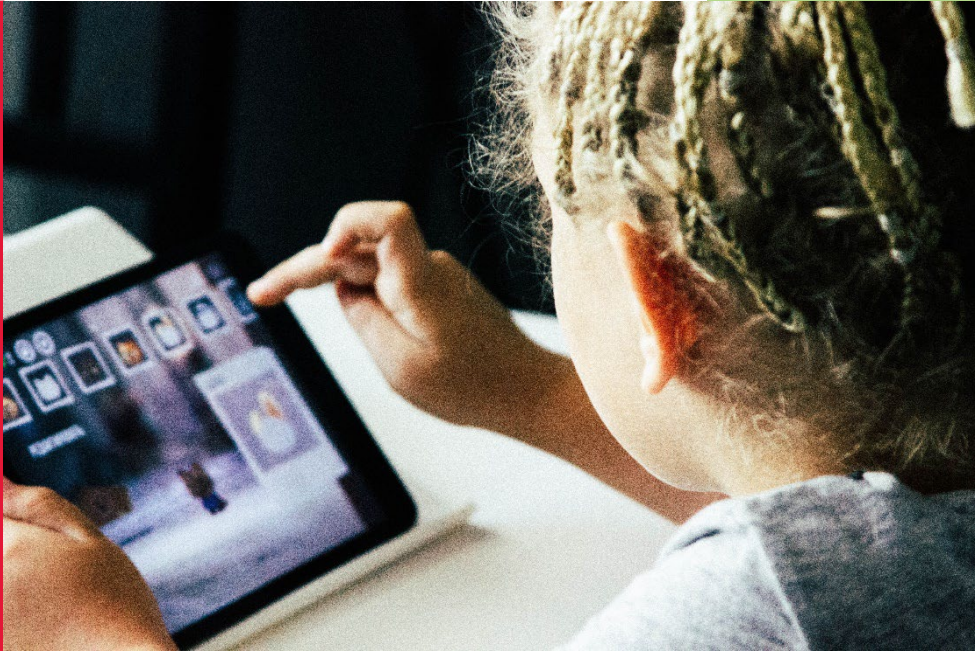




**International
Federation of
Library
Associations and Institutions**



IFLA Professional Report No.138

Creating and Maintaining a Safer Online World for Children and Young Adults in Libraries:

A Report on the 2021 Safer Internet Day Baseline Survey for the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

Developed by the IFLA Library Services to Children and Young Adults Section:
Safer Internet Day Working Group

Report written by: Marianne Martens, Ph.D.,Carolynn Rankin, Ph.D., and Alica Kolaric, Ph.D.

Cover Photo: [Igor Starkov](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Marianne Martens, Ph.D.,Carolynn Rankin, Ph.D., and Alica Kolaric, Ph.D., 2023

© 2023 by Marianne Martens, Ph.D., Carolynn Rankin, Ph.D., and Alica Kolaric, Ph D. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) license. To view a copy of this license, visit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

The Hague, IFLA Headquarters, 2023. – 21 p. (IFLA Professional Reports: 138)

ISBN 978-90-77897-78-2

ISSN 0168-1931

IFLA
Prins Willem-Alexanderhof 5
2595 BE The Hague
Netherlands

www.ifla.org

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Background and Use of the Report	4
1. Introduction	4
2. Survey Method and Design	5
3. Survey Results	5
3.1 Geographic location	6
3.2 Library Types	6
3.3 Respondents' Roles in their Libraries	7
3.4 IFLA Membership	8
3.5 Internet Access and Young People	8
3.5.1 How Libraries Enable Digital Inclusion for Children and Young Adults	8
3.5.2 Digital Skills Building	8
3.5.3 Protecting Young People's Access or Restricting Internet Use: Filtering, Surveillance and Supervision	8
3.6 Internet Safety Training for Library Staff Members	9
3.7 Safer Internet Day Programming	10
3.7.1 Types of Programming Offered	10
3.7.2 Points of Pride	10
3.8 What Would Help You as a Librarian to Create and Maintain a Safer Online World for Children and Young People?	11
4. Limitations of the Baseline Survey	12
5. Conclusion, Future Work, and Recommendations to the Broader Library Community	13
Appendix 1: Safer Internet Day Baseline Survey Introduction and Questions	14
Appendix 2: Safer Internet Day Working Group Members	21
Appendix 3: List of Figures and tables	21

Executive Summary

This report provides the results of a baseline survey of safe internet practices in libraries for children and young adults around the world. This survey was created by members of IFLA's Libraries for Children and Young Adults (C&YA) Section, with the goal of finding out: *What would help librarians create and maintain a safer online world for children and young people?* Since 2004, [Safer Internet Day](#) has been organised annually and is observed in about 200 countries. The campaign calls upon all stakeholders to join together to make the internet a safer and better place for all, and especially for children and young people. There is no clear definition of "safer internet" on the InSafe website, but the site states: "From cyberbullying to social networking to digital identity, each year Safer Internet Day aims to raise awareness of emerging online issues and current concerns."

In the context of libraries, the definition of "Safer Internet" is constantly evolving - including but not limited to providing education on information literacy, protecting children and young adults from malicious actors, blocking access to 'harmful' content, and encouraging children to be 'good online citizens' (not being cyberbullies, etc). Our online Qualtrics survey (see Appendix 1) was launched on Safer Internet Day 202, and we received 482 responses. Key findings revealed that most libraries put significant effort into educating children and young adults on how to use the internet safely, applying diverse methods such as:

- Running campaigns to promote information literacy in the digital age;
- Teaching users how to evaluate online information;
- Producing informative materials such as leaflets for children and parents; or
- Offering workshops on the educated use of online gaming and similar activities.

