
PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION & ICTs
PHASE II REPORT

Egypt

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1 Extended Executive Summary

Many people will only read this section so make it very comprehensive, about 8 pgs long.

It should read like a continuous and stand-alone text, with full paragraphs that summarize the following points:

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

Egypt has a young and rapidly growing population, a limited amount of arable land, and a huge dependence on the Nile all which contribute to stressing society and resources in Egypt. Over the last 30 years, and more so in the last decade, the successive governments have reformed the highly centralized economy inherited from the Nasser's era. While deregulation has been in place to economic activities, the government remains to provide sizable subsidies for basic needs, which has contributed significantly to the budget deficit in Egypt. While the government boosts improved economic conditions and almost 7% growth, these improved economic conditions have yet to be seen by the broader population in Egypt, which still struggle to attain basic needs and have an estimate of 20% under the poverty line.

As part of the reform process, the government has invested heavily in creating physical infrastructures across Egypt to encourage economic growth and FDI. Technology and information stand out as being areas where the government has heavily invested and achieved significant success. Through this support the government established the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) in 1999 under H.E. Ahmed Nazif, who has in 2004 become the prime minister of Egypt. MCIT has helped create an environment conducive for the development of the ICT sector. Among the major priorities set forth to the government is to establish Egypt as an information society. Over the past few years, Egypt has introduced legislations to facilitating this change and laws concerning intellectual property, e-commerce, consumer protection, computer piracy, and e-signature have been passed. In addition, the ICT infrastructure has received a huge boost, creating a modern ICT platform and along with deregulation has pushed prices down tremendously. The developments in the ICT sector have been considered as role models of deregulation and privatization as well as a catalyst for reform in other sectors.

Egypt has also introduced a number of projects that utilize ICT for development. The e-government program has been established to modernize the citizen's experience of public service and introduce reform and efficiency to governmental operations. The Egyptian Education Initiative (EEI) was also launched to enhance the effective use of ICT at all levels of education for life-long learning. ICT has also been deployed to upgrade scientific research, and health-care. Several programs have been launched to increase e-Access to citizens through the PC-for-every-home, free-internet and IT-clubs program. The later has been the flagship of the Egyptian information society to provide public access. In addition, the government has launched national capacity building programs to improve the capabilities of the Egyptian workforce, with a focus on civil servants and young graduates. In addition, these programs have been established using a multi-stakeholder partnership between the government, private sector and civil society. These programs intended to increase ownership and to enlarge the base of public benefit to use ICT in all sectors.

Country Overview

Egypt occupies the north-eastern corner of the African continent, and despite being mostly in Africa (94%), it relates more to its Arab neighbors in terms of language, culture and heritage, who although span North Africa also cover the area of western Asia. The majority of the Egyptian population lives along the Nile valley and the delta, which represents almost 5.5% of the total land and interrupts vast desert plateaus. Most of the economic activities, and human settlement, takes place in the fertile Nile valley, including the predominant activity in agriculture which amounts to 32%¹. In addition to the presence industrial activities, natural resources and the Suez Canal supporting the economy Egypt has witnessed an increase of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the last few years. In the last few years, the stock market in Egypt has been booming and in consistent growth, reaching over 7% in 2007.

Egypt is divided into 28 administrative divisions, or governorates, with two governorates only recently added in 2008. This includes six governorate cities, namely Alexandria, Cairo, Giza, Luxor, Port Said, and Suez. The five frontier governorates are the largest in size, yet the smallest in population, with the New Valley have a population density of 0.4 inhabitant/Km² compared to almost 2500inhabitant/Km² in Cairo, with the highest in Kalyoubia (part of the greater Cairo) estimated at 3400 inhabitant/Km². Egypt can further be divided into five distinct regions (i) Greater Cairo, which represents the capital city and surrounding urban areas spanning across five governorates and is central to government and business alike, (ii) Alexandria and the North Coast, (iii) Upper Egypt, representing the Nile Valley, (iv) The Delta, representing the Nile Delta, and finally (iv) Sinai and remote areas, which includes both governorates of Sinai, the eastern and western desert areas of Egypt. These regions reflect the population, and economic distributions in Egypt.

¹ Est. 2001 CIA World Fact Book <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/eg.html>

Egypt has a population of 80 million², with almost 99% Egyptians and 1% representing Nubians, Bedouins, Armenian, Greeks, and other European ethnicities. Almost 58% of Egypt's population is considered as rural mostly residing in agricultural areas in the Nile valley and Delta, and only a significantly smaller number in the remote desert areas and Sinai³. Rural areas differ from urban areas in terms of poverty, fertility rates and other social factors, more so literacy rates.

The age structure in Egypt has Egyptians aged 0-14 as 32.2%, 15-64 63.2% and 4.6% aged 65 and older, with more than 50% of the Egyptians are below the age of 25. 90% of Egyptians are Sunni Muslims, with 9% Copts and 1% Christians. Arabic is the predominantly spoken language, with English and French widely understood, mostly by the educated class. Literacy rates, defined for those 15 and older, is amongst the major problems in Egypt, with estimates of the illiteracy rates in Egypt ranging from 38-56%.

1.3 Research Rationale, Sample & Methods

This study, conducted in 2008, has focused on four public access venues in Egypt and was divided into two phases. The first phase was aimed to obtain a general understanding of the spectrum of activities that pertain to public access in Egypt. Semi-supervised interviewed directed towards key venues and individuals were conducted in addition to field visits to gather the initial understanding, in addition to the collection of literature revolving around public access and ICT in Egypt. Individual semi-supervised interviews were conducted in the first phase of this study. These interviews provided an insight of the spectrum of public access venues in Egypt. Through the course of these interviews key venues were visited, mostly in the greater Cairo area, to better assess the understanding of these venues. IT-clubs were the least targeted venues since the research team have been heavily involved in activities and research related to this venue. Field surveys were conducted in the second phase covering eight governorates in Egypt in urban and non-urban locations . Through the second phase of this research pairs of questionnaires directed to operators and users where tailored to each venue. Three focus groups were conducted, each directed towards a specific venue, to verify the results obtained from the survey.

The study focuses on four types of venues, namely (i) public libraries, (ii) academic libraries, (iii) IT clubs and (iv) cyber cafés. These venues cover the spectrum of public access venues to information in general and are perceived as the major contributors to public access in Egypt. They also have the potential to grow more effectively to facilitate the information needs of citizens.

- **Public Libraries:** remain a key with regards to public access to information. The public library system in Egypt has roots that go back to the ancient world, with the Library of Alexandria being a land mark in History. However, the second half of the 20th century has seen a huge decline in the role of public libraries. Only recently

² 2008 CIA World Fact book http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/egypt/egypt_people.html

³ Egypt's 2005 Human Development Report

have efforts championed by Egypt's First Lady, Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, have boosted their role once more. The integration of other activities, including ICT, to support shelved books has brought a large influx of users back to public libraries in Egypt. With other supporting programs such as the "القراءة للجميع" (reading for everyone) have also help brings books back into the hands of Egyptians and have reshaped their use in society.

- **Specialized and Academic Libraries:** are public libraries that serve a specific audience in a particular area of interest. Different to public libraries, these libraries address specialized audience, of which university and research students are the major bulk of users. With the general perception of public libraries focusing on children and teenagers, the specialized and academic libraries represent a venue sought by young adults, professionals and researchers. They suffer from many ills of public libraries, and have also acted towards integration of several other activities to improve their relevance to the community needs.
- **IT-clubs:** Information Technology Clubs (IT-clubs) are part of the national initiative to transform Egypt into an Information Society. The IT-clubs program, which is championed by MCIT, is a telecentre model that aims to provide citizens with access to digital ICTs, and allow them to use ICT as a tool for development. The IT-clubs were also designed to be the flagship of the accessibility objective set forth by MCIT to provide public access to information and ICT capacity building programs. They are also designed to be an outlet for citizens on relevant e-government information and a means to drive socio-economic development using technology. The target of the IT-club program is to cover Egypt from end to end to facilitate the access of information to citizen.
- **Cyber Cafés:** are, by nature, venues to provide communities with access to ICTs. These venues are operated in a profit making model, in contrast to IT-clubs, and spring up based on the presence of market demand. There is no collective governing body for cyber cafes in Egypt, however they have mushroomed in most communities and represent a venue for individuals with access to ICT technologies.

There were several other venues that have not been included in this study. These include the (i) Cabinet's Information Decision Support Center (IDSC) offices, (ii) Cultural Places, (iii) State Information Service (SIS) offices, and (iv) Wi-Fi hotspots. The municipalities IDSC are located in the capital cities of governorates, and have a limited audience. These offices mostly target civil servants, and deliver capacity building programs and governmental information, and the general awareness of these offices is limited. They also act as data collection points for decision makers in the government. This information is processed and made available online on the IDSC portal . Cultural palaces are administered by the Ministry of Culture, and although act as a public outlet to support youth, focus on art and theatre rather than public access to information. The SIS is similar in its role to the IDSC offices, and mainly act as information gathering venues as opposed to an information providing venue. The collected information is centrally available on the SIS portal .Wi-Fi hotspots are springing in many urban locations in Egypt, and mainly cater to young

professionals to access ICT using personal devices. Mobile providers have also introduced 3G services to their clients at affordable prices to professionals, however they are not clearly venues for public access.

Overall, based on the definitions of this study there are over 3500 public access venues in Egypt (1127 public libraries, 689 Specialized and academic libraries, and 1742 IT-clubs), in addition to over 10,000 cyber cafés covering Egypt. It is worth noting that there is a significant bias in the distribution of these venues towards major cities in Egypt, more so the greater Cairo. While it would be of great benefit to have a statistically significant sample of these venues, within the limitations of the study a more targeted selection was sought to help understand, in some details, the effect of several inequity variables, including (i) socio-economic factors, (ii) education, (iii) age, (iv) gender, (v) location, and (vi) individuals with special needs.

1.4 Information Needs of Underserved Communities

Information sought through public access venues has remained highly correlated to education in Egypt, and it has yet to grow into its broader sense to encompass the needs of communities. While most individuals remain to seek information through word of mouth, there is a drive to provide content in different avenues, however, critical mass is still to be attained. As a matter of fact, there is a drive to support the creation and utilization of educational material relevant to the Egyptian environment. The EEI is currently the most active program that partners with several companies in the process to generate educationally relevant content. Additionally, the e-government program is striving to place public information online, however this has yet to become an established means of access to such information. Civil servants remain to possess information, which in turn adds to their value and potential revenue generated. This is also magnified with the central nature of the government and the limitation imposed through lack of legitimate access points for e-government service. Other forms of content are trickling down, though many content programs lead by MCIT. Several key programs have been launched, however they all fail to tap into the exact needs of communities served, especially those of remote nature.

