PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION & ICTs
PHASE II REPORT

Argentina

Prepared for the University of Washington,
Center for Information & Society.

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Table of Contents

1 Extended Executive Summary

1.1 Research Project Overview

This research focuses on the public access to information and communication landscapes in 24 countries, with specific focus on public libraries, to understand the information needs of underserved communities, public access to information and communication venues, and the role of ICT.

Through field research in 24 countries conducted by local research partners, and cross-country comparative analyses based on common research design elements (see list of countries and research design overview in Appendix), the project aims to contribute to the knowledge in the field of information and ICT for development. Of particular interest and value are: the comparative look at key venues (libraries and other), and the mix of depth of in-country knowledge with breadth of global comparison to elicit success factors and scenarios to understand how diverse populations can and do access and use ICT to improve their lives. All outputs of this research will be broadly disseminated to interested stakeholders and placed in the public domain.

1.2 Introduction

For the last eight years, Argentina has suffered the ups and downs of a deep political, economical, and social crisis, which had been brewing since the late 1970s. This crisis is being overcome in the macro economic and institutional aspects (NGP, increase of National reserves, payments of the external debt, financial stability, increase in the monetary flow, unemployment decrease, poverty and indigence rates' diminution, reinforcement of public powers and of the constitutional State, etc.). Nevertheless, the 2001-2002 crisis has left a deep mark in the Argentine society. The social gaps, the economic unbalances, and the inequities that resulted from this crisis have generated the weakening of social networks, which had historically been assumed as this society's main capital. This research considers the inequalities that have impacts on general living conditions, and particularly on information access. Two types of inequalities have been defined: socio economic, related mainly to the external processes affecting individuals and families – poverty and indigence, income distribution, employment, labour situation, gender, ethnic factors, etc.)- ; and territorial, both regional and intra-urban. This has been key when developing research on public accesses to information, since inequality is a main constituent of the present development model. Not only does inequality generate poverty: it is at the very origin of the mentioned deep crisis of social cohesion. This is the general context which frames our research, aimed at identifying and analysing public venues for information access. Our survey of institutions, individuals, and processes linked to information access has been a complex but exciting exercise.

Concerning the information and communication access´ landscape, simultaneously to the increase of macro-economic indexes, Argentina is going through a significant rise of fixed and mobile telephone teledensity, as well as of broadband connections, among other ICT-related sectors. Nevertheless, even if Argentina is considered as one of the most evolved Latin American countries on information society matters, the population has not yet has access to universal service; infrastructure and services' differences are still notorious among regions, and within large urban areas. We have also measured the existing gap between the right to information - granted by the Argentine Republic Constitution, and by a

set of national, provincial, and local Laws and norms-, and the real mechanisms to put these rights into effect through the actions of diverse market, State, and civil society agents. This information resources' map has allowed this research team to identify the main actors with whom it is necessary to interact when planning proposals and implementing policies and strategies.

The Argentine society, as stated by numerous research and studies, values highly the incorporation of technology to its everyday life. An increasing number of people of all social classes -even if mainly urban- use or are interested in using ICT services to fulfil their information and communication needs. This is an extremely favourable landscape for conceiving and implementing policies and strategies to increase not only the citizens´access to information, but also the generation and dissemination of contents that satisfy their particular information needs.

The salient changes we foresee for the next five years regards sectors as the regulatory frame for Information Society, as well as for information venues, connectivity infrastructure, public policies and strategies:

The regulation area includes the implementation of a National Digital Agenda, stimulated by the demands coming from the private informatics and telecommunications sector, as well as from civil society organizations working on the defense of information rights and for the development of Information Society. It is very probable that there will be increasingly flexible regulations concerning public and private venues.on the other hand, it is foreseeable the significant development of e-government, wich will probably result on agreements among provincial and local governments, and private and public venues, to promote the dissemination of governmental actions, as well as to facilitate the citizens' possibilities to develop administrative procedures through the internet.

Concerning new infrastructures and improvement of existing infrastructure, Wi-Fi zones for public use in urban and interurban areas are already being implemented in several provinces (Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, San Luis, San Juan). This trend will be extended to other provinces. Simultaneously, it is foreseeable an extension of the broadband to the whole country, a measure encouraged by users and providers. Moreover, it is predictable that the National and Provincial governments will extend and increase the implementation of State - supported information venues at national and provincial levels. This process will be accompanied by the increase of ICTs infrastructure and available capacities in SCO's and State's venues.

Public policies will become active, articulated, and integrated, due to the implementation of a National Digital Agenda. The tendency to impulse partial and uncoordinated ICT-supported initiatives related to public access to information will be gradually replaced by the articulation and homogenization of plans and services. An increased activity in the Libraries' sector will outdate the current tendency to favour paper-based information, and replace it, at least partially, by ICTs supported information. New actors and initiatives are prone to be incorporated too.

These processes need in the first place, the reorganization of governmental institutions' internal information flows. As previously mentioned, the task of digitally unifying and making compatible the State's data bases is the first step to provide citizens the pertinent information they need.

Online information and procedures also need to be updated. Online procedures, exchanges between citizens and the government, as tax payments, declarations, registries, licences, procedures for each phase in life (studies, job search, marriage, divorce, identity documents, death certificates, etc.) are just the iceberg's visible peak. Governmental portals are classified according to the quantity and quality of the information they provide, as well as their user-friendliness. Argentina's governmental sites still admit serious improvements.

The increase of citizens participation remains a key ussue: even if web sites and portals are the e-governments' more extended resources, other virtual channels, such as electronic forums, blogs, chats and online voting are being considered by local authorities. Moreover, the generation of contents for local and on line communities has to be encouraged. It is important that each community, either geographic (sharing a common space) or virtual (sharing common interests) can produce and upload contents made by the community's members, in order to satisfy the communities' specific information needs.

1.3 Country Overview

For the last eight years, Argentina has suffered the ups and downs of a deep political, economical, and social crisis, which had been brewing since the late 1970s. This crisis, that has reached its peak in years 2001-2002, and that has put in check the Republic's institutionalism, is being slowly but constantly overcome in the macro economic and institutional aspects (NGP, increase of National reserves, payments of the external debt, financial stability, increase in the monetary flow, unemployment and poverty and indigence rates' decreasing, reinforcement of public powers and of the constitutional State, etc.). Nevertheless the turning point has left a deep mark in the Argentine society. The social gaps, the economic unbalances, and the inequities that resulted se have generated the breaking of social networks, which had historically been assumed as this society's main capital. However, according to official data, in 2006 the Argentine economy had an annual 8.5%, growth, with yearly average ratios of 9% during four consecutive years. These numbers were maintained and even they were deepened during the 2007.

The public expense had the priority of recovering the social and productive infrastructure, relegated during the previous decade. The primary expenses grew 26.2% in the year. The most dynamic component was capital expenses, increased to 64.5%. The infrastructure' cost reached approximately 3.5% of the GIP. A significant recovery of the retired people's spending power, and social cover increase of for third age people who had been marginalized from the system forced a security cost increase of 26.9% in the year. Finally, there was also an increase in the public sector' wage, which allowed civil servants to obtain an improvement of approximately 6% in their spending power during 2006. According to official data, in 2006 the Argentine economy had an annual 8.5%, growth, with yearly average ratios of 9% during four consecutive years. From the beginning of the XXth Century, it is possible to identify at least three cycles in which an (accumulated), GIP' fall

above 20% took place, followed by a strong recovery. According to the 2006 Ministry of National Economy's annual report, this is one of those moments. These numbers were maintained and even they were deepened during the 2007.

In spite of Argentina´s economic development, poverty and indigence are still a serious phenomenon, even if the last 5 years have witnessed a decrease in the number of poor and indigent people. During the economic growth phases, the indicators' recuperation capacity has been slower, not reaching yet the previous levels. In the first semester of 2007, in the context of a remarkable economic recuperation, 23,4 % of the population lived still below the poverty line, and 8,2 %, under the indigence line. However, in 2003, respectively 54 % and 27,7% of the population were in the same situation. Poverty and indigence's intensity differs according to geographical regions. The EPH (Homes´permanent Survey) shows that for the first semester of 2007, in the North –East of Argentina there is a proportion of 41% of poor people, and 17,2% of indigent people, while in the North-West region the numbers decrease to 36,4% and 11,4% respectively. The Cuyo Region, Greater Buenos Aires, and the Pampean Region show poverty levels of 22%, and indigence levels of 6%. Patagonia records the lower levels, with 12% of poverty, and 4,7% of indigence.

Part of the Argentine population that does not inhabit neither large nor medium cities lives in isolated towns, where there is not access to the Internet, and /or phone services. In year 2000 more than 1,000 towns, from 100 to 1,000 inhabitants, lacked telephone networks connecting their homes, and even public telephones. At present, Argentina's teledensity is 24%; this number hides deep regional differences. Buenos Aires City's teledensity is 60%. The main province capitals, such as Cordoba, Rosario or Mendoza, have around 35. 75% of the population lives in these territories. The richest regions rise to a teledensity of 20% (reaching 28% or more) while the poorest ones don't even achieve 10%: some provinces attain only 7% (Formosa and Santiago del Estero).

The amount of fixed lines per 100 inhabitants[1], in the country is 24%, 3,7% more than the projections estimated by the 2001 Census, which expected 20.3% of fixed lines per 100 inhabitants for that year. The opening of the market generated an avalanche of investments. From year 2000 to 2001, 4,301 million of USD was invested on telecommunications networks and services only in the first year, and 1,650 million of USD, the second. Almost 6,000 million USD allowed improving networks and services. Nevertheless, those investments were destined to the central markets, to the more important urban corridors. Public and private telecommunications' investments are developed first in the places where they can obtain faster benefits, to later expand to zones of lesser potential.

Concerning Internet access, the City of Buenos Aires' homes are the best equipped. Buenos Aires inhabitants are also well provided in other communication technologies: they display the highest proportion mobile telephony's active lines users. The city is also equipped with a profuse semi-public telephony network, as well as public and private parlours and cybercafés. This situation offers an outstanding contrast with inland regions connectivity, particularly the poorer Northeast and Northwest areas.

1 National Communications Comission, Comisión Nacional de Comunicaciones, (CNC)

According with Prince & Cooke's estimations[2], in their "2006 Argentine Market of Informatics and Telecommunications", from the year 2000 to 2006, Argentina's Internet users have increased from 2.400.000 to 13.000.000. Between 2003 and 2006, after the 2002 crisis, the average yearly growth was over 30 %. This study shows that at least 34% of the Argentines use, at least partially, Information Society's tools

The Internet users' profile has changed, from an initial profile related to elite, with university studies, high informatics knowledge, high income, and mostly male, to the present user. These are some of the more visible changes:

- Higher penetration of low and medium socio economic levels; these groups started their entry between 2000 and 2001.
- The users' educational average level decreases yearly, including population with primary and secondary studies.
- Gender balance in the Internet: the ratio between male and female users reached 50% years ago.
- In the last years, extreme age users made their entry in the Internet. Minors under 18 are more than 24% of the present users. The average age, since 2003, is about 29 years old.
- Entry of users with low technological knowledge, due to the use of cybercafés.

The last years' strong growth had diverse drivers: on one hand, the cybercafés, in which each computer can be used by many users per day, during many hours, seven days a week. On the other hand, since the 2001-2002 crisis, and for two years, many users entered the Internet encouraged by the so-called home free-access, which allowed users to pay for the Internet time they consumed without having to pay for a fixed fee. A third factor, between 2005 and 2006, has been the strong development of the broadband in the homes.

Broadband growth in Argentina went from 125,000 clients in 2002 to 475,000 in 2004, and to 880,000 in December 2005. Year 2006 finished with 1.590.000 subscribers, including homes and enterprises. This growth of more than 80% has been achieved partly thanks to the consumption increase, as well as to the telephone enterprises' strategies to attract clients through promotions and prices' decrease, oriented to a future strategy in triple or quadruple play, the combined provision of fixed phone lines, Internet, TV or videos, and cell phones, within the growing convergence phenomenon. This impulse was accompanied by a higher selling of PCs. The PCs park went from 3,8 millions in 2002 to 6 millions in 2006. By December 2007, the number grew to more than 7 millions installed PCs. In early 2008, 11% of the Argentine homes have two PCs, according to Microsoft. This enterprise expects a growth of 20% by December 2008[3].

2 Finquelievich, Susana; Prince, Alejandro. El Involuntario Rol Social de la Cibercafés. Dunken.2007

[3] La Gaceta Journal, February 6, 2008, http://www.lagaceta.com.ar/nota/256511/Informacion_General/11pc_hogares_argentinos_tiene_dos_computadoras.html

Also remarkable is the growth in the notebooks market: 15% of the sales, which promises a successful combination with hot spots and Wi Fi. The access to the Internet trough cell phones, even if still low, promises to increase by means of the offer of new contents and applications, as well as with the new PDA terminals (cell phone + agenda + GPS, photo camera, etc.). By the end of 2006 there were 24 million mobile lines in Argentina, which reached 27 millions in December 2007. The enormous cell phone's capillarity opens a broad horizon of Internet access[4]. This type of growth has been the product of a disordered expansion, lacking a State strategy (a deficiency that was inherited from the 1989 privatizations), and which responds basically to the market's interests. In Argentina, the technological innovation and its dissemination are originated fundamentally by enterprises' strategies.

1.4 Research Rationale, Sample, and Methods

This research is focused on the venues and institutions that facilitate public access to information and communication, with special emphasis on the communities' special needs, public access to local information and communication, and ICTs role in these processes. We have based the research on an in-depth analysis of social unbalances and inequities in Argentina, and on their impacts on access to information. We have also analyzed the information needs of diverse social groups, the contribution that information can make to their everyday lives, and the conditions of Argentina's public information venues, as well as their history, and their future perspectives.

We have studied the physical infrastructure and equipment, as well as the human resources in a variety of these venues, as well the contents and the information they provide. We have also surveyed the processes of communication and knowledge production carried on at these venues, as well as macro- contextual factors such as governmental policies, geography, ethnical and idiomatic differences, etc.

We have identified the following venues:

1. Libraries: Popular libraries and Public libraries.

2. Public Access venues with commercial objetives: Cybercafes (this category includes private parlors) and Telephone Cooperatives.

3. Public access venues with social objetives: Governmental and non-govermmental organization' parlors.

The selection criteria are based in the first place on the research's logic framework, which subdivides in two the universe to be explored: libraries and other public access venues.

"Libraries" integrate clearly defined universe: they have always had visibility and history in Argentina, and have provided more than a century of community services. Within this universe, the libraries´ diverse working methodologies, target population, and general

[4] Nota: cifras actualizadas sobre el Mercado TIC Argentino y sus indicadores pueden accederse desde "Observatorio TIC" en www.princecooke.com.

modalities, also show clear definitions. Public libraries (both popular and public), as well as specialized libraries - which do not integrate our research universe- conform a constellation of interacting institutions, which carry on their activities without many somersaults.

The second universe (other public access venues) is much more complex to delimit and to investigate. Not only is it strongly diverse: most of these venues are very young. They have flourished in the last years, mainly after the 2001-2002 crisis, and they have fastly occupied a relevant place in individuals' and communities' everyday life.

Unlike libraries, the other public access venues do not show clear territorial limits; their development potential, as well as their capacities to overcome obstacles cannot yet be accurately foreseen. Many of these initiatives have already failed in their early years, but yet many have assumed a relevant place as information venues, deserving a careful and systematic following by researchers and by policy makers.

Considering these dynamic perspectives, we have decided to classify this complex universe having into account the significance, - the view, the logic, the objectives- that owners and administrators adjudicate to these venues: commercial goals, or social goals. According to this logic, we have classified these venues in: a) commercial venues (such as private cybercafés and parlors); b) social venues (such as State – provided information venues).

In the second phase of the research the team focused on validating the verisimilitude and consistence of the collected information. The team has focused on some central issues:

1. Research the internal historical, territorial, institutional, services' logic in each studied venue, as well as on the possibilities to find common points for integration and articulation.

2. Identify the venues' possible development scenarios using the 14 research categories, as well as the conditions that should accompany these scenarios.

Focus on the social actors' voices and opinions: large telephone enterprises, cooperatives, officials in charge of the National Information Society policies and strategies, libraries coordinators, cooperative's managers, and civil society organizations' leaders. Two other important actors have been consulted: the persons in charge of libraries, cybercafés, parlours and social venues, and NGOs leaders.

1.5 Information Needs of Underserved Communities

As mentioned before, poverty and indigence's intensity differs according to the diverse geographical regions. The EPH (Homes´permanent Survey) shows that for the first semester of 2007, in the North –East of Argentina there is a proportion of 41% of poor people, and 17,2% of indigent people, while in the North-West region the numbers decrease to 36,4% and 11,4% respectively. The Cuyo Region, Greater Buenos Aires, and the Pampean Region show poverty levels of 22%, and indigence levels of 6%. Patagonia records the lower levels, with 12% of poverty, and 4,7% of indigence. In the large urban

agglomerations, mainly in Buenos Aires, Rosario, Córdoba, La Plata, Bahia Blanca, Mendoza, Tucumán, etc., there are areas of concentrated and segregated poverty.

In 2008, Argentina lacks universal service, meaning telecommunications access for all the country's inhabitants. Universal service is achieved when in every city, town or rural area, even if the houses are not provided with telecommunications services, the population can access these services in nearby public venues (parlours, cibercafés, telephone and of Internet kiosks, Community Technological Centres – CTCs, etc.) which permit at least basic access to information and telecommunications

Part of the Argentine population that does not inhabit neither large nor medium cities lives in isolated towns, where there is not access to the Internet, and /or phone services. In year 2000 more than 1,000 towns, from 100 to 1,000 inhabitants, lacked telephone networks connecting their homes, and even public telephones. These underserved communities have habitually transportation problems. To travel to or from them, by dirt routes, requires overcoming frequently serious climatologic problems. Many of the Cordillera towns, along the 40 Route, share these conditions.

1.6 Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities in Key Public Access Venues

The strenghts in public and popular libraries are their strong integration into communities, the gratuity and accessibility of their services, the varied activities they supply, the support tey receive from the State, and the information and exchange networks they have established. Their weaknesses are the low level of technological equipment. Those which do not receive State's support suffer from deteriorated premises, low equipment, and a lower capacity to provide services to the communities. Besides, most of the libraries employ volunteer staff, with the consequent discontinuity of staff availability. Most of all, most of the libraries are organized in the old fashioned, paper=based ways, and the directive staff is not yet alert about the ICTs advantages. Their opportunities reside in the State's political will to reinforce the libraries system

The strengths of venues with commercial goals are their low cost, their popularity, their capacity to support themselves without any State s help, and to frequently upgrade their informatics equipments. Their weaknesses come from the insufficiency of public legislation and regulations concerning these venues, as well as from their unequal distribution in the national territory. Their opportunities are related to the society's demand for information, to the increase of some economic sectors, such as tourism, which are strong information demanders, and to their capacity to keep their fees low.

The strengths of the venues with social goals come from their strong perception of social demands: these venues focus first on identifying the population's demands, and secondly, on information venues as a means to satisfy them. Moreover, the flexibility and informality of their organization is strength as well as a weakness. Their weaknesses concern their difficulties to sustain long term projects, their deep dependence, almost clientelism, from the State. Their main opportunities are to receive an increased support from the State and from international organizations; since the State needs social organizations to fulfill some

of the populations needs, these organizations can become an articulating agent for States policies and strategies.,

1.7 Salient Findings

This research has allowed our research team to:

Identify the inequalities and inequities that have impacts on general living conditions, and particularly on information access. Two types of inequalities have been defined: socio economic inequalities, related mainly to the external processes affecting individuals and families – poverty and indigence, income distribution, employment, labour situation, gender, ethnic factors, etc.)- ; and territorial inequalities, linked to regional and local dynamics and contrast – regional inequalities, and inequalities within large urban areas.

The identification of inequalities is key when developing research on public accesses to information, because inequality is considered by this research team as a main constituent of the present development model. Not only does inequality generate poverty: it is at the very origin of the mentioned deep crisis of social cohesion.

It is important to remark that, simultaneously to the increase of macro-economic indexes, Argentina is going through a disordered but systematic raise of fixed and mobile telephone teledensity, as well as of broadband connections, among other ICT-related sectors. Nevertheless, even if Argentina is considered as the most evolved Latin American on information society matters, the population has not yet has access to universal service, and infrastructure and services' differences are still notorious among regions, and within large urban areas.

Define the venues' map, in order to analyze the conditions that determine the information's accessibility. This map includes:

LIBRARIES. (Public and popular libraries).

PUBLIC ACCESS VENUES WITH COMMERCIAL GOALS: (Cybercafés (this category includes private parlors) and Telephone Cooperatives' parlors.

PUBLIC ACCESS VENUES WITH SOCIAL GOALS (governmental and non-governmental initiatives for public venues).

Measure the existing gap between the right to information - granted by the Argentine Republic Constitution, and by an incomplete set of national, provincial, and local Laws and norms-, and the real mechanisms to put these rights into effect through the actions of diverse market, State, and civil society agents.

When comparing the possibilities of information access offered to individuals, families, groups, and institutions, with the real information use to which society has access, an unequal panorama can be immediately perceived; the access is concentrated in the most favoured economic and territorial sectors, with islands of information resource's abundance, and constant cutting-edge technological updating, and holes of information and technological resource's squalor.

Building this information resources' map has allowed this research team to identify the main actors with whom it is necessary to interact when planning proposals and implementing policies and strategies.

In the libraries' universe these actors are the National Commission for the Protection of Popular Libraries –CONABIP- and the National Secretariat of Culture; the Argentine Republic Association of Graduate Librarians –ABGRA; the Province's governmental officials in charge of the libraries' area; a set of specialists and researchers who are not integrated to ABGRA; popular libraries' coordinators and persons in charge, and the volunteers that

In the private venue's universe, the main actors are the executives in charge of the main two telephone enterprises, Telefónica and Telecom, and the Telephone Cooperatives' managers. It has been considerable more complex to obtain information from cybercafés and parlours' individual owners, since the in Argentina; these venues do not integrate any type of Federation or association. Their practices are determined and influenced by their providers: telecommunication and informatics' enterprises.

In the social venues' universe, the present main players are the National Secretariat of Communications' Information Society Program –PSI, the Federal Investment Council – CFI; and the National Ministry of Economy. The recently created National Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, as well as some Provincial Governments, as the Province of San Luis, also deserve to be included in this map5. The National government tends at present to admit the country's problems regarding information access, and to impel and implement new initiatives to increase equity's levels.

Civil Society organizations have also encouraged and implemented initiatives regarding equity in information access. Among them there are Foundations that work directly with information venues: Equidad Foundation, Nodo Tau, Evolución Foundation, and others. Others are intermediate organizations, such as GADIS, and LINKS, which study the evolution of information access in relation to civil society. Still others play an active role in spurring both public and private sector's initiatives on ICT and information access for the whole population, as the Network of Argentine Digital Organizations, RODAr. The most involved international and cooperation organizations are IDB, IDRC, APC, and the European Union. Enterprises such as Microsoft, Intel, National and private Banks, actively relate to the social sector in the implementation of information and communication initiatives.

A considerable number of researchers, specialist, consultants, governmental and former governmental servants develop considerable contributions to the debates, critical reflections, and thoughts on this area.

Perceiving that the articulation and relations between the diverse types of venues (and, frequently, and among the same kind of venues) is practically nonexistent. The most outstanding fissure is the one between the social and private universe (cybercafés and social venues). This lack of programmed or specific interactivity between the existent

[5] The National Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, as well as some Provincial Government's actions and programs, such as the Province of San Luis, will be studied in depth in the second phase of the research.

nearly 20000 diverse venues throughout the country is a key aspect which deserves a deeper field research.

The lack of association among cybercafés and parlours hinders the initiatives implying partnerships with other kids of venues. Not even the Cooperatives, private civil associations that follow the private sector's marketing paradigms, have succeeded in integrating partnerships with the social venues.

Libraries, which have historically worked as networks, show a high interest in sharing resources, information, Technologies, and actions. The National State plays an outstanding role at supporting these exchanges.

On the other hand, this research has found a strong State tendency (80% of the recorded plans and projects) to implement its social campaigns and projects though social or non governmental organizations, benefiting from their insertion in the respective communities and their management capabilities..

Concluding that, with respect to the population's physical access to information, 2186 popular and public libraries were identified. Of them, 1995 are popular libraries, and 231 are public and national libraries. Argentina's inhabitants can also have access to information at between 14.900 and 17.000 privates venues (the data varies according to the consulted source), and nearly 1.500 Cooperatives' cybercafés and parlours. According to this initial survey, there are also 364 social venues, 117 of which are directly managed by NGOs, and the remaining 247 are the result of Governmental Plans, implemented mainly in association with Social Community Organizations (SCOs).

Identifying a venues' geographical distribution that obeys to diverse logic models. Libraries, which have a long history intimately linked to the population's growth, and are deeply imbedded in the regional territories, are distributed in all the Provinces and regions. 88% of them are located in urban areas and 12% in rural areas, proportions that follow the population's distribution pattern: 91% of the population is urban and 12%, rural. This suggests that this venues' distribution follows population density logic. There is no information about private venues' distribution in the diverse provinces and cities. 42% of the private venues are located in the City of Buenos Aires and its metropolitan area, and the remaining 58% are located in the rest of the country. Their distribution logic follows market logic: offer and demand. The implementation, opening, closure and renovation of these venues depend on their economic success. Social venues' logic seems to follow their declarations regarding their struggle against poverty, the reduction of the digital gap, social inclusion, and empowering communities. 43% of these venues are locates in the North East and the North West regions, the poorest in the country, while 39% of them are located in Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area and the Pampean Region, the richest and most densely populated areas.

Observing a strong tendency to ICT incorporation in libraries. 44 to 60% of them have Internet access, even if only 30% have broadband connections, and the remaining 70% have dial-up connections. 100% of the private and cooperative's venues have ICT services, most of them with broadband connections.

Understanding that Argentine society, as stated by numerous research and studies, values highly the incorporation of technology to its everyday life, and that an increasing number of people of all social classes -even if mainly urban- use or are interested in using ICT services to fulfil their information and communication needs.

2 Methodology

2.1 Venue Selection

2 paragraphs

Brief description of the selection process: how you selected the types of venues to be studied, why they were included, why others were left out.

Note: this data collection template is designed to capture info about 4 venue types. If you study in detail more than 4 venue types in the country, include a full description of the 5th one as an appendix, using the same set of questions.

The selection criteria are based in the first place on the research's logic framework, which subdivided in two the universe to be explored: libraries, and other public access venues. "Libraries", taken as a whole as a social actor, is a clearly defined actor, which historically has supplied educational and cultural services to diverse communities for a century and a half in Argentina. Within the libraries universe, their diverse working methodologies, addressed public, general modalities, also show clear definitions. Public libraries (both popular and public), as well as those that do not integrate our research universe, conform a constellation of interacting institutions, which carry on their activities without many somersaults.

The second universe (other public access venues) is much more complex to delimit and to investigate. Not only is it strongly diverse: most of these venues are very young. They have flourished in the last years, mainly after the 2001-2002 crisis, and they have rapidly occupied a relevant place in individuals' and communities' everyday life. Unlike libraries, the other public access venues do not show clear territorial limits, and their development potential, as well as their capacities to overcome obstacles cannot yet be accurately predicted. Many of these initiatives have already failed in their early years, but yet many have assumed a relevant place as information venues, deserving a careful and systematic following by researchers and by policy makers. Considering these dynamic perspectives, we have decided to classify this complex universe having into account the significance, - the view, the logic, the objectives- that owners and administrators adjudicate to these venues: commercial goals, or social goals. According to this logic, we have classified these venues in: a) commercial venues (such as private cybercafés and parlors), and b) social venues (such as State – implemented and supported information venues).

2.1.1 Venues studied

Enter the details to complete the table based on the venues studied in this country (more details will be filled in other sections):

	Public Libraries	Public Acces Venues with commercial objetives(*)	Public Acces Venues with social objetives
Total number in country (***)	2.186	18.500	491
A. # in urban location	2.011	18.500	414
% offering ICT	61%	100%	100%
Total # of people served (annual)	n/d	5.500.000 (**)	n/d
B. # in non-urban location	175	n/d	77
% offering ICT	61%	n/d	100%
Total # of people served (annual)	n/d	n/d	n/d

Comments (comment especially on definition of urban/non urban in the country):

(*) There is no available data allowing identifying the urban - non urban distribution in these venues. Therefore, Field A shows the information for the whole country.

(**) Estimated total in year 2007

(***) Estimated total for the country: 21.177

2.1.1 Other experiences of public access to information that are not quite "venues"

Basic information about other experiences with potential to make a difference to the public access landscape (tea rooms, Wi-Fi hotspots, coffee houses, web information portals) although they are not quite a "public information venue" in the sense defined for this study (see research design document for definition).