However, there is a fine line between providing internet access, and providing *safe* Internet access, and libraries around the world are right on that threshold. Respondents reported on a range of issues relating to filtering, surveillance and supervision. Our findings showed that safer internet practices represent an important and necessary growth opportunity for libraries serving young people. Librarians are well placed to provide and promote a safer online environment for their communities but are asking for help and support in doing so. There are important messages here for other stakeholders, including library employers, library managers, and those responsible for workforce planning and staff development. IFLA Sections, in turn, could collaborate with InSafe and related partners to establish international guidelines and policy support.

A key message for decision makers, resource allocators and policy makers is that as librarians provide a point of intervention with children and young adults there is a need for continuing professional development and training opportunities, some of which could be sourced via IFLA and the wider library community, perhaps in partnership with the SID organisation. Another theme was about resources, which also extended to organisational issues in the work environment including calls for better software and good network connections. There was a perceived need for international guidelines and policy support from national library associations. The study has limitations in that it only provides a generalised snapshot of the provision of internet access in libraries serving children and young people around the world. Due to the nature of the design, it may not have reached those with limited internet access. A further limitation stems from language barriers, as the survey questions were distributed only in the English language. However, despite the limitations of this initial baseline survey on Safer Internet Day practises around the world, we found that overall, safe internet access will continue to be an area of growing interest for libraries. With proper training and support, Librarians are well placed to provide a safer online environment for their communities.

Background and Use of the Report

The planning for IFLA's Safer Internet Day Baseline Survey began in August 2019 at IFLA's World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) in Athens, Greece, when officers from IFLA's Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section (Jorun Systad, Marianne Martens, and Benjamin Scheffler) met with Valensiya Dresvyannikova (IFLA Policy and Research Officer) to discuss how the Section could address the goals of Safer Internet Day. Since 2004, [Safer Internet Day](#) has been organised annually by Insafe, a European network of Safer Internet Centres, and is observed in about 200 countries. Each year Safer Internet Day aims to raise awareness of emerging online issues and current concerns and helping families and young people with safe internet access was something of great interest to the Section. In the past, promotional material by Insafe to promote Safer Internet Day mentioned Teachers, educators and social workers, but not librarians. For example, in their Safer Internet Day 2022 [Key campaign message](#), one bullet point stipulates:

“Teachers, educators and social workers can help to create a better internet by equipping their pupils and students with digital literacy skills and by developing their critical thinking skills, which will allow them to better navigate the online world. They can empower them to create their own content, make considered choices online, and can set a personal example of positive online behaviour for their pupils and students” (Safer Internet Day, 2022)

As librarians, we know that these are items already being addressed in many libraries around the world. Yet librarians have not been on the radar of the Safer Internet Day organisers. After WLIC, a working group of international volunteers (see Appendix 2) was set up to examine this question. This included members from countries where internet access in libraries is expected and plentiful, such as Europe, the Russian Federation, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and the United States and members from countries where it is either not readily provided in libraries, as was the case in Italy and Japan, or in countries where neither devices nor access are readily available at all, as in Bangladesh or the Philippines.

This report presents the results and findings of a baseline survey of safe internet practices in libraries around the world. In terms of audience, it is an advocacy document that can be used for library stakeholders, including Librarians and Library managers, Library Boards, National and State Library Associations, Library Educators at Universities as well as those working in governments or writing policy impacting libraries. In addition, it also provides a useful baseline view for librarians, to find out more about what is – or is not being done – in different libraries around the world.

This report was prepared by IFLA's Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section Members: Marianne Martens, Ph.D., Section Chair, United States, Alica Kolaric, Ph.D., Section Member, Croatia andCarolynn Rankin, Ph.D., Section Member, United Kingdom. The Section's Safer Internet Day working group (see Appendix 2) collaborated on developing and disseminating the survey. Visualisations and research support provided by Kristin A. Higgason, MLIS Student, Kent State University's School of Information.

1. Introduction

Vast international differences exist in library legislation, governance, funding, and philosophy on use, and in this baseline study we cannot make generalised statements about any of those issues. However, whatever attitudes existed pre-pandemic, the last two years have revealed an increased need for digital resources and the capacity on the part of libraries to deliver such resources in a safe way. It is hoped the findings in this report will be useful as leverage for making a case for promoting safe internet practices in libraries serving children and young adults.

The Section wanted to provide a baseline snapshot of what internet access looked like in libraries serving children and young people around the world. Each year Safer Internet Day aims to raise awareness of emerging online issues and current concerns. The key research question was: *What would help librarians create*

and maintain a safer online world for children and young people? It was decided to create a survey that would provide evidence around what was happening in practice and what was being done to promote Safer Internet Day itself- (See Appendix I for the questionnaire). The survey questions covered three broad categories:

- About libraries/librarians

The data gathering started with basic questions about what type of library respondents worked in (school, public, private, free or fee-based, academic, etc.), whether they were in rural, suburban, or urban locations, and how many people were served by their library, did they work directly with children and young adults?

- Current practices around internet access and safety for C&YA

Do their libraries provide internet access to children and young people, and if so, on which terms? Do the librarians receive training in providing internet access? Was providing safe internet access in their job description, or were separate library staff members responsible? Did their libraries have programs for families and young people on internet safety or on Safer Internet Day? Do their libraries place limits on access? Use filtering software? How has the pandemic impacted access?