News stands as the most dominant sought after information in Egypt in general. This need remains to be mainly addressed by word of mouth, newspapers, and mass media. The later has had a significant shift in recent years with the increase of the number of satellite channels that broaden the scope of understanding of events. Although there have been significant improvements on aspects of freedom of the press, several international bodies have remained to voice concerns on the issue in Egypt. Online, blogs and social networking have played a major role as tools of self expression. Actually, blogs and social networking have been a huge success in Egypt, with an ever increasing population of users, and have come into the spotlight for political reasons. On several occasions blogs and social networking, namely facebook, have driven political movements and statements that have been opposed by the government. Several bloggers and users of social networking tools have been prosecuted by the law for driving change and in the later case staging and supporting national protests. This has driven the government to enforce user registration in public access venues more rigorously to help identify individuals engaging in such activities.

News aside, information that supports socio-economic activity is generally of key importance to under served communities in Egypt. This includes employment opportunities and information regarding SME creation and marketing. While there are several programs to support these activities, the dissemination of this information has been highly limited. While the community development portal introduces some information regarding community examples of SME activities, they are not supported by mechanisms to establish these activities through integration of funding and marketing opportunities.

Agriculture is an important activity in Egypt, and relevant information is key to support this activity. While the extension officers system in Egypt has been a long established method for dissemination of information in Egypt, it has not addressed the overall needs of farmers. The FAO has piloted several approaches to integrate ICT into the extension officer program, however it has received limited audience. The integration of agricultural information and marketing information, especially in the newly reclaimed farming land is needed to help farmers become more productive and increase their profit.

1.5 Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities in Key Public Access Venues

Egypt has an interesting public access information landscape. Different key institutions, bodies and communities shape and influence the landscape at the national level. On the other hand, the readiness, awareness, socio-economic conditions, educational and cultural backgrounds of individuals influence it at the community level. The government, spearheaded in the domain of ICT by MCIT, has been the major investor in providing the access to information in the country, in line with its target to transform Egypt into an information society and building capacity and infrastructure to support economic growth. As a matter of fact the infrastructure for ICT in Egypt is amongst the most developed in the region, and in consistent growth in the last few years. Several initiatives lead by MCIT has supported the growth of the ICT sector in general, and also supporting public access through venues, supporting development of the e-government program, creation of digital content, and key national capacity building programs in ICT. It is worth mentioning that while the government initiates, and assumes a key role in, most of these activities, they are mainly conducted in partnerships with private sector's CSR, civil society organizations or international development agencies. The presence of influential key parties, such as the First Lady's interest in public libraries, helps create momentum for public access venues to be realized. All these factors create a favorable enabling environment in terms of terms of political will, regulations, and government interest to provide physical access and technological means to the public.

Public Libraries: The public libraries are generally accessible and affordable to all citizens, however, individuals with special needs have not received enough attention to make them welcomed in these venues. In the last decade, the public library system in Egypt has received a huge boost due to the efforts championed by Egypt's First Lady, Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak. Through the network of 1127 libraries, public library, irrespective of the quality of services available, cover most populated areas of Egypt with a varying degree. The major urban areas in Cairo and Alexandria are distinguished with the vast majority of libraries and those which are more recent and better equipped. The services are affordable to almost all segments of society, however, socio-economic factors affect the perception of

users in the importance of access to the public libraries as opposed to the access itself. This follows from the general understanding and awareness of the role of libraries. This awareness is also reflected in the major skew of users based on their age group towards young adults (aged 15-35). Technology has only recently been introduced to users in a limited number of public libraries in Egypt. The use of technology has remained in administration, or focused on capacity building programs for children and young adults. This is yet to be mainstreamed to the public library system in Egypt, however it remains to be a huge attraction to many of the patrons.

There are certain seasonal patterns for the access of libraries. Students and young people tend to use public libraries as places to study and to do research during the exams times and studying periods. In the summer, children and students tend to use the libraries for general reading as well as activities that are provided at selected libraries. In some rural governorates, public libraries were almost abandoned due to the lack of interesting, interactive and user/community oriented activities. Generally, the newly established libraries are much more vibrant and relevant than the traditional old ones.

In most of the public libraries, user fees are far from being sufficient to cover the running cost of the library. This has increased the reliance of libraries on governmental support, which has been ever reducing. The new libraries that are established in partnership with NGOs have more steady flow of funding from donation, yet they still remain stretched to expansion. Services other than access to books provided in the libraries are usual for additional fees, and they are planned for cost recovery in general. The lack of funding, and individual sustainability limit the potential expansion of services and resources within the public libraries and make maintaining the quality, variety and creation of new activities a huge hurdle.

Specialized and Academic Libraries: While academic libraries are accessible to most, they remain to have a close relationship with learning and research. The target audience of these venues are students and researchers engaged in scholarly activity, and this reflects on the selection of content presented. This is also reflected in the affordability of accessing the library in general, more so that users seek information on a per demand basis. Academic libraries mainly focus on providing access to selections of text books and research journals. However, funding and lack of awareness of the role of libraries in research have diminished the growth of academic libraries. Recently the Egyptian Universities Network (EUN), in partnership with MCIT has intervened to provide access to online electronic scientific resources to state owned academic institutions. This is in addition to access to offline research databases that has been available in academic libraries for some years. Unique to academic libraries, on the other hand, is the availability of scholarly output produced within the hosting institution to researchers. Several of these venues also act as hosts to IT-clubs.

Specialized libraries, on the other hand, are divided into two groups based on their hosting institutions belonging to either (i) research institutions or (ii) commercial institutions. With the exception of some key research libraries, specialized libraries are usually small and poorly kept facilities. In some cases they are a few shelves of books that are only accessibly to a few affiliated individuals. Among the few exceptions are the libraries of the

National Research Center, and the National Library of Agriculture, with the earlier catering for a variety of topics.

Academic libraries are hosted in educational institutions which are in major urban areas, more so focused in the greater Cairo, which hosts 32 universities from the total of 44 universities in Egypt. This includes the most significant academic libraries of Cairo University, Ain Shams University and the AUC. In addition, Cairo also acts as host to the major research specialized libraries such as the National Research Center library and the National library of Agriculture. Outside Cairo, only a few universities exist, and academic libraries hosted within these institutions are generally located in a few major cities in some of the governorates. This in turn reflects that the limited outreach to remote communities in Egypt. In addition, with the majority of these libraries hosted in governmental organizations that work the official business hours in Egypt play to limit the accessibility to the general audience being served.

IT-clubs: are part of the national initiative to transform Egypt into an Information Society. There is an estimated 1700+ IT-clubs in Egypt distributed across urban and non-urban areas in a fashion that closely follows the demographic distribution of the population of citizens. With urban areas accounting for almost 32% of the IT-clubs in Egypt. The IT-club is established in partnership between the program and a civil society organization that would act as a host. Civil organizations that host IT-Clubs include Youth centers, NGOs, schools, community centers, media centers, cultural palaces, libraries, local authority offices, and professional syndicates. The costs that the hosting agency is required to commit have limited the expansion of the program to more remote areas, where NGOs and the likes have scarce resources. This is reflected in the distribution of IT-clubs based on location.

While IT-clubs are generally accessible to all communities, the nature of the hosting agency has an impact on the general audience they entertain. The only notable exceptions are individuals with special needs, who are only served by a limited number of IT-clubs (Four) through a partnership program between ICTDAR, and Vodafone. The IT-clubs program also defines a business model, which dictates the fees collected for different services. The fees are hugely subsidized, and more so for students who receive a special discount on the fees (50%). This is meant to encourage young adults to obtain ICT literacy and to facilitate the creation of a knowledge based society.

While most IT-clubs have focused, either out of demand or to achieve financial sustainability, on capacity building programs, with only some progressing to offer courses beyond basic ICT skills. A far second has been in providing access to the general public. The IT-clubs program has not systematically transformed IT-club staff into knowledge intermediaries capable to direct users to useful information sources. It is notable that IT-clubs, in general, have been struggling to find local relevance, as well as maintain a financially sustainable model. This in turn has affected the quality of service provided in IT-clubs and they have been steadily losing ground and reputation as affordable access points for citizens.

Since there has not been a mainstreamed influx of relevant information despite the few projects that targeted content creation, access to the internet has remained for personal needs, such as email and general browsing. While some users have developed a routine visit to IT-clubs, cost of access and lack of local information remain major factors in limiting user access. Most of the users of IT-clubs are young adults, and more so those who frequent it, with basic or better ICT skills. While the political will has been strong in supporting the creation of the IT-clubs program, the communities have not acted in return with the same enthusiasm. Economic priorities, both with hosting organizations and users have played a huge factor in the current lack of strong presence of IT-clubs in remote areas. Users have challenges to perceive IT-clubs as being relevant to their daily routine despite all the public momentum present to develop this program.

While individual IT-clubs have remained as isolated entities, there are currently more effort being placed in networking and integration to help create a better, stronger ecosystem for IT-clubs. These networks would also help create a more supporting environment for IT-clubs.

Cyber cafés: in Egypt have gone through different phases and developments in the last few years as the patterns of internet access has shifted across the country. The increase of personal computers, and decrease in internet access costs have all taken their toll on cyber cafés. While they are based on revenue generating business models, compared to IT-clubs, and hence respond better to users requirements. In turn, cyber cafés are able to access to different users, at different times, in different locations in contrast to IT-clubs and other public venues which need to adhere to certain regulations. In addition, the current change in the ICT spectrum have driven the huge shift of interest has been seen in cyber cafés towards entertainment, namely digital media and gaming.

The different phases of cyber cafés have also affected the role they play as public venues for information. In the last decade when the use of the internet was growing, the cyber cafes were very popular as access points to the internet. This popularity started to gradually decline as access to the internet got easier than at the beginning of this century. Even among the cyber cafés owners, a significant number of the operators stressed that running a cyber café is no longer profitable as it used to be when they started their business. Cyber cafés are general perceived in a negative light, with more entertainment and gaming being utilized and that they are more "hang outs" for young males and the control on content being digested is low. This in turn has all through affected the male to female ratios of users in Cyber cafés. While the general perception of the internet is becoming more accepting with the change in the general awareness of the role of technology in improving access to information and knowledge, cyber cafés have yet to benefit from the change in the understanding of technology and the internet.

1.6 Salient Findings

There is a huge political support for public access venues, laying a favorable foundation for their success. The support of Egypt's first lady to libraries in Egypt, and the support of MCIT for IT-clubs and for public access in general have supported the creation of a new wave of venues for the public. The creation of programs to support internet access, and

broadband as well as PC for every home initiatives have all increased the personal access to digital ICTs and the internet penetration in Egypt. As a matter of fact, ICT is perceived as a tool to transform Egypt into the information society. The government has been a main driver for e-government, as well as a variety of initiatives to support public access to information and ICTs. IT-clubs are assumed to be the flagship of these programs to provide public access to ICT. In addition, ICT has been the driver for attraction and increasing the relevance of other public access venues such as public libraries.

Despite these efforts, in most case, people access information through mass media especially television and word of mouth. The public phone shops are also key in the way through which individuals communicate, although the increasing presence of mobile phones is hugely changing the roles of these shops. In addition, the national economy has a major effect on the amount of investment in these programs, especially since they have been based on partnership with civil society organizations. The lack of integration of appropriate sustainability models has also been reflected in the high diversity of quality between the different venues of the same type, depending on the partner organization.

