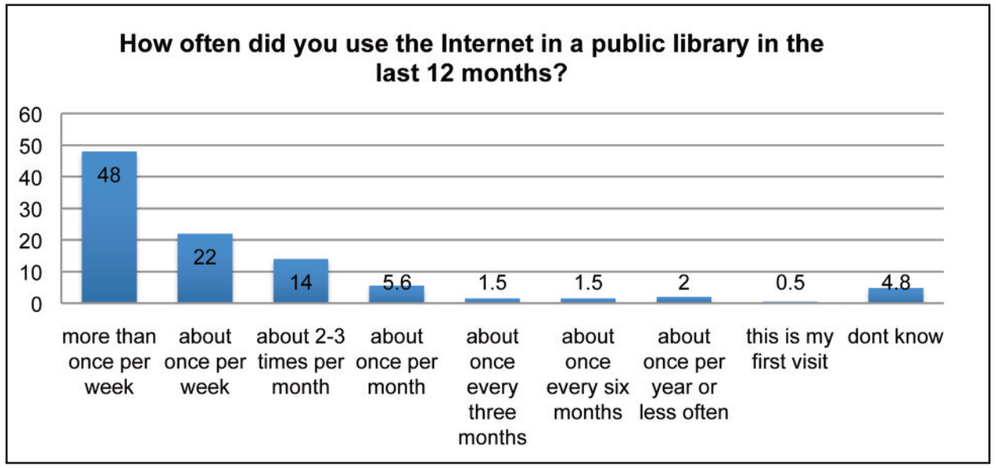
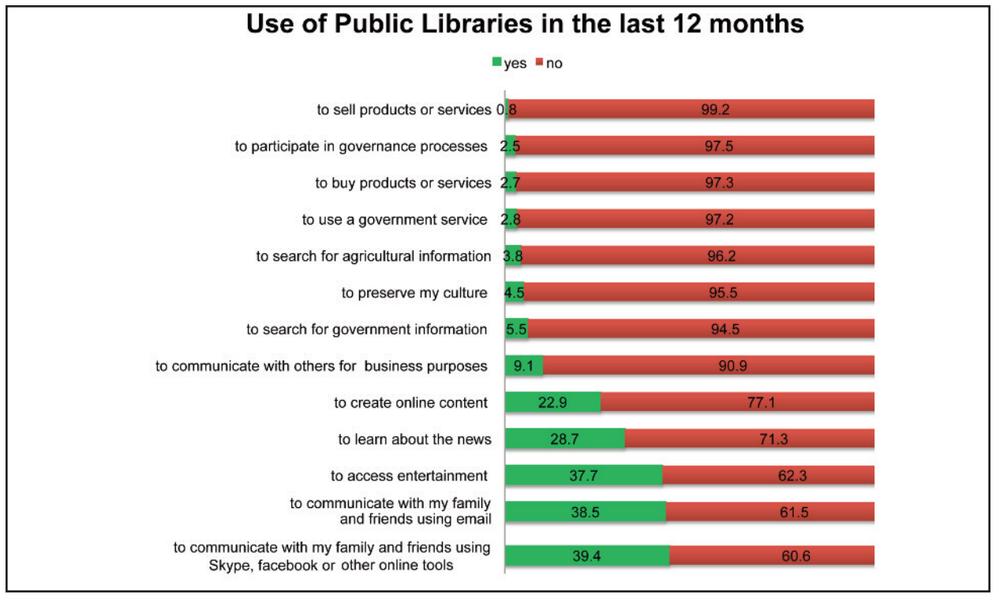


Figure 21: Use of Public Libraries in Last 12Months



When the figures are analysed in depth it shows that young adults is the group that is benefitting the most from the services provided at public libraries as they pertain to community activities.

The general behaviour pattern of users, is to access the technology at public libraries mainly to communicate with family and friends or for entertainment purposes even when other variables are included as Figure 31 shows.