- Library needs

What kind of support did librarians taking the survey want in order to create and maintain a safer online world for young people? Answers to these questions provided a snapshot of what internet access looks like in different types of libraries serving young people around the world, but also showed us places where library employers and organisations such as IFLA could provide professional development opportunities around safer internet for librarians—and the families and young people they serve—around the world.

2. Survey Method and Design

The target audience for the investigation was librarians working with children and young adults. An online survey with a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was used as an appropriate data gathering technique. This would reach a large and geographically dispersed community of librarians at low cost and had the potential to gather a large quantity of data relatively quickly. The respondents were able to confidentially and anonymously answer the questions in their own time. The baseline survey was designed using [Qualtrics](#), a web-based survey tool to conduct survey research and other data collection activities. Qualtrics is widely used for academic and market research and access to a paid version was facilitated via Kent State University in Ohio via the Section's Chair Marianne Martens and collaboration was enabled for SIDS working group members outside of the university. The survey included open questions so the librarian respondents could define what is important to them.

The baseline survey was launched on Safer Internet Day, 9th February 2021 and circulated online via the IFLA Listserv, on listservs of national library organisations around the world, and through Section members' contacts. The C&YA Section did not have members in Africa and Latin America at the time of the survey launch, so IFLA's regional representatives in Africa and Latin America were contacted to help solicit responses from these geographic areas.

3. Survey Results

The commentary in this section shows the key findings from the baseline survey and highlights results that are of practical significance. A total of 482 respondents completed the online survey. A key focus was to find out from the librarian target audience what would help them to create and maintain a safer online world for children and young people. The first portion of questions were designed to gather information about the librarians themselves and where they worked.

3.1 Geographic location

As indicated in Figure 1, the 482 survey respondents were located all around the world.

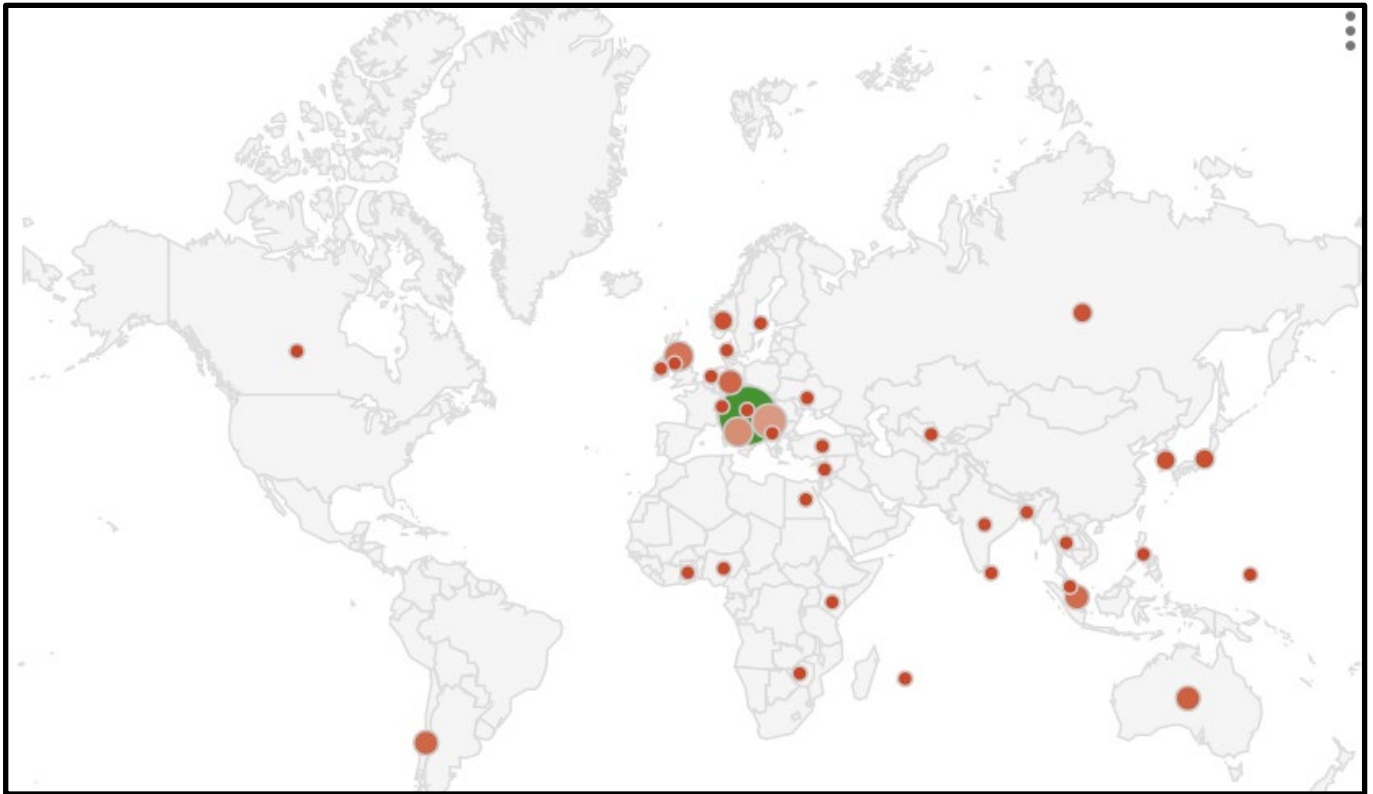


Figure 1. Respondents' Geographic Locations

In addition to geographic location, respondents were also asked to identify whether their library was in an urban, suburban, rural, or “other” location. Sixty-two percent of respondents reported working in an urban setting, 18% in a suburban setting, and 16% in a rural setting. Five percent reported working in a setting identified as “other,” including, for example an NGO.