Capacity building programs have been widely introduced as a driver to transform Egypt into an information society, which has been one of the mandates of MCIT since its creation in 2000. These programs have utilized IT-clubs as a venue to conduct training to communities at reduced prices. Additionally, programs to increase the capacity of civil servants in basic ICTs have been in place, supported by the e-government programs. Overall these programs have increased the general awareness of ICT in different segments of society, especially young adults. However, the high illiteracy rate and the limited awareness of the importance of digital ICT have contributed to the slow pace of technology penetration, especially in under privileged areas. Relevant content, and mainly that which focuses on local needs, has also been limited, and has also contributed further to the limited adoption across all segments of society.

It is worth noting that the public access venues are generally accessible to all segments of society. The business hours of operation, cost of transportation, and cost of utilization of services have all contributed to the limitation of access to public venues. While this is changing in some urban locations through new models of management of public access venues, it is still to take effect in under privileged and rural areas in Egypt. Probably the two most important factors that come to play in accessibility of public venues are educational level and gender. While the later is a reflection of cultural issues that restrict females accessing certain types of venues, such as cyber cafés, and other venues at late hours. The high correlation of ICT and libraries to education have also driven the focus of these venues on those individuals still in education, and on capacity building programs. Nonetheless, several of the public venues studied have gained popularity, especially with the younger generations. Public libraries, in their new form, are gaining popularity among their users who frequent them. Academic libraries are sought after by researchers for access to scholarly material of relevance to their work. The utilization of academic libraries remains limited in scope. IT-clubs have been modeled as public access venues to digital ICT, however they have mostly remained focused on capacity building programs. Cyber cafés remain to be generally perceived as the location to access computers and digital ICTs,

although they have also been oriented towards gaming and entertainment as opposed to general public access to information.

While there have been several efforts to increase the content accessible through these venues, it has yet to achieve critical mass. IT-clubs are intended as venues to consume and produce content. However the later has yet to materialize. While user generated content contribute the most to the increase of Arabic content online, they have mainly focused on news and personal spaces and have yet to be developed in capturing community needs and knowledge. Better networking amongst the IT-clubs to create relevant user generated content is an opportunity that has remained untapped to date, and requires the contribution of the different partners to achieve.

1.7 Key Recommendations

In addition to the need for increased awareness of the role of ICT in public access to information and the migration in using ICT as a tool, rather than being the goal in itself, to access information, several success factors and recommendations have emerged from this study, these include

- Assisting the creation of networks amongst public access venues in Egypt, aiming to help increase the knowledge sharing amongst these venues. This is especially helpful to better utilize resources, creation of support networks and to help create a broader set of services relevant to local communities.
- Deploying proper sustainability models would limit the drive in IT-clubs to transform into training centers and solidify their role as public access to information venues. In addition, developing sustainability models would assist and insure the increase in the number of venues, especially in rural and underserved communities, hence creating a large outreach information network.
- Strengthening the capacity of operators to work as information intermediaries. While a notable segment of the Egyptian society have received capacity in using ICT, it has yet to be more relevant to the vast majority who are not yet ICT literate. Operators should be able to bridge the gap and supply relevant information to the citizens through understanding their requirements and seeking the appropriate knowledge. They should also be able to aggregate the community requirements of content to drive content creation.
- Content creation mechanisms should also be the focus of further development of public access venues, both through systematic methods, such as governmental portals digitization programs and increasing in digitally born content, and through innovative means to understand and seek community relevant knowledge. Allowing individuals to influence and direct the content being provided would ensure the relevance, and models to align the needs of communities with the goals of content providers would develop these programs into an ecosystem of information.

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 study focuses on four types of venues, namely (i) public libraries, (ii) academic libraries, (iii) IT clubs and (iv) cyber cafes. These venues cover the spectrum of public access venues to information in general.

- **Public Libraries:** remain a key with regards to public access to information. The public library system in Egypt has roots that go back to the ancient world, with the Library of Alexandria being a land mark in History. However, the second half of the 20th century has seen a huge decline in the role of public libraries. Only recently have efforts championed by Egypt's First Lady, Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, have boosted their role once more. The integration of other activities, including ICT, to support shelved books has brought a large influx of users back to public libraries in Egypt. With other supporting programs such as the "القراءة للجميع" (reading for everyone) have also help brings books back into the hands of Egyptians and have reshaped their use in society. All in all, public libraries remain a destination that many perceive as a public venue for information.
- **Specialized and Academic Libraries:** Specialized and academic libraries are public libraries that serve a specific audience in a particular area of interest. Different to public libraries, these libraries address specialized audience, of which university and research students are the major bulk of users. With the general perception of public libraries focusing on children and teenagers, the specialized and academic libraries represent a venue sought by young adults, professionals and researchers. They suffer from many ills of public libraries, and have also acted towards integration of several other activities to improve their relevance to the community needs.
- **IT clubs:** Information Technology Clubs (IT-clubs) are part of the national initiative to transform Egypt into an Information Society. The IT-clubs program, which is championed by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), is a telecentre model that aims to provide citizens with access to digital ICTs, and allow them to use ICT as a tool for development. The IT-clubs were also designed to be an outlet for citizens on relevant e-government information and a means to drive socio-economic development using technology. The target of the IT-club program is to cover

Egypt from end to end to facilitate the access of information to citizen.

- **Cyber Cafes:** Cyber cafes are, by nature, venues to provide communities with access to ICTs. These venues are operated in a profit making model, in contrast to IT-clubs, and spring up based on the presence of market demand. There is no collective governing body for cyber cafes in Egypt, however they have mushroomed in most communities and represent a venue for individuals with access to ICT technologies.

These venues are perceived as the major contributors to public access in Egypt. They also have the potential to grow more effectively to facilitate the information needs of citizens.

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	Academic and Specialized Libraries	IT-clubs	Cyber Cafes
Total number in country	1127	689	1742	10194
A. # in Urban location	230	432	608	3513
% offering ICT	20	30	100	100
Total # of people served (annual)				
B. # in non-urban location	897	257	1134	6681
% offering ICT	5	10	100	100
Total # of people served (annual)				

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

The demographic distribution of Egyptian population revolves around the Nile basin, with almost all Egyptians living in 5.5% of the total land. The population is divided between urban and rural areas in Egypt, with a majority of the population living in urbanized or semi-urbanized regions. However another distinction lends itself to the population distribution in Egypt, which is metropolitan and non-metropolitan. Cairo, and a far second Alexandria, represents a concentration of population in Egypt. Cairo, the capital city and the main core hub of the Egyptian government, accounting alone for almost 25% of the Egyptian population and takes the lion's share of the resources and infrastructure of Egypt. This in turn dictated that these cities should be treated separately from other population densities in Egypt. Therefore, for the sake of this study urban refers to large metropolitans (namely Cairo and Alexandria) and non-urban refers to other cities and townships of significant size across Egypt.

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, wifi 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 hotspots

Description :

Wi-fi Hotspots have mushroomed in many metropolitan areas in Egypt. These hotspots have covered most upper class communities, cafes, public spaces, and many tourist attraction and accommodation sites. There are no solid figures accounting for the number of hotspots in Egypt, however Mobinil wifi, which is a part of a mobile operator- ISP joint venture, boasts 500 locations across Egypt, most in Cairo but cover other cities such as Alexandria, Sharm Elsheikh and Hurgada among others. Since there are no exact numbers that account for the hotspots in Egypt the research team has estimated the numbers as indicated bellow

Total number in country: 1500

% offering ICT access: 100

% in urban location: 90

Comments on how it is influencing public access venues in the country:

With an increasing number of personal laptop users in Egypt, it has been customary for young professionals to use the hotspots available in many locations. This service has remained to be offered for free in locations other than hotels. Only recently has Mobinil wifi moved to require users to register and use scratch cards for access time, which remains for free to date. The young upper class professional have become wired online throughout with these hotspots.

Other Public Access experience # 2: State Information Service

Description :

The State Information Service (SIS), established in 1954, is the main information, awareness and public relations agency in Egypt. The SIS provides access to governmental information to the general public, in addition to leading several awareness campaigns in issues pertaining to health, environment and literacy. The SIS overlooks a network of 64 locations across Egypt, and half as many international offices. Additionally, the SIS offices provide internet access to citizens, however it remains mostly focused on the portal aspect. With many governmental services moving online through and intensive e-government program the portal as become a similar to IDSC offices and IT-clubs. The great

deal of similarity between these three venues has influenced the choice of the research team to postpone the exploration of these venues.

Total number in country: 64

% offering ICT access:

% in urban location:

Comments on how it is influencing public access venues in the country:

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: Municipality IDSC offices

Total number in country: 27

% offering ICT access: 100

% in urban location: 15

Description of the Venue:

The Cabinet's Information Decision Support Center (IDSC) has been a major player in the development of the Egyptian Information Society. Many of the activities pertaining to increasing the public awareness of ICT could be traced to activities conducted in the IDSC throughout the 90s. With the establishment of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in 1999, many of these initiative migrated to the newly formed body. Nonetheless the 1500 information centers that cover ministries, governorates and in some cases district offices, have continued to act as information hubs. These hubs, in addition to being outlets for information, also collect local information to support governmental decision making. Currently, these offices focus on providing civil servants with capacity in ICT to help integrate e-government activities in the Egyptian governmental offices.

Reason why it was not included in the study:

The IDSC centers are located in the governorate capital cities, and hence could be limiting the equal access of citizens in remote areas and townships to the services provided. It is worth noting that most of the target audience (civil servants) is within governorate capital cities and hence it is reasonable that the offices be created there. This is in addition to the fact that most information produced within IDSC is available online and internet access would be sufficient

to facilitate utilization of this data. However, the activities of the IDSC have gone unpublicized and the public access aspect has been assumed by the IT-club program.

Other Venue not studied# 2: Cultural Places

Total number in country: 300

% offering ICT access: 0

% in urban location: 21

Description of the Venue:

Cultural palaces have long been looked at as venues for conducting activities, such as music and theatre. Overlooked by the Ministry of Culture, there are over 300 cultural centers across Egypt. The degree of outreach that these centers have and their mandate to help promote culture and support the young generation makes them potential locations to explore for the public access to information.

Reason why it was not included in the study:

The cultural places have mainly focused on the arts, and have not been perceived as locations where citizens have access to information

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

Socio-economic factors define the amount of resources individuals are allowed for accessing information. These resources are not only limited to monetary value, but also to time. Many low-income families expect children and young adults to work. They also could encourage their children to drop out of school in favor of generating income. This all adds more challenges to addressing the needs of these communities. Middle class communities are probably the best suited for best utilization of public information access. The members of this class usually possess enough means to utilize ICT to their fullest potential. High socio-economic communities usually opt to have personal access to ICTs and hence don't frequent public venues to often.

The socio-economic level of users and operators is amongst the information being collected in the survey. While they will not be conclusive due to the subjective nature of this factor, the data collected would give an indication of the contribution of this factor to public access.

2.2.2 Educational level

Educational level has an effect on the use of ICTs, although not directly proportional across all age group. The different levels of education are (i) no formal education, (ii) basic education, (iii) intermediate education and (iv) university or higher. The level of education has an effect on the ability to benefit from accessing ICT. The level of skill in using ICTs might out-shine the level of formal education received in the aspects of inequity of service. Nonetheless this was considered a factor to investigate.