Other public access experience #1: Wi-Fi

Description :

Wi-Fi (short for "wireless fidelity") is a term for certain types of wireless local area network (WLAN) that use specifications in the 802.11 family. The term Wi-Fi was created by an organization called the Wi-Fi Alliance, which oversees tests that certify product interoperability. A product that passes the alliance tests is given the label "Wi-Fi certified" (a registered trademark).

Total number in country:

Wi-Fi hotspots are available in coffe houses, hotels, ad some public buildings. Rosario has inaugurated public wi-fi in the city´s central area, while the Provinces of San Luis and San Juan are currently working to provide Wi Fi networks to all urban settlements above 50 inhabitants. There is no data about the total number of hotspots, which changes constantly.

2.1.2 Other existing public access venues, not included in this study

Basic information about other public access venues **not** included in the study (e-tuktuk, school or other private libraries not open to the public, health centers, etc), although they could play a role in public access information in the country. Indicate rationale for NOT including them in the study.

Other venue not studied #1: Especialist, University and schols liraries

Total number in country: 2703

% offering ICT access: s/d

% in urban location: s/d

Description of the Venue:

This account allows appreciating the strong relationship between Libraries' history with the country. According to the Argentine Republic Graduated Librarians (AGBRA), in the country are at 4688 registered libraries. They are classified into Popular, Public, National, School, University, and Specialized.

Reason why it was not included in the study:

Specialized libraries, Universities libraries, and school libraries are not considered in this research, since their access is limited to specific users, and do not match the "public access" category.

2.2 Inequity Variables

1-2 paragraphs each.

Describe how each variable affects equitable public access to information and ICT in this country, and what you did in this study to make sure each one was addressed (for example, if you visited venues in both urban and non-urban locations).

Also include additional variables of local relevance to your country, as you listed in Form 1, section 1a.

2.2.1 Socio-economic status

In the first Semester of the 2007, within the framework of noticeable economic recovery, 23.4% of the population was below the poverty line of and 8.2%, below the indigence line. However, in 2003, 54% and 27.7%, respectively, were in this situation.

The problem is not only the quantitative extension of poverty, but its qualitative depth. The poor and indigent homes have average incomes quite lower than the respective lines. Moreover, new poverty forms have arisen. There are homes that not located in the Unsatisfied Basic Needs (UBN) group, but which have undergone a substantial income loss.

These new forms of poverty have grown due to the increase of unemployment and underemployment, income reduction, and the expansion of precarious, unstable jobs, lacking social coverage. Although in the last years there has been an important reduction of poverty and indigence levels with respect to year 2002, the living conditions have not managed to return too the 1974 levels in the short-medium term. The unequal distribution characteristics of the present model are not modified: more of 52% of the total wealth is concentrated by 20% of the. The relation between the income of the richer 10% and the poorest has broadened throughout the last the 30 years. Between 1974 and 1991 this relation went from 9.5 times to 19.5, and reached the maximum of 42 in 2002. In the fourth trimester of 2006, the richest 10% of the population had 36.4% of the total generated income, whereas the poorer 10% had 1.3%. Thus, the richest 10% had, by the fourth trimester of 2003, an income 28 times superior to the poorest 10%. Recent INDEC's data regarding the third trimester of 2004 elevates this number to 32.

2.2.2 Educational level

Gender, geographical location, social and work integration, can generate educational inequity situations, due to the differentiated resources and conditions of the educational system, as well as for the educational results reached by diverse social groups. In Argentina, the highest educational inequities are found between socio-economic groups. Gender and geographical localization differences are less relevant.

Education at all levels is free in Argentina. However, depending on their social and economic origin, students face unequal access conditions, as well as unequal permanence, results, and graduation. Particularly educational achievements -years of study, quantity and quality of learning- differ according to the students' socio-economic origin, and their family context. Children and young people are the most affected by the increase of poverty and indigence, since this situation has direct impacts in their education. From mid 1980s onwards, the Argentine educational system has enjoyed a high expansion which facilitated an almost universal access to basic education, but the educational level reached by the lowest income groups' students is quite different from the level reached by higher-income students. Low-income students generally quit school after a few years; therefore, their educational level is not enough for their insertion in the labor market - at least, in non precarious jobs or conditions-or to earn enough income to ensure them a minimum welfare.

Educational development favours mainly the non-poor sectors, which generally complete their secondary and high education studies, while the poor sectors generally do not complete secondary studies. Educational gaps between the diverse socio-economic sectors have grown wider in the last decade. In the schools in which low-income students reach 20%, the range of those which repeat school years reaches 1,35%. Almost 100% of the students complete their studies. In schools where low-income students overcome 80%, the rate of students repeating school years rises to 12%, and 3% of the students quit their studies.

There is strong link poverty and educational results: the higher the percentage of poor

students in educational establishments, the lower the educational achievements. The results obtained by students in schools with highest proportion of poor pupils is, in average, 30% lower than the results obtained in schools with lower proportion of poor students.

2.2.3 Age

In 2001 the population over 65 years old was 3.587.620 individuals, or 9,9 % of the overall population6, while the population younger than 14 years old was 28,3%. In 2001, the life expectancy was 73,8 years. 70% of senior citizens are retired, while 15,6% keeps some kind of economic activity (men 26%, women 8,5%). 81,3 % of the senior adults has medical coverage, and 6,2 of them are illiterate.

Age is important regarding the use of information venues. Young people, particularly the portion between 16 and 35 years, are the most frequent users of ICTs, while use diminishes among the population over 65. Our research considers age differences in the use of public venues..

2.2.4 Gender

Women continue to face difficulties in getting into the labour market. This concerns not only the poorest women, but also the most highly educated, which suggests that universal education alone does not guarantee the same return for years invested in studying for boys as for girls. Regarding mothers situation, the coverage of services for children under five in Buenos Aires is relatively good, but it is less satisfactory in areas where it is most needed (rural zones) in order to empower women and encourage their access to employment, education or health services.

According to the Survey of Labour Indicators, only 3 out of 10 formal jobs are occupied by women. Only in a 4.6 % of the cases the employers ask that the vacancy is covered by a female candidate. According to the Homes Permanent Survey, female unemployment doubles male unemployment. In the Federal Capital, the positions occupied by women have a 32 % lower remuneration than the occupied by men. Important improvements in the economic and social status of the women were registered, among them, their increasing presence in the public sphere, the education and the promulgation of laws that protect their rights. Nevertheless, these advances are relative, seen under the light of the permanent inequities, maintained by an economic and political context.

Gender is not as relevant as age regarding the use of information venues. Women and men's use of these venues is almost equivalent.

2.2.5 Location

This is a good place to offer further details on the urban/peri-urban/non-urban definitions and relevance in your country, among other location variables.

[6] Censo Nacional 2001. INDEC

In the last years Argentina has accentuated its internal differences: while the central regions (Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area, and the Pampean region), concentrate more of 75% of the agricultural and industrial capital, the higher mass of workers, as well as a concentration of science and technology capacities, the peripheral regions enter a vicious circle of declination.

The development of the Argentina territory has historically depended on the country's economy and productions integration to the international markets. The result is a deeply unbalanced territory, with a strong demographic concentration in some urban areas, particularly the Buenos Aires Metropolitan area (39.1% of the inhabitants are distributed in a surface of 3.761.274 km2, with a gross internal product (PBI) of $ 330,565 million in year 2006), and with deserted areas in many provinces and regions (particularly the North West). In the large urban agglomerations, mainly in Buenos Aires, Rosario, Córdoba, La Plata, Mendoza, Tucumán, etc., there are areas of concentrated and segregated poverty.

Large urban agglomerations imply even larger hinterlands, including the central city, and diverse urban settlements located into an imaginary perimeter determined by present or potential interaction levels, as well primary production areas, and vacant spaces. One of the main characteristics of the Argentine cities is their deep social and spatial. Although during the 1990's an important dynamism in infrastructure and services' was registered -to a great extent product of the privatizations- these investments have paradoxically complemented and strengthened inequalities, preventing large urban sectors to have access to basic social services

Another mechanism that feeds the poor social isolation is the desertion of public spaces by the globalized middle classes. The more these contacts decrease in public spaces (transportations, public squares, schools, hospitals, soccer stadiums, cultural events, etc.), the more the structural base which supports the high and middle classes' capacity for empathy and ethical obligation feelings is weakened. The simplification of the security discourse, the isolation of the wealthier groups in private neighbourhoods and country clubs, and the segmentation of educational, social, and health institutions do the rest of the job. The "otherness" conscience is acutely present in social relationships.

2.2.6 Other inequity variables

Other Inequity Variable 1: Employment and labour situation

In the last 30 years, employment problems have occupied a central place in the social agenda.

The global tendencies in the labour market are heterogeneous in Argentina. The region which records the worse labour situation, followed by labour performance, is Greater Buenos Aires (that concentrates 42.8% of the urban population) followed by the Northwest and the Pampa (third trimester of 2004). In addition to being scarce, employment has become more precarious, as far as stability, level of remuneration and social cover (moon work). In the urban areas, only 40% of the wage-earners have social cover. A percentage of

60% works in informally, or by their own account. Within the registered work, reforms of the labour legislation in the last fifteen years caused an important damage of working conditions ("labour flexibility"), limiting the workers' stability and social cover.

According to 2001 Census, 56% of the work force (or 83%, if we considered those that have less than a year of labor antiquity) are located in precarious jobs (house cleaning service, Non-professional self-employed, informal wage-earners, beneficiaries of social plans). On the other hand, the picture of wages and of income in present Argentina is deeply heterogeneous. It is characterized by low average income, and by a high dispersion. This heterogeneity operates within an inequality pattern. For example, the precarious labour force's average incomes are 50% lower than the whole of the employed workers.

Those who kept their jobs had to face a substantial wage reduction through frozen salaries: according to an estimation made by FLACSO' Area of Economy and Technology, the wage deterioration that accompanied that process is clearly perceived when we see that at the present time the real average wage of the Argentine economy is 60% lower than the effective wage's average in 19747.

This implies that a considerable proportion of the urban and rural poor universe is integrated by people who have formal or informal jobs (the figure of the "poor by income worker" was not spread in the early 1970'). Moreover, a strong instability in working conditions reduces employment stability (and with it the possibility of improving the living conditions) and the social security8.

Other Inequity Variable 2: Ethnic

CEPAL's report "Social Panorama of Latin America 2006" estimates the original people in the region surpass 30 million. In Argentina, according to the INDEC census of 2004-2005, Complementary Survey of Indigenous Towns 2004-2005 (ECPI), 600,329 people recognized themselves as integrating an indigenous people9. These people comprise of a great diversity of indigenous people, distributed in all the provinces. The mapuche, kolla, tufa and wichí people, altogether rise to near 50% of t of the recorded population.

These populations are mostly rural, although many live in urban areas. The original people's age structures are "younger" than the national averages, with higher fecundity levels and elevated mortality rates in childhood, which makes necessary the design of public policies for their demographic, cultural and territorial specificities.

Other Inequity Variable 3: Inequities in ICT services

In 2008, Argentina lacks universal service, meaning telecommunications access for all the

7 See also Arceo E. y Schorr M., Argentina: del "modelo de la Convertibilidad" al "modelo de dólar alto", Área de Economía y Tecnología - FLACSO, mimeo, 2004.
8 Véase CELS, Informe Anual del Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales, Buenos Aires, 2003.
9 http://www.indec.gov.ar/nuevaweb/cuadros/2/w000001.xls

country's inhabitants. Universal service is achieved when in every city, town or rural area, even if the houses are not provided with telecommunications services, the population can access these services in nearby public venues (parlours, cibercafés, telephone and of Internet kiosks, Community Technological Centres – CTCs, etc.) which permit at least basic access to information and telecommunications

Part of the Argentine population that does not inhabit neither large nor medium cities lives in isolated towns, where there is not access to the Internet, and /or phone services. In year 2000 more than 1,000 towns, from 100 to 1,000 inhabitants, lacked telephone networks connecting their homes, and even public telephones. These underserved communities have habitually transportation problems. To travel to the, or out of them, by dirt routes, requires overcoming frequently serious climatologic problems. Many of the Cordillera towns, along the 40 Route, share these conditions.

Argentina's teledensity is 24%; this number hides deep regional differences. Buenos Aires City's teledensity is 60%. The main province capitals, such as Cordoba, Rosario or Mendoza, have around 35. 75% of the population lives in these territories. The richest regions rise to a teledensity of 20% (reaching 28% or more) while the poorest ones don't even achieve 10%: some provinces attain only 7% (Formosa and Santiago del Estero).

The amount of fixed lines per 100 inhabitants10, in the country is 24%, 3,7% more than the projections estimated by the 2001 Census, which expected 20.3% of fixed lines per 100 inhabitants for that year. The telecommunications privatization in 1989 had established that telecommunications enterprises must dedicate 1% of their total income to implement communications whereas the National Communications Secretary would require them to, in an attempt to serve the marginalized communities or social groups. The opening of the market generated an avalanche of investments. From year 2000 to 2001, 4,301 millions of USD were invested on telecommunications networks and services only in the first year, and 1,650 million of USD, the second. Almost 6,000 million USD allowed improving networks and services. Nevertheless, those investments were destined to the central markets, to the more important urban corridors. Public and private telecommunications' investments are developed first in the places where they can obtain faster benefits, to later expand to zones of minor potential (Aguiar, 2007). Already when the National Telecommunications enterprise, ENTEL, was working (it was privatized in 1989), hundreds of localities had requested to be served with infrastructure and services.

The City of Buenos Aires' homes are the best equipped. In the City of Buenos Aires the problem of laying wire nets does not exist, therefore any home can have it installed. The proportion of citizens who have mobile telephony's active lines is the higher in the country. There's also a profuse semi-public telephony network, as well as parlours and cybercafés, all around the City. It is also the City of Buenos Aires (where the number homes with NBI is the lowest of the country) the one that has higher proportion of homes with cellular

10 National Communications Comission, Comisión Nacional de Comunicaciones, (CNC)

telephony. Their inhabitants enjoy all the existing services of information access.

According with Prince & Cooke's estimations11, in their "2006 Argentine Market of Informatics and Telecommunications", from the year 2000 to 2006, Argentina's Internet users have increased from 2.400.000 to 13.000.000. Between 2003 and 2006, after the 2002 crisis, the average yearly growth was over 30 %. This study shows that at least 34% of the Argentines use, at least partially, Information Society's tools.

2.3 Data Gathering Techniques

Describe the different data gathering techniques you used to conduct this study. Provide specific examples and sample selection criteria.

2.3.1 Literature review

Describe the type and approximate number of documents reviewed. Include detailed references of the most useful ones. Include valid links for all online sources.

37 number of documents reviewed.

2.3.1.1 Most useful bibliography:

1. INDEC, National Institute of Statistics and Census,. National Census of Population and Housing, 2001. Official statistic information of the National State, institution dependent of the National Ministry of Economy, Database for the validation and construction of the country's profiles, www.indec.gov.ar
2. ONTI, National Office for Information Technologies, Ministry of Public Management, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
3. Official bulletins. Collect of current legislation regarding information access, at national, provincial, and local levels.
4. Ministry of Economy. Data collection on the telecommunications industry, investment on public works, and indicators related to ICT services' consumption.
5. Specialized bibliography General, and specialized journals, newspapers, and news letters.
6. Virtual libraries
7. Documents, research, and papers presented in national and international events. CONABIP. National Commission for the Protection of Popular Libraries. Official documents and statistics. Libraries guide, website www.conabip.gov.ar
8. ABGRA. Argentine Republic Graduate Librarians' Association. Official documents and statistics. Libraries guide, website www.abgra.org.ar

11 Finquelievich, Susana; Prince, Alejandro. El Involuntario Rol Social de la Cibercafés. Dunken.2007

9. CENOC. National Center of Community Organizations. Database on civil society organizations, www.cenoc.gov.ar

10. GADIS. Group of Social and institutional Analysis, Grupo de Análisis y desarrollo institucional y social. GADIS. Official documents and statistics. website www.gadis.org.ar

11. TELPIN Telecommunications' cooperative.

12. International organizations' studies: OECD, ECLAC, PNUD, BID, UNESCO, etc.

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15. Finquelievich, Daniel (2007): "Nativos al poder" en: Finquelievich Susana, Coordinadora (2007): "La Innovación ya no es lo que era. Impactos meta-tecnológicos en áreas metropolitanas", Editorial Dunken, Buenos Aires.

16. Finquelievich, Susana y Finquelievich, Daniel (2007): "Iniciativas para acceder a la Sociedad de la Information: Sistemas sociales de respuesta a necesidades de conectividad", en: Ester Kaufman, "Políticas Public y tecnologías", Ed. La Crujía, Buenos Aires, 2007.

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18. Finquelievich, Susana, Coordinadora (2005): "Desarrollo local en la Sociedad de la Information: Municipios e Internet", La Crujía, Buenos Aires.

19. Finquelievich, Susana (2004). "La sociedad civil en la economía del conocimiento: TIC y desarrollo socio-económico". Buenos Aires: Instituto de Investigaciones Gino Germani, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2004. (IIGG Documentos de Trabajo, Nº 40). Disponible en la World Wide Web: <http://www.iigg.fsoc.uba.ar/docs/dt/dt40.pdf> ISBN 950-29-0829-5.

20. Foucault Michel, Dits et écrits (1984) Des espaces autres (conférence au Cercle d'études architecturales, 14 mars 1967), in Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité, n°5, octobre 1984, pp. 46-49.

21. Gurstein, M. (2003): Effective use: A community informaTIC strategy beyond the digital divide. First Monday, 8(12). http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue8_12/gurstein/index.html

22. Gurstein, M. (Ed.) (2000) Community InformaTIC: Enabling Communities with

Information and Communications Technologies, Idea Group Publishing, Hershey PA.

23. Haseloff, Anikar M. (2005): Cybercafes and their Potential as Community Development Tools in India, The Journal of Community InformaTIC, Volume 1 Number 3 (2005), http://www.cijournal. net/viewarticle.php?id=68&layout=html(accessed: June 10, 2005)

24. Herzog Roman, Bert Hoffmann, Markus Schulz (2002): Internet y política en América Latina: Regulación y uso de las nuevas tecnologías de Information y comunicación (NTIC) en América Latina en el contexto de los transformaciones políticos y económicos Frankfurt am Main,

25. Vervuert, 2002, Edición en seis tomos (I-VI), 590 S., http://www.telecommagazine.com/default.asp?journalid=2&func=departments&page=0106i21&y

26. Rozengardt Adrián y Florencia Del Gizzo. (2005) "La sociedad civil y la Sociedad de la Information: lo local como eje de convergencia", en Susana Finquelievich, TIC y desarrollo local. Municipios e Internet, La Crujía, Buenos Aires

27. Bassi, Roxana y Silvia Rabadán: (2002) "Centros Tecnológicos Comunitarios: La experiencia argentina". Congreso Apropiación Social de Tecnologías de la Information y la Comunicación en América Latina y el Caribe, Perú, 17 al 24 de marzo del 2002, http://www.links.org.ar/infoteca/ctc-peru.rtf

28. Finquelievich, Susana, and Prince, Alejandro: "El (involuntario) rol social de los cibercafés", ed. Dunken, Buenos Aires, 2007.

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30. Furuholt, B. and Kristiansen, S. (2004). Internet Cafés – venues for learning in developing countries.

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37. Abdallah, Angélica y otros. "Un país diferente, jóvenes, TIC y desarrollo". IDRC. Prometeo Libros. TEDEL.

2.3.2 Individual interviews

Describe the type and approximate number of individuals you interviewed. Include detailed contact information for the most useful ones (indicate for which topic, if appropriate). Discuss how representative is this sample of people you interviewed in relation to different opinions and perspectives in the country.

28 number of individuals interviewed.

1. MANUEL ACEVEDO (Counselor, National Program for Information Society, PSI), Information source on Community Technology Centres (CTCs), and national strategies regarding information access.
2. GONZALO HEREDIA (Director of the National Information Society Program, PSI, of the National Communication Secretariat)
3. DANIEL GARCIA ROLERO (National Information Society Program, PSI, of the National Communication Secretariat)
4. ALICIA BAÑUELOS, Minister of Progress, Province of San luis
5. ROSA WASCHENMACHER, National Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation, (FONSOFT, SECyT)
6. HENOCH AGUIAR. Member of the Argentine Academy of Communication’s Arts and Sciences; President of the Digital Foundation.
7. ALEJANDRO PRINCE, President of Prince & Cooke. Information for the country’s profile and for cybercafés.
8. FEDERICO VILLAPANDO, DIEGO ROZENGARDT. Economy Consultants.
9. ANA WORTMAN, Senior Researcher, Research Institute Gino Germani, University of Buenos Aires.
10. MICAELA PERDOMO. Statistics Consultant.
11. GRACIELA KISILEVSKY, Sociologist, University of Buenos Aires, Telephone Cooperatives.

12. ESTER KAUFMAN, Lawyer, Electronic Government, INAP (National Institute of Public Management), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
13. MARIA DEL CARMEN BIANCHI. Comisión Nacional Protectora de Popular Libraries es (CONABIP). National Commission for the Protection of Popular Libraries, President
14. MELINA CURIA. Comisión Nacional Protectora de Popular Libraries es (CONABIP). National Commission for the Protection of Popular Libraries, Technical unit
15. LORENA VEGA. Comisión Nacional Protectora de Popular Libraries es (CONABIP). National Commission for the Protection of Popular Libraries, Technical unit.
16. CLAUDIA FERNANDEZ. President. Argentine Republic Graduate Librarian
17. FRANCO CECCHINI. Director. I.Plan.
18. RICARDO BACALOR, MICROTROL Director, provider for telephone cooperatives
19. SILVIA SENEN GONZALEZ, Federal Council of Investments, CFI. Information on CFI's Access Centers (C@CFI).
20. ELIDA RODRIGUEZ, E-Government expert, Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires
21. CLAUDIA GOMEZ COSTA, former Executive of the TELPIN Telecommunications' Cooperative
22. JUAN SANTOIANNI, former Manager of the TELPIN Telecommunications' Cooperative
23. ELIDA CECCONI. Group of Social and institucional Análisis, Grupo de Análisis y desarrollo institucional y social. GADIS. Executive Director.
24. ALEJANDRA SOLLA, Executive Director, SES Foundation.
25. ALEJANDRA DAVIDZIUK. Researcher LINKS).
26. SILVIA LAGO MARTÍNEZ, Senior Researcher, Research Institute Gino Germani, University of Buenos Aires.
27. PAULA PEREZ, Fundacion Evolucion
28. CAROLINA AÑINO, Fundacion Equidad

2.3.3 Group interviews and focus groups

Describe the type and number of group interviews or focus groups you conducted. If available, include detailed contact information for the most useful informants (indicate for which topic, if

appropriate).

4 number of group interviews or focus groups.

The overall number of focus groups was 4:

2 groups of Public and Public Libraries coordinators

2 groups of NGO´s leaders

Libraries Coordinators in the City of Buenos Aires were invited by e-mail and online requests.

The most representative NGOs leaders all over the country were invited by e-mail and telephone

All the participants were identified through a previous data collection survey.

2.3.4 Site visits

Describe the number and location of site visits you conducted. If available, include detailed contact information for the most useful informants (indicate for which topic, if appropriate).

Over 100 portals and websites have been visited. The most relevant information for the present research has been found at:

http://www.indec.mecon.ar/ Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos. Ministerio de Economía.

http://www.red-vitalis.org/vitalis/index.php Información regional.

http://vecam.org/article697.html Información sobre sociedad de la información.

http://www.esterkaufman.com.ar/ Especialista en sociedad de la información.

http://www.oficinascomerciales.es/ Información económica sobre Argentina.

http://www.accessmylibrary.com/ Libraries.

http://www.cfired.org.ar/ Consejo Federal de Inversiones, Argentina.

http://bc.uns.edu.ar/alfa/ Libraries, Argentina.

http://www.abgra.org.ar/ Asociación de Bibliotecarios Graduados de la Rep. Argentina.

http://www.politicaybiblioteca.com.ar/ Sitio de debate sobre libraries.

http://argentinactc.blogspot.com/ Sitio de CTC's argentinos.

http://www.puntobiblio.com.ar/ Información sobre bibliotecas argentinas.

http://www.psi.gov.ar/ Programa Sociedad de la Información. Argentina.

http://www.desarrollosocial.gov.ar/ Ministerio de Desarrollo Social de la Nación.

http://www.conabip.gov.ar/ Comisión Nacional Protectora de Biblitecas Populares.

http://www.programamipc.gov.ar/ Programa MiPC. MInisterio de Economía, PNUD.

http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/ Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires.

http://www.equidad.org/que-es-equidad/ ONG Equidad.

http://www.mecon.gov.ar/ Ministerio de Economía.

http://www.trabajo.gov.ar/ MIn isterio de Trabajo.

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ Portal de la UNESCO sobre Bibliotecas.

http://www.librosar.com.ar/

http://www.cicomra.org.ar/cicomra2/index1.asp/

http://www.aat-ar.org/ Asociación Argentina de Teletrabajo

2.3.5 Surveys

Describe the location and number of respondents to surveys you conducted for this study. Indicate their relative distribution across venues (for example, 30% in telecentres, 20% in cybercafés, 50% in public libraries), and how they were selected.

Describe the venues, their locations and the sample size for each:

	Public Libraries	Public Acces Venues with commercial objetives	Public Acces Venues with social objetives
# of **urban** venues surveyed	700	550	30 (Focus groups)
# of **non-urban** venues surveyed	50		10 (Focus groups)
# of respondents in **urban** venues	55	250	15
# of respondents in **non-urban** venues	6		4

Survey description and comments:

Description of the survey activities and instruments used; include limitations in the sample or application

2.3.6 Other data gathering techniques

Other Data Gathering Technique 1: Data Gathering Technique

2.3.7 Most useful contacts

List here some of the most knowledgeable and useful contacts that can provide additional information and insight, in case someone else wants to gather additional information about this topic in the country.

1. MANUEL ACEVEDO (Counselor, National Program for Information Society, PSI), Information source on Community Technology Centres (CTCs), and national strategies regarding information access.
2. GONZALO HEREDIA Y DANIEL GARCIA ROLERO (National Information Society Program, PSI, of the National Communication Secretariat)
3. HENOCH AGUIAR. Member of the Argentine Academy of Communication's Arts and Sciences; President of the Digital Foundation.
4. ALICIA BAÑUELOS, Minister of Progress, Province of San Luis
5. ALEJANDRO PRINCE, President of Prince & Cooke. Information for the country's profile and for cybercafés.
6. ANA WORTMAN, Senior Researcher, Research Institute Gino Germani, University of Buenos Aires.
7. GRACIELA KISILEVSKY, Sociologist, University of Buenos Aires, Telephone Cooperatives.
8. MARIA DEL CARMEN BIANCHI. Comisión Nacional Protectora de Popular Libraries es (CONABIP). National Commission for the Protection of Popular Libraries, President
9. CLAUDIA FERNANDEZ. President. Argentine Republic Graduate Librarian
10. FRANCO CECCHINI. Director. I.Plan.
11. ELIDA RODRIGUEZ, E-Government expert, Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires
12. CLAUDIA GOMEZ COSTA, former Executive of the TELPIN Telecommunications' Cooperative
13. ELIDA CECCONI. Group of Social and institucional Análisis, Grupo de Análisis y desarrollo institucional y social. GADIS. Executive Director.
14. ALEJANDRA SOLLA, Executive Director, SES Foundation.

2.4 Research Trustworthiness and Credibility

2-3 paragraphs

Describe any steps you took to minimize your own bias in conducting this study, and to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the results you are presenting.

The construction of the research's conclusions is based on the information collected from the mentioned key social actors, the consulted bibliography, web sites, as well as the primary and secondary sources data. The trustworthiness of the results is guaranteed by comparing data coming from diverse sources. We tried to minimize our own ideological and political biases by discussing the research's progress and conclusions with colleagues.

Public Libraries: Data collected through the answers of 61 Public libraries managers, on 750 surveys.

Public Access Venues with commercial objectives: Source: our own processing of a survey to Internet users all over the country: 553 cases, of whom 24% access the Internet at public access venues with commercial objectives. The survey has a reliability of 95,5%, with an error margin of +/- 4,5%. The survey has been carried on at national level. Methodology: telephone surveys using the telephone directory, semi-structured questionnaire, with open and closed questions.

Public Access Venues with social objectives: besides interviews, and documentary information, the data was collected through the Focal Groups

2.4.1 Research limitations

Describe important limitations you encountered in conducting this research, and limitations in drawing generalizations or broader conclusions based on the findings you report.

The most important limitation was the lack of data produced by the services, programs and institutions that offer access to information. This is due, among other things, to the deficiency of systematization and monitoring policies and practices. This panorama is expressed in all the venues. Libraries are the actors that offer the highest amount of data, since they rely on the support and collaboration of governmental organizations. Private studies analyzing the ICT market do not reveal the whole reality concerning cybercafés and parlors. Governmental and non-governmental social initiatives can provide partial data on their initiatives, but the information is not systematized. Information on the geographic distribution, users number, budget, involved staff, and technological capacity of information venues has been difficult, and in some cases, impossible to obtain.