3.2 Library Types

Figure 2 visually depicts respondent’s answers to the question about in what type of library they work. The majority (52.9%) reported working in public libraries (available for use free-of-charge), and 30.3% work in public school libraries. Others reported working in academic or university libraries, private school libraries, private religious libraries, national libraries, or private (fee-based) libraries. Responses were received from a library for Indigenous people, government libraries, and a closed library system consisting of five rural libraries.

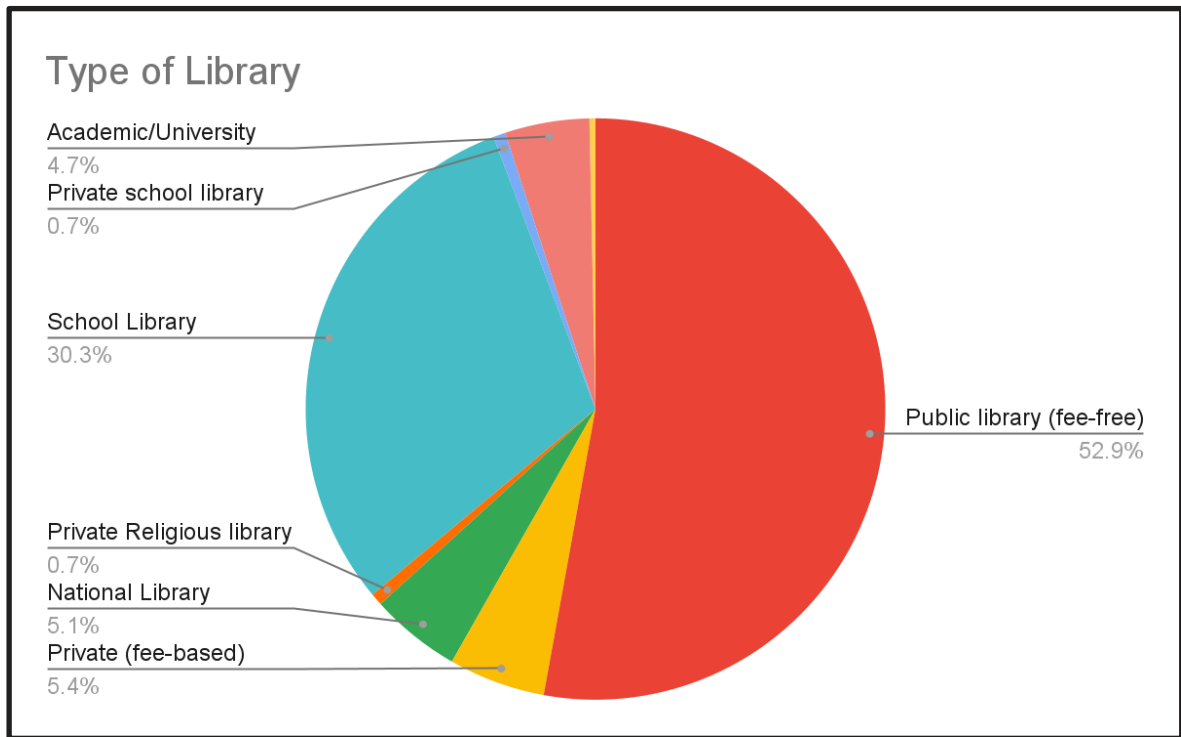


Figure 2. Type of Library

3.3 Respondents' Roles in their Libraries

The majority (89%) of those responding to the survey work directly with children and young adults. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents work for libraries serving the general public, while 23% work in libraries serving children and young adults, 11% work in libraries only serving young adults, and 7% work in libraries serving children only. Table 1 summarises the responses for details of job titles.

Table 1: Summary of Respondents' Roles in Their Libraries

Library roles		
Librarian (youth focus)	115	45.10%
Librarian (no specification)	51	20.00%
Director/Head librarian (not youth)	39	15.29%
Support staff	6	2.35%
Library assistant	5	1.96%
IT	5	1.96%
Research	4	1.57%
Director/Head librarian (youth specified)	4	1.57%
Media Specialist	3	1.18%
Reference	3	1.18%
Cataloging	1	0.39%
Other	16	6.27%
No Answer	3	1.18%
	255	100.00%

3.4 IFLA Membership

Respondents were also asked ‘*Do you or your library (or related institution) belong to IFLA?*’ Twenty-six percent reported being personal IFLA members or working for an institution that belonged to IFLA. 59% did not belong. Some were not sure about their institution’s membership status, and others preferred not to respond. Non-IFLA members reported belonging to other library-based institutions and organisations, including The Zimbabwe Library Association, Bibliosuisse, Associazione Italiana Biblioteche, INELI India and South Asia, HUSK (Croatian Association of School Librarians), International Association of School Librarians (IASL), and the Ukrainian Librarian Association, among others.

Once respondents had answered questions about themselves, the survey turned towards questions around professional practice relating to internet access and young people. These findings are discussed in the following sections.