The educational level of users and operators is amongst the information being collected in the survey. The level of education is divided between formal education and knowledge of ICT in general. While knowledge of ICT is a pre-requisite for direct access to information, individuals lacking this capacity could access information through intermediaries. This aspect is also investigated in the data collected.

2.2.3 Age

Over 60% of the Egyptian population is below the age of 30, which represents a great opportunity for ICT technologies in Egypt. The political drive behind increasing the capacity of young children in aspects of ICT could help boost Egypt into the information society with rapid footsteps. The ability to accept the technology also hugely reduces with increased age.

Age is amongst the factors that are highly correlated with access ICT, not only that but the public library system has also focused heavily on the younger generation. The data collected looks closely on these different aspects pertaining to age.

2.2.4 Gender

The social norms place more restrictions on females than males in Egypt. The availability of alternative means of entertainment, and freedoms are significantly more for males. In addition, the keenness on education amongst females is much higher than males. These factors collectively contribute to the distribution of users based on gender. As a matter of fact, some projects that have addressed access to ICT have made it a concern to create a female friendly environment.

Gender is amongst the data collected from the surveys implemented

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.

Egypt has been logically divided into five different segments, namely (i) Greater Cairo, (ii) Alexandria, (iii) The Nile delta, (iv) Upper Egypt and (v) Sinai and the remote areas. The amount of resources dedicated to each segment differs considerably with the majority focused on the greater Cairo and Alexandria is a distant second. This is also reflected in the population distributions in these respective locations. It is for this reason that for the sake of this study the Greater Cairo and Alexandria are considered one cluster (urban) and other locations are considered non-urban. This is in contrast to the tradition definition of urban and rural areas which would see cities in the different segments considered as urban areas and townships as rural locations.

The distribution of venues studied cover in this study addressed the locations appropriately with venues selected from the five different segments in Egypt. The venues were considered urban and non-urban in accordance to the definition provided.

2.2.6 Other Inequity Variables

Other Inequity Variable 1: Inequity Variable (if needed)

Other Inequity Variable 2: Inequity Variable (if needed)

Other Inequity Variable 3: Inequity Variable (if needed)

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.

85 number of documents reviewed.

A large number of references was reviewed including academic books/articles, evaluation reports, and online materials.

2.3.1.1 Most Useful Bibliography:

Hashem, Sherif (1999), Technology Access Community Centers in Egypt: a mission for community empowerment, proceedings of the INET99, San Jose, CA. Available Online at http://www.isoc.org/inet99/proceedings/3c/3c_1htm

Wanas, Nayer (2004), IT-Clubs, Egypt's Telecentres experience, ITU Telecom Africa (Telecom Africa 2004), May 3-8, Cairo. Available online at <http://www.k4dev.com/images/stories/publications/it%20assessment.pdf>

Wanas, Nayer (2007), Telecentres in the Middle East and North Africa, a scoping study, Technical Report, IDRC, Canada.

UNDP Egypt (2005) Egypt Human Development Report, "Choosing our Future,: Towards a

New Social Contract", UNDP, Egypt.
 UNDP (2004) Arab Human Development Report, Building a Knowledge Society, UNDP, New York.
 MCIT (2007) Egypt's ICT Strategy 2007/2010, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), Egypt, Available online at <http://mcit.gov.eg/Publications.aspx?realName=Egypt-ICT-Strategy.pdf>
 MCIT (2005) Egypt's Information Society, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), Egypt, Available online at http://mcit.gov.eg/Publications.aspx?realName=EgyInfo_Society.pdf
 Mostafa Hossam-Eldin (2005) Development of Public Libraries in Egypt: A Future Outlook, Cybarians Journal, Issue 6, September 2005, (In Arabic), available online at http://www.cybrarians.info/journal/no6/public_lib.htm
 IDSC (2006) Description of Egyptian Governorates with Figures, Information and Decision Support Center, (In Arabic), <http://www.idsc.gov.eg>

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.

186 number of individuals interviewed.

Describe

The research focussed on a large number of individual interviews in 8 governorates/provinces around Egypt.

The following map shows the distribution of the cities, towns and areas around the country in graphic format. The black big dots represent the major cities where the survey was conducted in different venues (Public Libraries, IT Clubs, Academic Libraries, and Cyber cafes).

Venue	Number of valid interviews/surveys	Notes
Public Library Users	60	
Public Library Operators	7	
IT Club Users	18	
IT Clubs Operators	6	

Academic Library Users	16	
Academic Library Operators	10	
Cyber Cafes Users	39	
Cyber Cafes Operators	30	
Total	186	

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).

3 number of group interviews or focus groups.

Three focus group meetings were conducted to verify the results that the individual surveys discovered. The meetings involved several of the operators interviewed, as well as experts in public libraries, academic libraries and IT-clubs. The focus groups shed some more insight on the results, and verified our findings.

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).

61 number of site visits.

The sites visited spanned the four different venues, in the different geographical regions in Egypt. The sites were distributed between Cairo, Alexandria, Tanta, Aswan, Assuit, Arrish and Zagazig. This selection spanned urban and non-urban regions, as well as geographical distribution of venues between the Nile delta, Upper Egypt and remote areas.

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	Academic and	IT-clubs	Cyber Cafés
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	Specialized Libraries			
# urban venues surveyed	3	2	6	12
# non-urban venues surveyed	4	8	2	12
# respondents in urban venues	35	2	24	50
# respondents in non-urban venues	31	30	5	12

Survey description & 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

Other Data Gathering Technique 2: Data Gathering Technique

Other Data Gathering Technique 3: 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. Dr. Hoda Baraka, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), hbaraka@mcit.gov.eg
2. Sherif El Tokali, ICTD Specialist, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Egypt, sherif.el.tokali@undp.org
3. Abeer El Helwo, Manager, NGO Academy, Ministry of Social Solidarity, abeer_alhelw@hotmail.com
4. Hala Abdelwahab, Head, Resource Development Unit, Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA), Hala.Abdelwahab@bibalex.org

5. Hala Sherif, Director, Mubarak Public Library (MPL), hsherif@mpl.org.eg
6. Hoda Dahroug, Executive director, Egypt ICT Trust Fund, hdahroug@mcit.gov.eg
7. Hosam Osman, Head of Library branches section (network), Mubarak Public Library (MPL), Tel: +202-3336-0291
8. Dr. Ikram Fathy, Training and Human Resources Advisor (IT Clubs national initiative focal point), MCIT, ifathy@mcit.gov.eg
9. Dr. Sherif Shahin, General Director, Central Library, Cairo University, sherifshn@yahoo.com

2.4 Research Trustworthiness & 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.

In order to arrive at a general understanding of the spectrum of activities in public access to information in Egypt a qualitative case study strategy was adopted. This approach would make it possible to obtain specific details about some of the venues investigated rather than a statistical sample, since a statistically significant sample was not possible within the scope and time limits of this study. The researchers also decided to adopt qualitative case study methodology because it involves the researcher spending time in the setting under study (field work). This provided an opportunity; to interact with the partners, users and beneficiaries, thereby obtain first hand information and better understanding of the attitudes towards engaging in access to information. On top of that, it provided an opportunity to understand the models that the various programs studied.

The study utilized semi-structured interviews and documentary review (when available) as the main methods for data collection. Unlike the totally unstructured or structured, the **semi structured interviews** requires a framework of questions or issues to be explored in the course of interview but with considerable flexibility in how and when they are to be asked. This helped maximize fieldwork time and interviewing different people more systematic yet providing room for probing and asking follow up questions where gaining a deeper understanding of interviewee's experiences, feelings, and perspectives was required. **Documentary Review** was utilized whenever possible, although many experiences lacked proper and informative documentation.

Interviews were planned with influential individuals within the different venues visited. This didn't always imply the institutional director, but sometimes a more informed middle level manager. Samples of the different venues were singled out to explore the type of services provided. It is expected that the second phase would examine them in more details and in larger

quantities.

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.

Probably the biggest limitation for conducting this research was the time and resources to select a statistically significant sample. In addition, finding respondents willing to provide detailed surveys was a significant task. This was in part due to the timing of the study which overlapped with the end of year for most educational institutions are different levels, which in turn reflected that a large set of the targeted beneficiaries of many of these programs were not present for the survey. In addition, it would have been better for samples to be spread across different times of the year, since many of these venues have seasonality in the way individuals utilize and access them.

2.4.2 Team Qualifications

1 paragraph

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

2.4.3 Description of research team

1- Nayer Wanas (Project Manager)

Nayer Wanas is an ICT for Development Consultant. He has participated in several research and assessment studies in using ICT for development. Among the highlights of his research work is a scoping study in the Middle East and North Africa region for telecentre activities. The study included field visits to telecentres in the region, interviews with key stakeholders and was concluded with a capacity building workshop that Dr. Wanas facilitated. During the period from Dec 2004 till Jan 2006 he was acting as a resident ICT for development consultant for Egypt ICT Trust Fund. Dr. Wanas has initiated and overseen a broad range of activities including design and implementation of new projects, investigating issues of sustainability of developmental projects, establishing private sector partnership in developmental projects. He was also involved in the process of re-alignment and assessment of active projects and initiatives covering a wide spectrum of developmental issues. Dr. Wanas has published several reports and papers in issues related to ICT for development. He has served as a panelist in several national and international forums. Dr. Wanas holds a Ph.D. in Systems Design Engineering from the University of Waterloo, and a Bachelors and Masters of Engineering in Electronics and Communications from Cairo University

2- Karim Kasim (Key Research Team Member)

Karim Kasim is an ICT for Development specialist and MA student/researcher in International Development who has had the chance to work at different levels where ICT is used as a tool for development. The field level, where Telecentres were established, was the first grassroots level he took part at the beginning of his career. He participated in the establishment of different Telecentres (Technology Access Community Centers TACCs) in both Sharkia, Luxor (Egypt) and in Kherbet Char, Hrar, Fnaydaq, Elyioun in

Akkar region, North of Lebanon.

On the national level, his post as a Community Service Specialist with Egypt ICT Trust Fund (UNDP-MCIT joint initiative) allowed him to play the role of a link between Technology and Development. He was working to ensure that the ICT interventions are user-friendly, relevant and making a difference in the underprivileged people's lives.

On the regional level, it was a unique experience to be involved in a project to support local governance in Northern and Mount Lebanon region between 2004 and 2006. His role was to manage the ICT part of it, which was simple yet fundamental to a great extent. He had also the chance to manage the whole project for half of his assignment. Karim has been involved in several assessment and/or evaluation missions both in Egypt and Lebanon that had the focus on the impact of ICT as a tool for development. He has been engaged also with several NGOs promoting and training on topics such as: volunteerism, youth participation, intercultural learning and community development in Egypt, the Arab region and across the Mediterranean through the Euro Mediterranean Cooperation.

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?