2.4.2 Team qualifications

1 paragraph

Description of the research team and its qualifications to undertake this study.

Project leader: Prof. Adrián Rozengardt. Professor. Current candidate to Master in conception and Management of Public Policies and Programs, FLACSO Argentina. Expert in planning, design, assessment and monitoring social projects, with focus in childhood and

adolescence. Consultant and researcher on the relations between public policies and ICTs. Consultant for national and international organizations. Vice President of LINKS, Civil Association for the development of Information Society.
Associated researcher: Dr. Susana Finquelievich. Architect, National University of Rosario, Argentina. Postgraduate in Urban and Regional Planning, Polytechnic University of Stettin, Poland. Master in Urbanism (Université Paris VIII), PhD in Social Sciences (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France). Senior Researcher in the National Council of Scientific and Technological Research (CONICET) on Information Society. Coordinator of the Research Program on Information Society, Instituto de Investigaciones Gino Germani, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Buenos Aires. National Contact Point in Social Sciences, Humanities and Economy for Scientific Cooperation with the European Union. President of LINKS, Civil Association for the Development of Information Society.

Research assistant: Daniel Finquelievich, Junior Researcher, member of LINKS, Historian.

3 Country Assessment

3.1 Overall Country Assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in the country, informed by the results of this research. In 2-3 paragraphs, what is your overall assessment of public access information venues in this country?

Our overall assessment of the public access information in Argentina is extremely positive, regarding public access to information provided by libraries, commercial venues, and social venues. Citizens have access to public information venues all over the country, with low-cost or free connections to the Internet. Nevertheless, a lot has yet to be done in terms of improving physical access (for example, for people with disabilities), and of training people to appropriate ICT for social uses. Moreover, In 2008, Argentina lacks universal service, meaning telecommunications access for all the country's inhabitants. Universal service is achieved when in every city, town or rural area, even if the houses are not provided with telecommunications services, the population can access these services in nearby public venues (parlours, cibercafés, telephone and of Internet kiosks, Community Technological Centres – CTCs, etc.) which permit at least basic access to information and telecommunications

We have considered two types of libraries: "Popular" and "Public". The "Popular" concept is linked to the idea "for everyone", and not only for low-income sectors. Both types of libraries serve a large territory, in large cities as well as in small towns, and rural areas. They are present in all the Provinces, as well as in the city of Buenos Aires. Within the cities, libraries are distributed in the centres as well as in poor neighbourhoods. Libraries located in rural areas and in underserved urban areas are generally the only communities' options to have access to information, culture, literature, and learning, as well as to a considerable number of social and cultural activities.

In the cybercafé category we include all the private venues allowing and encouraging public access. The typical cybercafé is a commercial micro enterprise or franchise, a venue in which users have access to the Internet by paying for a given time, per hour or minute. At present, private venues allow 5,5 million Argentines, from all socio-economic sectors, to access the Web. For medium and low- income groups, private parlours are a mean to access a PC with a broadband connection. For higher-income groups, they are a mean to access the Web without worrying about informatics complexities, as well as a complement for their home and working connections. Among the young, these venues constitute a new socialization places, physically, at the venues, and virtually, through the Internet. 100% of these cybercafés (approximately 200.000 computers) offer Digital ICT services. Within this category, telephone cooperatives provide telephone and Internet services, by dial-up and/or broadband (ADSL) connections, as well as IP telephony, to their target populations at significantly lower costs than the large traditional firms. Most of them offer also free community services, such as courses on information and communication technologies (ICTs), free Internet access to public schools, libraries, and public facilities (police stations, hospitals, etc.). In Argentina there are 320 cooperatives. Almost all of them have cybercafés, adding up to approximately 1500 venues in Argentina. 100 % of them offer Digital ICT services.

The model of institutional development of the information accesses with social goals is focused on social promotion and the strengthening of the community groups, the development of the social capital, and the fight against poverty. These initiatives have two origins: civil society organizations, and the State. State programs contribute technology, services and qualifications; the organizations contribute their physical spaces, their social capital, their knowledge about the community, their experience, etc. There are approximately 491 social venues in Argentina. 302 of them integrate National State's programs; 155 are linked to the CTC program; 85, to MiPC program; 90 of them are provided by the Province of San Luis Government to the San Luis citizens; 22 to the Federal Council of Investments' Access Centres; and 40 to Integration Center to the Ministry of Social Development . The venues implemented by civil society organizations are around 99. Their geographic distribution favours higher-poverty regions. The NEA and the NOA concentrate 43% of the venues, whereas only 25% of the venues are located in the Pampean region –which concentrates a much higher number of population, income, institutional support, and infrastructure.

3.2 Real Access Framework

Summarize the key findings and your assessment of each dimension in the Real Access framework used in this study. You will provide more details later.

3.2.1 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in the country (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

Physical access has been described in Point 3.1.

CICOMRA and other analysts estimated that by December 2007, 16 to 17 millions individuals had directly or indirectly used the Internet periodically. The role of the broadband is relevant, since it already has 2 millions subscriptions (3 years ago, it had only 475.000). However, CICOMRA status that this interanual 20% growth is not sustainable without large investments, and without specialized human resources. According to a 2007 Prince & Cooke study, there are at present 160.000 individuals in ICT enterprises. But if we add to them the individuals working for other sectors, public as well as private, that also use ICT tools, their number reaches 310.000 (nearly 2% of the country's Economically Active Population). For year 2009, the sector will require around 370.000 individuals, of which 20.000 are not adequately trained yet.

Access to telephone communications for the underserved groups is strongly linked to other problems, such as the social infrastructure, the transportation means, the insufficient routes and ways, the adverse and sometimes extreme climatic conditions - like desert zones in the north of the country, extremely cold and snowy in Patagonia, and near the Andes. Communicational isolation implies lack of emergencies' aid, lack of medical attention and difficulties for children to attend schools (children must frequently cross kilometres on foot or on horseback). It also inhibits the development of local economies, complicating the interchanges with other localities. It also inhibits fluid contact with the provincial and National governments.

The venues' geographical distribution that obeys to diverse logic models. Libraries, which have a long history intimately linked to the population's growth, and are deeply imbedded in the regional territories, are distributed in all the Provinces and regions. 88% of them are located in urban areas and 12% in rural areas, proportions that follow the population's distribution pattern: 91% of the population is urban and 12%, rural. This suggests that this venues' distribution follows a population density logic. There is no information about private venues' distribution in the diverse provinces and cities. 42% of the private venues are located in the City of Buenos Aires and its metropolitan area, and the remaining 58% are located in the rest of the country. Their distribution logic follows market logic: offer and demand. The implementation, opening, closure and renovation of these venues depend on their economic success. Social venues' logic seems to follow their declarations regarding their struggle against poverty, the reduction of the digital gap, social inclusion, and empowering communities. 43% of these venues are located in the North East and the North West regions, the poorest in the country, while 39% of them are located in Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area and the Pampean Region, the richest and most densely populated areas.

The technologies used in the diverse venues, particularly in those with commercial goals, are appropriate and easily appropriated by users. The venues use is inexpensive: while in venues with social goals Internet connections are free or low-cost, commercial venues are also quite affordable, even for low income sectors.

3.2.2 Capacity

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in the country (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

Argentina is a fertile ground for technological adoption. A Gallup survey (September 2007) shows that from the technological point of view Argentina has made the last 5 years an enormous quantitative leapfrog (described in previous paragraphs). Argentina's population strongly associates technology with positive changes in people's lives: (increased and better communication, more and better jobs opportunities, more free time, etc.). However, two different technological realities subsist: the technological gap between socio-economic levels, and between the Capital and the Provinces plus Greater Buenos Aires The exception is mobile telephony (a high proportion of interviewed low-income people and Provinces' inhabitants declared to have at least one).

Internet connections constantly increase: 30% of the Argentine inhabitants had access to the Internet in August 2007. Seven years ago, in 2000, only 10% of the inhabitants were connected. Since 2005, the quantity of online time has also increased. The proportion of Argentineans accessing the Internet in August 2007 has augmented among the men (34% against 27% of women), as the age of the interviewed people decreases (reaching to 6 of each 10 Argentineans below 25 years) and in higher formal educational levels. The number of Internet users also increases in the higher socio-economic levels (8 out of 10 in the ABC1 segment), as well as in the Federal District (practically doubling those from the Provinces, respectively 57% to 28%). A significant growth of Internet connections are detected until year 2005, climbing from 11% in 2000, to 16% in 2001 and 29% in 2005. This proportion is located in very similar levels to those of 2005 (30%). Moreover, from 2005 to 2007 a

significant increase in daily Internet connections has taken place; towards 2005, 36% of the Argentineans declared to have accessed the Web once a day or more, whereas at the present time this figure reaches 46%.

In December 2007, Argentina was considered the most evolved country in the Region regarding Information Society, according to a study carried on by Everis, together with IESE Business School[12]. ICTs have shown tangibly their role in country's social and economic development, in essential sectors as productivity and innovation.

Accessing the Internet, from home, work or public venues, is integrated to the everyday life of the population. Argentine society, as stated by numerous research and studies, values highly the incorporation of technology to its everyday life, and that an increasing number of people of all social classes -even if mainly urban- use or are interested in using ICT services to fulfil their information and communication needs. People perceive information and communication technologies as an improvement in their lives, an opening to study, work, and social possibilities.

3.2.3 Environment

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in the country (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

Although in the last years there has been an important reduction of poverty and indigence levels with respect to year 2002, the living conditions have not managed to return too the 1974 levels in the short-medium term. The unequal distribution characteristics of the present model are not modified: more of 52% of the total wealth is concentrated by 20% of the. The relation between the income of the richer 10% and the poorest 10% has broadened throughout the last the 30 years.

The tendencies in the labour market in Argentina are heterogeneous. The region which records the worse labour situation, followed by labour performance, is Greater Buenos Aires (that concentrates 42.8% of the urban population) followed by the Northwest and the Pampa (third trimester of 2004). In addition to being scarce, employment has become more precarious, as far as stability, level of remuneration and social cover (moon work). In the urban areas, only 40% of the wage-earners have social cover. A percentage of 60% works in informally, or by their own account.

Argentina's teledensity is 24%; this number hides deep regional differences. Buenos Aires City's teledensity is 60%. The main province capitals, such as Cordoba, Rosario or Mendoza, have around 35. 75% of the population lives in these territories. The richest regions rise to a teledensity of 20% (reaching 28% or more) while the poorest ones don't even achieve 10%: some provinces attain only 7% (Formosa and Santiago del Estero). These urban structure conditions do not follow any logic, except for the market reason, if we relate it to the diverse regions' needs. There are provinces where telephone networks do not exist; neither do electrical network, nor access to telephony or parlours; nevertheless, it is not there where the higher numbers of cell phones are found. It is the City of Buenos Aires (where the number homes with NBI is the lowest of the country) the one that has higher proportion of homes with cellular telephony. Their inhabitants enjoy all the existing services of

[12] Revista CanalAR, 30/01/2008, http://www.canal-ar.com.ar/Noticias/NoticiaMuestra.asp?Id=5397

information access.

Regarding Internet access, the City of Buenos Aires' homes are the best equipped. The proportion of citizens who have mobile telephony's active lines is the higher in the country. There's also a profuse semi-public telephony network, as well as parlours and cybercafés, all around the City. The last years' strong growth had diverse drivers: on one hand, the cybercafés, in which each computer can be used by many users per day, during many hours, seven days a week, differing from school venues, more limited in space and time. On the other hand, since the 2001-2002 crisis, and for two years, many users entered the Internet encouraged by the so-called home free-access, which allowed users to pay for the Internet time they consumed without having to pay for a fixed fee. A third factor, between 2005 and 2006, has been the strong development of the broadband in the homes. It is also remarkable the growth in notebooks: 15% of the sales, which promises a successful combination with hot spots and Wi Fi.

The access to the Internet trough cell phones, even if still low, promises to increase by means of the offer of new contents and applications, as well as with the new PDA terminals (cell phone + agenda + GPS, photo camera, etc.). By the end of 2006 there were 24 million mobile lines in Argentina, which reached 27 millions in December 2007. The cell phone's capillarity opens a broad horizon of Internet access. This type of growth has been the product of a disordered expansion, lacking a State strategy (a deficiency that was inherited from the 1989 privatizations), and which responds basically to the market's interests. In Argentina, the technological innovation and its dissemination are originated fundamentally by private enterprises' strategies.

The December 2007 government change also suggests a larger opening towards communications, to information access, and to the development of Information Society in Argentina. Besides public investments, the creation a Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation, is promising. Moreover, the Executive is interested in developing electronic government in country, as well as in the implementation of electronic vote; both developments need information and communications expansion. Nevertheless, a thin line separates the State's functions from the private sectors, and civil society's tasks. Actors can migrate from a scene or sphere to another one (or even live more than one simultaneously), according to the actions they are taking. In many cases that line does not exist, and the roles and functions are intermingled and intercrossed. The State's role is more neatly perceived that the private sector's and civil society's role in the creation and implementation of information and communication policies, either in juridical and normative issues, as in the implementation of universal access strategies, public expenditure, etc. Information about these issues is generally public and freely accessible. It's more difficult to define the incidence of civil society, as well as of the private sector, on information access' public policies. This incidence can take place in the diverse phases of public policies' creation and implementation.

3.3 Information Needs of Underserved Communities

Describe the specific information needs experienced by underserved populations, based on the results of your research. Who could benefit from better public access to information? This could relate to e-government services, health or agriculture information, job training, employment search, among many others. Include reference to the key inequity variables in your country.

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(ii) Indicate the sources of data for this assessment

Access to telephone communications for the underserved groups is strongly linked to other problems, such as the social infrastructure, the transportation means, the insufficient routes and ways, the adverse and sometimes extreme climatic conditions - like desert zones in the north of the country, extremely cold and snowy in Patagonia, and near the Andes. Communicational isolation implies lack of emergencies' aid, lack of medical attention and difficulties for children to attend schools (children must frequently cross kilometres on foot or on horseback). It also inhibits the development of local economies, complicating the interchanges with other localities. It also inhibits fluid contact with the provincial and National governments.

The type of information that can help individuals, families, organizations, institutions, communities, etc., is copious and diverse. It has to do with their necessities and desires, their will and their curiosity. These do not only vary between social groups and individuals: they also change according to variables as gender, age, geographic location, and others. Finquelievich and Prince (2007), Finquelievich and Kisilevsky (2005), Rozengardt (2006) studies indicate that people search for information as far as their needs move them to do so: thus, these searches can alternate between cinema programs in a given city, help groups for domestic violence victims, health tips, tax proceedings, scientific researches, and others.

From the individuals and families' point of view, information access can have impacts on everyday life in relation to work, education, health, culture, transportation, social inclusion, environment, etc., as well as to information on the economic and market conditions, administrative information, and citizen participation.

From the collective and institutional point of view, information can have impacts on social movements, as well as on the defence of human rights; on the construction of social networks; in supporting of near and distant communities in the geographic space; in institutional management and communication between an organization's members; knowledge production, management, and collective creation; empowering social movements; on networks' integration; and on social and cooperative enterprises' access to the local, national, and world markets.

Source of information

a. *Basualdo E. y Lozano C., A 25 años del golpe. La economía argentina luego de la dictadura, Instituto de Estudios y Formación (IDEF) - CTA, Buenos Aires, 2001.*

b. *Finquelievich Susana, Coordinadora (2007) La Innovación ya no es lo que era. Impactos meta-tecnológicos en áreas metropolitanas. Editorial Dunken, Buenos Aires, 2007.*

c. *Finquelievich, Daniel (2007): "Nativos al poder" en: Finquelievich Susana, Coordinadora (2007): "La Innovación ya no es lo que era. Impactos meta-tecnológicos en áreas metropolitanas", Editorial Dunken, Buenos Aires.*

d. *Finquelievich, Susana y Finquelievich, Daniel (2007): "Iniciativas para acceder a la Sociedad de la Information: Sistemas sociales de respuesta a necesidades de conectividad", en: Ester Kaufman, "Políticas Publicas y tecnologías", Ed. La Crujía, Buenos Aires, 2007.*

e. *Finquelievich, Susana, Coord. (2000): "¡Ciudadanos, a la Red!" Ed. La Crujía, Buenos Aires.*

f. *Finquelievich, Susana (2004). "La sociedad civil en la economía del conocimiento: TIC y desarrollo socio-económico". Buenos Aires: Instituto de Investigaciones Gino Germani, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2004. (IIGG Documentos de Trabajo, Nº 40). Disponible en la World Wide Web: <http://www.iigg.fsoc.uba.ar/docs/dt/dt40.pdf> ISBN 950-29-0829-5.*

g. *Herzog Roman, Bert Hoffmann, Markus Schulz (2002): Internet y política en América Latina: Regulación y uso de las nuevas tecnologías de Information y comunicación (NTIC) en América Latina en el contexto de los transformaciones políticos y económicos Frankfurt am Main, Vervuert, 2002, Edición en seis tomos (I-VI), 590 S., http://www.telecommagazine.com/default.asp?journalid=2&func=departments&page=0106i21&y*

h. *Rozengardt Adrián y Florencia Del Gizzo. (2005) "La sociedad civil y la Sociedad de la Information: lo local como eje de convergencia", en Susana Finquelievich, TIC y desarrollo local. Municipios e Internet, La Crujía, Buenos Aires.*

3.3.1 Information sources

4.2b) What are the current sources for this kind of information in the country? Are these sources adequate (current, appropriate to the population, etc.) In sum, does the locally-relevant content exist?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(ii) Indicate the sources of data for this assessment

The Argentine society shows a high consumption level regarding information. Argentine society is mediatic and mediated. TV, radio and newspapers provide increasingly local information, carrying on a "Mac donalization" of the written, radial and TV. This process is reflected in the Internet. The access possibilities have increased greatly since 2002, as has the contents' production by a higher number of individual and collective actors. The means to access information are diversified. Nevertheless, paradoxically, there is still a high degree of disinformation regarding this information's existence, its sources, its importance, and usefulness. Therefore, individuals, groups, and families' information demand is not yet linked to a perception of information as a factor that can improve their living conditions.

The consumption of Information is diversified according to the socio-economic conditions, the type information needed, and the information search channel search. For example, in the City of Buenos Aires and the large cities, popular and public libraries show a lower number of visitors than in the Provinces, since the potential information users have other possibilities, as well as material and symbolic resources, than in the underserved areas. It is difficult to map the number of people who access to information through these diverse venues.

***Source**:*

1. *INDEC, National Institute of Statistics and Census, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos. National Census of Population and Housing, 2001. Official statistic information of the National State, institution dependent of the National Ministry of Economy, Database for the validation and*

construction of the country's profiles, www.indec.gov.ar

2. *ONTI, National Office for Information Technologies, Ministry of Public Management, Ministry of Foreign Affairs*
3. *Official bulletins. Collect of current legislation regarding information access, at national, provincial, and local levels.*
4. *Ministry of Economy. Data collection on the telecommunications industry, investment on public works, and indicators related to ICT services' consumption.*
5. *Finquelievich Susana, Coordinadora (2007) La Innovación ya no es lo que era. Impactos meta-tecnológicos en áreas metropolitanas. Editorial Dunken, Buenos Aires, 2007.*
6. *Finquelievich, Susana y Finquelievich, Daniel (2007): "Iniciativas para acceder a la Sociedad de la Information: Sistemas sociales de respuesta a necesidades de conectividad", en: Ester Kaufman, "Políticas Publicas y tecnologías", Ed. La Crujía, Buenos Aires, 2007.*
7. *Finquelievich, Susana, Coord. (2000): "¡Ciudadanos, a la Red!" Ed. La Crujía, Buenos Aires.*
8. *Rozengardt Adrián y Florencia Del Gizzo. (2005) "La sociedad civil y la Sociedad de la Information: lo local como eje de convergencia", en Susana Finquelievich, TIC y desarrollo local. Municipios e Internet, La Crujía, Buenos Aires.*

3.3.2 Key barriers to accessing the information that underserved communities need

Are the people who could benefit from this information getting access to it? Why or why not (e.g. content exists but not in the right language, print media exists but has not been distributed appropriately, digital media is available but people do not have access points, etc.)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

People who could benefit from this information– or most of them- have physical access to information tools, through public and popular libraries, cibercafés, CTCs, Access Centers, and other venues. The written press, either national, regional, or local, is plentiful, and it is distributed in almost all the Argentine urban and rural areas.

In the Internet there are numerous contents in Spanish, as well as in other languages spoken by immigrant's descendants (French, English, Catalan, German, Idisch, Russian, Korean, Arabic, etc., besides indigenous languages: aymara, mapudeungun, guaraní, etc,).

In spite of the relatively easy access to information venues, users have some limitations, as knowing which kind of information they need, and where to search for it. To solve these issues, it is necessary to implement information campaigns for users. All the existing means are possible vehicles for these campaigns: articulation with schools, social national and regional programs. Users can access the Internet motivated by a street poster, a TV program, or by the written press.

3.3.3 Ways users experience different types of public access venues

Based on responses to the open question in user surveys, how do users experience different types of public access venues? Are there any trends or preferences for kinds of information, services or activities in one type of venue over another?

Users experience different types of public venues in similar ways. Their main activities vary not in relation to the type of venues they use, but in relation to gender, age, and cultural and educational level factors. But in general they use mainly e-mail services, chats, social networks such as Facebook, Internet searches, Internet games, online administrative or tax procedures, music and films download However, according to our surveys, public libraries users have a previous interest in cultural issues that precede the adoption of ICTs. These users show higher interest in specific educational and literary Internet searches than in commercial venues; they practically do not use on line games.

We conclude that the existing historical association between libraries and culture influences the users way to experience public libraries venues.. .

3.3.4 Inequity environment in the country

2-3 paragraphs

What does inequity look like in the country? Using the inequity variables described in section, provide a short overview of the main underserved groups, regions and/or other locally-appropriate segments of the population.

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Argentina is undergoing a fast economic development without the recuperation of the previous living conditions, with the impoverishment and growing vulnerability of the middle class, and with the deepening of the social exclusion processes. The 1990s witnessed a gigantic concentration of wealth. Poverty cannot be interpreted as the result of period of economic crisis, but as an inequality's social effect. It is structural in the new development paradigm. Unequality does not only generate poverty: it is also the origin of the current deep social cohesion crisis in LAC countries. "Inequality" is the key word for these times, just as "Poverty" was key to analyze the social panorama in the 1980s.

Insecurity became the general expression of the social individualization and de-collectivization process. The erosion of social welfare institutions –unemployment insurance, retirement and pensions' incomes, medical assistance, labour collective agreements – meant the expansion of the individual-centred culture, in the individual autonomy and personal freedom as going hand in hand with economic success. This culture has accompanied the passage from a vertebrate, organized solidarity, centred on citizenship and the State, to mere particularized assistance strategies.

Poverty, income distribution, and employment, integrate a set with deep and complex interrelations. Poverty and indigence are extremely serious phenomenon in Argentina, not only for the number of affected people, but also for the deprivation intensity they mean. Even if the last 5 years have witnessed a decrease in the number of poor and indigent people, there still remains the deterioration of the last 30 years of living conditions worsening. During the economic growth phases, the indicators' recuperation capacity has been slower, not reaching yet the previous levels. In the first semester of

2007, in the context of a remarkable economic recuperation, 23,4 % of the population lived still below the poverty line, and 8,2 %, under the indigence line. However, in 2003, respectively 54 % and 27,7% of the population were in the same situation.

Access to telephone communications for the underserved groups is strongly linked to other problems, such as the social infrastructure, the transportation means, the insufficient routes and ways, the adverse and sometimes extreme climatic conditions - like desert zones in the north of the country, extremely cold and snowy in Patagonia, and near the Andes. Communicational isolation implies lack of emergencies' aid, lack of medical attention and difficulties for children to attend schools (children must frequently cross kilometres on foot or on horseback). It also inhibits the development of local economies, complicating the interchanges with other localities. It also inhibits fluid contact with the provincial and National governments. When the Universal Access policy was generated in 2001, it divided to Argentina in three categories, according to its communicational development:

- Areas with a teledensity over 15%. In these areas, telecommunications enterprises had to assign 1% of their gross profit to the Universal Service (Universal Service, or SU).
- Areas with a teledensity below 15%. These areas are not in communicated (as the North East region), but their relative growth is lower than the national average. Enterprises serving these areas would have the incentive of not paying control taxes, and would be free of assigning 1% of their gross profit to the Universal Service.
- Areas underserved by communication means. The funds generated by the first category areas would be assigned by the Universal Service Management Council to underserved communities, and to people with disabilities, such as the deaf, who require special communication's systems and equipments,

Nevertheless, although from 1 of January 2000 to December of 2007 the telecommunications would have accumulated 800 million AR Pesos (around 250 million USD) to serve the underprivileged sectors, the National Government has not taken measures to guarantee SU's observance. The funds are credited in the companies balance; from the second half of year 2007 onwards they are reserved in separate accounts, but the State inertia of the keeps these funds generating interests for the telecommunications companies, while the underserved population ignores their existence.

3.3.5 Freedom of press and expression and the right to information

What is the overall perception of freedom of press, censorship and right to information in this country?

In Argentina, access to online contents is free, with the exception of legal limitations related to intellectual property, and the legally required filters to inhibit the public venues' users' access to pornographic or children abuse sites. According to the 2005Global Survey of Media's Independence (Freedom House) the Argentine Republic obtained 41 points, occupying position 23 among the 35 Latin America and the Caribbean countries included in the study. The Argentine press can operate freely, although not without pressures. These pressures, which include cases of verbal and physical intimidations, are particularly serious among journalists who investigate corruption cases, frauds or human rights' violations. The media' possibility of criticizing the government does exist; it is developed in a context of relative diversity of viewpoints and of high public credibility; however, many of these critics are followed by strong accusations of political partiality by government members, including the

President.

Until late 2006, the National Law of Public Information Access had still not been sanctioned. Instead, the sanction of the Law 26,134 was reached; this Law forces the national State to leave without effect the secret or reserved character of all the laws sanctioned under that label, and to publish them in the Government's press organ. And from the Laws sanction onwards, it remains prohibited the dictation of laws of secret or reserved character. Another negative aspect mentioned by the report is the systematic increase of governmental publicity in communication media.

Regarding the knowledge collective production in the Internet, the philosopher Alejandro Piscitelli, states that "Internet users have gone from production to consumption, and from visiting web pages to a world of Web 2.0 elements, such as many to many communication"[13], Piscitelli affirms that the 1990s Internet was completely different to the present one, due mainly to the existence of "prosumers", smart consumers instead of passive conventional Internet contents' consumers. The present main idea is to transmit contents from many to many, using the "prosumer" concept, simultaneously consuming and producing contents. Weblogs are the Web 2.0 stars. In Argentina, the educational National portal (educ.ar) 20 weblogs; it receives 800000 monthly consultations. However, contents and services for mobile phones are still an unexplored area in the country.

3.4 Charts: Information Needs, Users, and Uses

Based on the results of your research (especially user surveys and interviews with librarians and operators), complete the required data to chart the information needs of underserved communities using the following examples. Provide any explanatory comments as needed.

3.4.1.1 Users, by type of venue

Users profile (Estimated proportion of users in each category, %)		**Public Libraries** (1)		**Public Acces Venues with commercial objetives** (2)		**Public Acces Venues with social objetives** (3)	
		Urban + No urban (4)		Urban + Non-urban		Urban + Non-urban	
		General use	ICT use (a)	General use	ICT use (b)	General use	ICT use
Gender	Male	34%	90%	48,2%	100%		
	Female	66%	90%	51,8%	100%		
Age	14 and under	28%	90%	6,8%	100%		
	15-35	40%	90%	41,7%	100%		
	36-60	21%	90%	46,2%	100%		
	61 and over	10%	90%	5,3%	100%		

[13] Seminar "Hablemos de Internet con McLuhan, Piscitelli y Bolter", organizad by the Asociación Mexicana de Internet (AMIPCI).

Education level	No formal education	24%	90%	0,8%	100%	
	Only elementary	35%	90%	3,0%	100%	
	Up to high school	29%	90%	50%	100%	
	College or university	13%	90%	46% (c)	100%	
Income bracket (approx)	High	35%	90%	n/d	n/d	
	Medium	65%	90%	n/d	n/d	
	Low	5%	90%	n/d	n/d	
Social status (approx)	High	10%	90%	23,28%	100%	
	Medium	50%	90%	66,71%	100%	
	Low	40%	90%	9,72%	100%	

Source of information

(1) Public Libraries: Data collected through the answers of 61 Public libraries managers, on 750 surveys.
(2) Public Access Venues with commercial objectives: Source: our own processing of a survey to Internet users all over the country: 553 cases, of whom 24% access the Internet at public access venues with commercial objectives. The survey has a reliability of 95,5%, with an error margin of +/- 4,5%. The survey has been carried on at national level. Methodology: telephone surveys using the telephone directory, semi-structured questionnaire, with open and closed questions.
(3) Public Access Venues with social objectives: The data collected through the Focal Groups is not representative enough to complete this section.
(4) Tha information collected does not discriminate between urban and non urban population, since the collected data is not representative enough for its disaggregation. The rural population in Argentina is barely 8% of the overall population.