3.5 Internet Access and Young People

3.5.1 How Libraries Enable Digital Inclusion for Children and Young Adults

The survey showed that libraries around the world put significant effort into bridging the digital gap which divides those who have access to the internet from those who do not. The great majority of the respondents (86.15%) reported that their library offers internet access to children and young adults. 62.20% of the libraries offer internet access through both library-owned and patron-owned devices, while 29.67% offer access through library-owned devices only, and 8.13% through patrons’ own devices only. The respondents added that the patrons can use library-owned PCs, laptops, and iPads to access the internet, and can use the functions each device offers, such as copying, scanning and printing. Some respondents reported that creative technology kits available for patrons’ use included: robotics, coding and digital art tools, 3D pens, and virtual reality headsets. Some libraries loaned iPads and charging cables. Sixty percent of respondents said that there was no minimum age for patrons to use the internet in the libraries, while 30% reported various age-based restrictions usually for patrons between the ages of 10 and 18. About 57% indicated that children and young people needed approval from a parent, caregiver, or guardian to access the internet, while about 39% did not require permission.

3.5.2 Digital Skills Building

Libraries offer digital skills-building opportunities for children and young adults such as lessons and workshops (20.19%), awareness-raising programs, for example through displays and social media (19.95%), interactive programming such as contests, quizzes, and games (13.70%), and programming to help parents or caregivers support the safety and well-being of their children online (7.21%). Libraries also develop informational materials such as handouts and resource guides (16.35%). Other programs include efforts to make the community aware of the correct use of the internet, of the importance of the use of information instead of fake news. Librarians also work to improve users’ digital skills and media and information literacy, especially of children and young adults.

3.5.3 Protecting Young People’s Access or Restricting Internet Use: Filtering, Surveillance and Supervision

There is a fine line between providing internet access, and providing *safe* Internet access, and libraries need to navigate those distinctions. The respondents reported a range of concerns relating to filtering, surveillance and supervision. An initial review of the data indicates that public librarians are more concerned with intellectual freedom and less concerned about filtering, while school libraries seem to be focused on the protections offered by filtering. Filtering was a prominent topic in responses to the survey. Other IFLA documents which address filtering and access to information include the official IFLA [Guidelines on Public Internet Access in Libraries](#), and IFLA’s [Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom](#).

Approximately 53% of respondents replied that their libraries restrict access to certain content for young people by employing filters. Twenty-eight percent said that their libraries did not, and others were not sure. Comments described different outcomes. Most school librarians reported filtering in their schools and some public librarians reported filtering for all users. Following are some of the write-in comments related to filtering:

- *We are not required but we do.*
- *Our administration and IT have filtering software for the whole school.*
- *Filtering software is used to restrict access to certain content, but adults are also restricted. There is no discrimination between adult and children's access.*
- *Not only for children. Undesirable content is also blocked.*
- *Our network is already filtered by the internet provider.*
- *Internet access is controlled by our ICT department, they created restrictions about internet safety.*

Those who work with children and young people will not be surprised to read the following response from one respondent:

- *We have found children have discovered a way around [filtering] by using the OPACs.*

For others, the question of whether or not to filter is irrelevant:

- *The library does not have an internet connection.*

In addition to (or instead of) filtering, 38.98% of the respondents reported that their libraries use internet surveillance software (while 41.10% reported that they do not). About half (56.36%) of respondents reported that their libraries supervise children's and young adults' access to the internet, while 34.75% do not. In most of the cases, they are supervised by library staff (80%) and their parents, guardians, or caretakers (16.15%). This survey shows that a significant number of libraries around the world rely on filtering, restricting access, using surveillance software, or blocking access to content that is considered unsuitable. The young library users' activities on the internet are supervised by library staff in most of the libraries whose employees participated in the survey.

Arguably, using filters, restrictions, and surveillance methods to keep young people safe online conflicts with some of the basic documents that advocate for human rights. More specifically, one of the crucial documents of the library profession, IFLA's [Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom](#), claims that humans have a fundamental right to access to expressions of knowledge, creative thought, and intellectual activity, and to express their views publicly. Libraries must provide access to information, ideas and works of the imagination, serving as gateways to knowledge, thought and culture. The position of the international library community is expressed in the [IFLA Internet Manifesto 2014](#), which emphasises, inter alia, that providing free access to information, regardless of media and national borders, is a central task of librarians and information professionals.

3.6 Internet Safety Training for Library Staff Members

In addition to asking whether staff members were responsible for ensuring that young people can use the internet safely (62% answered yes), we asked if librarians or staff members received training to do so. One library had gone as far as hiring a computer scientist to handle this responsibility (but this was an outlier). About 50% of respondents said training was provided for those charged with internet safety, and most (86%) felt that the training they or their staff members received was helpful in serving children and young adults. Yet responses indicated that there were inconsistencies even about how "training" was defined, and that quality and amount received varied widely.

Respondents described training as follows:

- *One reported very general training about internet usage policy and safety, which covered aspects of children's and young adult's usage;*
- *A respondent described how their school considers filtering software to be the first line of defence, and others described monitoring software that censors or blocks children's access to certain content [in other words, emphasising that the school considers filtering to be more important than training];*
- *Someone else reported having different computers for children and for adults;*
- *One respondent described receiving training through their graduate school program, but not at the worksite;*
- *Others reported learning on the job, or training themselves.*
- *Others reported that the training received was not enough.*

About 50% of respondents reported receiving no training at all, and others reporting a wide range in definitions of training, and of the quality and reach of training available. This is clearly an issue of concern and indicates the need for the development and provision of internet safety training for practitioners, ideally resourced by the wider library community and involving organisations such as IFLA. The next section looks at libraries' responses to questions around Safer Internet Day Programming.