Egypt has an interesting public access information landscape. Different key institutions, bodies and communities shape and influence the landscape at the national level. On the other hand, the readiness, awareness, socio-economic conditions, educational and cultural backgrounds of individuals influence it at the community level. The government, spearheaded in the domain of ICT by MCIT, has been the major investor in providing the access to information in the country, in line with its target to transform Egypt into an information society and building capacity and infrastructure to support economic growth. As a matter of fact the infrastructure for ICT in Egypt is amongst the most developed in the region, and in consistent growth in the last few years. Several initiatives lead by MCIT has supported the growth of the ICT sector in general, and also supporting public access through venues, supporting development of the e-government program, creation of digital content, and key national capacity building programs in ICT. It is worth mentioning that while the government initiates, and assumes a key role in, most of these activities, they are mainly conducted in partnerships with private sector's CSR, civil society organizations or international development agencies. The presence of influential key parties, such as the First Lady's interest in public libraries, helps create momentum for public access venues to be realized. All these factors create a favorable enabling environment in terms of terms of political will, regulations, and government interest to provide physical access and technological means to the public.

Overall, there are over 3500 public access venues in Egypt (1127 public libraries, 689 Specialized and academic libraries, and 1742 IT-clubs), in addition to over 10,000 cyber cafés covering Egypt. In general, these venues are accessible to most citizens, although limited human capacities in utilization of ICT, socio-economic factors and education collectively have a huge role in limiting the actual access. The geographic distribution of venues, which is biased towards urban and major cities in Egypt, also acts to limit the accessibility of these venues in rural areas. Additionally, public access venues take a backseat to other forms of access to information, mostly dominated by word of mouth, mass media and newspapers. There is a general perception amongst the public that libraries are targeted for young children and IT-clubs to young adults, and not to the general public, which in turn also limits their outreach and inclusion. In addition, cyber cafés are perceived negatively from communities, since they mainly focus on games and entertainment.

While the average capacity of individual in using ICT is improving, due to mass capacity building programs and introduction of mandatory ICT training in education and for holding a

civil servant job, it still remains limited to very basic ICT skills. As a matter of fact, most venues that report success have remained focused on providing capacity building programs, which distinguish them from cyber cafés. This squarely applies to the IT-clubs program, which is the flagship program for Egypt's public access to information, which has focused mainly on basic capacity building programs. Individuals with special needs remain a marginalized community despite a few activities that are emerging to support their independent access to information.

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 in Egyptian public access to information venues could be described as reasonable despite the high variability in the quality of services provided. With most of the newly founded activities engaged in public access conducted in a partnership model, the overall condition of the venue heavily depends on the hosting agency, and partners involved. The range in the quality of the services, and the physical shape of the facilities, ranges from state-of-the-art facilities such as the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, to smaller rooms in remote NGOs that have gone unmaintained for several years. The latter is also the case of programs totally funded and run by the government, such as public libraries of the National Book Authority, usually lack appropriate level of funding for maintenance, and facilities deteriorate severally due to increased negligence.

While the cost of access to public venues studies is in most cases free of charge, the major cost of access comes in utilization of the services provided. While the services are subsidized for the younger generations, yet frequent access to certain services such as direct access to digital tools could be costly since they are charged on an hourly basis, especially for low and medium income families. Libraries, on the other hand are affordable to most individuals in Egypt. It is also worth mentioning that while the cost of services in the different venues in Egypt is affordable for most of the upper middle classes and the upper classes, however the key question stays on how much priority they place on access to information. The general Egyptian public perceives information and access as an entertainment, rather than a tool, and hence it is assigned a low priority to most. This is influenced by the general socio-economic, educational, awareness, and time availability factors.

While the access to venues is affordable, the cost of transportation, due to the location of these venues, is probably the most notable cost in most cases. This applies to both urban and non-urban locations, especially in case of larger more central venues such as libraries. IT-clubs on the other hand, are usually focused on a certain community and the severity of this issue is hugely reduced. The other significant barrier to access is the hours of operation for

governmental administered venues, which follow official business hours in Egypt. Business hours are from 8:20 till 2:30 and overlap with the majority of educational and economic activities in Egypt. Recently introduced venues such as the Mubarak Public Library (MPL) have addressed this issue squarely, and have extended working hours and are open during the weekends. Venues hosted in civil society organizations tend to be more flexible on this aspect, and hours of operation are more accommodating.

Local cultures also sometimes affect the people's access to public access venues. Among these is the factor of gender, which in some communities limits the access of women. Cyber cafés, as an example, witness a limited number of female users, more so in rural areas. While this is not as extreme in other venues, there is a limitation on the suitable hours for females to access these venues.

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)?

: Human capacity is a key factor to the access to information, and this includes the capacity of the users and operators alike. There has been significant programs and drive to provide capacity building in basic ICT to young graduates and to civil servant. The later has been mandated by the e-government programs and the first by the government's drive to support economic growth. As a matter of fact, basic ICT knowledge is perceived as an asset by individuals and capacity building programs for youth have been the focus of many IT-clubs and libraries alike. They programs have been the only focus of some IT-clubs, and the main revenue generating activity to most. Operators of IT-clubs and digital ICT facilities in other venues are usually knowledgeable in ICT, and in some cases act as trainers for capacity building programs. On the other hand, librarians are almost totally graduates of library studies. However, the human capacity in Egypt is constrained by the level of education and awareness of the public. There is a huge segment of illiterate individuals in Egypt, where estimates range from 38-56% of the population, especially in rural area of Egypt. This immediately isolates a significant population from access to information. Basic ICT skills are also being introduced at the school level, however the lack of equipment at public schools, especially in rural areas, make this more of a theoretical foundation of access to ICT.

Content also remains as a challenging issue, both in digital and printed form. Libraries that offer access to printed material have limited budgets, and the selection offered is usually purchased from the local market in limited quantities. This is more significant in academic libraries, where recent and up-to-date scholarly material is very costly to maintain at an acceptable rate. As a matter of fact this has hugely hindered academic libraries from finding a role in scholarly research, especially that relating to high pace sciences. The only exception is the library of the American University in Cairo (AUC), which however focuses mainly on humanities. Some libraries, namely the Biblotica Alexandrina, focuses on digital content and has depended on donation for their selection and some academic libraries have witnessed activities supported by alumina, but these have remained very limited.

Digital content, has also been limited, and the Arabic content online is estimated at 0.5% with over half of the Arabic speaking internet users have limited knowledge of English . News has been an increasing amount of content online, and several programs have been established to increase the available content for public consumption, including the e-government portal and the community development portal. However, they have not addressed the immediate needs of communities, and have not been rooted within these communities. The content and services are generally common across the different venues, with only limited localization within communities. Mechanisms to capture the information needs of communities have not been put in place, and hence the content available is usually generic in nature. It is worth noting that the majority of the Arabic content increase online has been attributed to User Generated Content (UGC), while this has covered blogs and online forums, it has not been systematic in providing communities with relevant information needs.

While they represent a small segment of society, the individuals that access public access venues generally frequent them at some rate. This applies to all venues studied, and it is also noted that the presence of technology, in libraries for example, boosts the appeal of these venues to users. These regular users have integrated access in their regular routines, however the majority of individuals are overburdened by other requirements that hinder the integration of access in their daily routines. Most users of the internet are not weary of privacy and security issues, and only recently has there been some talk about cyber-crime. The First Lady has also championed legislations to help protect children in the online environment, however this is yet to materialize. Generally, regarding content available online people swing to either extreme, either total distrust of the content or total trust. These users are mostly not aware of the nature of content online being generated from the grass-roots and from users and that sound judgment should be used on the available content.

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 & public support, regional and international context)?

The overall environment in Egypt is adequate, as a matter of fact there is huge political will and pressure placed on improving the access to information in Egypt. This is signified by the establishing the MCIT in 1999 under H.E. Ahmed Nazif, who in 2004 has assumed the role of Prime Minister to continue the drive of the information society in Egypt, led by the telecommunication and information sectors. This is also supported by the contributions of the First Lady in supporting public libraries in Egypt and access to information for younger children. In addition to an advancing ICT infrastructure, these variables have created a huge political support for access to information in Egypt. The telecommunication, and ICT industry in general, have received huge boost in recent years, and has reflected in creation of many jobs. However they have not yet affected local and small business. Several programs have been targeting the support of small business and individuals to utilize ICT with some limited success. It is worth mentioning that one of the major challenges for access to information in Egypt is the economic status of individuals. With almost 20% of the population below the poverty line and many more challenged by rising prices of basic needs most citizens are over-

burdened to be able to access information. The government has also established bodies to overlook the telecommunication regulation, however it has mainly focused on bandwidth allocation for mobile providers and quality of service of ISPs. They have not placed regulations for access to information.

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

Information is generally perceived as a valuable good in itself, and it is even more valuable for the underserved communities. It is worth mentioning that underserved communities in Egypt exist in different parts of the country. The concept of underserved communities is very much related to the overall economic situation of the nation as well as the political will to help those communities. Underserved communities are usually isolated and much less informed even if the community is in slums around Cairo. The information needs of these communities are those related to their daily lives. Access to information on services that are provided by the government or other agencies was one of the most needed requirements identified. Although the government offices have -usually- information on their services displayed in public areas, a significant percent of people expressed their concerns about the deficiency of the information. They also expressed the gaps between the displayed information and the actual complicated procedures. The e-government was one of the initiative that drew some attention and interest of the underserved communities as it has adequate information about several government services. The limited capacity to use technology and the limited amount of services currently available has hugely affected the adoption of these services. The expansion in using the internet as channel to -sometimes- exclusively provide important information to the public has helped increase the use of ICT. For example, providing the results of "Thanawya Amma" (the high school diploma), the universities and some schools through online portals before any other means was quite revolutionary in changing the people's perspective\ toward the use of ICT as a source for information.

Source: *source of information*

3.3.1 Where is Information Available?

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 new e-government portal plays an important role in providing "some" information that did not seem to be enough/adequate to the educated, upper classes however it provided somehow reasonable information about some basic governmental services. The majority of information available online -for example- are limited to some services. They are also limited to certain segments of the society. Forexample, the traffic police department's services online is apparently targetting those who own cars. Some other services are provided to less privileged segment as well as the population as a whole such as the birth certificates' copies, copies of lost or damaged ID cards. On the other hand, if someone wants to issue a new ID card or registered a newborn baby and issue his/her borth certificate, they have to go to the offices to do that in person. The government offices are the venues for such information, while some public access venues are also venues for this information provided that they have access to the internet and they are supporting the use of the e-government portal.

Source:

3.3.2 What are some of the Key Barriers to Access 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.

Distance both actual (remote communities) and virtual is key barrier to accessingof information. The lack of experience on using ICT as a tool to get the information is another one. Also the lack of ICT tools in specific communities decrease the chances of having proper access to information. As far as printed media is concerned, there is a lack of "free" publications or useful printed information in Egypt. The newspapers and other printed materials are priced, which is not very expensive but it is still not affordable or priority to many under served communities.