Comments, including comments on other inequity variables**.**

(a) El 90% de las Libraries encuestadas cuentan con conexión a Internet y servicios TI.

(b) 100% of Venues with commercial goals use ICT

(c) Including post graduate studies (1,5%)

No appropriate Caste and Ethnicity.

3.4.1.2 Information People Seek, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries		Public Acces Venues with commercial objetives		Public Acces Venues with social objetives	
	Urban + Non-urban		Urban + Non-urban		Urban +Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use

Education	33%	90%	6,0%	100%	
Health	7%	90%			
Agriculture	8%	90%			
Government services	3%	90%			
Entertainment	6%	90%	52%	100%	
News	5%	90%	32,8%	100%	
Personal		90%	88,8%	100%	
Other	40%	90%	Several	Several	

Source**: **See point 3.4.1.1.

3.4.1.3 Uses of ICT, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries		Public Acces Venues with commercial objetives		Public Acces Venues with social objetives	
	Urban + Non urban		Urban + Non-urban		Urban + Non Urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Email	18%	100%	88%	100%		
Chat	4%	100%	60,3%	100%		
Web browsing	42%	100%	69,8%	100%		
Blogs & social networking	2%	100%	22,4%	100%		
Commerce & business	1%	100%	16,8%	100%		
Phone or webcam		100%	5,2%	100%		
Games	4%	100%	6.6%	100%		
Other	32%	100%				

Source**: **See point 3.4.1.1.

3.4.1.4 Frequency of Use for each type of venue

(estimated	Public	Public Acces	Public Acces

proportion in each category, %)	Libraries		Venues with commercial objetives		Venues with social objetives	
	Urban + Non urban		Urban + Non urban		Urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
First visit						
Rarely (less than monthly)	8%	90%				
Occasional (about once a month)	12%	90%				
Regular (about 2-3 per month)	14%	90%				
Frequent (about once a week)	30%	90%	35%	100%		
Daily (about every day)	36%	90%	63%	100%		

Source**: **See point 3.4.1.1.

3.4.1.5 Barriers to use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries		Public Acces Venues with commercial objetives		Public Acces Venues with social objetives	
	Urban		Urban		Urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Location, distance	21%	90%				
Hours of Operation		90%				
Cost	15%	90%				
Lack of skills/training		90%				
Not enough services	31%	90%				
Not in right language		90%				
Not enough content		90%				
Other	23%	90%				

Source: See point 3.4.1.1.

3.4.2 Salient initiatives to help meet critical information needs by underserved communities

What are the most salient initiatives in the country (past, ongoing, or planned) that aim to meet the information needs of underserved communities in the country? How important are they? In what ways are they successful or not? Where can more information about them be found?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

3.4.3 Past initiatives:

Governmental initiatives regarding information Society are fragmented and partial. The diverse administration's changes did not maintain the plans regarding information access. These initiatives have been carried out individually, separated from each other. In the late 1990s, Argentina had a strong impulse regarding the implementation of technological centres in community institutions and organizations, in order to facilitate connectivity for the underserved sectors. Three programs worked in parallel on these projects: i) Centros de Tecnología 2000, 2000 Technology Centres, located in 9 Buenos Aires City public libraries; they stopped working in 2003, following a decision of the Buenos Aires City Government; ii) Centros de Acceso (Federal Investments Council's Access Centres), and iii) the 1300 National Government's Community Technological Centres, CTCs. At present, the remaining 155 CTCs coexist with Federal Investments Council's Access Centres, the National Economy Ministry's "Plan Mi PC", and the a recent experience in the Integration Centres of the Ministry of Social Development.

I). Community Technological Centres, CTCs

Community Technological Centres (CTC) depend from the national Information Society Program (PSI), of the National Communications Secretariat. This program is meant to facilitate the population's access to Information Society through actions contributing to reduce the digital gap, though ICT use. According to the PSI's Web site, CTCs favour social inclusion and contribute to the population's development, generating knowledge and using ICTs to reduce the Digital Gap. The National Program ***argentin@internet.todos*** was created to promote the development of telecommunications infrastructures all over the country, with social and geographical equity, promote universal access to the INTERNET, and promote the creation of CTCs. CTCs were pioneer, not only in Argentina, but also in a large part of Latin America, using ICTs as articulating tools for communities' development, and planning the articulation of a national CTCs network, in which diverse organizations (educational, civil society, governmental), had to assume the engagement of working for their communities, facilitating their inclusion in Information Society.

II). The Federal Investment Council's Access Centres

The Federal Council of Investments (Consejo Federal de Inversiones, or CFI), created in 1959, is an institution that proposes investment and development policies for the whole National territory. From 1990 onwards, the CFI created "Unidades de enlace" (Liaison Units), initially focused on

credits for medium and small enterprises (SMES). These Units became later decentralization entities, which at present host the CFI's Access Centres (C@CFI), in every Province's capitals. These Centres have a basic infrastructure to access the Internet. They are meeting places of encounter for the local entrepreneurs, students, community association representatives, professionals, and the general community. The premises are located in the cities' central areas, being readily accessible for those who need to use them.

III) MI PC Program

Mi PC Program (My Next PC Program) was implemented by the Argentine government to facilitate computers' acquisition by the population. It includes a series of additional benefits, aimed at achieving that every Argentine citizen, besides owning a computer, is able to train, get connections and training, with home-adapted softwares. MI PC Program's first edition sold 110.000 computers, acting as a dynamic factor on the electronic market, which recorded a 93% increase in home computers in 2005. In 2006, the incorporation of new technologies and enterprises was an indicator of the achieved success. The Program raised funds for the implementation of 85 access and training centres for underserved communities. A percentage of the MI PC Program's sales, including Intel and Microsoft components, will continue to be destined to these centres, aimed at reducing the digital gap.

IV) Integration centres of the Ministry of Social Development

Community Integrating Centers (Centros Integradores Comunitarios, CIC) constitute a model of public management that integrates and coordinates diverse health and development policies in a common physical environment, at local scale. These centers encourage community integration, with the purpose of transforming reality, searching for social inclusion, promoting local development in the different regions, and highlighting communities' resources. In 2007 they have incorporated Internet in highly vulnerable communities, contributing to the improvement of life quality in the communities. It is the first time that the national government's social area incorporates information access to its active policies. 201 CIC are now working. 40 of them already have access to ICTs.

V) Public and popular libraries

From their beginning, the Popular Libraries were associations of individuals whose development was based on two fundamental factors: citizens participation (since they are associations of individuals that generate their own forms of government), and the State, which through the Protective Commission of Popular Libraries (CONABIP) enunciates and legislates on the institutional support and levels of state participation in the creation and maintenance of these institutions.

According to the Argentine Republic Graduated Librarians (AGBRA), in the country are at 4688 registered libraries. They are classified into Popular, Public, National, School, University, and Specialized.

***More information**:*

http://www.desarrollosocial.gov.ar/notas/CIC6.asp

www.conabip.org.ar

www.abgra.org.ar

http://www.psi.gov.ar/

http://www.programamipc.com.ar

3.4.3.1 Ongoing initiatives:

Ongoing initiatives are described in the previous point

3.4.3.2 Historical trends and opportunities to serve information needs

Based on the above, what is the general trend in the country in relation to provision of public access information services? Are there any important upcoming opportunities (for example, upcoming regulatory changes, infrastructure enhancements, etc) that can impact public access information (include services through libraries and other public information venues)?

i. If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The ICTs score in the national territory, regarding development and implementation, increased nearly 18%, the most elevated in almost two years, according to Everis. ESI-s evolution also arrived at unprecedented numbers, reaching a growth of 6.1%.

- Another result of the investigation carried on by both organisms assures that the Argentine mobile telephony, with 904 terminals by each 1000 people, continues being the technology with highest increase and penetration in the Region, a key variable for the development of the obtained ICTs level, ahead of the Internet, its users, and the PCs.
- At present, Argentina leads in South America the United Nations ranking[14] that measures the States' level of training in electronic government (GE). The country occupies the 39th position among 192 UN member countries. At the top of the list there are the Scandinavian countries, Sweden, Denmark and Norway. Top down, African countries. (http://www.anses.gov.ar/prensa/notas/2008/enero/gobierno_electronico.html). Argentina's raise was due to an infrastructure increase, together with the rise of cell phone lines, and computers. The following South American countries are: Chile, in position 40, Brazil (45), Uruguay (48), Colombia (52), and Peru (55).
- From the technological point of view Argentina has made the last 5 years an enormous quantitative leapfrog. Argentina's population strongly associates technology with positive changes in people's lives: (increased and better communication, more and better jobs opportunities, more free time, etc.) (Gallup survey, September 2007). Two different technological realities subsist: the technological between socio-economic levels, and the gap between the Capital, and the Provinces plus GBA. The exception is mobile telephony (a high proportion of interviewed low-income people and Provinces' inhabitants declared to have at least one). Within technological incorporations, the cell phone (58%) and TV (58%) are considered as the most useful. Internet access falls far behind them (7%). 30%

[14] The Study's fourth edition. The First was in 2002

Argentina inhabitants had access to the Internet in August 2007. Seven years ago, in 2000, only 10% of the inhabitants were connected. Since 2005, the quantity of online time has also increased.

The proportion of Argentineans accessing the Internet in August 2007 has increased among the men (34% against 27% of women), as the age of the interviewed people decreases (reaching to 6 of each 10 Argentineans below 25 years) and in higher formal educational levels. The number of Internet users also increases in the higher socio-economic levels (8 out of 10 in the ABC1 segment), as well as in the Federal District (practically doubling those from the Provinces, respectively 57% to 28%). A significant growth of Internet connections are detected until year 2005, climbing from 11% in 2000, to 16% in 2001 and 29% in 2005. In the present survey, this proportion is located in very similar levels to those of 2005 (30%). From 2005 to 2007 a significant increase in daily Internet connections has taken place; towards 2005, 36% of the Argentineans declared to have accessed the Web once a day or more, whereas at the present time this figure reaches 46%.

***Source**:*

Prince & Cooke, annual Survey, 2007

*National Office for Information Technologies, ONTI, www.sgp.gov.ar/contenidos/**onti**/**onti**.html*

INDEC, National Institute of Statistics and Census, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, www.indec.gov.ar

3.4.3.3 Planned initiatives:

The general trends suggest the development of e-government services and a steady increase in connectivity, through public, private, or social venues. The fact that the country wishes to occupy a significant place in software's production and exports has impacts in the overall education system: the trend, at least in the richest provinces, is to facilitate children access to the Information Society, through connected schools, affordable PCs, and access to public information venues. Nor the advances in electronic government, neither the implemented policies still impact neither in the volume nor in the quality of the public social accesses.

A National Digital Agenda is under construction, led by the Secretariat of Public Management, and the National Office for Information Technologies, ONTI, together with nine NGOs (Network of Argentine Digital Organizations), and with the most outstanding ICT enterprises chambers. This Agenda foresees the development of E-inclusion among vulnerable social groups.

***More information**:*

*National Office for Information Technologies, ONTI, www.sgp.gov.ar/contenidos/**onti**/**onti**.html*

Network of Argentine Digital Organizations, Red de Organizaciones Digitales Argentinas, RODAr, www.rodargentina.net

LINKS, Civil Association for the Development of Information Society, www.links.org.ar

INDEC, National Institute of Statistics and Census, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, www.indec.gov.ar

3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment

3.5.1 National and local economic environment

Describe the national and local economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in the country.

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In Argentina the Marked quota linked to ICTs reaches a total of USD 9,500 Millions. The ICT market has grown 19.6% between 2003 and 2007, employing 283000 individuals: 1.9% of the active population. Its annual growth is PBI x 2.2. In the 2002-07 periods, a strong increase in the SMES/homes sectors has taken place. The sector's analyses foresee an even greater growth for 2007-2010 in the Government and Public Administration (PA) sectors. The Argentine Republic Chamber of Informatics and Telecommunications Enterprises (CICOMRA) informed that during 2007 the sector recorded an interannual growth of 20%, with an estimated invoicing of 34.600 millions AR pesos. In the last 3 years, the ICT sector grew consistently over the country's IGP (9% in the same period). One third of those 34.600 million AR belonged to information Technologies, including software and services, and hardware. The remaining 2/3 were related to communications, including equipments and infrastructures, as well as fixed and cellular telephony services, plus the Internet. Some technologies had "a very special behaviour": the Internet, mobile telephony, the selling of personal computers, particularly notebooks, informatics services, and software development, drivers of this growth and that are expected to keep pace during 2008.

CICOMRA and other analysts estimated that by December 2007, 16 to 17 millions individuals had directly or indirectly used the Internet periodically. The role of the broadband is relevant, since it already has 2 millions subscriptions (3 years ago, it had only 475.000). However, this yearly 20% growth is not sustainable without large investments, and without specialized human resources. According to a 2007 Prince & Cooke study, there are at present 160.000 individuals in ICT enterprises. But if we add to them the individuals working for other sectors, public as well as private, that also use ICT tools, their number reaches 310.000 (nearly 2% of the country's Economically Active Population). For year 2009, the sector will require around 370.000 individuals, of which 20.000 are not adequately trained yet.

Trends:

Salient changes that will probably happen in the next five years are:

1. Regulation:

a. Implementation of a National Digital Agenda, stimulated by the demands coming from the private informatics and telecommunications sector, as well as from civil society organizations

working on the defense of information rights and for the development of Information Society.

b. Flexibilization of the regulations concerning public and private venues.

c. Encouragement and development of e-government, establishing agreements among provincial and local governments, and private and public venues, to promote the dissemination of governmental actions, as well as to facilitate the citizens' possibilities to develop administrative procedures through the internet.

2. New infrastructures and improvement of existing infrastructure:

a. Implementation of Wi-Fi zones for public use in urban and interurban areas, as the already implemented in Rosario, Carlos Casares, and Junín, among other cities and towns, an the are to be equipped with Wi-Fi at the Municipio de la Costa, uniting the coastal towns and cities of the Province of Buenos Aires.

b. Extension of the broadband to the whole country, a measure encouraged by users and INTERNET providers.

c. Implementation of State venues at national and provincial levels. Present examples of such venues are the *Ciber AUI* (Cibercafés de la Autopista de la Información – Information Highway's cybercafés) of the Province of San Luis, previously called Community Access (CAC). The Province of San Luis aims to provide its 62 municipalities with public venues. 40 Ciber AUI are already working and 40 more will be implemented in 2008-2010.

3. Active, articulated, and integrated public policies:

a. The tendency to impulse partial and uncoordinated ICT-supported initiatives related to public access to information will be gradually replaced by the articulation and homogenization of plans and services.

b. An increased activity in the Libraries' sector will outdate the current tendency to favour paper-based information, and replace it, at least partially, by ICTs supported information. New actors and initiatives are prone to be incorporated too.

c. Extension of ICTs infrastructure and available capacities in SCO's and State's venues.

These processes need:

a. The reorganization of governmental institutions' internal information flows. As previously mentioned, the task of digitally unifying and making compatible the State's data bases is the first step to provide citizens the pertinent information they need.

b. Online information and procedures: Online procedures, exchanges between citizens and the government, as tax payments, declarations, registries, licences, procedures for each phase in life (studies, job search, marriage, divorce, identity documents, death certificates, etc.) is just the iceberg's visible peak. Governmental portals are classified according to the quantity and quality of the information they provide, as well as their user-friendliness. Argentina's governmental sites still admit serious improvements Full interactivity has not yet been

reached, not even for simple procedures. However, some progress in this area has been detected: in cities as Mendoza and Rafaela the possibilities to obtain results and answers from the municipal authorities regarding this area have increased over the expected level. These cities have developed a conscious process about e-government and information circulation's importance and potentials, beyond the mere construction of electronic portals.

c. Citizens participation: Even if web sites and portals are the e-governments' more extended resources, other virtual channels, such as electronic forums, blogs, chats and online voting are being considered by local authorities.

Production of contents for local and on line communities: It is important that each community, either geographic (sharing a common space) or virtual (sharing common interests) can produce and upload contents made by the community's members, in order to satisfy the communities' specific information needs.

***Source**:*

People interviewed

38. *ALEJANDRO PRINCE, President of Prince & Cooke. Information for the country's profile and for cybercafés.*
39. *ANA WORTMAN, Senior Researcher, Research Institute Gino Germani, University of Buenos Aires.*
40. *FEDERICO VILLAPANDO, DIEGO ROZENGARDT. Economy Consultants.*
41. *HENOCH AGUIAR. Member of the Argentine Academy of Communication's Arts and Sciences; President of the Digital Foundation.*
42. *NORBERTO CAPELLAN, President, National Chamber of Informatics and Communications Enterprises.*
43. *INDEC, National Institute of Statistics and Census, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos. National Census of Population and Housing, 2001. Official statistic information of the National State, institution dependent of the National Ministry of Economy, Database for the validation and construction of the country's profiles, www.indec.gov.ar*
44. *ONTI, National Office for Information Technologies, Ministry of Public Management, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.sgp.gov.ar/contenidos/**onti**/**onti**.html*
45. *Ministry of Economy. Data collection on the telecommunications industry, investment on public works, and indicators related to ICT services' consumption.*
46. *Specialized bibliography General, and specialized journals, newspapers, and news letters.*
47. *Documents, research, and papers presented in national and international events.*

Bibliographic resources

1. *Basualdo E. y Lozano C., A 25 años del golpe. La economía argentina luego de la dictadura, Instituto de Estudios y Formación (IDEF) - CTA, Buenos Aires, 2001.*

2. *Finquelievich Susana, Coordinadora (2007) La Innovación ya no es lo que era. Impactos meta-tecnológicos en áreas metropolitanas. Editorial Dunken, Buenos Aires, 2007.*

3. *Finquelievich, Daniel (2007): "Nativos al poder" en: Finquelievich Susana, Coordinadora (2007): "La Innovación ya no es lo que era. Impactos meta-tecnológicos en áreas metropolitanas", Editorial Dunken, Buenos Aires.*

4. *Finquelievich, Susana y Finquelievich, Daniel (2007): "Iniciativas para acceder a la Sociedad de la Information: Sistemas sociales de respuesta a necesidades de conectividad", en: Ester Kaufman, "Políticas Public y tecnologías", Ed. La Crujía, Buenos Aires, 2007.*

5. *Finquelievich, Susana, Coordinadora (2005): "Desarrollo local en la Sociedad de la Information: Municipios e Internet", La Crujía, Buenos Aires.*

6. *Finquelievich, Susana (2004). "La sociedad civil en la economía del conocimiento: TIC y desarrollo socio-económico". Buenos Aires: Instituto de Investigaciones Gino Germani, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2004. (IIGG Documentos de Trabajo, Nº 40). Disponible en la World Wide Web: <http://www.iigg.fsoc.uba.ar/docs/dt/dt40.pdf> ISBN 950-29-0829-5.*

7. *Finquelievich, Susana, and Prince, Alejandro: "El (involuntario) rol social de los cibercafés", ed. Dunken, Buenos Aires, 2007.*

3.5.2 National and local policy (legal and regulatory) environment

Describe salient features of the policy and regulatory framework in the country (and if applicable, locally) that affect delivery and access to information (e.g. censorship, Wi-Fi bandwidth regulation, etc). What is your assessment of the general trend on this matter?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The Argentine National Constitution's Article 1, establishes a democratic and republican government, granting citizens a central role in the "res publica". Not only are citizens charged to choose the government, and to govern through their representatives, but also they are made responsible of permanent collaboration and control task regarding the constituted authorities[1]. In order to ensure this role's effective observance, the Constitution grants the right to free speech, the right to information access, the publicity of governmental actions, and the public access of files and registries.

As a result of the right to information, and the Republican principle of the publicity of governmental actions, arises the modern democracies' right to public information access. This right grants citizens the possibility to have access to State files, statistics, and registries, and it is therefore an indispensable instrument to implement citizen's participation in public issues. The Legal context for public and popular libraries was launched in year 1870: law Nº 419 listed the requirements to be fulfilled for the implementation of Popular Libraries. It also defines their goals

and funding modalities. Successive Laws defined the Popular Libraries' mission and institutional characteristics, as well as of the tax and administrative benefits due to them; they valued Popular Libraries' social role in their geographic areas, and established CONABIP's functions and dependencies. In 2001, Law Nº 25.446 - Law of Book and Reading Promotion, established the overall books and reading policy, and its conditions. The National State recognizes books and reading as indispensable and suitable instruments to culture's enrichment and transmission

Regarding the National legal context for commercial information venues (Parlours, cybercafés and telecentres), it is important to highlight the services provided by the two main telephone companies in Argentina: Telefónica de Argentina, and Telecom. The fact that these two enterprises' monopoles absorb practically all the telephone service in Argentina, offers advantages and disadvantages for public information access policies. On one hand, both integrate national networks, so that the implemented legislation, measures and procedures include thousand of venues. On the other hand, the disadvantage is the low technological capacity of these venues, equipped with relatively few computers.

The parlours ("locutorios") provided by Telefónica de Argentina, through a franchising system, are ruled by the enterprise's internal norms, besides complying with the National and Provincial laws. The franchised parlour ("locutorio de titularidad ajena") "is a communications center, owned by a physical or juridical person unattached to Telefónica, who assumes the investment, and to whom Telefónica provides the lines, while the client must pay the sum corresponding to the services' connection". This service is provided in commercial premises, installed complying with Telefonica's technological and aesthetic specifications. From the parlours' telephone cabins, clients can make local, long-distance, and international phone calls, directly, or trough an operator. These venues provide also other services, as the Internet. Telefónica demands at least eight cabins per parlour (without maximum limit), one of them must be equipped for people with disabilities, and a fax. Moreover, according to the National Communications Control Chamber (CNC), every parlour with more that eight telephone lines must have at least one terminal connected to the Internet. **Telecom** provides Tele cabins (Telecabinas) franchising. These include additional services, as e-mail, fax, chip cell phone cards sale, Telecom Global and Personal Light (a mobile phone provider), Private Mails, photocopiers, cell phone accessories, and cell phone equipments' sale. The company's Telecommunications Licences Services Rule establishes issues as licences, price lists, providers' obligations, etc.

Regarding the Legal Framework for Telephone Cooperatives, their legal status is defined in the Commerce Code, and regulated by the Law N° 20.33715. This Law defines the Cooperatives solidarity actions, as well as their role as social economy enterprises, which differentiates them from the traditional, market-oriented enterprises. The Cooperatives, as members of a Cooperatives Federation, FECOTEL16, have also signed a Collective Work Agreement (Convenio Colectivo de Trabajo), which establishes a balance between the workers rights and dignity and the CCs economic reality. Cooperatives that were created before 1990 can keep 78% of their profits, while they must pay 22% of their interconnection fees as a "toll" to the telephone enterprise

[15] See Convenio Colectivo de Trabajo 296/97, http://www.foetrabsas.org/cct29697%20cooperativas%20telef.doc

[16] http://www.fecoteldatos.com.ar/

which provides the network. However, cooperatives created after the privatization must negotiate the commission to be paid with the telephone enterprises. The terms of the negotiations vary from one cooperative –or Federation- to another.

Trends:

As mentioned earlier, the main identified trends for the next five years are:

- Implementation of a National Digital Agenda, stimulated by the demands coming from the private informatics and telecommunications sector, as well as from civil society organizations working on the defense of information rights and for the development of Information Society.
- Flexibilization of the regulations concerning public and private venues.
- Encouragement and development of e-government, establishing agreements among provincial and local governments, and private and public venues, to promote the dissemination of governmental actions, as well as to facilitate the citizens' possibilities to develop administrative procedures through the internet.

***Source**:*

- National Office for Information Technologies, ONTI, www.sgp.gov.ar/contenidos/**onti**/**onti**.html
- Network of Argentine Digital Organizations, Red de Organizaciones Digitales Argentinas, RODAr, www.rodargentina.net
- INDEC, National Institute of Statistics and Census, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, www.indec.gov.ar
- Quevedo, Luis Alberto: **"Los consumos culturales en la Argentina"** Informe 2004 del Sistema Nacional de Consumos Culturales de la Secretaría de Medios de comunicación de la Presidencia de la Nación Argentina. Buenos Aires, 2004 y 2007.
- Rozengardt, Adrián, con Florencia Del Gizo: **"Desarrollo Local en la sociedad de la Informacion" La sociedad civil y la sociedad de la Informacion, lo local como eje de convergencia.** Editorial La Crujia". Buenos Aires, 2004 y 2007.
- Leiras, Marcelo. "En La incidencia política de la sociedad civil", de Carlos Acuña y Ariana Vacchiere (Comps). Siglo XXI editores.
- Aguiar, Henoch. "El Futuro no espera". Políticas para desarrollar la sociedad del conocimiento. Fundación digital, La Crujía, Buenos Aires, 2007.

3.5.3 Regional and international policy (legal and regulatory) environment

Describe salient features of policy and regulatory framework in the region and internationally that affect the delivery of public access to information and communication in the country. What is your assessment of the general trend on this matter?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

3.6 Collaboration Practices and Opportunities Across Venues

Linkages and collaboration between different types of venues was identified as a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand existing and potential collaboration opportunities and linkages among and between public access venues, and how they can improve the quality and relevance of information access to underserved communities.

i. Include reference to existing as well as potential collaboration opportunities.

ii. If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Inter-Libraries' Networks

In Argentina there is an active inter –libraries networking. National and private universities have launched remarkable initiatives, such the AMICUS networks (Private Universities); Network of Patagonic Libraries; Universities of the Province of Buenos Aires; Universidad de Buenos Aires Libraries; University Information System for National and private Universities; Cordoba's University Libraries; BDU (University Data Base); Directory of University Libraries; and others. The National Ministry of Education supports many of these initiatives. There are also specialized networks (Agricultural Information, Aquatic and Fishing Sciences, Biomedicine, Scientific and Technological Information, CLACSO, Nuclear International Information, Legal Libraries, among others.

Two of the most important networks are UNIRED, created in Argentina in 1989, by a group of liberal professionals interested in sharing information. RECIARI – Project of Argentine Networks. RECIARIA is a network of networks that integrates 27 information networks in the country, covering a wide spectre of disciplines.

Popular Libraries (PL) integrate a network supported and encouraged by the National State. The National Commission for the Protection of Libraries, CONABIP.

There are many active State venues networks:

Intranet in Community technological centres (CTCs), the implementation of the Intranet CTC, http://intranet.ctc.gov.ar/ . This Intranet was created with a horizontal participation spirit: it Works as a coordinators' meeting point. But it is also an informatics tool that allows CTC's management, communicating them with PSI as well as among themselves. The intranet works also as a portal displaying news, events, calls, as well as contents management; it is a platform for distance training, forums exchange of experiences, and an information reservoir to be shared by all the CTCs.

Argentina participates in the Red CLARA, (Latin American Cooperation in Advanced Networks, Cooperación Latinoamericana de Redes Avanzadas) and **RETINA**, the Academia REd TeleINformática , was created to facilitate ICT access to scientific researchers. Since 1990 it has been providing communications for the academic sector.

Regarding social venues, the institutional model of the accesses with social aims is focused on social development and the empowerment of community groups, the development of social capital, and the struggle against poverty. The model observed in their Web materials and information, as well as the information they have provided when interviewed, is supported by the internal networks, as well as in their work with communities. We did not identify any proposal from civil Society organizations that does not include the development of the "network" concept, both as a main value and a work methodology.

There are networks and collaboration forums, i.e. Somos@telecentros, Tau Node, etc. The State projects are also strongly marked by a network methodology. The CTCs, CFI's Access Centres, and MiPC program's CEA, work in networks, and as networks, and they are defined as networks in their foundation documents. However, the results to date are uncertain; in many cases the original project's justifications have been left away from the present concrete results.

Commercial venues do not work in networks. Cybercafes are not even grouped in a Federation.

Nevertheless, there are no collaboration or integration mechanisms among the diverse types of venues. The collaboration mechanisms within each type of venues' universe are feeble, except when the State (CONABIP) implements direct actions on this issue. There is no collaboration between the public and the private sectors respect to the use of venues. For example, the State could establish agreements using the cybercafés, parlours, etc., infrastructure without having to build costly new venues, whose activities do not differ much from the commercial venues' ones. Also, there is no collaboration between commercial venues and social venues. Frequently NGOs have to implement their own venues and to buy technology, while there already are all set alternatives in the same community. We have not identified any best practices data banks.