3.7 Safer Internet Day Programming

Survey respondents were asked about their familiarity with Safer Internet Day (SID), and if they'd ever offered programming related to the event.

3.7.1 Types of Programming Offered

The responses to this question indicate some level of digital skills building, awareness raising and interactive programming for children and young adults. There is less evidence of programming to help parents and caregivers support the safety and well-being of their children online. Many were aware of Safer Internet Day and had offered some sort of the programming. Twenty percent offered digital skills-building opportunities for children/young adults (e.g. lessons, workshops); 7% offered related programming to parents and caregivers, 14% offered interactive programming such as contests, quizzes and games, 20% used displays and social media for awareness-raising, and 16% developed informational materials such as handouts, resources, or guides, and how to find reliable information instead of misinformation. But almost 21% of the sample who responded have not offered programming related to Safer Internet Day. One respondent commented that this is their first year of raising awareness about SID and a number of respondents said they did not know about Safer Internet Day. This represents a promotion, advocacy and training challenge and opportunity for library organisations and IFLA regarding the value and purpose of this annual event.

3.7.2 Points of Pride

As a follow-up to the question on Safer Internet Day Programming, we were interested in finding out what programming activities librarians thought were successful, and of which they were most proud. This was designed as an open question to allow the respondents to comment in their own words and describe what they were actively doing at the time of the survey. While we were seeking examples relating to activities around Safer Internet Day, the question did not explicitly state this and may have been interpreted differently by respondents. Hence the examples showed how librarians were helping to support the user needs of different groups in their communities and the open question comments provided insight into support for activities in the digital environment. The answers gave some idea of the topics they were focusing on and mentioned various partners. The Covid-19 pandemic had influenced how these examples were reported.

There was evidence of proactive activity by librarians in examples of activities and programming. This included online classes, online workshops on topics, quizzes and games, promotion of e-books, displays and posters. They also reported opportunities for improving awareness and knowledge of online resources—from

WhatsApp to YouTube to Google Classroom to eBooks to online quizzes—as well as innovative ways of using them. A number reported directly participating in SID activities, such as hosting a “Fake vs Fact” workshop, safer-Internet workshops, or teaching digital citizenship.

The responses also included some comments on increased partnerships, such as cooperation with a number of libraries, librarians and teachers across different schools and libraries. In view of Covid, collaborations with teachers to deliver resources was also mentioned, as was providing materials that would be helpful for families. One respondent mentioned their school was involved in national budgets for safe internet which suggests there are funding partnerships in place at a national level. This merits further exploration.

3.8 What Would Help You as a Librarian to Create and Maintain a Safer Online World for Children and Young People?

The final question in the survey was focussed on the librarian as practitioner and asked ‘*What would help you as a librarian to create and maintain a safer online world for children and young people?*’ This was a free text/open question which enabled respondents to reply in their own words and define what is important to them. This was an opportunity to raise issues of personal concern and identify a range of professional development needs and the question generated a total of 142 individual comments. These answers are of particular interest in helping us to identify needs that have practical significance. Figure 3 provides a word cloud representation of the responses.



Figure 3. What Libraries Need to Support a Safer Online World for Children and Young People

An analysis of this qualitative data from this final question shows a number of broader themes emerging across the responses.

Theme 1: Education. A predominant, recurring broad theme is 'Education' and this can be considered as three groups of particular interest:

- Professional development opportunities for librarians
- Learning opportunities for children and young people
- Learning opportunities for parents and guardians.

As the focus of the question was on the librarian it is perhaps not surprising that many comments were about professional development, education and training for practitioners such as requests for:

- *More educational programs for librarians*
- *More professional development and continuous training on internet safety*
- *Train the trainer workshops*
- *Workshops for children and young people on the topic of safe and age-appropriate use of the internet.*

Another recurring theme was the need for education of parents/grandparents and carers. Comments here included providing information on the dangers and resources. Collaboration with teachers and other stakeholders was also seen as important; overall, there was an identified need for more awareness around internet safety.

Theme 2: Resources and organisational issues

Effective education and training requires the provision of appropriate support and resources and this also was a recurrent theme. Respondents commented on the need for '*learning activities about using a safe internet; ongoing, relevant and up to date resources; materials for workshops; ready-made risk assessments*'. The resources theme also extended to organisational issues in the work environment. This included calls for better software, good network connections, modern ICT environments for teaching, increased budget and more IT personnel. These comments are flagging libraries' own requirements which need to be met in order for them to be effective in this field.

Theme 3: Guidelines and Policy Support

Another broad issue relates to the perceived need for guidelines and policy support. This can be considered at a wide range of levels covering international, national, local and organisational. There were requests for international guidelines and support from national library associations. Respondents suggested '*universal guidelines; Guidelines from the National Library Association; Government support for library initiatives to create and promote safe online content for children and adolescents.*'

Other topics of concern that were mentioned included filtering and information literacy. The responses to this open question indicate societal needs that libraries themselves can help meet such as overall awareness-raising around internet safety and providing high-quality resources.

4. Limitations of the Baseline Survey

The main limitation of the baseline survey is that it can only offer a vague and generalised snapshot of what internet access looked like in libraries serving children and young people around the world. This online survey may not have reached those who have limited provision, or they may have felt there was no value in responding to the survey. Another limitation stems from the language barrier as the survey was distributed only in the English language. Some answers indicate that the questions were "lost in translation" and were not fully understood by non-native English speaking respondents. This could be improved in the future by offering the

survey at least in the official IFLA languages. Another important consideration is that the survey was administered equally across the divide: from areas of high internet access and use, to areas without any internet access at all. Future surveys might be more specifically tailored to regional differences.