Figure 30: Age Group Impact – Awareness of Community Activities

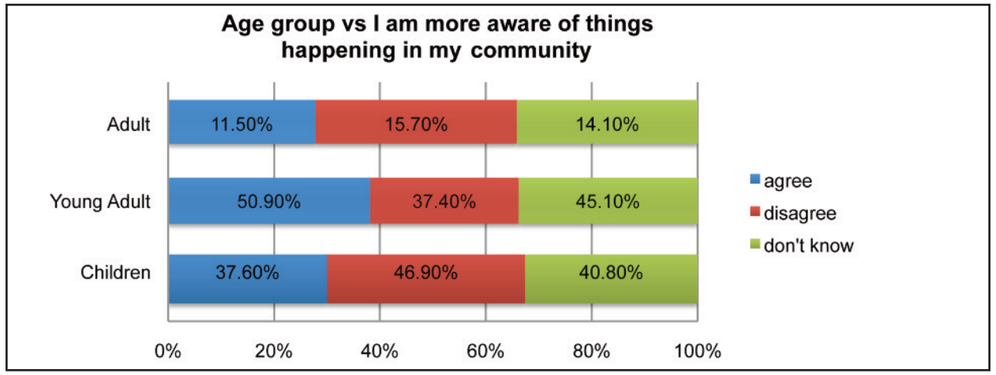
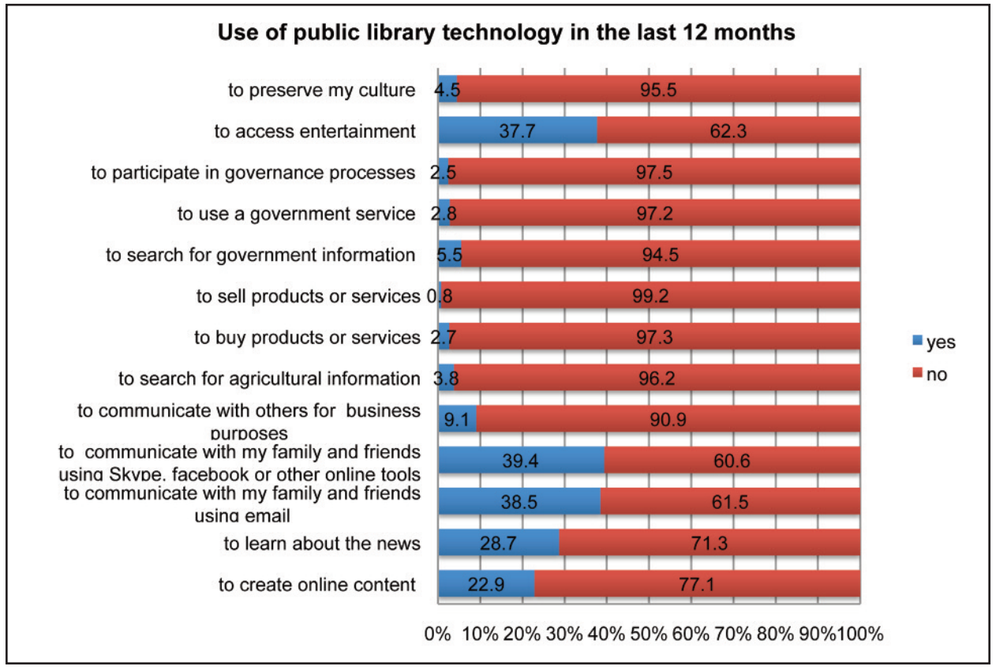


Figure 31: Breakdown on What Persons Do Online - Community



4.4 CULTURE AND LEISURE

In looking at the impact of the library on communities, respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the role of the library (directly and indirectly) on their awareness of activities in their communities. As outlined in Figures 27, 28 and 29, the impact is not major on overall awareness in the community (32%) or civic activities (30%) or the promotion of recreational activities (27%).