Possible collaboration opportunities:

a. Government + Commercial venues partnerships: As mentioned above, the State, at National, Provincial and local levels, could establish agreements using the cybercafés, parlours, etc., infrastructure, subsidizing an Internet User Card for low-income users. This would unburden the State of building costly new venues, whose activities do not differ much from the commercial venues'.

b. Universities + public venues: universities could provide local contents for public venues, as well as train the users to create and upload their own contents.

3.7 Buzz Factor: Public and Government Perceptions About What is "Cool"

The "buzz factor", i.e., public and government perceptions about what is "cool" in relation to public access venues, where to invest resources, what places to hang out in, was identified as a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand how these perceptions about what is "cool" offer new opportunities or obstacles to strengthening public access information venues in the country.

Young users consider cybercafés and parlors as "hang out places", where they socialize, meet new "virtual" friends, and share study and recreation activities. The rest of the users do not consider information venues as particularly cool places: they just use them as public utilities.

However, public and popular libraries have integrated community activities into their agendas. They have succeeded in attracting neighbors for diverse literary, artistic, and community activities. These activities could include the creation of local specific contents to be uploaded into the Web.

3.8 Legitimate Uses

The difference between “legitimate” or “non-trivial” uses of information in public access venues was identified as a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. For example, uses of social networking spaces (Facebook and similar), blogs, chat, video games, as well as opportunities to download, install and run open source software applications in public access computers poses new challenges to traditional notions of “legitimate” information needs for development, and “trivial” uses of information for development… Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand how local definitions and restrictions based on what is “legitimate” or “non-trivial” information or communication practices offer new opportunities or barriers to public access information venues in the country.

Legitimate use of ICTs is considered from two diverse perspectives within this research' frame. The first viewpoint is related to the individual users' interests, skills, and needs. From this perspective, it would be extremely complex to define which use is legitimate or not, minor or not, since it would mean interfering with individual freedom, and to people's rights to express freely their ideas. However, we can highlight the existence of regulatory frames or sets of norms concerning the venues' schedules and timetables, as well as the –not always successful- measures to protect children and teenagers against pornography, violence, prostitution, and pedophilia, among others.

The second perspective is related to the criteria of the institution or organization offering information access. Libraries appear to considerate as legitimate and significant the searches for literary information, art, culture in general, news, information to be used at school, the university, etc. Social organizations and institutions seem to consider legitimate and important using information related to their social goals: training, strengthening social networks, accessing e-government, public information, etc. Commercial venues apparently do not propose any ethical nor moral framework to their uses. It is in these venues where the uses' largest magnitude and diversity is deployed. These conclusions are derived from the surveys' processing, focal groups, interviews, and direct observation.

3.9 Shifting Media Landscape

The ever-changing media landscape and the new opportunities brought about by new media such as mobile phones, SMS, GPS, and even renewed roles for community radio open, was a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand how these new technologies and media offer new opportunities or barriers to public access information venues in the country.

Given the complexity of searching and processing specific information for this research, we have given priority to previous points. Our research was not focused on the changing media landscape. We consider that these extremely important issues are a possible subject for future research work.

3.9.1 Web 2.0 tools and use

If appropriate, describe any salient uses of Web 2.0 tools among users of ICT in public access venues. (Web 2.0 refers to evolution of web-based communities and hosted services, such as social-networking sites, wikis, blogs and others. Wikipedia).

Internet users employ almost indistinctly Web 2.0 tools and "traditional" Internet tools. In Argentina, blogs, flogs, wikis, podcasts, social networks such as Facebook, Linkedin, and other, are extremely popular, basically among young and teenage users. The use of the Web 2.0 generates new types of exchanges among the young.

4 Venue-Specific Assessments

4.1 Venue 1: Public Libraries

4.1.1 Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment ofpublic access information in this type of venue?

Public libraries are, by their definition and their history, specifically conceived and sustained venues aimed at facilitating citizens' access to information. The creation of Public Libraries in the XIX century in Argentina is strongly linked to the creation of the National State, times in which citizens discussed about the State paradigm, and thought currents promoting new ideologies, as well as new convivence and productivity models, were circulating. The National Educational System was implemented as a key stone in the launching of the new Argentina. Its main goal was the homogeneization of the cultural diversity (inmigrants from diverse European countries, criollos, aborigens, etc.). The Public School intended to dissolve the cultural differences through teaching a common language (Castillian Spanish), and to disseminate a common culture, religion, and political conception. Within that context, President Sarmiento encouraged the creation of the National Educational System in year 1879, followed by the creation of the Libraries' Protective Commission, by Law 419. Sarmiento based his plans on the Readers Clubs created by Benjamin Franklin in 1727 in Philadelphia, and on the EEUU experiences of libraries' implementation in towns and villages.

Libraries became, from their very creation, important citizens' participation spaces. Their bonds with State and society have undergone many changes, according to the diverse political phases in the country. Thir expansion has paralelled the growth of the Argentine large cities, alternating development and depression phases through the diverse institutional, political, and economic crisis suffered by the Argentinean people in the last 100 years. The freedom brought by Democracy' return in the 1980s impulsed community organizations (NGOs, civil associations, cooperatives, etc.) to reconstruct the large public libraries' network in the country. The State participated from the termination of the 2001 crisis onwards, contributing economic and infrastructural help through centralized programs17.

In Argentina there are Public Libraries (created by a govermental or public institution), and Popular Public Libraries (autonomous civil associations, created through the solidary vission of a town or neighbourhood neighbours). There are also Libraries that have access only for given users, such as Universities or Specialized libraries. These can have public or public origin, and

17 CONABIP www.conabip.gov.ar/contenidos/institucional/cronologia.htm 21/01/2007

their services can be free or paid. in any case, they are not public Libraries.
This research considers only "Popular" and "Public" libraries, referring to the project's Terms of Reference. The whole country features 4688 registered libraries. This study focuses on the 2186 public libraries, 42% of the total number. Libraries are generally perceived by the population as places that grant safety, security, and privacy. The information and services offered are highly trusted.

4.1.2 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

Information about libraries is insufficient and contradictory with respect to their number and their profile as public information venues. Therefore, this information insufficience reveals a strong weakness in the libraries' system. Unlike any other information access systems, public libraries are located throughout the whole country, in a balanced structure that covers both rural and urban areas. Their distribution is also equilibrated between city centers and urban peripheries. Public libraries are perceveid in their respective communities as specific information, culture, and learning access spaces. Therefore, they gather around them a relevant institutional and social capital.

Libraries usually have adequate building infrastructure, although some libraries have better buildings and equipments than others, according on the institutional and economic support they receive. Practically 100% of the libraries have computers, but only 50% of them have Internet access. Libraries provide their communities with a high number of paper-supported books, and in a lesser quantity, of digital resources.

Libraries provide information access for free, without any kind of limitations. Some of them provide special facilities for people with disabilities. Others offer services in original people's languages.

4.1.2.1 Physical access

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Argentina has a large territory, but its population is concentrated in urban areas, particularly in large and medium cities . The urban population reaches 91%, while the remaining population, 9%, lives in rural areas. The percentage of urban libraries reaches 92%, while the remaining 8% are located in rural areas. Popular libraries have a more equitable distribution: 88% of them are located in urban areas, and 12% in rural areas. The remaining Public (non Popular) libraries are located in a 100% in urban areas.

4.1.2.2 Appropriate technology and services

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Working hours: Information is accessible in libraries within their working hours. 57% of the PL Works more than 35 hours a week. Information services are provided in 98% of the PL from Monday to Friday. Besides, 20% of the libraries are open on Saturdays.

Appropriate spaces (quantity, quality, maintenance): Argentine popular libraries suffer an important deterioration of their premises. This is mainly due to the difficulties in funding improvements and buildings' permanent maintenance. CONABIP has signed an agreement with the Ministry of Federal Planning, Public investment and Services, aimed at getting State's investments on popular libraries. We haven't' obtained information concerning the results of this agreement.

Premises' availability: On 1141 Popular Libraries 48% have their own premises, 21% has gratuitous leases, 19% uses loant premises, and 5% rents its premises. 30% of the libraries shares.

There are differences among larger and smaller libraries concerning technological issues. Libraries' authorities admit that technological equipment should be inceased and updated. For tehcnological equipment, as well as for building infrastructure, libraries depend on the institution that hosts them (in the case of Popular Libraries), or on the National State, in the case of Public Libraries.

Among popular libraries, only 57% have documentation managing systems, and only 76% have telephone lines. 60% of them have a TV set, but only a few have DVD players. Only 28% have videoconference systems, and just a few have photographic cameras.

The absence of insurance against robberies is a relevant problem in libraries. Only 2% of them has anti-burglary electronic systems.

Practically 100% of the libraries have computers (an average of 6 computers per library, since some of them have 20, and other, just 2). The libraries that have computers use them for administrative tasks, managing the libraries' stocks, and in 95% of the cases, to provide users with Internet access.

There is no data about the information materials existing in all the Argentine libraries. The bibliographical patrimony is large and heterogeneous. Its quantity depends on the libraries' age and geographical location.

National Public Libraries own some valuable bibliographical reliques, as well as and incunables. They also have highly specialized materials, accessible to the general public. Popular Libraries provided to the public in year 2006, 22.577.081 books.

Many libraries are working in providing their users with ICT access, facilitating also the libraries' inclusion in national and international networks.

CONABIP promotes the use of a libraries' management system (SIGEBI) to standardize an facilitate the interconnection between libraries, and between libraries and the National program for Information Society, the National Secretariat of Communications, the ONTI , and National Universities.

With respect to digital ICT services, there have been serious difficulties to identify the number of libraries that have internet conections, or which provide their users with digital services. According to CONABIP's data, nearly 50% of the libraries provide digital services. However, the survey carried on by this research team reveals that this proportion could be considerable higher. These data tend to become rapidly obsolete due to the swift dissemination of broadband connections in the country. CONABIP's President informed this research team that most of the technical requirements and fundig requests coming from libraries concern ICT-related initiatives. It should nevertheless be considered that 28% of the libraries are located in towns that lack Internet access.

Acording to a CONABIP survey, over a total of 1133 Public Libraries, and 692 public libraries having Digital ICT services, 71% of them (488) use dial-up connections, and 29% (204) have broadband connections.

4.1.2.3 Affordability

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Except in a low number of public and popular libraries, there are not yet favourable conditions and facilities for people with physical and/or mental disabilities. No discrimination situations in libraries have been identified in this survey, either because of gender, age, religion, race, or any other factor.

Since public libraries' use is free, thay are perfectly affordable for the population. Thay are a way of democratizang access to information and knowledge.

4.1.2.4 Fees for services

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

Gratuity in access to information is a remarkable value in Argentina's libraries. This free access to information is as integrated into the national culture, as the public and gratuitous educational system, which grants a State education for the majority of children and adolescents, and as the public and gratuitous health system. Access to libraries is considered by citizens as a public service, and assumed as such by the citizens and by the political class.

If fees: It is free in all the surveyed cases.

Most of the libraries offer volunteer association systems. In the case of popular libraries, these "associates" contribute a volunteer monthly fee of around 0, 70 u$s.

Indicate amount in local currency $ 2.-

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0,70.-

Date of estimate July 2008

and local currency name Pesos

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

No cases of required fees for digital services in libraries have been detected. On the contrary, libraries include these kind of services a a tool to multiply the services they provide, not as a means to increase the libraries' income.

4.1.2.5 Geographic distribution

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section

Libraries serve a large part of the Argentine territory. Public libraries are present in all the provinces, as well as in the City of Buenos Aires. There are public libraries in large and medium cities, small towns, and villages. Within the cities, they serve city centres as well as low-income neighbourhoods. In fact, libraries in rural areas and low-income areas are often the only communities' opportunities to have access to information, culture, literature, and learning, as well as to a high number of social and cultural activities.

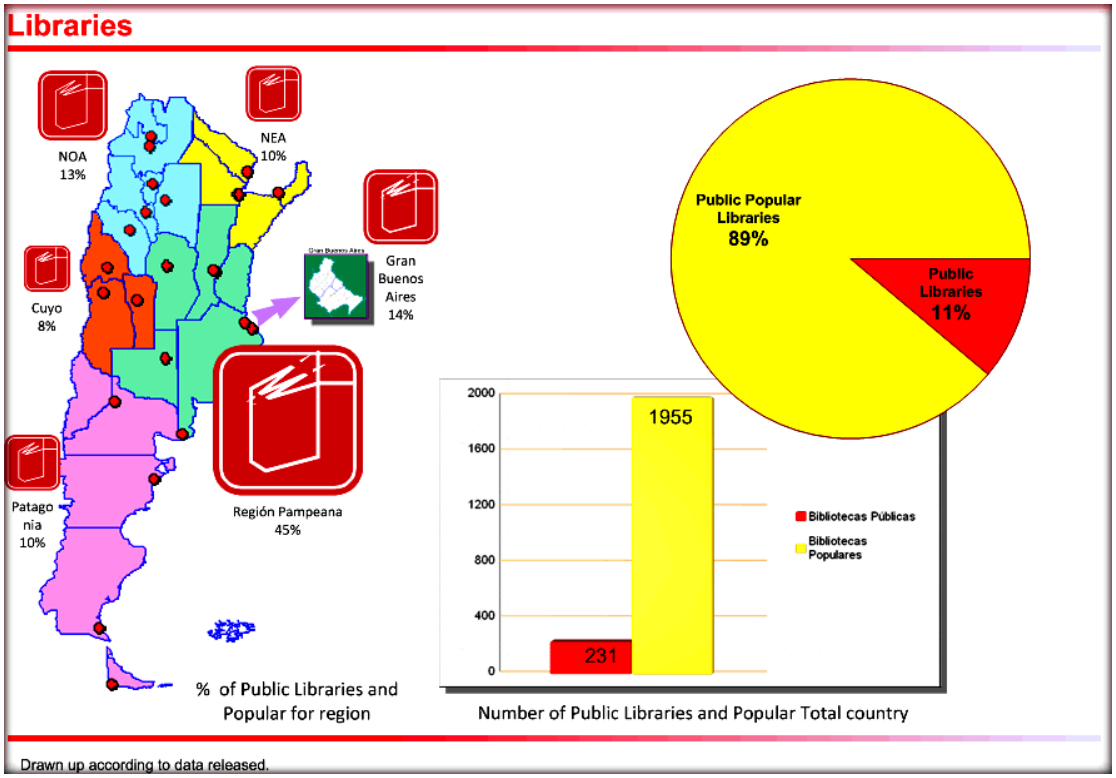
Information sources do not provide data on the Public libraries geographical distribution, nor on how many of the public nor popular libraries have access to ICT services.

Some libraries carry bibliographic materials to the most underserved homes, or to people with disabilities. Thy use "changos" (carriages), backpacks, "bibliomóviles", bibliobuses or "Bibliolanchas" (motorboats).

60% of the Libraries are distributed in urban central areas, therefore they provide larger access; 28% are in urban peripheral areas; and 12% in rural areas. Lo que conforma un porcentaje de 88% en zonas urbanas y un 12% en zonas rurales. Most of the libraries (80%) are located in areas whose socio economic contitions are poor, but that neverteless have access to educational services. 5% of the libraries are located in extermely poor areas, while 15% of them are located in higher income areas.

4.1.2.5.1 Map 1

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).



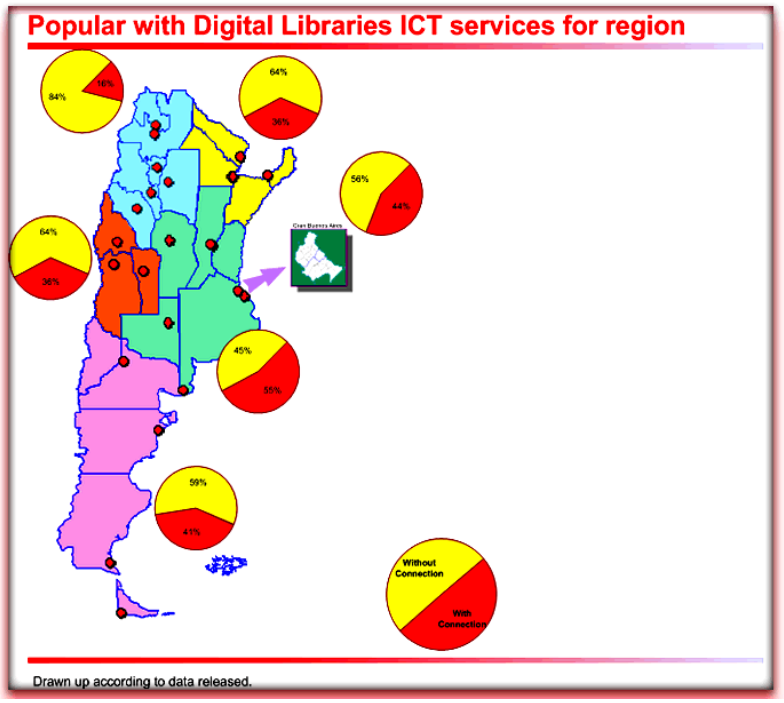
Description of map:

Map 1 describes the Public Libraries' geographic distribution per region. ca de las Bibliotecas Públicas de acuerdo a las regiones del país. The Pampean region, the most relevant in socio-economic development, hosts 45% of the libraries. The City of Buenos Aires and its Metropolitan area, (the highest populated in the country), 14%. The largest and least densely populated region, Patagonia, hosts 12%, while the poorest areas, North-East and North-West, host respectively 13% and 10% .

The infographics reveals the existing relationship between Public Libraries , 231 (11%), and Popular Libraries, 1955 (89%).

4.1.2.5.2 Map 2

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).



Description of map:

Map 2 describes the proportion between Public popular Libraries equipped with Internet connection with those that do not have it, in each geographical region.

Considering that at national level nearly 50% of the libraries have dial up or broadband Internet connection, the gap between the equipped and non-equipped libraries that approaches most the national average is found in the City of Buenos Aires and its periphery (respectively 55% and 44%). In the poorest regions, this ratio is inverted: only 16% of the North Esast libraries are connected, as well as 36% of the North West libraries.

4.1.2.6 Other factors affecting access

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

4.1.3 Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

Libraries have both rented and volunteer staff. The number of human resources varies enormously between the different libraries. Most of libraries' employees are non professional. Popular Libraries generated in 2006, 2.601 rented positions, with an average monthly salary of USD 220. The other universe of Libraries' workers covers the "volunteers". These volunteers,

besides integrating the libraries' directive commissions, participate in the libraries' activities and the projects. Volunteers constitute is an outstanding and particular movement in Argentina. Only in popular Libraries there were 27,327 registered volunteers in 2006. There is no data with respect to the number of volunteers in public libraries.

Most of the Public Libraries offer activities which generate a high community participation. These activities produce relevant local contentes. In some cases, these contents are disseminated throughout the country via libraries' networking or the media. Some of these activities are described in Point 4.1.3.3.All the services are available in the local language, Spanish. Some Libraries provide material in foreign languages; some of them promote original people's languages.

Accessing information is a deeply-rooted practice in Argentina's society. Ascension in the social scale, as well as the satisfaction of individual and family needs were historically based on the individuals and groups' capacities to have access to education and culture. Accessing information, and therefore, "culture", is strongly linked to these concepts. Libraries occupy an important role in equilibrating access to education and information for the social sectors that had not reached full social inclusion. The State and its public policies had a complex political relationship with social initiatives. For some period, they have encouraged and supported their development; for other periods, they have inhibited it. At present, the State is supporting information venues.

In year 2006, more than 400.000 individuals had used ICT services, through the Citizens Information Program. 620.000 individuals have participated in the Reading Encouragement Program, 280.000 in support to school integration, and 1.139.500 people have participated in cultural and artistic activities. 1.052.803 individuals have borrowed books, and 1.904.900 have consulted books in the libraries' reading rooms.

Argentine Libraries are an example of long-sustainable public-private partnership. Public Libraries depend directly from State institutions, but they receive strong support from private and educational organizations, and from international organizations. They also receive their users' support. Popular Libraries are civil society organizations, supported and reinforced by a National State institution. They also receive the support of provincial and local State institutions, accept donations from private and social local institutions and organizations, the users' contributions, and the participation of a considerable number of volunteers.

4.1.3.1 Staff size

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations; i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Libraries have both rented and volunteer staff. The human resources' issue is a key one. The number of resources varies enormously between the different libraries. A subject of conflict we have observed in the process data collection is the relations between professional and non professional staff members. ABGRA, the librarians' representative organizations, does not recognize as its own librarians who are not matriculate as such. Given that most of libraries'

employees are non professional, this constitutes a complex problem.

Popular Libraries generated in 2006, 2.601 rented positions, with an average monthly salary of USD 220. They also had the rented support of personnel whose wages came from other administrative instances. Among them, the stagiaires (7%), the staff depending from other public organisms (24%), contracted by wages (18%) and a very particular category: people who received a social plan then (generally Home Heads) and that works for some hours a day in the Libraries. 51% of the Popular Libraries' workers in 2006 were in this condition. It is very probable that this percentage has diminished, since in the last two years the number of people receiving such social plans has decreased. In Popular Libraries, 21% of the rented personnel is in charge of reading promotion tasks, 28% are librarians, 21% provide information services, and 30% are cultural promoters.

4.1.3.2 Staff training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(ii) For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

80% of this population has complete secondary studies; 79% of the total has had some specific training: 26% are graduated in bibliotecology, 11% is bibliotecology assistant, 27% have become qualified through courses and 29% through other training activities.

The other universe of Libraries' workers covers the "volunteers". These volunteers, besides integrating the libraries' directive commissions, participate in the libraries' activities and the projects. Volunteers constitute is an outstanding and particular movement in Argentina. Only in popular Libraries there were 27,327 registered volunteers in 2006. There is no data with respect to the number of volunteers in public libraries.

CONABIP is carrying on a National Training Plan (Plan Nacional de Capacitación) addressed to all the individulas working in libraries, either rented staff or volunteers. Training includes the following contents: Libraries' Management,Social Animation to Reading, and Information and Communication Technologies.

4.1.3.3 Services offered

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

Services Offered	*Comments*
1. Reading rooms, children's rooms, loans of books and audiovisual	Some libraries provide Internet access, distance search of bibliographic material, online books

	materials	request; other libraries provide spaces for ICT – related activities. Libraries provide reading services for the general public. Some of them also provide a hemeroteca, photo library, documentary material, map library, partitures, reading rooms for the visually impaired, among other services.
2.	Encouragement for reading	Some libraries use virtual resources (ie weblog) to accompany initiatives of reading support and individual or collective creative writing. Development and encouragement for the creation of physical and virtual meeting reading spaces.
3.	School support and other training activities	Informatics training Language courses, youth leaders' training, workshops.
4.	Artistic and cultural activities	Encouragement of the organization and development of projects of cultural activities, the creation of choirs, theatre, and other social and community activities, as cinema, concerts, puppets, special festivals, books presentations, and sport activities. In many cases, Libraries' multiple uses' spaces are utilized.
5.	Recuperation of the historical patrimony	Systematization activities of the historical patrimony in each community for its preservation and dissemination at national level.
6.	National Reading Plan	Virtual libraries are offered to teenagers and young people, promoting Internet use and virtual forums. National Plan implemented by each Popular Library, aimed at encouraging people's interest in reading. The plan develops activities with children, teenagers, young people, senior citizens, as well as in hospitals, prisons, etc. Books promotions are also developed.
7.	Mobile services	As part of the National Reading Plan, Popular Libraries use diverse activities and mobile means to take books and cultural animation to geographic, socially or economically isolated groups, which cannot have access to libraries facilities.

8.	Citizen's Information Program	Creation of a Citizens' Information Base, with a consultation service for the community. Support from the Ministers' Cabinet Headquarters, and from the National Office of Information technology (ONTI) for the bases' informatics programs. The Basis is available in CONABIP's web site, as well as in CD ROM for those libraries that are not connected to the Internet. 479 Popular Libraries from all over the country participate in this program. Promotion of the Popular libraries' reinforcement and community integration, as well as their role as information centres, so that citizens may know their rights, and find answers to their questions regarding available services, procedures, claims, and denunciations. The contents consist of questions and answers on citizens' fundamental rights and the available citizenship's exercise procedures, responsible institutions, their contact data, and the present laws regarding freedom, security, work, children and teenagers' rights, non-discrimination rights, consumers' rights, health, environment, Human Rights. Popular libraries are invited to complete this information with provincial and local data..
9.	Popular Cultural Tours	Production of cultural tours websites, with involved neighbours, among other actions. Promotion and development of local, regional, and decentralized cultural tours, encouraging the preservation and dissemination of local popular culture, and community participation
10.	Special services for people with disabilities	Some PL offer services for the visually impaired people, encouraging initiatives to facilitate blind people's access to libraries.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

Some of the initiatives mentioned above are related to services offered by the libraries, aiming to diminish regional, idiomatic, and abilities' differences in access to libraries.

Other actions are:

- Mobile libraries' services
- Policies and programs developed by the National Executive Power, through CONABIP, in order to transfer material and economic resources to acquire books, buildings' maintenance, and projects development for the communities.
- Provincial and local governments also generate promotion and reinforcement actions of the Popular Libraries, mainly in the Provinces of La Pampa, Chaco, Chubut, Santa Fe, Buenos Aires, and the City of Buenos Aires.
- Conferences on original people's languages. In the case of the Guaraní, two international conferences have been organized by a popular library, with participants from Argentina (Provinces of Corrientes, Chaco, Formosa, and Misiones), and Paraguay.
- The adaptation of libraries' time schedules, which are determined mostly by the particular regional and local situations.
- The development of peripheral neighbourhoods' libraries' networks, aiming at encouraging the use of information in underserved communities, and reach a larger number of people to involve them in reading and information use.

4.1.3.4 Programs for underserved communities

Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

See Point 4.1.3.4.

4.1.3.5 Relevant content

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

Most of the Public Libraries offer activities which generate a high community participation. These activities produce relevant local contentes. In some cases, these contents are disseminated throughout the country via libraries' networking or the media. Some of these activities are described in Point 4.1.3.3. the most relevant are:

Artistic and cultural activities: Encouragement of the organization and development of projects of cultural activities, the creation of choirs, theatre, and other social and community activities, as

cinema, concerts, puppets, special festivals, books presentations, and sport activities. In many cases, Libraries' multiple uses' spaces are utilized.

Systematization activities of the historical patrimony in each community for its preservation and dissemination at national level.

Citizen's Information Program: Creation of a Citizens' Information Base, with a consultation service for the community. Support from the Ministers' Cabinet Headquarters, and from the National Office of Information technology (ONTI) for the bases' informatics programs. The Basis is available in CONABIP's web site, as well as in CD ROM for those libraries that are not connected to the Internet. 479 Popular Libraries from all over the country participate in this program.

Promotion of the Popular libraries' reinforcement and community integration, as well as their role as information centres, so that citizens may know their rights, and find answers to their questions regarding available services, procedures, claims, and denunciations.

The contents consist of questions and answers on citizens' fundamental rights and the available citizenship's exercise procedures, responsible institutions, their contact data, and the present laws regarding freedom, security, work, children and teenagers' rights, non-discrimination rights, consumers' rights, health, environment, Human Rights. opular libraries are invited to complete this information with provincial and local data.

The Popular Cultural Tours, Production of cultural tours websites, with involved neighbours, among other actions.

Promotion and development of local, regional, and decentralized cultural tours, encouraging the preservation and dissemination of local popular culture, and community participation .

Other Content Needed:

Libraries which do not have digital services nor Internet access have limited possibilities to generate and exchange contents between their users, with other libraries, and with the community. Therefore, their possibility to generate local contents that would lately be disseminated in the Internet are limited. Not all the libraries provided with digital services and Internet connections have contents' creation among their usual activities. Actually, there still are few experiences in this area, due to the novelty of having digital tools and to the staffs' scarce training with content creation.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

Incorporating all Public libraries into the CONABIP's Citizens Information Program, or in similar experiences. These kind of programs are valuable instruments to facilitate the creation of local contents, and to disseminate them in the communities.

Promoting in all libraries, particularly in Popular Libraries, the analogic and digital edition of the quality historic and narrative contents created in their activities.

Involving communities population in the creation of local contents, though agreements with

schools, Universities, etc.

Training libraries' staff in the creation of local contents, digital edition, creation and management of social networks, social and community work, etc.

Articulation among public and popular libraries' programs.

***Source**: Websites CONABIP, ABGRA, other Libraries, etc.*

4.1.3.6 Services and information available in local languages

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

All the services are available in the local language, Spanish. Some Libraries provide material in foreign languages; some of them promote original people's languages.

4.1.3.7 Types of uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Refer to section and complement here as needed.

By year 2006, more than 400.000 individuals had used ICT services, through the Citizens Information Program. 620.000 individuals have participated in the Reading Encouragement Program, 280.000 in support to school integration, and 1.139.500 people have participated in cultural and artistic activities. 1.052.803 individuals have borrowed books, and 1.904.900 have consulted books in the libraries' reading rooms.