5. Conclusion, Future Work, and Recommendations to the Broader Library Community

Around the world, librarians serving children, young adults, and their families, face on-going issues with providing access to the internet. Despite the limitations of this initial baseline survey on Safer Internet Day practises around the world, we found that overall, safe internet access will continue to be an area of growing interest for libraries, whether a library is at the very earliest stages of getting internet access, or already has access to the internet and provides an array of devices for patrons.

While some libraries (such as school libraries) are required by law to provide internet filtering, overall, librarians seek to provide free, unfiltered, and uncensored access to information, no matter in which container such information comes. To provide safe access to such information on the internet, they are well served by continuing training, professional development opportunities, and access to information about best practises around the world. These needs were clearly articulated by survey respondents describing what would help them to create and maintain a safer online world for children and young people. We cannot rely solely on filtering as a means of protection, but rather must also teach kids how to protect themselves. This can be supported with a greater focus on educating and training young people (and their families) to be savvy about safe internet practises, to develop information literacy skills to differentiate between “authentic” and “fake” information and protect themselves from online predators. This initial survey looked at filtering from the context of whether or not libraries were required to use filtering software in their service to young people, and 53% answered that they were required to use filters in their libraries. Future research on filtering alone could look at how and why libraries filter around the world. Who mandates filtering? What do national policies on filtering look like? How might they be different from local policies? What do those mandating filters seek to block: harmful content? Inappropriate content (and who determines what is “harmful” or “inappropriate”)? Social media channels? Other specific, potentially distracting content? Whom are they trying to protect with filtering? What do those mandating filtering hope to achieve? And is there legislation in countries around the world that conflicts with filtering—legislation that protects young people’s access to information?

A future survey might also look at how librarians around the world define “Safer Internet.” What is important to them in their service with young people? What kinds of guidelines and policies are already available at a local, state, and national level? What is missing?

We live in a multicultural and multilingual world. Providing materials in different languages is crucial to reaching diverse communities. Our study reveals numerous opportunities for library association, IFLA and the Section on Libraries for Children and Young Adults, in collaboration with other sections, to produce multilingual resources that can be shared and repurposed for local library use. Such resources might include sharing examples of good practice on promoting Safer Internet Day activities and programming via:

- Online resources/ toolkits
- Best Practises Videos
- Webinars
- Workshops

This baseline survey has indicated a range of topics for future research. Librarians are well placed to provide a safer online environment for their communities but are asking for help and support in doing so. There are important messages here for other stakeholders in particular library employers, library managers and those responsible for workforce planning and staff development.

Acknowledgments

We would like to record thanks to the librarians around the world who took the time to respond to this SID baseline survey and to staff at IFLA HQ for their guidance and support in helping to create, prepare and promote this project. Thanks also to Kent State University for Qualtrics support.

Appendix 1: Safer Internet Day Baseline Survey Introduction and Questions

IFLA's Section on Children and Young Adults' "Safer Internet Day" Survey

Introduction

The annual Safer Internet Day is now celebrated in approximately 170 countries worldwide. The campaign calls upon all stakeholders to join together to make the internet a safer and better place for all, and especially for children and young people.

This survey is for librarians and/or related staff who serve children and young adults, or those who supervise those who do. The survey will be disseminated to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Members, their affiliates, and the global library field. The goal of this survey is to answer our research question of how librarians around the world contribute to making the internet a safer and better place for children and young adults. This research will not benefit you directly. However, your participation in this study will help us to better understand library best practices on safer internet practices for young people. Results from this survey will be used to develop a tool to raise awareness and share best practices with the wider IFLA community and the library field. The survey is administered in partnership with IFLA's Section on Children and Young Adults' "Safer Internet Day Working Group," and Kent State University (USA).

Please be assured that the information you provide through this survey will be kept confidential and will be analysed in aggregate; no information that could reasonably identify you or your library will be included in any publications or public dissemination of the collected data. No identifiable information is requested by the survey and any information provided that could reasonably identify you or your library will be removed prior to the data analysis and aggregate reporting. De-identified data will be stored on a password-protected computer until March 30, 2023, and then destroyed. Participation in this survey is voluntary and optional. You have the right to stop or refuse participation at any time. Your completion of this survey will be indicative of your consent to participate in this research study. This 19-question survey should take you no longer than 20 minutes to fill out.

If you have questions about IFLA and Safer Internet Day, please contact IFLA's Director of Policy and Advocacy, Stephen Wyber: stephen.wyber@ifla.org. For general questions about the survey, or to reconcile, request deletion, modification, or to file a complaint about data, please contact IFLA's Children and Young Adults' Safer Internet Day Working Group: sid.iflacya@gmail.com. Please see [Kent State University's Privacy Statement](#) for more information:

We are very grateful for your participation!

- 1) What country or region do you work in?