Figure 27: Impact on Community Awareness

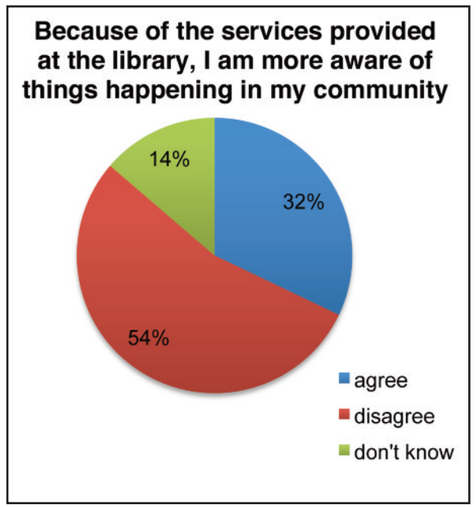


Figure 28: Impact of Community Awareness/Civic Activities

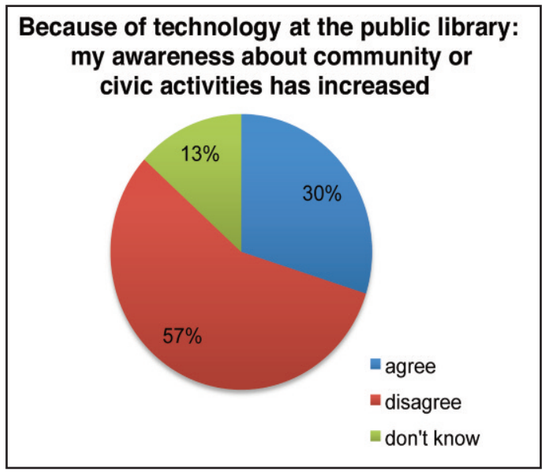
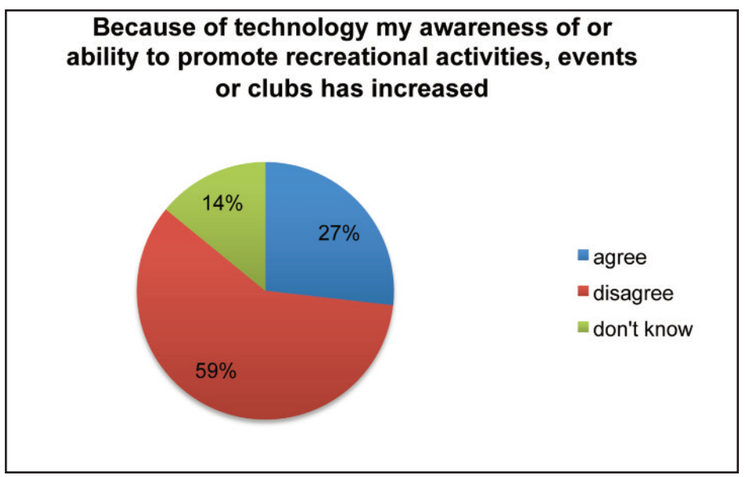
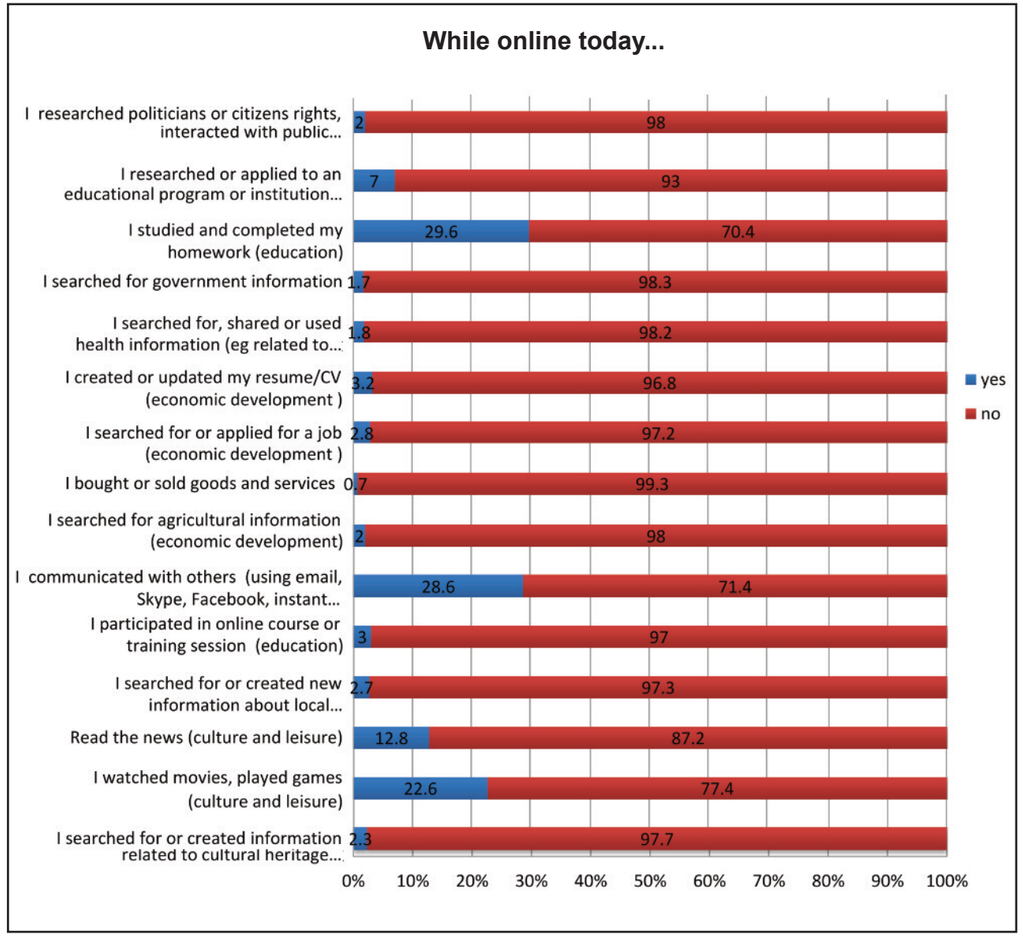