33% of the Libraries' users requiere services concerning education; 26% a, services concerned with litterature; a lesser proportion of users is interested in subjects such as environment, health, public services, news, etc. When libraries provide Intenet connection services, these are used in 42% for internet searches, 30% for school tasks, or study, 20% for e-mail, and in a lesser proportion, for chatting, social networks, playing games, etc.

4.1.3.8 Number, type, and frequency of users

Refer to section Complement here as needed.

EsIt is complex to define the number of users of these venues, since there are no reliable registries for this type of information. There are Libraries that receive to thousands of people per month and other that always receive to a small number of users. 28% of Libraries users are children, up to 15 years; from 15 to 35 40%, 21% are adults from 36 to 61. Users over 61 years are10%. 66% are woman and 34% men. 24% of the users have incomplete primary education. Only 35% has completed primary education, 29% of the users have completed secondary school, and 13% have

completed university or tertiary level studies. 36% of the users concur every day to the library, 30% at least once per week, 14% two or three times per month, 12% once per month and 8% less of once per month.

4.1.3.9 Users Capacity to use information and services offered

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Libraries are socially valued in the communities, because of their territorial presence, their gratuity, and because they interact with other relevant institutions, such as schools, NGOs, community centers, etc. Libraries have an additional virtue: their permanence. Even in places that register high violence and delinquency indexes, libraries are more respected than other social institutions.

According to libraries' managers, users could access informatin in better conditions if libraries' buildings were better maintained. The lack of connectivity is an obstacle to providing digital services. For the majority of the libraries' managers, (79%), the dissemination of libraries' activities among the communities is insufficient. They claim for an increase in dissemination activities, which would imply a corresponding increase in the quantity of users, and in the quality of the activities.

4.1.3.10 Training courses for users

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

Training courses: See 4.1.3.3

ICT specific training courses:

4.1.3.11 Integration into daily routines

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Tradicionallly, libraries have provided services of accessing litterature, and educational support The users' capacities to integrate these services depend on cognitive and environmental factors. Our survey on the libraries' activities transformation in the last decade, indicates that information and communication services have expanded, involving libraries in activities concerning training for the present job market, social contention, popular education, popular culture, music, theatre, digital services, and Internet access. These activities have increased the information services to the communities' everyday life.

4.1.3.12 Users perceptions about the venue

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are "cool" or "only for elites" etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue…

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

See previous points

4.1.3.13 Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If relevant, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

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Libraries carry on experiences of social appropriation of ICTs, as well as of generation of knowledge (ig, training people with dissabilities in ICT use, the development of resource-generation strategies for social-economy enterprises, creation of social networks for institutional strengthtening, and information exchange, the generation of solidarity spaces, fund - rasing for social goals, environmental protection, networked actions to face natural catastrophes, the creation of local contents with multimedia tools, etc.)

4.1.3.14 Trust, safety, and privacy

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

Libraries are generally perceived by the population as places that grant safety, security, and privacy. The information and services offered are highly trusted.

4.1.3.15 Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

No available accurate data

4.1.4 Enabling environment

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

The public libraries' rich history suggests that accessing information is a deeply-rooted practice in Argentina's society. Ascension in the social scale, as well as the satisfaction of personal and family needs –in a country that until 40 years ago displayed full employment- were based on the individuals and groups' capacities to have access to education and culture. Accessing information, and therefore, "culture", is strongly linked to these concepts.

Libraries have occupied an outstanding place in equilibrating access to education and information for the social sectors that had not reached full social inclusion. The State and its public policies had a complex political relationship with social initiatives. For some period, they have encouraged and supported their development; for other periods, they have inhibited it. At present, the State is supporting information venues.

4.1.4.1 Local and national economy

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Immigration was central to Argentina's development. Prior to the 1860s, there was relatively little migration into the country; the population in 1869 was less than 2 million and, due to the sparse population, vast tracts of land remained unutilized. Labour shortages became widespread, resulting in the growth of real wages and, consequently, an increasing gap between the wage rates of Argentina and Europe. This facilitated a nearly-uninterrupted mass immigration until World War I and by 1914, one third of Argentina's 8 million people had been born elsewhere, mostly in Italy and Spain. These inmigrants carried with them teir love for knowledge. Besides, education was a way to upscale the social ladder. Therefore, public libraries accomplished a relevant role for inmigrants and their children, many of whom became University professionals in one generation.

4.1.4.2 Legal and regulatory framework

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

According to the Law Nº 419, year 1870, establishes that Popular Libraries created by citizens' associations in cities, towns, villages, and other human settlements Hill be assited by the Nacional

Treasure. The Protective Comisión for Popular Libraries was constututed. Its Mission is to encourage and monitor Popular Libraries, as well as investing funds on them. In Law Nº 23.351 was sanctioned; this Law regulates Popular Librraies, and is complemented with the Norm for Encouragement Books and Reading, sanctioned in 2001.

4.1.4.3 Political will and public support

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The rich history of libraries suggest that information access is a practice deeply rooted in Argentina's society. Ascension in the social scale, as well as the satisfaction of personal and family needs –in a country that until 40 years ago displayed full employment- were based on the individuals and groups' capacities to have access to education and culture. Information is strongly linked to these concepts.

Libraries have occupied an outstanding place in equilibrating access to education and information for the social sectors that had not reached full social inclusion. The State and its public policies had a complex political relationship with social initiatives. For some period, they have encouraged and supported their development; for other periods, they have inhibited it. At present, the State is supporting information venues.

CONABIP was created, as described in Form 3, in 1870, by Law 419. In 1986 the Special Fund for Popular Libraries was created. Its mission was to fulfil PL's development needs. Within this framework the relationship between the State and the social organizations supporting PLs was institutionalized. CONABIP's role is to orient and execute the governmental policy for the promotion of popular culture and PL's development, administering and distributing national funds.

CONABIP's strategic goals are to promote the reinforcement of Popular Libraries, support their community and local integration, promote national and Latin American culture, and supporting the development of popular culture. 1995 Popular Libraries, almost half of Argentine libraries, are integrated to CONABIP.

During 2004-2007, two ICT-related initiatives were implemented, a) an integrated system of computerized management was developed, updating the informatics libraries' management system, which had positive impacts on information management; b) the "Citizens' Informatics program" was implemented for libraries' users, using ICT services.

4.1.4.4 Organization and networking

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

In Argentina there is an active movement of inter-library networks. National and private Universities, and the National Ministry of Education have implemented remarkable initiatives in

this sense. Specialized networks gather a high number of library institutions. Some of them answer to territorial and regional logics.

The two more important networks are UNIRED, created in Argentina in 1989, by a group of liberal professionals interested in sharing information. At present it integrates the country's main libraries. The second network is RECIARIA – Project of Argentine Networks, created in 2000 by UNIRED, integrating at present 27 information networks in the country, and covering a large disciplinary spectre. Its mission is to improve access to information in the country, and abroad, so that the diverse social, economic, educative, scientific& technical, and cultural sectors can access to the information resources required by their activities.

All the libraries participate in more than one network, featuring a complex tissue of relations and exchanges, with interesting results. Popular Libraries (PL) are also integrated to a National State – supported network.

4.1.4.5 Partnerships

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Argentina' Libraries are an example of long-sustainable public-private partnership.

a. Public Libraries depend directly from State institutions, but they receive strong support from private and educational organizations, and from international organizations. They also receive their users' support.

b. Popular Libraries are civil society organizations, supported and reinforced by a National State institution. They also receive the support of provincial and local State institutions, receive donations from private and social local institutions and organizations, the users' contributions, and the participation of a considerable number of volunteers.

4.1.4.6 Other environment factors

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

No data available

4.1.5 For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

4.1.5.1 Budget

What is the total budget for this public access venue system (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Total Budget for Fiscal Year 2008

Local currency name Pesos amount (local currency) 20.000.000

Approx. equivalent in USD 6.500.000 based on exchange rate of 3,05 on date 20/07/08 .

Local currency name Pesos Argentinos local currency amount 20.000.000,00 on date 2008

CONABIP manages the Special Fund for Popular Libraries (Law 23.351), integrated by 5% of the collection of Emergency Taxes for prizes paid at lotteries and raffles. From 2004 onwards, supplementary contributions have been added, i.e. extraordinary funds to reinforce CONABIP's Libraries and Operational Plans. Estos aportes especiales se han incluido en el presupuesto del Tesoro Nacional. Common collection funds and the Nacional Treasure contributions will provide AR pesos 20.000.000,00 (u$s 6.500.000) for the present fiscal year.

Popular Libraries' associates contribute approximately AR $ 7.000.000 per year. The management of these funds is decentralized in each management unit.

We have not been able to collect data among the rest of the Public Librraies, due to the lack of accurate information.

4.1.5.2 Relative size of budget

How large (or small) is this budget in relation to other funding streams? (this is a way to show, in financial terms, how much the government cares about information and public access as compared to a variety of other issues in the country).

Relative Size of Budget for same year	Total budget (local currency)	Comments
Total national budget	$161.486.462.174	
Education	$10.441.075.472	
Other (name)		
Public libraries	$18.000.000	

4.1.5.3 Sources of funding

What are the sources of funding for this public access venue system?

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:	Between 60 and 75%	
International donors:	Unknown	
National donors:	Between 10 and 20%	
User fees/services:	Between 10 and 20%	

Other Comments:

Argentina' Libraries are an example of long-sustainable public-private partnership.

Public Libraries depend directly from State institutions, but they receive strong support from private and educational organizations, and from international organizations. They also receive their users' support.

Popular Libraries are civil society organizations, supported and reinforced by a National State institution. They also receive the support of provincial and local State institutions, receive donations from private and social local institutions and organizations, the users' contributions, and the participation of a considerable number of volunteers.

4.1.5.4 Paths and flows of resources

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

Offical (State) financial resources to public libraries are granted through direct subsidies coming from the National, Provincial, or Local State. The decision about the resources quantitym and about their management, belong to the Executive Powers in each jurisdiction, according to the Plans stipulated in the annual budgets approved by the Legislatures in each one of the State's levels.

The National Budget grants at least AR pesos 12.000.000 to direct subsidies to Popular Librraies. Private donations and volunteer support are also integrated to the institutions' official accountancy.

4.1.5.5 Fees and cost recovery

Describe if there are user fees or any other type of cost recovery. How does it affect service delivery and usage?

Contributions are voluntary and very low, but independently of their contributions, users receive exctly the same services.

4.1.5.6 Cost categories

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

No data available

4.1.5.7 Recent changes and future trends

Describe any recent changes and anticipated future trends in the funding and revenue streams for this type of venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is the outlook for the foreseeable future?

The public expenditure levels addressed to libraries have considerably increased in the last years, during the economic recovery following the 2001-2002 crisis. If the present economic conditions prevail, an increasing development of public libraries can be foreseen y the next years.

4.1.6 Case example for public libraries

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.

Insert Case Example and Photo here.

The city of Santa Rosa, capital of the Province of La Pampa, is located at the crossroad of two main national routes: Nº 5, and Nº 35. It is also easily accessible from the main urban centres, such as Buenos Aires to the east, Córdoba and Rosario to the north, Mendoza to the west, and Neuquén and the Rio Negro Valley to the south. Founded in 1892, Santa Rosa has become the main economic centre of the La Pampa Province. In the last years, the city has grown economically over the country's average.

The Popular Library "Clemente J. Andrada" was created in Santa Rosa. As most institutions of this type, it was born tanks to the initiative of parents and teachers of the Escuela Normal Superior Teniente General Julio Argentino Roca. In 1947 it was acknowledged by CONABIP (National Commission for the Protection of Popular Libraries) as a Popular Library. However, it worked as a school library.

The Popular Library "Clemente J. Andrada" is specialized in Teachers Training. It also hosts the materials of the Network for Teachers Training. Its users are students of all the educational levels, university graduates, and the general public. The Library has a special service for the visually impaired.

In Argentina, a high proportion of people with disabilities are also poor. For this reason, it's not common for the visually impaired to have computers of their own. This is why it becomes fundamental for Popular Libraries to be equipped with an organized technological and organizational system in order to strengthen this type of services in diverse places in the country.

When Tiflotechnologies arrived to the library, the librarians launched a series of actions in order to disseminate the existence of this technology at the Popular Library. Tiflotechnology is the adaptation and accessibility of ICTs for their use by the blind and the visually impaired. As a first

step, the librarians visited the local School for the Blind, to contact blind potential users and their families.

The first project between the School for the Blind and the Popular Library, called "A Library for ALL", with the objective to obtain the greater advantages from the new technologies for the social inclusion. Two librarians learned to write in Braille in the School for the Blind, in order to assist visually impaired users in the best possible way. In year 2000 they participated in the librarian training seminar on the use of Tiflotechnologies and dealing with blind users, organized by CONABIP.

By year 2001, blind users went to the Library to use Tiflotechnologies, but not knowing how to use the equipment, they needed more help and time from the librarians. The library had only one librarian trained CONABIP to work with the visually impaired.

The Library generated other project to achieve effective social inclusion. It launched the Users Training Program, in which the library and the School for the Blind work jointly on two axes. The School worked on Orientation and Mobility (O and M) in the urban space, while the library taught the use of Tiflotechnologies. Currently, the Library organizes during the educational year meetings that, as Informatics Workshops, teach interested users the handling of computers, use of the scanner, Braille printers and the HP printer, use of electronic mail and the Internet.

In 2003, the Library informed its users about the Program on Labour Qualification for Blind proposed by the Foundation Once for Latin America, FOAL. The Library received the requests of inscription for the courses that were dictated in the University of Buenos Aires on: "Management and Association of Organizations without Aims of Profit" and "Technical Course of Kinesiology Assistant". In addition, other La Pampa participants displayed productive projects for micro enterprises.

In 2006, the Library within the framework of the National Program INCLUSION, on Labour Formation for Young people, proposed the inclusion of young people with visual difficulties in this program. The proposal was accepted by the Province and the Nation. 25 young people became qualified in advanced Handling of PCs, Marketing, and Elaboration of projects, notes, reports, and Braille. Among them, 12 were blind and 5 were visually impaired.

Services provided:

- Printing in Braille - the Library prints the material asked for by the users.
- Readings printing (cassettes) - the Library has a group of Volunteer Readers charged to record books or chapters.
- Lending of writing and reading materials: (Small boards, striker pins) *Access to computers with JAWS software; Galileo scanner; Braille printing; HP printing.
- Internet

The achievements are numerous:

- The young people who have attended the computation workshops during the previous years,

have managed to incorporate sufficient and necessary skills to work independently on the computers

- Currently, the visually impaired are regular users of the Library, mainly the adolescents and young adults, who besides using the resources provided by the Library usually organize meetings to exchange experiences on diverse issues.
- The blind use the Library by their own initiative and attend the institution whenever they consider necessary to do it. In general they arrive at the Library in local lines buses, which show that the objectives of the Blind School and the Popular Library have been reached.

The implementation of actions to improve the life quality of the blind and the visually impaired in the Popular Library, reached positive results. Using ICTs, the users have autonomous to the bibliographical collection available in the Library. The librarians hope that in a near future their experience will contribute to the implementation of a NATIONAL SYSTEM OF POPULAR LIBRARIES WITH SPECIAL AREAS FOR the BLIND, in which each Popular Library will generate social inclusion benefits, considering all its actual and potential users.

4.2 Venue 2: **Public Acces Venues with commercial objetives**

4.2.1 Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

In the cybercafé category we include all the private venues allowing and encouraging public access: the cybercafés that are the product of individual small capital enterprises, as well as the private parlors implemented by the main telephone enterprises: Telefónica de Argentina, Telecom Argentina, and IPlan. The typical cybercafé is a commercial micro enterprise or franchise, a venue in which users have access to the Internet by paying for a given time, per hour or minute.
In Argentina, cybercafés concentrate a large proportion of Internet users. By year 2006, 34,3% of Internet users use the cybercafés as their main connection place. There are 18.000 to 20.000 cybercafés in the whole country, of which 50 – 60 % is located in Buenos Aires and its Metropolitan Area (AMBA). Almost half of these establishments are private parlors, implemented by the main telephone enterprises: Telefónica de Argentina, Telecom Argentina, and IPlan. Cybercafés are places of technology appropriation, mainly for the underserved population.

At present, private venues allow 5,5 million Argentines to access the Web. It's a varied public, which includes diverse socio economic sectors. For medium and low- income groups, private parlours are a mean to access a PC with a broadband connection. For higher-income groups, they are a mean to access the Web without worrying about informatics complexities, as well as a complement for their home and working connections. Among the young, these venues constitute a whole new ways to socialize, both physically, at the venues, and virtually, through the Internet. 100% (approximately 200.000 computers) offer Digital ICT services. The use of cybercafés has a higher penetration among medium and low-income groups. A large proportion of users that have accessed the Internet for less than a year (new users) use private venues. Users that have been accessing the Internet for 2 to 6 years are also the higher cybercafés users. It is significant that the majority of the low-income users have started to utilize the Internet in cybercafés. These venues facilitate the Internet use by low-income users, including street children, as well as children and teenagers from the poorest neighbourhoods: 68% of low-income children and adolescents access the Internet at least once a day, for almost two-hour sessions. However, cybercafés don't usually provide special contents. Users search the information they want in the Internet, sometimes with the help of employees or other users.

4.2.2 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

Our overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability) is extremely positive. These venues are easily reached by the general population, because of their widespread localization in urban and semi-rural areas. The type of

technologies, services, and information provided by cybercafés do not differentiate among socio economic groups. Each individual user, or group of users, can use the equipments for their own interests, as long as they pay the fee and comply to the cybercafés rules regarding the prohibition of accessing pornography or paedophilic sites.

Cybercafés are extremely affordable: from the cost viewpoint ($0.50/hour), cybercafés is accessible for all social groups. Users spend a weekly average of $5,26 in connectivity

4.2.2.1 Physical access

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

From the physical viewpoint, these venues are accessible to the general population, because of their widespread localization in urban and semi-rural areas. There are 18.000 to 20.000 cybercafés in the whole country, of which 50 – 60 % is located in Buenos Aires and its Metropolitan Area (AMBA). Cybercafés work for an average of 15 hours daily (practically 2 working shifts). In many cases, there's not a fixed closure time: they stay open as long as users are there. However, in general cybercafés are not adapted for people with physical disabilities. There is no place to handle a wheelchair, or special software for the visually or hearing impaired.

4.2.2.2 Appropriate technology and services

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The type of technologies, services, and information provided by cybercafés do not discriminate among socio economic groups. Each individual user, or group of users, can use the equipments for their own interests. On the other hand, cybercafés don't promote services that may interest a particular type of users, with an exception: age. The young are the most frequent cybercafés users. Users under 25 reach 60.6% of total clients. In the last years, extreme ages are using these venues: users below 18 are almost 26% of the overall users. From the cost viewpoint, cybercafés is accessible for all social groups. Users spend a weekly average of $5,26 in connectivity. It is interesting to verify that the men declare to spend more than women.

4.2.2.3 Affordability

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

From the cost viewpoint, cybercafés is accessible for all social groups. Users spend a weekly average of $5,26 in connectivity. It is interesting to verify that the men declare to spend more than women; In 2006, they spent $5,71weekly, whereas women express to spend less: an average of $4.95 per week. Evidently, male users have more intensity and/or frequency of use. Those users defined as "intensive" (18,3%), lavish $7,30. "Regular" users (65,6%), spend an average of $4.14.

Medium-income cybercafés users are the biggest spenders: a weekly average of almost 6$, unlike the high-income clients ($4.32) and low-income clients ($4.94). Te degree of expenditure in these venues is related to the degree of Internet adoption in the home: only the 21,9% of the low-income users and 55,6% of medium income level have Internet connections at home, whereas this proportion rises to 81% in high-income users.

4.2.2.4 Fees for services

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

Users pay an average of Argentine Pesos 1 or 1,50 ($0,30 to 0,50) for an hour of using a computer connected to the Internet. There are no registration fees. There are not any restrictions for particular social groups, except for minors, who have to comply to time regulations. The fees in private venues (cybercafés and parlours): 1 AR Peso to 3 AR Peso (an average of 1,70 AR Peso), in January 2008 (Local currency name: AR Peso. Equivalence: 3,16 AR Peso per 1 USD).

Indicate amount in local currency Argentine Pesos 1 or 1,50

Equivalent in US Dollars: $0,30 to 0,50

Date of estimate July 29th , 2008

and local currency name Argentina Pesos

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

This type of venues is not administratively distributed by any State administrative institution. Only offer and demand (market) rules determine their number and localization throughout the country.

4.2.2.5 Geographic distribution

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section 2.1: Venue Selection.

The joint phenomenon that determine the geographical distributin of the nearly 18.500 cibercafes or parlors are the following: a) the creation of a commercial information venue does not require complex legal nor normative proceedings: anyone can implement a cybercafe in any physical space , either owned or rented; this is the reason why many of these venues area started witout a market analysis nor bussiness model. The large Telephone firms do not regulate the conditions to grant connections nor licences. Only smaller enterprises, such as IPlan, have spatial an esthetical criteria for their franchises. b) In the second place, these venues' geographic distribition is strongly determined by the connectivity qulity in the chosen town, the available bandwith, and the available technical assistance. c) Factors such as the users' answer to the venues, their use, demands, the predominant age in the chosen locality, complete the conditions that define the map

of cybercafes and parlors' geographical distribution.

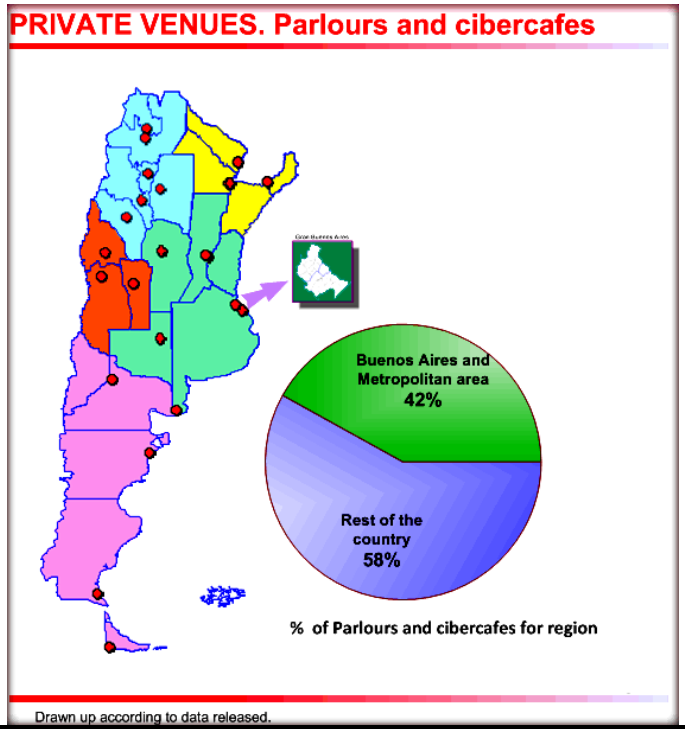
Cybercafés are used proportionally more inside the country (39,3%) that in the AMBA (28,3%) - without cutting out the Federal Capital, which suggests its greater utility for regions in which the ADSL or cable do not arrive or are scarce. Whereas in the AMBA the home connections (73,8%) widely surpasses the connection from cybercafés (28,3%), in the Provinces the use of both places of access is much more balanced (respectively 55,9% and 39,3%). Also, the importance of the GIP per capita of the Federal Capital is one of the factors that have impacts on a lower use of cybercafés, since Buenos Aires City has a broader computer park, and a higher number of connections than interior cities and towns.

Direct observation suggests that there is a considerable difference between the use of cybercafés by the Buenos Aires city users, and those of the Provinces, whose use of these venues is quantitatively higher. In the Provinces, cybercafés don't only provide the services that they provide in the Capital: they are also essential to keep contacts with the rest of the country and the world (online newspapers, websites, blogs, virtual reunion of families whose members have emigrated to other provinces and countries), to follow on line courses and careers, to telework, and as in Buenos Aires, to serve as recreation and socialization places.

The average frequency to use cybercafés, both in AMBA and the Provinces (inland), is twice a week. However, inland users (45.8%) overcome AMBAS's users (31.8%) in this frequency: The same happens regarding inland users that use the Cybercafés once a day (24.3%) and AMBAS's ones (21.2%). These numbers show the higher frequency in cybercafés use in the Provinces, probably as a way to compensate for the lack or insufficiency of other cultural and leisure activities, as well as because of the different communication costs, as suggested by the higher use of E-mails.

4.2.2.5.1 Map

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).



Description of map:

A large majority of parlors and cybercafés (42%) are located in the city of Buenos Aires and its Metropolitan Area (AMBA), which concentrate jointly a third of the Argentine population. The remaining 58% are distributed mainly in the rest of the country, with predominance in tourist and Universities' areas.

4.2.2.6 Other factors affecting access

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cybercafés that have been created by individual initiative do not integrate any network or association. The private parlors implemented by Telefonica, Telecom, IPlan, and others integrate a franchise system. Higher-income groups are connected mainly from the home and secondly from the work, leaving the third place to cybers. This proportion changes steeply in the lower levels, where the access from cyber almost equal home access; access from working places is relegated to the third place.

This tendency is remarkably accentuated in low-income groups, which connect mainly (71.9%) from cybercafés, and in the second place from home (21.9%). In this groups, access from work places is insignificant (7.8%), probable because they work less in offices and places where they can use computers.

It is interesting to remark that high and medium-income groups access the internet in a very low proportion from educational institutions (respectively 4.8% and 4.2%), but even so they overcome low-income groups, who only use free connections in educational institutions in 1.6%.

this can be related to the good informatics equipment in private schools and high schools, better equipped than public educational institutions. Another factor is that in private educational institutions, the "computer rooms" are always open, while in public schools computers are carefully preserved.

The use of cybercafés has a higher penetration among medium and low-income groups, which initiated themselves to the Internet in the years 2000 and 2001. A proportion of 7.4% of users that have accessed the Internet for less than a year (new users) uses private venues. Users that have been using the Internet for 2 to 6 years are also the higher cybercafés users (46.4%). It is significant that almost *72% of the low-income users have started to utilize the Internet in cybercafés*, against around 50% of the medium-income users, and 31.3% of the high-income users. *Equally striking is the relatively insignificant role of educational institutions regarding the initiation to the Internet:* 10.7% of high-income users have started to use the Internet at their schools or universities, as well as 8% of medium-income, and 11% of the low-income groups.

4.2.3 Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

Our overall assessment on the CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue is positive. Even if these venues are often underequipped in staff, the staff training is enough to assist and informally train users in ICT skills. Cybercafés are places of technology appropriation, mainly for the underserved population. They also serve a socialization places for young people. They have become an usual facility in daily routines, for students, youngsters that search recreation or social networks, adults that want to stay in touch with family and friends, searching for information, or to to comply with administrative procedures. However, it must be taken into account that these venues are not deliberately planned to serve to social groups nor underserved populations: they are commercial initiatives undertaken by individuals or families, and eventually some partners, to achieve a subsistence means. Their social role, serving the underserved population, is purely involuntary.

4.2.3.1 Staff size

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations, i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Typically, 1 to 3 people work at these venues, including their owners. It's a business that tends to "enslave" its owners and workers. Cybercafés work for an average of 15 hours daily (practically 2 working shifts). In many cases, there's not a fixed closure time: they stay open as long as users are there. Since most cybercafés have an average of 2,7 persons working at them, it's easy to estimate that they have less employees than necessary (considering weekends and holidays). For this type of hours and operations, an average of 4 employees would be desirable.

4.2.3.2 Staff training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(iii) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(iv) For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

In these venues one owner in three has worked as an employee elsewhere, before getting to manage his/her own business. If we consider that 37% of cybercafés started working in the deepest phase of the 2001-2002 crises, is evident that their implementation was in many cases a way to endure the crisis and the loss of jobs. It is also remarkable that 12% of the owners had not previous labour experience. The previous enterprises inexperience of almost half the venue's managers has impacts on the business' development. Generally, cybercafés staffs are individuals who have a certain degree of knowledge on diverse software. They are capable of helping users in the basics of Internet use, e-mails, Word, Excel, as well as in network games.

4.2.3.3 Services offered

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

	Services Offered	*Comments*
11.	Computers	The computers' quality and upgrading depends purely on the kind and size of the cybercafe
12.	Internet	Mostly broadband connections
13.	Payment of services (electricity, local taxes, telephone, cell phone, general taxes, others)	CD burning, Scanning of texts and images, Photo downloads, Video downloads
14.	Selling of informatics materials, suchs as CD's, mouses, keyboards, etc.	
15.	Food (chocolates, candies, eventually ice creams and sandwiches) and beverages (coffee, soft drinks).	

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

Commerce around Internet access is growing in Argentina. On one hand, an increasing number of cafés offer unlimited wireless access for free. On the other hand, many cybercafés also sell soft drinks, cigarettes, candies, newspapers, stationery, informatics elements, such as CDs, mouses,

keyboards, joysticks, etc., and offer services such as photocopies, CD burning, and fax. They also work as "Pago Facil" points, places where neighbours can pay their local taxes, as well as their electricity, gas, telephone and cell phone bills. The decrease of connectivity costs suggests that many cybercafés base part of their earnings on these merchandises, as well as on the sold bits. Cybercafés do not require their patrons to register as users: you can walk into them, ask for a computer, use it, and pay for the used connectivity time.