- 2) Do you or your library (or related institution) belong to IFLA?
 - Member of IFLA
 - Member of a Standing Committee or Special Interest Group (SIG)
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer
 - Other (please describe below)

3) Is your library in an area that is:

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural
- Other (please describe below)

4) A. Is your library:

- A public library (free-of-charge and open to all)
- A private library (fee-based)
- A private library (affiliated with a religious institution)
- A national library
- Something else (please describe below)

B. Is your library for:

- Children only
- Young Adults only
- Children and Young Adults
- General Public (including Children and Young Adults)

C. Is your library:

- An independent library
- A section of a larger library
- A library in a cultural institution
- A school library
- Other (please describe below)

5) Do you directly serve Children and Young Adults?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to answer

If *No* is selected:

If not, do you supervise those who do?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to answer

6) What is your role at the library? Please tell us your job title, and if you are responding on behalf of an entire library, please let us know that as well. (For the sake of anonymity, please do not tell us the name of your library!)

7) In your library, are there staff members responsible for ensuring your customers can use the internet safely?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer

If *Yes* is selected:

A. Did you (or your staff members) receive any training to do so?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer
- Is there anything else you would like to add here?

B. Did this training help prepare you (or your staff members) to work with children and young adults on Internet safety?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer
- Is there anything else you would like to add here?

8) What is the size of the local population served by your library (or library district or system)?

- Under 1,000
- Under 2,500
- Under 5,000
- 5,000-9,999
- 10,000-24,999
- 25,000-49,999
- 50,000-99,999
- 100,000-249,999
- 250,000-499,999
- 500,000-999,999
- 1,000,000 and Over
- Don't know

9) Does your library offer internet access to Children and Young Adults?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer

If *Yes* is selected: If you said "yes" to question 9,

- Is such access on library-owned devices?
- On patrons' own devices?
- Or on both library-owned and patron-owned devices?

What do you provide for children and young people to use in your library? Please select all that apply.

- Internet / Wi-Fi
- Hotspots
- Computers
- Laptops
- Tablets
- eReaders
- Gaming devices (handheld)
- Charging stations for devices including smartphones
- Other (please describe below)

10) Is there a minimum age patrons must be in order to use the Internet?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer

If *Yes* is selected:

a. If yes, how old must they be?

- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- Other (please insert age)

b. Do children and young people need permission from a parent/guardian/caregiver to access the internet?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer

11) Has your library implemented initiatives for young people to teach them how to use the Internet safely, or other measures to keep them safe online?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer

If *Yes* is selected:

a. If so, what do they include? Please check those which apply, or write-in:

- Programming
- Instruction
- Classes
- Opportunities to earn certificates or diplomas?
- Librarian-curated lists of age-appropriate web resources?
- Signage
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer
- Other actions

12) Filtering and Surveillance Software:

a. Is your library required to use filtering software to restrict access to certain content for Children?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer
- Add comment

b. Is your library required to use filtering software to restrict access to certain content for Young Adults?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer
- Add comment

c. Is your library required to use internet surveillance software?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer

d. Are Children's and Young Adult's access supervised?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer

If *Yes* is selected:

i. If yes, then by whom?

- Staff
- Parents/Guardians/Caretakers
- Other

e. Is there a set time limit for use?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer

If *Yes* is selected:

i. Are time limits connected to the age of user?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer

ii. How long is the time limit?

- 30 minutes
- 60 minutes
- 90 minutes
- 120 minutes
- 150 minutes
- 180 minutes
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer
- Other (please describe below)

13) Does your library follow specific guidelines related to Internet safety? If so, which ones?

- Own Guidelines
- National Library Association Guidelines
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer
- Other (please describe below)

14) Do you collaborate with others in the community on these issues? If so, with whom?

- Local schools and educators
- After school centres
- Parents and guardians
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer
- Other (please describe below)

15) Now or in the past, have you offered programming related to Safer Internet Day? (If yes, please select all that apply and/or describe briefly):

- Digital skills-building opportunities for children/young adults (e.g. lessons, workshops)
- Programming to help parents or caregivers support the safety and well-being of their children online
- Interactive programming (e.g. contests, quizzes, games)
- Awareness-raising (e.g. through displays, social media)
- Developing informational materials (e.g. handouts, resource guides)
- No, I/we have not
- Other (please describe below)

16) Did you implement new initiatives for young users utilizing the internet during the Covid-19 Pandemic (inside the library or beyond)?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer

If *Yes* is selected:

Were there examples that were especially successful, or that you are most proud of?

17) What would help you as a librarian to create and maintain a safer online world for children and young people?

On behalf of IFLA's Section on Libraries for Children and Young Adults, we thank you for taking our survey!

Appendix 2: Safer Internet Day Working Group Members

Razina Akhter, Bangladesh
Maria Alekseeva, Russian Federation
Annie Everall, United Kingdom
Emiko Goeku, Japan
Salomon Hellman, Sweden
Huey Bin Heng, Singapore
Alica Kolaric, Ph.D., Croatia
Naoko Nakajima Koseki, Japan
Antonella Lamberti, Italy
Marianne Martens, Ph.D., United States, Coordinator
Melanie Ramirez, Philippines
Carolynn Rankin, Ph.D., United Kingdom
Benjamin Scheffler, Germany
Jorun Systad, Norway


Appendix 3: List of Figures and tables

Figure 1. Respondents' Geographic Locations

Figure 2. Type of Library

Figure 3. What Libraries Need to Support a Safer Online World for Children and Young People

Table 1: Summary of Respondents' Roles in Their Libraries



IFLA Headquarters
Prins Willem-Alexanderhof 5
2595 BE The Hague
Netherlands

Tel +31-70-3140884
E-mail publications@ifla.org
www.ifla.org

ISBN 978-90-77897-78-2
ISSN: 0168-1931