Source:

3.3.3 How do 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?

The two major venues that most of the respondants highlighted as being most relevant were the public libraries and the IT Clubs. It is worth mentioning that the open ended question was not answered by many of the interviewees though the researchers tried to simplify and help the user understand it without influence in order not to have the risk of providing any answer or non accurate answers. Many users mentioned the "internet" as a source of many of their information needs. Although it is not a physical venue, the internet represented a relatively easy and fast way to acquire information, when available.

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 2.2, 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.

Inequality environment in Egypt is influenced very much by the socio-economic reality of the general population, education, age,

Socio-economic factors: define the amount of resources individuals are allowed for accessing information. These resources are not only limited to monetary value, but also to time. Many low-income families expect children and young adults to work. They also could encourage their children to drop out of school in favor of generating income. This all adds more challenges to addressing the needs of these communities. Middle class communities are probably the best suited for best utilization of public information access. The members of this class usually possess enough means to utilize ICT to their fullest potential. High socio-economic communities usually opt to have personal access to ICTs and hence don't frequent public venues to often.

Education: educational level has an effect on the use of ICTs, although not directly proportional across all age group. The different levels of education are (i) no formal education, (ii) basic education, (iii) intermediate education and (iv) university or higher. The level of education has an effect on the ability to benefit from accessing ICT. The level of skill in using ICTs might outshine the level of formal education received in the aspects of inequity of service. Nonetheless this was considered a factor to investigate.

Age: over 60% of the Egyptian population is below the age of 30, which represents a great opportunity for ICT technologies in Egypt. The political drive behind increasing the capacity of young children in aspects of ICT could help boost Egypt into the information society with rapid footsteps. The ability to accept the technology also hugely reduces with increased age.

Sex; the social norms place more restrictions on females than males in Egypt. The availability of alternative means of entertainment, and freedoms are significantly more for males. In addition, the keenness on education amongst females is much higher than males.

Location; most efforts have focused heavily on the major metropolitans of Cairo, Giza and Alexandria, with Alexandria take a backseat to the greater Cairo area. A distant third are the major cities across Egypt. Townships, and more so remote areas, are on the further end of the spectrum where venues are either absent or limited in numbers.

Geographic; Egypt has been logically divided into five different segments, and the amount of resources dedicated to each segment differed. These segments are (i) Cairo and Alexandria, which receive a significant portion of the resources of Egypt in general, (ii) the delta region, (iii) Upper Egypt, (iv) Sinai and (v) the remote areas are significantly separated from major metropolitans in most dimensions. Most efforts have focused heavily on the major metropolitans of Cairo, Giza and Alexandria, with Alexandria take a backseat to the greater Cairo area. The major cities across Egypt come as a distant second. Townships, and more so remote areas, are on the further end of the spectrum where venues are either absent or limited in numbers.

Special needs: Individuals with special needs have been under-served and accessibility issues have not been considered in most public venues. Only recently has there been a focus on giving these individuals more attention.

Inequality in Egypt has different dimensions. Indeed it needs a comprehensive research to assess the impact of each one but it could be summarized in few more apparent aspects. Some of the noticeable aspects of inequality are related to; geographic distribution, rural/urban, and the income disparity. Upper Egypt and the remote oases communities have witnessed less attention in general and in issues of access to public information and libraries in particular. Now the government is making efforts to fix that however it is not yet felt at the local level. Urban Egypt is perceived as Cairo and Alexandria and there even some less optimistic people believe that urban Egypt is only Cairo. This perception has been created, maintained and further encouraged by the centralized reality of the country. While most of the major cities (capitals of governorates) have many services, still a lot of quality services, infrastructure and even entertainment facilities are located in Cairo and Alexandria.

Also the have-nots tend to have fewer opportunities in general in Egypt while the haves enjoy a relative capability to secure their basic needs including information and access to knowledge much easier than their less fortunate peers.

3.3.5 Freedom of Press and Expression & Right to Information

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

The official positing in Egypt is that Egypt is a country that has a freedom of expression, press and all means of information that is not threatening national security. The government admits that there are violations to that and it puts the responsibility on all stakeholders including sometimes some government bodies. The government promise always to deal with freedom of expression immediately to ensure its existence and maintaining flow of information. On the other hand, several international organizations including Amnesty International, European Union, and others have expressed concerns as well as hopes about Egypt's record on freedom of expression. The general public is divided about it, some see the current situation as enough and promising specially when compared to other countries in the region. The research has not come across any particular violation or severe intervention in the public venues' policies or strategies toward access to information however many of these venues are considered part of the government directly or indirectly.

3.4 Charts: Information Needs, Users & 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.

(if appropriate)	other								
	other								
	other								
Ethnicity (if appropriate)	Dominant	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	other								
	other								
	other								

Source: *Survey Results, interviews and users feedback*

Comments, including comments on other inequity variables.

It is worth mentioning that factors like the social class and income were not accurate due to the fact that the research team observed sensitive about answering this question in some areas. Also the levels "high, medium or low" are relative to the overall status of the community; i.e. village, neighborhood etc.

3.4.1.2 Information People Seek, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Academic Libraries				IT-clubs				Cyber Café			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Education	40		25		100		80		67		60		3		25	
Health	5		3		0		5		0		20		0		0	
Agriculture	2.5		0		0		2.5		0		45		0		0	
Government services	0.5		0		0		5		10		10		10		7	
Entertainment	12		10		0		5		25		30		53		55	
News	2		3		100		45		38		1		23		20	
Personal	38		35		0		15		30				56		7	
Other	0		24		100		5		0		7		50		50	

Source: Survey Results, interviews and users feedback

Comments: (Include description of "other". Suggested headings based on frequently reported topics in other research and may vary across countries).

describe

3.4.1.3 Uses of ICT, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Academic Libraries				IT-clubs				Cyber Café			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Email	20		50		0		36		45		100		55		80	
Chat	10		10		0		9		17		20		53		50	
Web browsing	35		44		100		100		48		100		50		45	
Blogs & social networking	7		8		0		5		7		5		10		15	
Commerce & business	3		4		0		10		10		1		7		2	
Phone or webcam	0		0		0		5		0		15		10		2	
Games	20		12		0		5		18		20		45		25	
Other	5		0		0		0		0		20		0		0	

Source: *Survey Results, interviews and users feedback*

Comments: (Include description of "other". Suggested headings not exhaustive, based on frequently reported topics in other research and may vary across countries).

describe

3.4.1.4 Frequency of Use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Academic Libraries				IT-clubs				Cyber Café			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
First visit	0		0		0		1		0		5		3		5	
Rarely (less than monthly)	2		15		2		1		1		20		4		5	
Occasional (about once a month)	5		25		3		3		5		40		10		10	
Regular (about 2-3 per month)	8		30		20		15		36		20		15		20	
Frequent (about once a week)	35		15		65		45		28		10		45		40	
Daily (about every day)	50		15		10		35		30		5		23		20	

Source: Survey Results, interviews and users feedback

Comments:

3.4.1.5 Barriers to use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Academic Libraries				IT-clubs				Cyber Café			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Location, distance	40		20	10	0		1		20		10		2		20	
Hours of Operation	15		35	18	35		34		40		5		3		0	
Cost	0			9	0		0		5		5		15		7	
Lack of skills / training	4			7	10		15		3		30		9		15	
Not enough services	25		15	5	10		15		20		10		40		20	
Not in right language	2			21	10		10		2		20		24		15	
Not enough content	3		30	20	30		20		5		20		7		23	
Other	11			12	5		5		5				0		0	

Source: Survey Results, interviews and users feedback

Comments: (Include description of "other". Suggested headings not exhaustive, based on frequently reported topics in other research and may vary across countries).

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.

3.4.2.1 Past Initiatives:

It is difficult to judge an initiative as "past" when it comes to help meeting critical information by underserved communities because most of the initiatives are ongoing or rather recent at the first place. The one that the research team sees as crucial is the radio. Many of the households in the underserved communities have radios before they have a television set or satellite. The radio used to be one of the main channels to reach out with information to the public before and to some extent it is still the case. The radio has been important because of the low cost and the wide reach.

More information:

3.4.2.2 Ongoing Initiatives:

Mainly people in Egypt seek information that helps them get their day to day issue done. Information on government services, education, employment, bills, and transportation are amongst the most needed. The e-government portal www.egypt.gov.eg has been providing some information however it is not widely used yet. The Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC) has an interesting study on the use of the e-government services in Egypt. The e-government portal does exist and have been adding more services by time. The only problem with it is that people are not aware of what is there yet, may be due to the lack of enough publicity and awareness. It is believed that many services and information on them exist at the governorate and township levels but they are not available online.

More information:

<http://www.idsc.gov.eg>; <http://www.egypt.gov.eg>

3.4.2.3 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.

There has been several drives to improve public access to information in Egypt, more so tailored towards two specific venues, namely (i) public libraries and (ii) IT-clubs

1. Public libraries in Egypt have witnessed a significant boost with due to the efforts championed by Egypt's First Lady, Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak. Through this support several programs have emerged to enhance the role of public libraries in Egypt. This included the expansion of the services offered in public libraries to go beyond printed material to a selection of access to information in general as well as extra-curricula activities in arts and crafts.
2. IT-clubs are a cornerstone of the national initiative to transform Egypt into an information society. This telecentre model, championed by MCIT, gives access to citizens to digital ICT access and capacity. IT-clubs are also perceived as natural outlets to online information available through a variety of portals and information resources online. This includes e-government, as well as portals such as the community development portal.

These programs have mainly focused on the drive to provide access points to information, in general. This opens opportunities to outreach to communities with relevant content in their local environment.

Source:

3.4.2.4 *Planned Initiatives:*

The vast majority of initiatives have focused on access, and bringing local communities closer to the information age. However, a key element that remains to require attention is content that represents a cornerstone of information. There are several ongoing activities to increase the wealth of relevant content, especially that pertaining to local communities, in Egypt. In addition to the e-government information portals, and the expansion in its reach, the community development portal is a key program to support socio-economic development information. In addition, several initiatives to increase digital content are underway, including digitization of books. Additionally, initiatives to increase networking amongst individual venues is increasing, boosted with the realization of the value of integration between the individual key models and to help increase their effectiveness with the limited funding that is available.

More information:

Egypt ICT trust fund <http://www.ictfund.com.eg>; *MCIT* <http://www.mcit.gov.eg>

3.5 Economic, Policy & Regulatory Environment

3.5.1 National & Local Economic Environment

Describe the national & local economic environment and how it affects public access to information &

communication in the country.

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

Egypt has a young and rapidly growing population, a limited amount of arable land, and a huge dependence on the Nile all which contribute to stressing society and resources in Egypt. Over the last 30 years, and more so in the last decade, the successive governments have reformed the highly centralized economy inherited from the Nasser's era. While deregulation has been in place to economic activities, the government remains to provide sizable subsidies for basic needs, which has contributed significantly to the budget deficit in Egypt. While the government boosts improved economic conditions and almost 7% growth, these improved economic conditions have yet to be seen by the broader population in Egypt, which still struggle to attain basic needs and have an estimate of 20% under the poverty line.