The difference between the services in the diverse Argentine regions vary between the largest and most modern cybercafés, equipped with 30 to 50 computers connected to a fast broadband, to small stationery shops, cafés, bookstores, barber shops, or other, which also provide their users with two or three computers. Large cities' centres offer services of the firs kind, although intermediate variations can also be found. In the Provinces' cities, services vary between these extremes. The most common type of venues around the country combine telephone and fax services with around 6 to 10 computers.

4.2.3.4 Programs for underserved communities

Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

These venues are not planned to serve to social groups nor underserved populations: they are commercial initiatives undertaken by individuals or families, and eventually some partners, to achieve a subsistence means. Their social role, serving the underserved population, is purely involuntary.

4.2.3.5 Relevant content

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

Cybercafés don't usually provide special contents. Users search the information they want in the Internet, sometimes with the help of employees or other users. They visit mostly sites in Spanish. The population integrates easily Internet search in their everyday lives, to communicate, study, work, shopping, or recreation activities. In Argentina, 61.8% of the interviewed individuals use the Web at least to visualize and obtain information about products and services. Most of them carry on these activities from work, then from home, and in the third place from cybercafés, probably due to the fact that many cybercafés users have low incomes and no credit cards.

4.2.3.6 Services and information available in local languages

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

No data

4.2.3.7 Types of uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(ii) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs and complement here as needed.

Cybercafés are places of technology appropriation, mainly for the underserved population. Among Internet users, independently of their place of connection, the main occupations are to search for information (87.7%), and sending and receiving personal e-mails (82.6%). Chatting follow with 70.5%. Newspaper reading comes in the fourth place (54.7%), followed by search for information about products and services (54.3%). Recreational activities, such as visiting entertainment sites (23.6%), visiting blogs and personal sites (21.6%), and online games (21.4%) hold a middle place referring to their demand, compared with other Internet services.

Uses vary according to the connection place, mainly for users accessing the Internet at work.

4.2.3.8 Number, type, and frequency of users

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs. Complement here as needed.

Additional details not covered in section 4.2.3

4.2.3.9 Users capacity to use information and services offered

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The degree of literacy in Argentina is quite high (97%, World Bank, 2001), so generally the users are capable to use ICTs, sometimes with some help from Cybercafés managers and employees, or other users'. The main problem is for users to know which kind of information may be useful to them (for example, governmental plans, or job information), where can they find it, and how to use it. This is why, as mentioned above, state-private partnership could generate technological education, training for people over 60, citizens training on the use of e-government, e-health, e-vote, and other services.

4.2.3.10 Training courses for users

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

Training courses: Generally this type of venues does not provide training courses to its users.

ICT specific training courses:

4.2.3.11 Integration into daily routines

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The population integrates easily Internet search in their everyday lives, to communicate, study, work, shopping, or recreation activities. Considering the total of Argentine Internet users, independently of the place of use, 28% of them frequent cybercafés one or several times per day. It is significant that 63,6% of these venues' total users, are connected between one and several times per week. Only a minority (2,6%) uses the Internet less than once per week

Most cybercafés users, use these venues twice a week (40,5%). 23,1% of the users are connected once a day. The group that uses the Internet once a week shows a similar proportion: (23,1%). Few are the "extreme" cybercafés users that surf the Internet more of once a day or, on the other side, less than once a week (2,3% and 6,4% respectively). Consequently, most of the users who use cybercafés are moderate regarding the frequency. They are not "Internet addicts".

Considering the overall users, the average number of weekly hours spent at the Internet is 16.6 hours. Home users show a higher number: (20 hours per week). The group of users that use the Internet mainly from work is connected during 29.7 per week. Cybercafés users are connected 6.2 hours per week, three times less than the other groups.

With respect to the average duration of a typical session measured in minutes, the average in the 2006 measurement for the overall users indicated 114,4 minutes. This level is higher among home users, and users that get connected at work, and decreases among cybercafés users, with 84,9 minutes per typical session. Habitually, 5,8% of cybercafés users have sessions of up to 30 minutes. A 11% have sessions of between 30 and 60 minutes, 33,5% fluctuate between 60 and 90 minutes and 39,9 remain more than 90 minutes at the computer.

4.2.3.12 Users perceptions about the venue

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are "cool" or "only for elites" etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue…

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In general, the population's perception about these venues is extremely positive, given their physical, economic, and social accessibility.

4.2.3.13 Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cybercafés and parlours are completely integrated to the urban and semi-rural landscape. Among their users, there are businessmen, tourists, teenagers in search for online thrills, students, immigrants who try to keep contact with their families, and street children spending the cents they have earnt selling flowers or opening car doors. No one perceives these venues as reserved for elites, nor as "fashionable" or "cool" places. They are just used, in the same way a kiosk is used to buy newspapers, cigarettes, or candies. Cybercafés users use these venues individually or in groups of friends, families, schoolmates, etc. There is no information about how many people are indirectly provided of information through users.

4.2.3.14 Trust, safety, and privacy

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

The general perception of the population about the safety, security and privacy of the information and services offered in this venue is relatively positive. Cybercafés and parlors are used for online tax paying, registrations, and other procedures. However, few cybercafés users operate home banking procedures from these venues.

Among the overall Argentine Internet users, by the end of the 2006, for 13,1% of them, the Internet does not present any negative aspect. 13,3% indicate that the Web contains inadequate contents. However, the proportion of those who fear the insecurity is important (34,9%), followed by those who fear addiction to the Internet (24,2%). Cybercafés users do not differ from the general average users in this sense.

Almost half of Argentine Internet users (48.7%), whichever their connection place, are afraid first of virus attacks. These fear is more important for home users (53.2%), followed by those who use the Internet at work (48.5%). Private venues users are the least worried about viruses (40.2%).

The second perceived risk in Internet use is the violation of confidential information (37.6% of the overall Internet users). In this also, cybercafés users are below the average: (34.1%). Access to inconvenient contents (35.6%), is a significant worry for older users. Other factors, such as hackers' attacks, Internet addiction, or health problems related to computers' use, bother only a small minority.

4.2.3.15 Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

Other information / services people need that are not being met at cybercafés and could be offered, are:

- Local and neighbourhood contents.

- Training in ICTs
- Guides to use e-government services and e-vote.

Opportunities that exist, that are not being met are:

1. State regulation on cybercafés
2. Agreements between local governments and cybercafés to exploit the existing connectivity infrastructure for social purposes.

Besides access to the internet, some measures for cybercafés should be considered by the National, regional, and local governments:

1. Technological means (hardware quality, connections quality, data security, etc.)
2. Use autonomy and facilities (access costs, location of access, etc.)
3. Technical and training support (availability of trainers to refer to learn further about ICTs uses)
4. Possibilities to share abilities with other users.

In order to benefit from Information Society's opportunities, citizens must be prepared to the economic, social, cultural and political evolutions that are changing our World. Citizens' e-readiness describes a country's society degree of preparation to participate as proactive agents in diverse sectors and levels of Knowledge Economy, and to capitalize the participation chances offered by the new economic and technological environment. Cybercafés do not guarantee e-readiness. But they provide fast and low-cost access to ICT infrastructures, equipment, and to the Internet, self-training, access to information, and opportunities for ICTs effective use.

Another unused opportunity is the partnership of public governmental institutions with Cybercafés in order to provide services to citizens. Instead of building or implementing costly Community Technological Centres (CTCs, in Argentina), the national, regional or local governments could take advantage of the existent infrastructure in cybercafés and private parlours, and carry out agreements with them, to use this venues and build agreements with them, in order to facilitate the access to very-low income users, through State subsidies. This kind of state-private partnership could generate technological education, training for people over 60, citizens training on the use of e-government, e-health, e-vote, and other services.

The planning for a specific legislation for cybercafés should include the recognition of these venues' social role, as well as their variable degree of informality, and their fragile economic sustainability of many of them. New norms and standards should control and regulate the quality of the venues and their equipment, as well as protect minors and vulnerable users. But it is necessary to consider that these standards should not imply burdensome financial charges, but on the contrary, they should be helped by a tax-reduction system, in order to help cybercafés to multiply, to fully achieve their social role, to be replicated in remote areas, and to improve the quality of their services.

4.2.4 Enabling environment

2 – 3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

The national environment (economic, social, legal and regulatory, and cultural), facilitates the multiplication of cybercafes and parlors. In the last years Argentina has accentuated its internal differences: while the central regions (Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area, and the Pampean region), concentrate more of 75% of the agricultural and industrial capital, the higher mass of workers, as well as a concentration of science and technology capacities, the peripheral regions are not so favoured. In 2008, Argentina lacks telecommunications access for all the country's inhabitants. This is why that fact that the population can access these services in nearby public venues (parlours, cibercafés, telephone and of Internet kiosks, Community Technological Centres – CTCs, etc.), which permit at least basic access to information and telecommunications, becomes so relevant.

4.2.4.1 Local and national economy

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

To understand the flourishment of private information venues, it is necessary to consider the country's eocnomic and technological unbalances. Part of the Argentine population that does not inhabit neither large nor medium cities lives in isolated towns, where there is not access to the Internet, and /or phone services. These underserved communities have habitually transportation problems. To travel to the, or out of them, by dirt routes, requires overcoming frequently serious climatologic problems. Besides, Argentina's teledensity is 24%; this number hides deep regional differences. The richest regions rise to a teledensity of 20% (reaching 28% or more) while the poorest ones don't even achieve 10%: some provinces attain only 7% (Formosa and Santiago del Estero). Public and private telecommunications' investments are developed first in the places where they can obtain faster benefits, to later expand to zones of minor potential . Regarding Internet access, the homes in the City of Buenos Aires. In the City of Buenos Aires the problem of laying wire nets does not exist, therefore any home can have it installed. The proportion of citizens who have mobile telephony's active lines is the higher in the country. There's also a profuse semi-public telephony network, as well as parlours and cybercafés, all around the City.

This distribution of information and communication facilities follow predominantly a commercial logic. However, the Argentine society, as stated by numerous research and studies, values highly the incorporation of technology to its everyday life, and that an increasing number of people of all social classes -even if mainly urban- use or are interested in using ICT services to fulfil their information and communication needs. Private venues satisfy the populations' needs where public or private enterprises have failed.

4.2.4.2 Legal and regulatory framework

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Most of the legal restrictions in place with respect to private venues consider minors. In Buenos Aires City, cybercafés are legislated by Law Nº 147256, Contravencional Code, Articles 61 and 62, as well as by Laws 863 and 943. The Article 61 of the Contravencional Code limits the minors' entries in places identified: *"[...] place [s] of public spectacles, dance, or entertaining", and charges the owners with the responsibility of the minors' permanence in such places.* Apparently the Law identifies cybercafés exclusively with leisure places, not considering their functions as communication, learning, study, work, and others.

Article 62 of the Buenos Aires City Contravencional Code, Law Nº 1.472, deals with the access to pornographic materials by children younger than 18 years. However, Cybercafés are also legislated in this area by Law Nº 86357, modified in the Law 94358. These Laws refer to Cybercafés as "[...] commercial establishments allowing Internet Access [...]". Owners have to install pornography filters for children younger than 18 years.

"The entry of children younger than 16 years will only be allowed during the school year, between 6 PM to 8PM". If this Ordinance was obeyed, it World imply that children and teenagers World have la short access time, and within the school year, which is the time they most need the Internet to search information for their studies.

In the Province of Córdoba, Law 9.103 rules the cybercafés functioning, prohibiting the access of children and teenagers younger than 18 years *"in places that work as cybers, from 0 to 6 AM".* This Law also determines that cybercafés owners must install in public use computers "filters to inhibit contents on pornographic web pages, as well as on those which may prejudice the children's overall development".

4.2.4.3 Political will and public support

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The National state is not particularly supportive for private venues. With respect to cybercafés and parlors, an overview of the Argentine legislation shows that the Law is present mainly on prohibition aspects, oriented to protect users or their properties: the norms refer to age limits for users, opening and closing times, and locations. Cybercafés must be located far from schools, temples, places for wake, and other places "that deserve respect".

The legislation is also present to prevent or to limit the Internet delinquency by, to protect the industry of music, videos and films against piracy, and mainly, to offer to protection to children and teenagers against pornography and pedophilia. However, Argentina lacks a legislation that encourages cybercafés as inclusion social and technological tools. Legal instruments are not used

to encourage their settlement in deprived or remote geographic areas, nor encourage their use for community goals

The Argentine norms do not specify the services' quality, that cybercafés and other private or social venues should provide their users. Neither are indicated the prices, nor there are standards regarding equipment, hardware, software, furniture, etc. The exclusion of people with disabilities is not taken into account.

4.2.4.4 Organization and networking

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

Cybercafés are not organized in any network nor Federation. Parlors belonging to enterprises such as Telefonica, Telecom, or IPlan, comply with the respective enterprises rules. on the other hand, telephone cooperative do conform Federations (due to their social origins), although this fact does not make any diference in the facilities, equipment, not contents provided in their parlors.

4.2.4.5 Partnerships

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In the Mendoza Province, Internet is taught in private venues, such as cybercafés and parlours. A chain of parlors in the city of Mendoza, WEBHOUSE, offers free space and the use of the PCs: the Mendoza Government organizes the courses. The project's name is INCLUITE, and it's oriented to the underserved population. "Abuelos Online" ("Online grandparents) is an INCLUITE Project, in which, using these premises, grandchildren teach their grandparents how to use the Internet. The Mendoza Province Under secretariat of Relations with the Community has asked cybercafés to join this initiative writing to comunidad@mendoza.gov.ar.

In the city of La Plata, Capital of the Buenos Aires Province, its Municipality, together with the National University of La Plata (UNLP), is implementing a program to train students from the different University departments in volunteers' actions. Among the activities there's a project to rent cybercafés in underserved neighbourhoods, so once a week, UNLP advanced informatics students will train informatics to the neighbourhood children.

4.2.4.6 Other environment factors

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

describe

4.2.5 For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

4.2.5.1 Budget

What is the total budget for this public access venue system (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Total Budget for Fiscal Year fiscal year

Local currency name amount (local currency)

Approx. equivalent in USD based on exchange rate of on date .

4.2.5.2 Relative size of budget

How large (or small) is this budget in relation to other funding streams? (this is a way to show, in financial terms, how much the government cares about information and public access as compared to a variety of other issues in the country).

describe

4.2.5.3 Sources of funding

What are the sources of funding for this public access venue system?

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:		
International donors:		
National donors:		
User fees/services:	100%	

Other Comments:

According to our calculations, the total monthly budget for cybercafés rises to:

Rent: AR 4000 (1265 USD) to AR 20000 (4746 USD), depending on the locals' dimension and localization. We've considered an average of AR 5300 (USD 1670)

Salary, two full time employers: AR 3000 (950 USD)

Computer maintenance: AR 320 (103USD)

Cleaning, electricity, phone, etc: AR 600 (USD 190)

Monthly total: AR 9220 (USD 2918)

Total Budget for Fiscal Year: AR 110640 (USD 35013) per cybercafé.

Items such as computer reposition should be added: two new computers /year: AR 3500 (USD 1108) Local currency name AR peso. Local currency amount: USD 3,10 in July 2008.

4.2.5.4 Paths and flows of resources

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

Cybercafes and parlors are self-sustainable. Thy do not receive any public funds for their work. We estimate that the average cybercafés / parlours invoicing yield AR 4800 (USD 1519) per month. These are gross profits, to which should be deduced diverse costs and expenditures.

4.2.5.5 Fees and cost recovery

Describe if there are user fees or any other type of cost recovery. How does it affect service delivery and usage?

Since the majority of these venues (57%) started to work, in the years 2003 and 2004, the main cost categories have suffered considerable rises: rent and salaries. The business boomed in terms of growth in the midst of the crisis, as a labor outing for many people who had lost their jobs, at times when rent costs were low, due to the number of closed business generated by the very same crisis. The scenario changed when the economy took a growth direction. Once the crisis was overcome, the prices recovered the lost ground, mainly commercial rents, and salaries (either formal or informal). With the costs implied by a growing economy, the equation costs-benefits is not profitable for many cybercafés owners.

The average premises' rent represents 44% of the total costs, while human resources amount to 25%. Meanwhile, the services' price rose slightly, approximately 13% (the cost of a connection hour to the public rose from AR 1,50 to the current 1, 70). This situation was combined with the explosive development of cell phones, and the broadband. Therefore, cybercafés owners have to face increasing costs, stable selling prices, and a demand retraction. However, from a macroeconomic viewpoint, this retraction becomes compensated by the entry of new users to the Internet. This forced some owners to diversify their services, offering activities not linked to telecommunications, such as newsstands, kiosks to sell candies, cigarettes, etc. In 2007, telecommunications represented 50% of the business benefits,

In most cases, these venues allow their owners to earn a living, but not to become rich. It is not possible to consider all the premises offering internet access within the same category. Even if the average equipment is 13 PCs, the extremes go from 2 PCs to 56 PCs, with different technology levels. The PCs' age is relative, since two users out of three admitted not to renew their PCs park. However, they do update their technology, particularly in rigid disks and memories.

4.2.5.6 Cost categories

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)	25%	Salaries, two full time employees, U$ 950/month
Building infrastructure	44%	
Utilities		
Staff Training	0%	
Computers/technology	20%	
other (name)Taxes, electricity, water, etc.	11%	
Total	100%	

4.2.5.7 Recent changes and future trends

Describe any recent changes and anticipated future trends in the funding and revenue streams for this type of venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is the outlook for the foreseeable future?

The investigation allows concluding that the Argentine society positively values the incorporation of the technology in its daily life, and that more and more people of the entire social, although mainly urban conditions use or are interested in using services TIC to satisfy their necessities and demands of information and communication

The most relevant probable trends for this type of venue the next five years are:

1. Regulation

    d. Relaxation of the regulations concerning private information venues.

2. New infrastructures and improvements of existing infrastructures

    d. Implementtion of Wi-Fi áreas in urban and interurban areas.

    e. Extensión of broadband communications to the whole nacional territory.

    f. Implementation of State managed information venues

3. Active, integrated and associated public policies:

    d. The tendency to encourage uncoordinated policies regarding public access to information will be gradually replaced by articulated policies regarding the homogenization of plans and services.

    e. Extension of ICT infrastructures TIC and of the available capacities in State, private, and Civil Society managed information venues.

4.2.6 Case example for venue 2: Public Acces Venues with commercial objetives

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.

Insert Case Example and Photo here.

Cybercafe LUNA, Neighbourhood Ejercito de los Andes (Fuerte Apache), Prov. De Buenos Aires

In Argentina's cities there are marginal urban spaces, where social vulnerability is crudely exposed in chronic contexts of poverty and children exclusion. On of these areas is the Barrio (Neighbourhood) Ejército de los Andes, better known as Fuerte Apache (Fort Apache), because of its permanent state of social violence and insecurity, institutional and police abuses, delinquency, and drugs traffic. Fort Apache is located at the West of the Greater Buenos Aires area.

Over 35.000 persons live in Fort Apache. 20% of the neighbourhood population is unemployed, and devoid of any kind of social assistance. Almost 10% of the inhabitants are between 15 and 19 years old. Some social studies estimate that 20% of the children under 14 years old will die before reaching their 19th year, because of drug abuse, or violence.

Both cable operators and Internet providers refuse to enter Fort Apache to connect their services, even if the area is a strong potential consumption niche.

"The neighbourhood is the safest place on Eartht, because everyone knows everyone else. If they rob outside the Fort, they won't rob inside", explains Osmar Molina, a Fort Apache inhabitant. *"Now everything here is fine, quite quiet. There are few shootings, few gun fires. The kids are behaving better. Outside people don't want to come here because they don't really know us".*

Other low-income neighbourhoods undergo the same situation; their neighbours have organized themselves, and presented a complaint against their discrimination to the People's Ombudsman. However, in the Fort, the lack of cable TV was solved though a quite Argentine strategy. A neighbour achieved to get a license from a cable operator, and he distributes it in the Fort, with unusual benefits: each home pays around USD 12 per month, including codified channels with Sunday soccer games. Self-sufficiency without intermediaries.

In front of Cibercafé Luna, for the moment the only cybercafé in the neighbourhood, Rubén

Riquelme, its founder and owner, states that the Web is outplaying television. According to Finquelievich and Prince (2007), it is a growing phenomenon: 84 % of the children under 18 years that access the Internet do it at cibercafés, where kids chat, play, and study for 1 AR Peso (0.30 USD) an hour. Riquelme estimates that "Around 100 kids per day come to the cybercafé. If you send them to learn informatics, they'll never go. However, they come here, and they learn, all right. They learn by themselves, or they help each other. Everything that exists is in the Internet".

Damian (15) spends his mornings in the streets cleaning car windows. In the afternoons he gathers his earnings and runs to the cybercafé Luna". In the virtual world, dozens of kids are waiting for him to connect. "Sometimes I get so caught in the internet, I think it's an addiction", Damian admits.

In the cybercafé, with its deep blue walls, it's always night. A couple of skulls hang from the ceiling. A moon shines in one of the walls. "We named the Cyber Luna (Moon) because of my first grand daughter, named Luna", tells Riquelme. The average age of his patrons stays below 12 years old. It looks like a kindergarten. Instead of crayons, kids play with mouses, keyboards and monitors. No children songs, either: the loudspeakers vociferate cumbias.

"Coming here helped me to finish high school", tells Diana, a daily Luna's client. "Before the cyber came, I used to spend the whole day at home. Now, I come here religiously at least an hour a day, to use the Internet (…) I use the Internet to search for school staff, to get to know new people, to amuse myself…".

4.3 Venue 3: Public Acces Venues with social objetives

4.3.1 Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

Our assessment about social-minded venues is positive: it is important to have a significant increase of this type of venues in the country. However, we keep a critical viewpoint: these venues so not follow any common paradigm. The diverse institutions that implement social-minded venues are not coordinated among them, and they do not use the most important potential of information society: social networks. The lack of commonalities among the diverse venues´models. As well as the lack of unifying networks, lead to a dangerous waste of social capital.

The institutional model of social-aimed accesses is focused on social development and the empowerment of community groups, the development of social capital, and the struggle against poverty. This conjunct of venues is particularly heterogeneous regarding its origins, goals, practices, working conditions, target population, funding sources, institutional development, impacts, and monitoring and assessment models. Therefore, any tentative of classifying these information venues implies a methodological risk.

Governmental initiatives regarding social-aimed information venues have been fragmented; they lacked continuity through the successive administrative changes, and they were not able to respond to integral and articulated plans among diverse organizations and institutions. The diverse governmental initiatives have been developed in parallel and uncoordinated ways.

By the late 1990s, both governmental institutions and community organizations in Argentina strongly impulsed the implementation of technological community centres in local institutions and in community organizations premises, with the goal to facilitate access to the Internet to underserved populations. Community Technological Centers (CTCs), created by the Information Society Program, became the paradigm of the 1990s neoliberal model. The Project, implemented without any type of previous impact studies, was unorganized. Neither CTCs coordinators nor users received any type of training. Costly informatics equipment, distributed with no rational criteria, arrived to unaware, surprised schools or NGO directors, which had not received previous information about CTCs implementation in the premises. Most the equipment was rapidly stolen or simply disappeared. The main beneficiaries of these projects were not the final users, but the government and the participating private enterprises. Of the original 1500 CTCs, only 150 survive in 2008. The survivors have manager to find jeans to support the CTC. At present, they are receiving new State funds and managerial assistance.

At least four Argentine National governmental organizations are carrying on initiatives regarding public information venues: the Information Society Program (National Secretariat of

Communication), the National Ministry of Economy, the National Ministry of Social Development, and the Federal Investment Council. The Provinces of San Luis and San Juan are also implementing social-oriented public venues. Among the, they have implemented more than 300 venues. There is no coordination between these programs.

The Information Society Program (National Secretariat of Communication), the National Ministry of Economy support projects generated by social and community organizations. The rest of the mentioned institutions implement public information and internet access venues, created by their own initiatives, premises of their own, or in some cases, in communities' buildings.

The number of social, and community organizations, and NGOs, which have developed initiatives regarding information venues independently from the State, is scarce. We have identified 99 venues supported entirely by NGOs..

4.3.2 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

For the institutional model of social-aimed accesses is focused on social development and the empowerment of community groups, the development of social capital, and the struggle against poverty. This conjunct of venues is particularly heterogeneous regarding its origins, goals, practices, working conditions, target population, funding sources, institutional development, impacts, and monitoring and assessment models. Therefore, any tentative of classifying these information venues implies a methodological risk.

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The number of social, and community organizations, and NGOs, which have developed initiatives regarding information venues independently from the State, is scarce. We have identified 99 venues supported entirely by NGOs.

4.3.2.1 Physical access

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

According to the collected information, 414 of the information venues are distributed in urban areas (84,5%), and 77 in rural areas (15,5%). Within the cities, most venues are located in the low-income suburbs. Almost 50% of the venues are distributed in the country's most underserved regions, the Northeast and the Northeast.

4.3.2.2 Appropriate technology and services

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Work hours: the social venues' working hours depend on the human resources' capacities, the quality of the Internet connection, and the availability of the premises. The users' needs do not always define the provided services of physical access to information.
Availability of equipment, software and hardware (quantity, quality, maintenance):
All the venues have a common problem: keeping thir equipment updated and in good working conditions. The increase of braodband connections´use and the experiences y satellite connections have facilitated access.
Most of the venues use open source software. In many cases, social organizations a good amount of efforts and resources to disseminate this type of technological tool. On the other hand, social venues use largely web resources
Premises' availability for Social venues work: Many of the venues work in premises belonging to other organizations, a fact which often poses problems regarding te venues´management.
The lack of financial resources is claimed as the main factor of distance between the organizations and instititions´goals, and the impacts actually reached in the communities. Social venues provide free services. This gratuity provides a double benefit: on one hand, obviously, users don't have to pay for the services; on the other hand, they have access to technological tools and services which they cannot afford at home.

Technological resources are incorporated to these venues though two main sources:
1. A State funding institution delivers equipment and technology to the venue when the Project starts, but they do not update the technology as the project develops. This implies the fast obsolescence and lack of maintenance of the equipment

2. Enterprises, or enterprises' foundations, donate equipments and technology to the venues. Generally they are obsolete equipments.

3. A third mechanism is related to the recycling of donated obsolete computers, developed by NGOs such as the Fundacion Equidad in Buenos Aires.

4.3.2.3 Affordability

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

No discrimination problem has been identified in our data collection and processing. On the contrary, due to the goals of this type of venues, we have detected initiatives stongly linked to the social and digital integration of low income or vulnerable groups.

Some examples are the ATEDIS Program (PSI´s Technological support for people with disabilities), training projects for agricultural sectors, Nodo Tau´s digital literacy initiatives for low income neighbourhoods in Rosario, or Puerta 18, Foundation IRSA´s initiative to train low income teenagers in the use of informatics, multimedia, and others, in the city of Buenos Aires.

4.3.2.4 Fees for services

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

Generally, these venues' services are free. In some of the venues, the users make some kind of contributions. Some participation activities, such as informatics training, have low, affordable fees.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

See Point 4.3.2.4.

4.3.2.5 Geographic distribution

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section 2.1: Venue Selection.

Regarding the regional distribution of these types of venues, the higher proportion is located in the country's poorest regions. The North East and the North West concentrate 43% of the venues, while the Pampean region, with higher population, income, infrastructure, and institutional support, concentrates 25% of the venues. This data suggests that when institutions and social organizations decide where to locate their venues, they choose the most underserved and poorest regions.

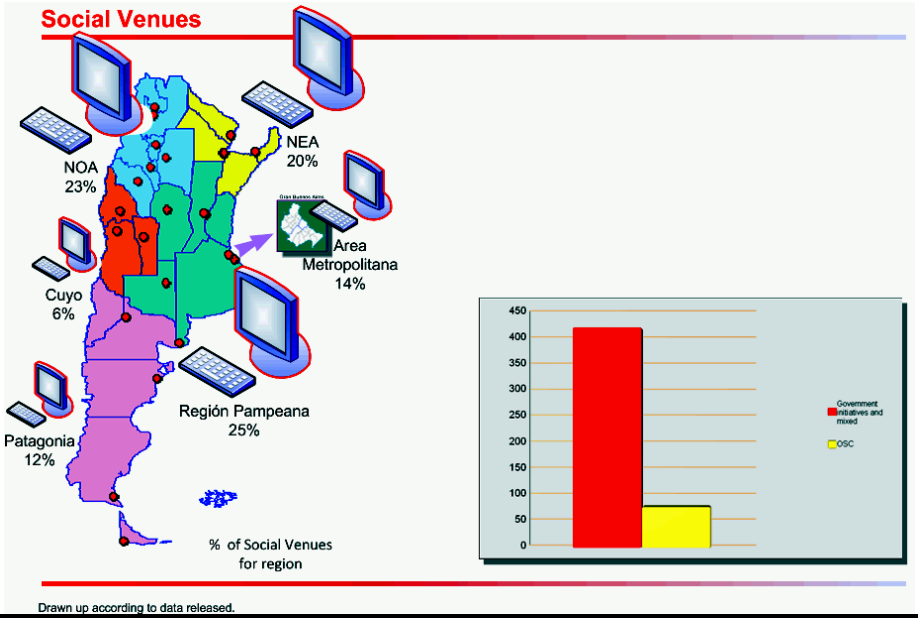
The diverse and heterogeneous programs for venues with social goals follow different logics regarding the venues´ geographic distribution. Governmental projects do not show the same criteria. The Information Society Program's CTCs have not been located following social indicators. However, the Centres of Community Integration, of the National Ministry of Social

Development, as well as the MiPC Program, of the National Ministry of Economy, grant high priority to locations on low-income and/or high social vulnerability areas. CFI´s Access Centres are located in the Provinces capital cities, regardless of neither the inhabitants´ needs nor social conditions.