Figure 29: Promotion of Recreational Activities



In responding to the activities they did online today (day of the research), most respondents had used the Internet to either study or complete assignments. Also, given that a significant number of persons use public libraries to communicate with family and friends either through social media or email, it is plausible that second most popular response was that they communicated with others. As outlined in Figure 22 the next common task was to access entertainment followed by reading the news.

Figure 22: Activity While Online Today



The availability of technology at public libraries has also had an impact on the reading habits of users. As stated in Figure 23, more than half of users (56%) agree that they read more because of access to technology at public libraries. An analysis of class reveals that this is the case for most social groups except for the middle class as presented in Figure 24. There is no distinction between genders.

Figure 23: Technology and Reading Habits

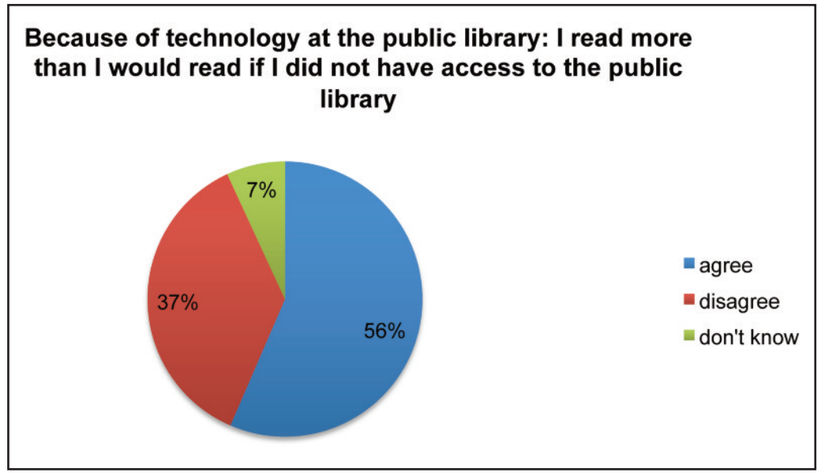
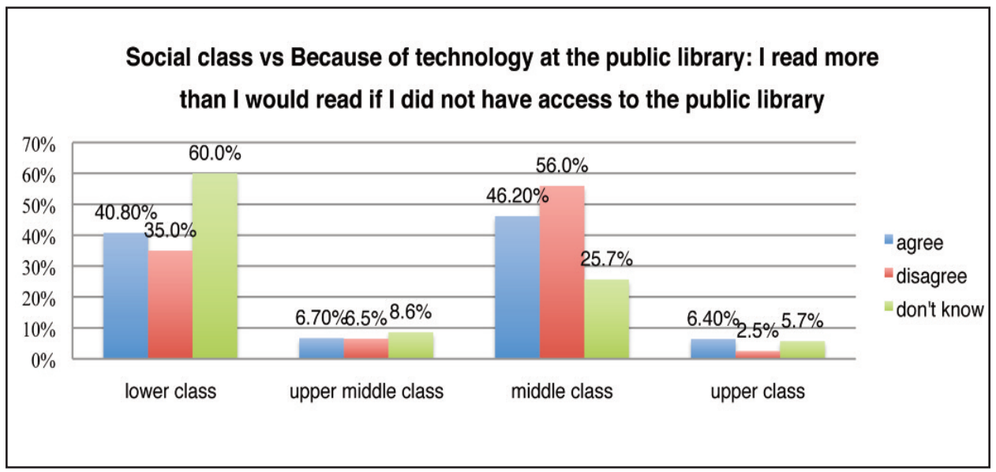