As part of the reform process, the government has invested heavily in creating physical infrastructures across Egypt to encourage economic growth and FDI. Technology and information stand out as being areas where the government has heavily invested and achieved significant success. Through this support the government established the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) in 1999 under H.E. Ahmed Nazif, who has in 2004 become the prime minister of Egypt. MCIT has helped create an environment conducive for the development of the ICT sector. Among the major priorities set forth to the government is to establish Egypt as an information society. In turn the ICT infrastructure has received a huge boost, creating a modern ICT platform and along with deregulation has pushed prices down tremendously. The developments in the ICT sector have been considered as role models of deregulation and privatization as well as a catalyst for reform in other sectors.

Trends:

While the indicators for the progress of the ICT has shown significant progress in the number of land lines, mobile subscribers and internet users, the main target of MCIT is to drive more FDI in the ICT sector at large. This in turn would reflect on the continuation of the deregulation process, and increase in the ICT infrastructure to provide state-of-the-art connectivity across Egypt to establish Egypt as a technology hub in the region. The later would be more focused on the targets set by MCIT to create a vibrant and export oriented ICT sector, mostly in outsourced services.

Source: MCIT Strategy 2010, Prime Ministers Statements, Ministers Statements

3.5.2 National & Local Policy (legal & regulatory) Environment

Describe salient features of the policy & 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.

Over the past few years, Egypt has introduced legislations to facilitating this change and laws concerning intellectual property, e-commerce, consumer protection, computer piracy, and e-signature have been passed. In addition, the deregulation has been marked by the establishment of the National Telecommunication Regulatory Agency (NTRA)⁴. As per the NTRA mission: " The NTRA was established in accordance with the provision of Law No. 10, for the year 2003 'the Telecommunications Regulation Law' as a national authority to administer the telecommunication sector, considering transparency, open competition, universal service and protection of user rights as a general outline for NTRA scope of work".

In addition, the Competition Commission Agency and Consumer Protection Agency have been established to overlook various sectors of the economy in Egypt including ICT. In addition, several customs and tax reform policies have been underway, in addition to the investment law amendments that play a positive role in attracting FDI.

Trends:

Cyber security is become more of the focus recently, with efforts championed by the First Lady of Egypt. In addition, the deregulation of the postal service, in an effort to present it as a world class service, and on convergence technologies.

Source: MCIT strategy 2010

3.5.3 Regional & International Policy (legal & regulatory) Environment

Describe salient features of policy & regulatory framework in the region and internationally that affect the delivery of public access to information & 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.

Egypt belongs and aims to integrated with several regional bodies. This stems from the fact that although being part of Africa, Egypt is also a major player in the Middle east and North Africa and in the Arab region at large. In addition, the proximity to Europe reflects in the efforts to integrate on different fronts, with the support of the EU. In addition, Egypt had been an active participant in the WSIS process, at the different levels (nationally, regionally and globally). Egypt remains committed to continuing to be an active participant in the follow-up mechanisms, especially those pertaining to internet governance.

Trends:

Egypt aims to utilize the models and policies adopted nationally as exemplary models to regional and global bodies, and would continue to interact with the different bodies involved.

Source: MCIT strategy 2010

⁴ <http://www.ntra.gov.eg>

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.

Probably the only common thread between a variety of the venues studied is that public and academic libraries act as a hosting organization for some IT-clubs. However, this is far from being collaboration between the different venues, which if implemented would add considerable value. There are a variety of levels of collaboration required to advance the services in the venues studied.

1- Inter-venue collaboration: Most venues studied remain as isolated samples of the models being proposed. Enhancing the collaboration amongst these venues would help increase the wealth of knowledge sharing and utilization of funding to help advance the services provided. Currently a few activities have started to emerge to support the growth of these networks. Mubarak Public Library (MPL) has become a hub for knowledge sharing of the new wave of libraries in Egypt. The growth of new libraries of the same nature in the different governorates have integrated management know how from the MPL. The Egyptian Universities Network (EUN) acts as a central entity that has lead the introduction of digital resources in Egyptian libraries. This is still missing the ability to cross fertilize these different libraries through a common index and interlibrary services. A recently lunched program to support the networking and knowledge sharing amongst IT-clubs has been launched in June 2008. This program is intended to increase the networking and resource sharing amongst successful IT-clubs to help increase their impact on society.

2- Intra-venue collaboration: The different venues remain as separate organizations despite the presence of IT-clubs in libraries. The audience received in these venues is significantly different with the main audience of public libraries being children, while academic libraries mainly focus on researchers. On the other hand IT-clubs mainly focus on young adults and recent graduates. While digital ICT is a cornerstone in all these venues, they still need integration to help better understand the information being provided, and increase its credibility. Additionally, increasing the digital presence of libraries in Egypt would help increasing the awareness of its role in society.

3.7 Buzz Factor: Public and Government Perceptions about what is “cool”

The “buzz factor”, ie, 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.

The Egyptian government has perceived ICT literacy as a gateway to the transformation of Egypt into an information society. This has reflected on the drive to introduce ICT awareness programs

and the expansion of digital content in general. In addition, this is also seen as a key element in light of the e-government programs that have been hugely supported in recent years. In addition, the awareness of digital ICT is perceived as a strong asset in general and cool. However, this has remained limited to utilization of productivity desktop applications and has not yet been enough to totally transform it to an access to information in its general terms. This trend has not affected the perception of venues, such as IT-clubs, as being cool places.

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.

Most venues in Egypt that are public in nature prohibit the use of video games. Additionally, chat is generally perceived as inappropriate however it is harder to limit access such applications. This is also supported by the general perception that these applications are abused by younger generations, and hence posing limitations on them is welcomed. Cyber cafés on the other hand mostly depend on both in attracting customers.

Blogs and social networking tools have turned into a huge success in Egypt. However there utilization recently as political vents have posses some limitations on their use by the government, although not officially pronounced. The success of this new wave of media has not been witnessed with open-source software where proprietary systems, mainly Microsoft technologies, have dominated the spectrum of public access with no exceptions. As a matter of fact, the general public has correlated between ICT and Microsoft technologies, and only a limited community, mostly computer science gurus, have adopted open-source.

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.

3.9.1 Mobile phones

If appropriate, describe salient uses of mobile phones, text messaging, SMS and similar technologies, in relation to public access information venues and information needs of underserved communities.

Mobile phones have been a huge success in Egypt with over 40 Million users, a user base unmatched by other ICT technologies. In addition to the communication needs that mobile phones address, many users have realized their socio-economic value.0020The general population of craftsmen has adopted mobile phones as a means of customer access. Additionally, SMSs in general are by far more successful among customers due to their competitive pricing and broadcast abilities. Community journalism using mobile phones to broadcast media has also increased, especially with the vast majority of phones being multimedia enabled. Additionally, GPRS and 3G technologies have been on the rise with individuals with greater

awareness and higher social and income levels. Other forms of information, such as GPS and community radio have not experienced the same success. As a matter of fact, both remain highly controlled by the government, to the extent of being prohibited. Only recently, a limited number of private radio stations have emerged and have been successful in competing with state owned and controlled media.

3.9.2 Web 2.0 tools & 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](#)).

Blogs and social networking have been a huge success in Egypt, with an ever increasing population of users. While social networking has been mainly used as means of communication, blogs have been tools of self expression. Both platforms have come into the spotlight for political reasons. On several occasions blogs and social networking, namely facebook, have driven political movements and statements that have been opposed by the government. Several bloggers and users of social networking tools have been prosecuted by the law for driving change and in the later case staging and supporting national protests. This has driven the government to enforce user registration in public access venues more rigorously to help identify individuals engaging in such activities. Wikis have yet to experience the same success with a limited number of enthusiasts increasing the wealth of Arabic content.

3.9.3 Combination of different media

If appropriate, describe creative ways in which different media are being combined to meet information needs of underserved communities, and the ways they affect public access venues. Different media include community radio & TV, other print media, street theatre, songs, etc.

3.9.4 Other shifting media landscape examples

If appropriate, describe other new features and practices in the media landscape that affect public information venues and information needs of underserved communities.

This would be a good place to discuss innovative practices on content creation and production of new messages, media, information and knowledge that are not described elsewhere in this report.

3.10 Health Information Needs

This is an extra contribution to other research on health information needs going on at the University of Washington, based on willing respondents to last two questions on user surveys at the public access venues.

3.10.1 Sources of Health Information

Where are people most successful at locating useful health information for themselves or their family (% of respondents across all venues):

47	42	39	14
clinic/hospital	friend	health worker	public access venue (library, community center, etc)

Comments:

3.10.2 Types of Health Information

What types of health information do they have the most difficulty finding (% of respondents across all venues)?

52	24	21	25	0
disease prevention	how to locate healthcare	child health information	remedies/drugs	Other

Comments:

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 of public access information in this type of venue?

The public libraries are generally accessible and affordable to all citizens, however, individuals with special needs have not received enough attention to make them welcomed in these venues. The public library system in Egypt is composed of 1127 venues across Egypt, mostly administrated through local government in each governorate, and overlooked by the general authority for books. The lack of funding in most of these libraries has limited their use and the integration of new services such as digital ICT. Among the other more notable libraries in Egypt are the National Library and Archives of Egypt, which administers 18 different public libraries in the Greater Cairo Area.

The public library system in Egypt has recently received a huge boost due to the efforts championed by Egypt's First Lady, Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak. Mrs. Mubarak has championed the activities that lead to the development of the Heliopolis Services Development Society (HSDS) library and the Integrated Care Society (ICS) libraries (13 in total), organizations which she heads. The Mubarak Public Library, which was established in 1997, and the Bibliotheca Alexandria are both recent expansions to the public libraries spectrum in Egypt that has been ever changing. The public libraries in Egypt, with the exception of the national library and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina are generally perceived to be focused on children.

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)?

Access to public libraries in Egypt is relatively easy in broad terms. The public library network, irrespective of the quality of services available, cover most urban areas of Egypt. However, the major urban areas in Cairo and Alexandria are distinguished with the more recent, better equipped public libraries. The services are affordable to almost all segments of society, however, socio-economic factors affect the perception of users in the importance of access to the public libraries as opposed to the access itself. This follows from the general understanding and awareness of the role of libraries. This awareness is also reflected in the major skew of users based on their age group towards young adults (aged 15-35). Individuals with special needs remain a severely underprivileged segment of society, with only limited venues offering services that address their specific needs. Technology in general is edging into the public libraries, both at

the level of management and for public use. The newly established public libraries, administered by NGO, are at the forefront of this modernization championed by the effort of the first lady of Egypt.

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.

While public libraries in Egypt are accessible to most, individuals with special needs have remained underserved in this regard. Most of the public libraries are not equipped with facilities to serve these individuals with special needs. This includes access to those physically challenged, as well as special equipment for those who are visually impaired. It is worth mentioning that while visually impaired users have a little better chances of accessing those venues through the assistance of community volunteers, physically challenged individuals are less fortunate. Recently, serving these individuals has become a focus and slowly public libraries are starting to integrate services and access to them. However, this remains in newly established facilities and in urban large metropolitan areas of Egypt. Additionally, while the distribution of libraries covers the different governorates of Egypt, rural areas remain underserved. This surfaces the issue of transport to and from public libraries, especially in non-urban areas, as a major problem for access to these facilities. The initiative of establishing new public libraries in many parts of the country has been developmental in its core value. In other words; it has been focusing on establishing libraries in less privileged areas. Decision makers and operators that the research managed to involve, highlighted the importance of providing access to the underprivileged simply because they privileged citizens have their own ways to find information and to access knowledge. It is worth mentioning that a majority of users have indicated that the working hours of libraries are a major hurdle for its use. This is more prominent in non-urban areas, where libraries are administratively related to local government, and working hours are limited to the business hours in Egypt. (9am-2:30pm). This has limited the audience of public libraries in general, rendering them inaccessible to employed individuals.