On the contrary, social and community initiatives which are independent from State institutions are generally located in highly underserved areas. These venues geographical location is coherent with these organizations development criteria, since almost 50% of these venues are concentrated in the country´s poorest regions, the Northwest and the Northeast.

4.3.2.5.1 Map

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).



Description of map:

This map shows the connection between information venues related to State projects and those implemented by NGOs, social, and community organizations, and the venues distribution in the diverse regions..

4.3.2.6 Other factors affecting access

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above are:

1. Inefficient and unstable political and financial support to State initiatives, i.e. the case of the CTCs.
2. Difficulties to incorporate human resources

3. Difficulties to train and support the venues staff.
4. Budgetary difficulties for equipment, suitable Internet connections, and software
5. Difficulties for building maintenance
6. Few operating venues in relation to the underserved population
7. Lack of articulation with other social institutions as Public and Popular Libraries, Universities and other social institutions, such as hospitals, children homes, jails, etc.
8. Lack of a state policy supporting the social organizations which drive the development of information access.
9. Lack of venues in rural areas.
10. Internet and proprietary softwares costs are obstacles for NGOs, which do not consider Internet access as one of their top priorities. Only 5% of NGOs´ leaders consider important to raise their expenditure in updating the existing technological tools.

4.3.3 Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

Our overall assessment of the CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue is extremely positive. The main value of venues with social goals is the capacity to generate the social appropriation of ICTs, as well as effective use. The challenge with ICTs is not merely to provide passive "access" to the technology but rather to make available the means by which individuals in their communities can find ways of making "effective use" of these technologies for productive, wealth creating, and transactional as well as other processes. Non governmental social organizations show their consideration for these factors.
On the other hand, most of these initiatives encourage the generation of local contents, related to the citizens and communities everyday needs, and to the social appropriation of technologies.

However, many of these organizations have weak institutional structures, their budgets are limited and often discontinuous, and their human resources are scarce in relation to the number of users that expect to access these venues. Additionally, most of the human resources are voluntary, and have a low level of technological and managerial training.

4.3.3.1 Staff size

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations, i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

There is no data about human resources, paid or voluntary, working in these venues. Ideally, it would be necessary to have a Coordinator, and at least two community operators, and two technicians in each venue.

4.3.3.2 Staff training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(v) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(vi) For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

Without data

4.3.3.3 Services offered

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

	Services Offered	*Comments*
16.	Training and workshops	Training on the Internet, open source software, design, multimedia, etc. School support for children and adolescents.
17.	Dissemination of ICTs	Participation in events
18.	Strengthening access to the labour world	Training in teleworking. Design and constructions of websites and publicity blogs Training for the labour market; strengthening access to the labour World; labour inclusion. Training for SMES and social economy enterprises. Development of local commerce through information and exchanges networks.
19.	Creative spaces for individual and social development	ICT use.Group processes for diverse age groups.
20.	Articulation with other institutions.	Training on ICTs for other social organizations.
21.	Generation of local news and information	Use of ICT tools. Incorporation of local feature writers to reconstruct the communities' towns, and/or organizations' history.

22.	Citizens' information	Access to public procedures and public information
23.	Graphic services.	Design for micro entrepreneurs and small enterprises.
24.	Integration of original people (aborigin)	Training and support for community and social organization.
25.		

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

These venues provide a large variety of services, depending on their diverse institutional plans and criteria. In some NGOs, our research has shown a strong tendency to encourage regional and local economies, social economy, and training for low-income children, teenagers, and adults. Another group of organizations works on environmental and indigenous issues. Many of the socially-oriented venues are specialized on specific age and gender groups: children, teenagers, young adults, women, and people with disabilities.

Other group of organizations work on local issues, on evironmental problems, indigenous communities, etc. Organizations working on the generation of local contents, training, and educational inclusion are relevant. Many of the initaitives are addressed to diverse age groups; some organizations work preferably with children and teenagers, while others orient their initiatives to senior citizens, and still other organizations work specifically with women and gender issues.

4.3.3.4 Programs for underserved communities

Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

These initiatives are mostly conceived to provide services allowing to decrease the digital gap, and to help the social and digital integration and development of individuals and communities.

4.3.3.5 Relevant content

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

Every kind of contents is available for these venues users, excep in those venues which use filters for pornographic and paedophilic contents. The socially oriented venues tend to generate specific contents:

1. Contents on local issues (since many of them, such as Fundacion Pro Alvear, which generates contents addressed to rural development, are strongly linked to local territories)

2. Contents addressed to specific goups (artisans, microentrepreneurs, photographers, teenagers, women, senior citizens, people with disabilities, etc). In these cases, the generation of contents is both an attraction strategy, and a factor of institutional strenghtening.

3. Contents addressed to the creation and work of social networks. I.e. Nodo Tau, trough its portal www.enredando.org.ar, concentrates the activities of community organization in its region, Rosario and its hinterland. Its content is permanently updated with the contribution of each participating organization, trhough user-friendly tools.

Other Content Needed:

Since many of these initiatives are supported by State funds, is is rather surprising not to find State contents (neither National, regional, nor local) in their websites . Therefore, the opportunity for the State, to benefit of its own investment to generate contents that could be useful to the citizens, remains lost. These websites are not linked to any e-government site.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

The National Information Society Program (PSI) though its CTCs trains coordinators to generate local contents

Sources of information:

Nodo Tau Asociacion Civil, Rosario, www.tau.org.ar

National Information Society Program (PSI), www.psi.gov.ar

Asociación Argentina de Teletrabajo, www.aat-ar.org

Teletrabajo y Desarrollo local, www.tedel.org

LINKS, Asociación Civil Para el Estudio y la Promoción de la Sociedad de la Información, www.links.org.ar

4.3.3.6 Services and information available in local languages

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

All the services are available in Spanish. In some North eastern communities, where Spanish and Guarani are currently spoken, contents and information in Guarani are generated.

4.3.3.7 Types of uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(iii) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs and complement here as needed.

People use these venues to participate in individual and collective processes oriented to generate social economy enterprises, and social capital, in order to improve their living conditions: education, training for the labor market, access to general and specific information, and others. NGOs also use their access capacity to disseminate their activities, invite citizens to their activities, and to integrate social, thematic, or political networks.

According to the collected data, among the diversity of the services and contents provided by these venues, the most relevant are the use of ICTs for labour training (50%), building institutional and social networks (35%), accessing entertainment and culture (45%), and using e-mail and chat (55%).

4.3.3.8 Number, type, and frequency of users

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs. Complement here as needed.

No data available.

4.3.3.9 Users capacity to use information and services offered

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In Argentina, as in the rest of the world, users often learn to use ICTs by doing. Public venues are not only information access places: they are also self-training places, where users learn to use ICTs by themselves or with the help of employees or other users. However, social oriented venues often provide training courses on ICTs, multimedia, computer recycling, etc.

4.3.3.10 Training Courses for Users

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

Training courses: No specific data available

ICT specific training courses: No specific data available

4.3.3.11 Integration into daily routines

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The population integrates easily Internet search in their everyday lives, for communication, study, work, social, civic, or recreation activities. In Argentina, 61.8% of the interviewed individuals use the Web at least to visualize and obtain information about products and services. Many users find information about e-government procedures, taxes payments, and other issues. Most of them carry on these activities from work, then from home, and in the third place from public or private venues, which offer the advantage of providing informal guidance trough these procedures. Social oriented venues offer the extra advantage of guiding their users on specific information issues as solutions to their needs and problems: training, concrete local needs, content generation, etc.

4.3.3.12 Users perceptions about the venue

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are "cool" or "only for elites" etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue.

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Social oriented venues are perceived as a much needed public facility. They are not perceived as particularly "cool" or fashionable places, but as community gathering venues.

4.3.3.13 Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

As described above, people use these venues to participate in individual and collective processes oriented to generate social economy enterprises, and social capital, in order to improve their living conditions: education, training for the labor market, access to general and specific information, and others. NGOs also use their access capacity to disseminate their activities, invite citizens to their activities, and to integrate social, thematic, or political networks. While social venues created by the State generally do not focus mainly on the generation of contents, the venues implemented by social organizations do help and encourage users to generate their own contents. Of the services and contents provided by these venues, the most relevant are the use of ICTs for labour training (50%), building institutional and social networks (35%), accessing entertainment and culture (45%), and using e-mail and chat (55%).

4.3.3.14 Trust, safety, and privacy

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

The general perception of the population about the safety, security, and privacy of the information services offered in these venues is positive. According to the 2007 Prince & Cooke study on Argentine population ICT use, the users who use public venues generally do not worry about these issues.

4.3.3.15 Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

Some services people need that are not provided by these venues is specific contents about e-government (National, regional, and local). Although anyone can access a governmental website or portal, many citizens don't due to lack of information. These services should be displayed in the main access pages provided by the venue, which should also guide citizens in public procedures, and civic and political life.

4.3.4 Enabling environment

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

In the last decades, social and community organizations have assumed roles in providing educational, training, and information services to underserved populations, which have been left vacant by the State, while they receive an increasing support from the same State. However, this support is not integrated in systematic and regulated policies. A few organizations receive international support from international organizations (BID, CRDI, European Union, etc.) or private foundations, (Microsoft).

Many of these organizations promote survival or social economy projects, with low impacts on the real economy.

4.3.4.1 Local and national economy

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In Argentina, the dynamics generated by the globalization process and structural adjustment of last decade's economy has generated strong changes in the productive structures, caused by the amplifying effects of free trade and a social crisis indicated in the previous chapter. At territorial level, this process generates the aggravation of historical problems, since the country's different areas and regions, already unbalanced, have increased their inequity levels. In the last years Argentina has accentuated its internal differences: while the central regions (Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area, and the Pampean region), concentrate more of 75% of the agricultural and industrial capital, the higher mass of workers, as well as a concentration of science and technology capacities, the northeast and northwest provinces face economic and social problems. Within this context, complementary relationships disappear, settling a hegemonic urbanization process that empties the poor areas, weakens the countryside, and contributes to the urban internal fractures.

The importance of public social information venues resides in that they try to compensate the lack or insufficiency of access to education and information in the most underserved areas. As

mentioned above, the higher proportion of this type of venues is located in the country's poorest regions. The North East and the North West concentrate 43% of the venues, while the richer Pampean region concentrates 25% of the venues.

4.3.4.2 Legal and regulatory framework

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The National Constitution, as well as the International Treaties incorporated to it, guarantee free associability to non governmental organizations. These organizations, either Civil Associations, Foundations, are regulated according to the Civil Code. The country also recognizes foreign organizations´ legal entity. At national level, non governmental organizations are inscribed in the Tributary Frame, by Law 16.656 (exemption of national taxes, TVA, etc. The legal frame also establishes the organizations levels of responsibility, as well as control mechanisms.

4.3.4.3 Political will and public support

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The level of political will and institutional support (including financial support) for this type of venue is relatively high if compared with the support granted to other types of information venues. At National level, four institutions support these venues: the National Ministry of Economy, the National Secretariat for Communications, the Federal Investment Council, and the National Ministry of Social Development. At regional level, the Provinces of San Luis, San Juan, and Buenos Aires, have developed State funded social information venues. In August 2008, the city of Rafaela, Santa Fe, has launched an information venues project (too recent to be considered in this research). Nevertheless, these diverse plans and projects are not articulated between them.

4.3.4.4 . Organization and networking

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

These facilities are organized in networks, or collective bodies depending on the Plan or project they integrate. PSI's CTCs are linked by an Intranet, and integrate an exchange and training network. CTCs' identity was marked by the concept of "local informatics networks connected to the Internet, with community developments and contents, located in underserved human settlements, or in remote areas". The CFI works on the issue of social networks since 1983, through political and institutional liaisons between the Provinces. Most social community organizations integrate electronic networks, not only in large cities, but also in the Provinces' small towns. In such towns, the existence of a SCO providing information access through ICTs has proved useful to overcome the inhabitants isolation.

Generally the networks are established among the organizations either at territorial levels (national, regional or local) or around thematic interests. Nevertheless, both governments implemented venues and SCOs venues show a lower level of strength, as well as a lesser number of generated and uploaded local contents, than libraries.

4.3.4.5 Partnerships

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Of the 491 analyzed venues, only 99 of them are not financially supported by the State. Almost 75% of these venues are State supported. In the last years, private support coming from enterprises and private Foundations, has increased, i.e. Telefonica´s Programa Pro Niños, Microsoft, ARCOR Foundation, IRSA Foundation, etc.

4.3.4.6 Other environment factors

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

4.3.5 For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

4.3.5.1 Budget

What is the total budget for this public access venue system (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Total Budget for Fiscal Year fiscal year

Local currency name amount (local currency)

Approx. equivalent in USD based on exchange rate of on date .

Without data

4.3.5.2 Relative size of budget

How large (or small) is this budget in relation to other funding streams? (this is a way to show, in financial terms, how much the government cares about information and public access as compared to a variety of other issues in the country).

Without data

Other Comments: No data available

Without data

4.3.5.3 Sources of funding

What are the sources of funding for this public access venue system?

Other Comments:

There is no available data to define the exact proportion of funding of these venues.

4.3.5.4 Paths and flows of resources

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

The State-supported programs mentioned in this research work rely on funds from the National Treasury. The allocated funds are established in each year's National Budget. NGOs, as well as social and community organizations can receive subsidies from the National, provincial or local governments (when they have legal entity), and thy also can receive funds from other national and international organizations. Access to diverse public and private funds is possible, provided that NGOs and other social organizations have legal recognition, open accounts in public or private Banks, and updated tax compliance.

4.3.5.5 Fees and cost recovery

Describe if there are user fees or any other type of cost recovery. How does it affect service delivery and usage?

Generally, these venues do not charge fees to their users. In the rare case they do, fees are kept extremely low and affordable even for the poorest groups. Therefore, this is not a financial source that determines neither services continuity nor quality.

4.3.5.6 Cost categories

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Other Comments:

Without data

4.3.5.7 Recent changes and future trends

Describe any recent changes and anticipated future trends in the funding and revenue streams for this type of venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is the outlook for the foreseeable future?

State programs and funds addressed to public access to information and digital services have increased from year 2003 onwards. They have even leaped in 2007 and 2008. For instance, in 2008 the Information Society Program has called an international bidding to provide CTCs, and other PSI's programs with a new platform. This bidding includes providing informatics equipment and software, in order to allow CTCs and local governments to access ICTs new benefits. MiPC Program has tripled its CEAs centers in the whole country, while the National Ministry of Social Development has provided technological access to its Community Integration Centers in 2008. All these programs show a tendency to increase their investment on information venues.

However, NGOs seem to have lost many of their traditional funding sources, since Argentina does not occupy a priority place for international organizations. These organizations are funding mainly macro-regional projects, such as Mercosur, instead of national or regional ones.

4.3.6 Case example for venue 3: Public Acces Venues with social objetives

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.

Insert Case Example and Photo here.

MOBILE AND FIXED COMMUNITY ACCESS CENTERS IN DIGITAL SAN LUIS

The Argentine Province of San Luis launched an ambitious digital project; its purpose is to position the Province as a world-wide referent in the production of software and informatics services, and to achieve between 70% and 75% of digital inclusion. One of the implemented initiatives to facilitate ICT access to the population though the creation of Community Technological Centres (recently renamed Information Highway Centres – Cybers AUI), which includes 80 fixed centres distributed among San Luis' 62 urban and semi urban settlements, and one mobile centre.

San Luis is an Argentine province located in the centre-west of the country. It limits at the north with the province of the Rioja, at the east with Cordoba, at the south with La Pampa, at the west with Mendoza and at the northwest with San Juan. According to INDEC's estimations for June of 2007 the population was of 428,025 inhabitants. Census 2001: 366,900 inhabitants (INDEC, 2001) (urban population: 320,006 inhabitants (INDEC, 2001), rural population: 46,894 inhabitants (INDEC, 2001). The City of San Luis is the Province's Capital.

The Province of San Luis has launched the initiative "Digital San Luis" (San Luis Digital), a 20 year plan aimed at integrating the population to Information Society, and to position the Province as a

world-wide referent in the production of software and informatics services. This mega project is being developed by La Punta University (Universidad de La Punta, ULP), which aims at fully using the "Information Highway" implemented by the Province's Government in 2004.

The initiative comprises three phases. The first one consists in consolidating the ULP's Informatics' Park **(**PILP, http://www.ulp.edu.ar/Ulp/Paginas/p_tecnologico/p_tecnologico.pdf) created by the Provincial Law N° VIII 0502-2006 (by jeans of which the province also adheres to the National Law of Software Industry Promotion) and located in ULP's campus. Its goal is to generate a cluster of IT enterprises, as well as strengthening the links between the Academia and the IT enterprises.

Google Earth image: University of La Punta's campus

The San Luis Information Highway in numbers

>900 // Presence Points serve urban areas with more than 20 inhabitants.

40 // Fixed Community Access Centres – CACs, renamed as CIBER AUIs (40 more are being developed in 2008-2009)

1 // Mobile CAC

>2000 // Information Highway PCs

10 // Multimedia Kiosks

16 // Telephone Centrals

In the medium run, the San Digital Luis project includes goals as first-level education and learning for the young. In the long run, the purpose is to extend ICT education to every primary school children. In 2008 twelve companies have signed agreements to work in the new Technological Park. San Luis offers facilities access to physical space, funds for financing Labour Capital, a financial incentive for hiring local manual labour, and access to tax benefits.

Fixed Community Access Centres – CACs or CIBER AUIs

"In the areas which are not profitable for telephone companies, the possibilities of installing private cibercafés decrease. Therefore, the Provincial Government must implement public venues in those areas, so that the population can have access to ICT tools, to the Provincial broadband services, and to e-government services. CACs are both Citizens' Service points, and information sources. In an initiative to be present where the private sector is not, the accede to the technology, simultaneously points of attention to the public and governmental and general sources of intelligence. In the concept to be present where the private sector is not it, the Provincial Government has created 40 (CACs) in all the Province, and 40 more will be implemented in 2008", states Dr. Alicia Bañuelos, Rector of the Universidad de la Punta, San Luis, and Minister of Progress in the Province.

Coordinated and managed by local community organizations (schools, NGOs, local clubs, etc.), CAC are equipped with 3 PCs each, connected to the Internet though wireless access or satellite connection. They also have printer, scanner, webcam, and telephone. Fixed CAC, as well as the mobile CAC, are entirely financed by the Government of the Province of San Luis.

The constant communication and information between users and the Government of the Province is aimed to:

• Improving the present service standards in health, education, and security

• Geographic equity, enabling the arrival of governmental services to the whole Province's territory.

• Developing informatics skills using CAC's provided ICT tools

• Knowledge dissemination among the Province's inhabitants.

Community Access Centre, http://200.80.140.55/Website/pub/autopista/viewer.htm

Through CACs, San Luis inhabitants can access diverse services, as the San Luis Portal, the Integrated Health System, the Integrated Security System, the Digital Civil Registry, the Integrated Educational System, On Line Bids and Purchases, the Survey and Assessment System, Jobs. NET, Electronic Payments, etc.

In the health area, since the implementation of the Integrated Health System, citizens can book health appointments at the Province's hospitals and clinics though the Internet. The only requisite is to access the website www.e-sanluis.net and have an e-mail address registered in the same site, which habilitates users to a 5 mb. capacity e-mail account.

Mobile CAC

"The mobile CAC serves inhabitants in places where special events are made, but where there is yet no Internet cover, like communities' celebrations in the middle of the fields, mountain places, etc. The mobile CAC equipped with satellite link is driven to public and private events. The journalists who cover the event and the public in general can use it to make the operations and procedures they need: address changes, registering, modifying registries, etc. The mobile CAC replaces thus governmental offices for a high number of procedures". Dra. Alicia Bañuelos, Rectora de la Universidad de la Punta, San Luis.

In 2005, the Province implemented the Mobile Community Access Centre, in order to enable the rural community to use the Internet. It consists of a truck with computer equipment and radio network, and 2 trailers with satellite access. The Mobile CAC travels across the Province to allow the population the use of ICT tools.

Mobile CAC

5 Success Factors and Strategic Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Lessons in Country

5.1.1 Information needs

What are the most critical information needs by underserved communities that are currently not being adequately met by public access to information and communication venues?

The most critical information needed by underserved communities concerns the availability of public and private social services, on health, employment, housing, jobs, education, citizens' rights, security and safety, etc. This in turn is linked to the need of better developing the electronic government (and its more recent spin-offs of E-Democracy, E-Participation, E-Procurement, etc.), at national, regional, and local levels. User-centered E-Government suggests that governments will provide services and resources tailored to the actual service and resource needs of users, including citizens, residents, government employees, and others. This also means providing public information to citizens through public access venues.

It is necessary to call attention to the case of citizens with physical, mental, visual or hearing disabilities, and to elderly people. It is necessary to implement specific information programs (and to equip information venues according to their needs) to integrate these groups of people into the information society so that they may take advantage of information technology's potential as a factor that can promote their integration into the community. In this respect it is essential and urgent to develop products, systems and services with the necessary backup to support citizens with special needs, alongside the design and production of products and services for the larger part of the population.

5.1.2 Where people go

Where do people go for public access to information and communication in the country, especially underserved communities?

People, particularly underserved communities, search the information they need in the traditional media: newspapers, radio, and television, and in their social environments: co workers, friends, etc. They also increasingly search for information and communication in information venues of any kind. The most widely known are information venues with commercial goals.

5.1.3 How access, capacity, and environment affects public access

How do access, capacity and environment affect public access to information and communication venues in the country? (Refer to details under access, capacity and environment in research design document).

The information and communication environment in Argentina is still far from satisfactory. The information and communication gap is double: on one hand, there is a cleavage between

diverse socio-economic groups; on the other hand, there is a second gap between the City of Buenos Aires and its Metropolitan area, and the rest of the Provinces. According to the 2008 Gallup Survey, Cellular telephony is an exception (a high proportion of the surveyed individuals in low-income sectors and from the Provinces had cell phones). Cell phones (58%) and TV (58%) are considered the most useful technological elements. Internet access falls behind (7%).

According to the 2008 Gallup Survey, most of the Argentine inhabitants know how to use a remote control, call and receive calls, send and receive messages using cell phones, and to use a DVD. In the opposite side, most of the population affirms also that they do not know how to use a film camera, an MP3 player, send e-mails, nor program a VCR.

Regarding the Internet, 3 out of 10 Argentineans have accesses the Internet in the last 30 days. Seven years ago, in 2000, only 1 out of ten Argentineans was connected. In the last two years, the amount of on-line time per user has significantly increased. Half of Internet users are connected through public access venues, a third from their homes, and a fourth, from work.

Since the use of ICT depends largely on experience, the inhabitants develop their capacities as they use the technologies. Most ICT users are self trained. The role of public information venues in facilitating the citizens' experiences and experimentation with ICTs is invaluable.

5.1.4 Role of ICT

What is the role of ICT in public access to information and communication? What untapped opportunities exist?

Information and communication technology (ICT) has a large impact on society and the economy. The innovative impact of ICT is also felt in the social sphere. Digital technologies have already empowered thousands of Argentina's citizens and helped socially and geographically marginalised groups become more included and engaged. They facilitate improvements in public services, ensuring equal access to information and promoting democracy. They contribute to improving the environmental performance of other technologies, thereby enhancing our quality of life. In Argentina, many small urban settlements have leapfrogged from lacking telephone lines to Wi Fi communication.

The 2008 Gallup survey reveals that nearly 6 out of 10 Argentineans state that ICTs imply better and wider communications, a "better life", and higher possibilities to get better jobs. The positive opinions that affirm that ICTs allow having more free time (42%), more family time (39%), and better control over their lives (37%), are more moderate.

The still untapped opportunities that exist are using cell phones to inform citizens about e-government issues, public and private social services, and in general, to encourage users integration to Information Society.

5.2 Success Factors and Recommendations

5.2.1 Where to invest resources

How could additional resources (money, people, time, knowledge) be best used to strengthen public access to information and communication venues and practices in the country? (i.e., solutions that would make it more accessible, affordable, appropriate?)

Additional resources (money, people, time, knowledge) could be best used to strengthen public access to information and communication venues and practices in Argentina in the following sectors:

- Establishing partnerships between the public, private, and associative sectors concerning public information venues.
- Enlarging Wi Fi access in urban settlements.
- Facilitating the purchase of inexpensive computers, through increased credit systems.
- Implementing information venues, through partnerships between the diverse sectors, in all the communities with more than 50 inhabitants
- Including social community activities (courses, training, recreation, etc.) in the public information venues, so as to make them community attraction centers.

5.2.2 Key success factors

What are the key success factors for public access to information and communication to meet information needs of the population, especially underserved communities, and especially through digital ICT?

The success factors of the diverse venues to meet information needs of the population, especially underserved communities, and especially through digital ICT, are the following:

In public and popular libraries, the success factors are their strong integration into communities, the gratuity and accessibility of their services, the varied activities they supply, the support they receive from the State, and the information and exchange networks they have established.

The success of venues with commercial goals resides in their low cost, their popularity, their capacity to support themselves without any State's help, and to frequently upgrade their informatics equipments and their software.

The success of the venues with social goals is linked to their strong perception of social demands: these venues focus first on identifying the population's demands, and secondly, on information venues as a means to satisfy them, as well as to the resources they receive, from the State, private enterprises, and international organizations.

5.2.3 Role of ICT

How can public access to information and communication venues in the country be strengthened to offer more meaningful and equitable access to information, especially using digital ICT?

Public access to information and communication venues in the country be strengthened to

offer more meaningful and equitable access to information, especially using digital ICT, by:

- Establishing norms and regulations about the venues´ space, equipment, software, etc.
- Encouraging training courses to users for the generation and uploading of local contents
- Making public information venues a "one stop point" where users could find information about e-governments services, tax payment, procedures, etc.

5.2.4 Top ten recommendations

What are the Top Ten recommendations for public access to information and communication venues in your country? Make sure you include policy recommendations as part of them.

1. Access to information can improve the living quality of individuals, families, and communities. However, really vital improvements will be reached when information access is part of a proactive and participatory process of knowledge generation and management (individual and collective) allowing and encouraging the construction of bridges between the communities' needs, dreams, and interests, and information.
2. Any policy considering information access should take into account that the most important goals are to decrease inequities between genders, socio-economic groups, and territories, and to guarantee the citizens information rights.
3. Social strategies should plan to encourage and educate users, using training courses and community activities, to make a real appropriation of ICTs, though the creation and maintenance of networks around the issues that interest them, as well generating and disseminating their own contents. The use of Web2.0 applications should be strongly encouraged.
4. Governments at all levels should post information online to give their citizens more access to public data and to promote transparency. Public information venues could become privileged places of training citizens to participate in E-Government and in E-Democracy processes.
5. The legislation, at national, provincial, and local levels, should establish norms and regulations about the venues´ space, equipment, software, etc., with the view to make them more comfortable, to better serve the users, and to make them available to people with disabilities.
6. The public, private and associative sectors should establish strong partnerships among them to optimize the human, technological, physical, and financial resources allocated by them to public information venues. A multistakeholder approach would benefit the implementation and use of public information venues.
7. Implementing information venues, through partnerships between the public, private, and associative sectors, in all the communities with more than 50 inhabitants

8. It is relevant to include in the National Digital Agenda the need to strengthen public information venues, through positive regulations, a balanced territorial distribution, and allocation of fresh resources

9. It would be advisable to extend the concept of information access to the use of cell phones, since they are the most popular ICT equipment in use among the Argentine population. E-government services, information concerning everyday needs, etc., could be transmitted via cell phones at low costs.

10. .Finally, it is important to strengthen and reinforce the initiatives, projects, strategies and policies, coming from the diverse sectors, that are oriented to the decrease of inequities, the reinforcing of peoples capacities, and their participation in development policies aimed at building an equitable and democratic Information Society.