Figure 24: Technology and Reading Habits – Class



The obvious impact of saving money as a result access to technology at public libraries was confirmed by half of respondents. At the same time, the library is by far (86%) the place where users access the Internet free of cost.

Figure 25: Public Libraries Impact on Finances

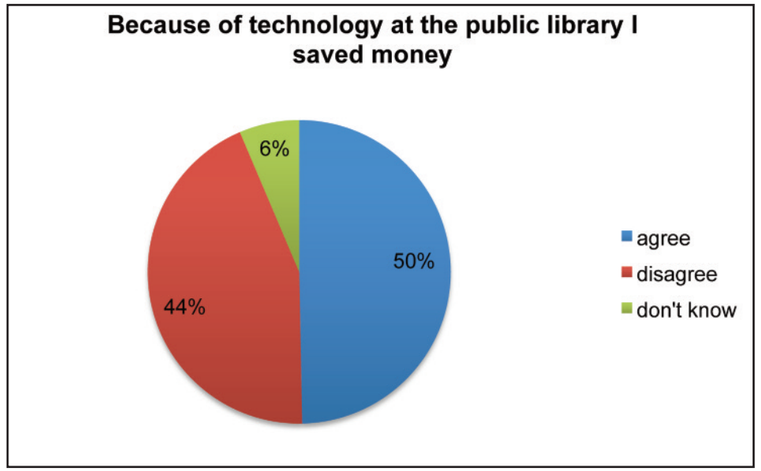
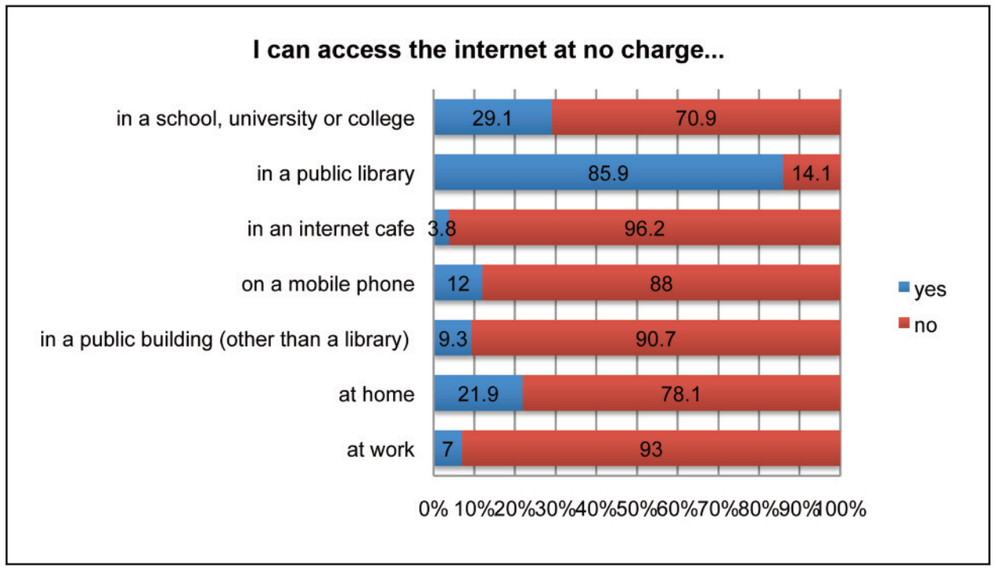



Figure 26: Free Internet Access Points