4.1.2.2 Appropriate Technology & 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.

Overall, the usage of technology is still limited in public libraries in Egypt. Appropriate technology is used in the newly established libraries, which represent a fraction of the libraries in Egypt. As a matter of fact, this has been influenced with the change into the open shelves policies in these libraries. A major factor affecting the use of technology is the library staff, while some libraries exhibit enthusiasm to use technology and have gone further down discovering its potential, many resist it on the basis that libraries are not intended for its use. This is mostly due to the lack of awareness of the role technology could present to these venues. Ironically, the libraries that have witnessed success in recent years have had technology at their core, and among the major attractions for users. The network of Mubarak Public Libraries and the Integrated Care Society's

libraries around the country are the pioneers in using technology/appropriate technology. They have web sites, data bases, cataloges and access to the interent/computers at their venues. In contrast, in other public libraries, the access to shelves is through the librarian and hence even access to an electronic catalog is unrequired.

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.

In general terms, the public libraries' services are affordable to most of the Egyptian citizens that exhibit interest to access and seek information. This is especially true for the educated middle class who could easily afford the services. As a matter of fact, many libraries provide on-premisis access to book free of charge. Membership fees, that range from 15 to 30 EGP, for students and adults respectively, are mostly for book loan service and a pre-requisite for participation in the library activities. However, despite the affortablility of using public libraries, citizens with low socio-economic levels don't see the value of using the libraries. This is more apparanet in non-urban areas, where citizens with low income levels are significantly less that those in urban areas. Specifically, Digital ICT services are hugely subscidized, and hence affordable if compared to the private and other public ICT services provided elsewhere, however, they are treated as a separate addition cost to using the public library. This cost could be hindering to usage for individuals with low socio-economic levels. This also applies to other activities provided in the library such as arts and crafts, which are based on additional fees.

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?

Public libraries have registration fees that are either annual or monthly. While these fees are very low and reasonable, they ensure the seriousness of the subscriber and marginally contribute to the running cost of the libraries. In public libraries, the fee is for access and borrowing books (when the service is available), users pay for other services such as photocopying, training sessions, cultural and craft activities or internet use. There are no restrictions to certain population, however young children need to have their guardian approve their membership.

Indicate amount in local currency 15 EGP/annually (for students), 30 EGP/annually (for all others)

Equivalent in US Dollars: 3 USD/annually (for students), 5.5 USD/annually (for all others)

Date of estimate May 2008

and local currency name Egyptian Pound

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:

The digital ICT services are divided into two groups;

1- Those related to the management of resources at the libraries premises if they exist, and these are free of charge. Example to are the use of catalogue, the web site/online catalogue, which are limited to only few public libraries in Egypt.

2- Direct usages of computers, internet, and audio-video material are usually for additional fees on an hourly basis when available. Access to a computer is for 2EGP/hour, (\$0.4/hour).

It has been noted that while the use of computers, internet and the catalog are mostly by young adults aged between 16 and 35 years, the educational ICT services, audio-video, and games are used mainly by children and younger users. The libraries that have expanded their use of digital ICT service are mostly focused larger, urban venues, while smaller, non-urban libraries are heavily lagging behind.

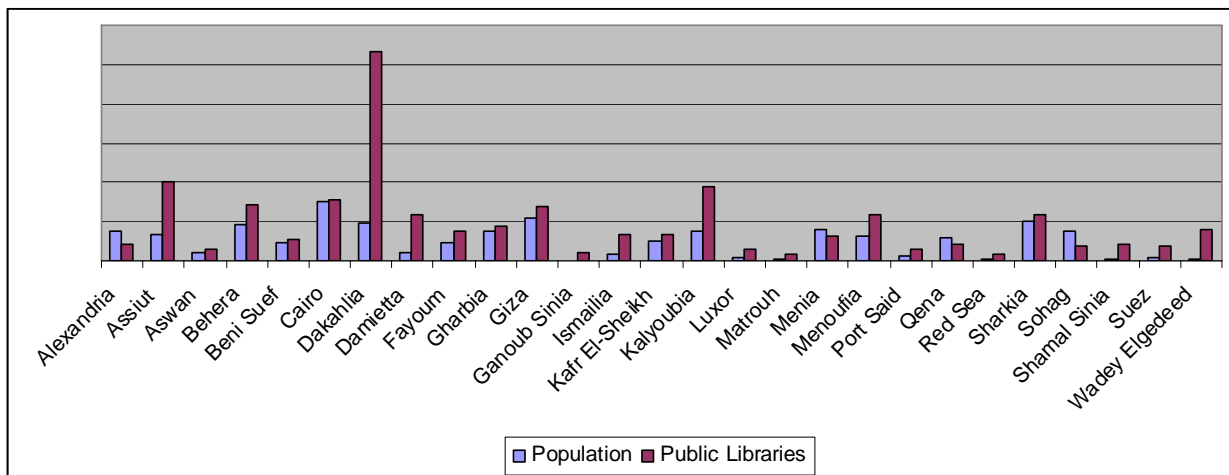
4.1.2.5 Geographic Distribution

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

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

There is a distinction between different types of public libraries with regards to geogrphical distribution.

1- Governmental public libraries are administered by each governorate, and the funding and local needs govern the decisions for creation of libraries. The distribution of public libraries across governorates mostly follows closely the demographic distribution in Egypt. However, the limited funding available for these libraries and it being fragmented to a major degree have affecting the growth of these libraries in both size and reach to rural and remote areas.



2- Newly established libraries that were created, managed and sustained by NGOs and/or semi-

governmental bodies such as Mubarak Public Library and the Integrated Care Society's network of libraries, have mainly focused on urban areas, namely Cairo. Only recently has their reach extended to other locations in Egypt, however it remains limited in nature.

4.1.2.5.1 Map

4.1.3 Capacity & 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)?

Public Libraries staff should be mostly concerned with making information available to their users and communities. In the Egyptian context, public library staff are usually traditional government employees, with a limited knowledge of technology and customer service attitude. Recent influx of public libraries managed by NGOs has changed this notion a little, to include staff with more capacity in addition to a more colorful spectrum of activities that involve arts, theater and digital ICT. However, libraries generally remain focused on content provided through external entities, in the form of books or digital content, and have not considered generating local knowledge. This content is mostly in Arabic, and hence of relevance to local communities, however it focuses mostly in the arts and humanities. Several newly formed libraries have expanded their selection to other languages and other forms of content, such as audio and visual material, to attract more users.

In general, the library is not so popular, or "cool", destination for people in Egypt, although it is worth noting that there are seasonal patterns to access of libraries. Students and young people tend to use public libraries as places to study and to do research during the exams times and studying periods. In the summer, children and students tend to use the libraries for general reading as well as activities that are provided at selected libraries. In some rural governorates, public libraries were almost abandoned due to the lack of interesting, interactive and user/community oriented activities. Generally, the newly established libraries are much more vibrant and relevant than the traditional old ones.

Technology has only recently been introduced to users in a limited number of public libraries in Egypt. The use of technology has remained focused on capacity building programs for children and young adults. This is yet to be mainstreamed to the public library system in Egypt.

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.

The number of staff varies from one public library to another. In a large library, such as Mubarak Public Library (MPL); there are 15-18 core staff members and 10-20 supportive staff including part timers and interns. While in other libraries, especially in rural areas, the staff can be as small

as 3-5 employees. This stems from the size and funding dedicated to these individual libraries. The staff's educational background is generally in library studies, especially in urban areas. However, in non-urban areas staff members could have degrees in other disciplines where government job placement could assign worker to the library.

4.1.3.2 Staff Training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (ie, librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information & 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.

The number of staff varies from one public library to another. In a large library, such as Mubarak Public Library (MPL); there are 15-18 core staff members and 10-20 supportive staff including part timers and interns. While in other libraries, especially in rural areas, the staff can be as small as 3-5 employees. This stems from the size and funding dedicated to these individual libraries. The staff's educational background is generally in library studies, especially in urban areas. However, in non-urban areas staff members could have degrees in other disciplines where government job placement could assign worker to the library.

4.1.3.3 Services Offered

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

Services Offered	Comments
1. Access to books	It is the main activity in the public libraries, and in some cases the only activity. Electronic catalogs are provided in a few libraries, namely the National Library, Mubarak Public Library, Library of Alexandria, and the Integrated Care society libraries. Access is limited to books and printed material.
2. Audio/video material	Only available in newly established libraries that are managed by Mubarak Public Library and/or Integrated Care Society. On premises access is generally allowed, with some libraries allowing external use of this material. Viewing and hearing rooms are provided on premises where most of this material is consumed.
3. Recreational and cultural activities	Several libraries offer recreation activities that range from arts, crafts, theatre, and music.
4. Digital ICT capacity programs	Libraries with ICT services generally focus on providing training and capacity building programs in digital ICT..

5.	General Internet Access	Access to the Internet is available in special computer labs, or at specific times when ICT facilities are not used for training
6.	Renting meeting/conference rooms and facilities	In a limited number of libraries, space could be rented out to individuals to conduct activities.

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

Services differ from one region to another depends on the resources available at the library. The libraries that are established to follow governmental institutions general limit their services to book access. Libraries that have been established by NGOs in the last decade have packaged different services that include along with access to books, some ICT based services such as access to the internet, computers, and audio/video materials. These services have become the major attractions to these venues, in contrast to traditional access to books. Libraries in rural areas have generally less resources than libraries in urban areas, and hence limited service in both quality and variety.

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.

The mobile library program has been established to support underserved communities. The program administers several trucks that circulate Egypt during the summer, and provide access to books during their stay in underserved communities. The program, that has started in the late 80s has suffered from lack of funding and has slowly become a legacy. A more recent program that focuses on digital ICT has been launched by Egypt ICT Trust Fund in 2005. The mobile IT-club is an ICT enabled truck that serves underprivileged communities during its visits that last for two weeks. However, it mainly focuses on capacity building programs and is currently administered by the IT-clubs program.

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 content that is available is books in Arabic, which meets the lingual capabilities of the local community. The topics are mainly those available in the market and they include novels, religious books and books in science and arts. There is limited -if any- locally generated content.

Other Content Needed:

The research showed that content that is updated and up to date is needed in many libraries. More coordination between the National Library of Egypt and the local public libraries is need to ensure

that more recently published content is available in the different public libraries across Egypt not only in the National library in Cairo.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

In the public libraries researched, there were not many local content generated. The libraries have steady and consistent strategies to define the content from outside sources more than using the local content available. It is worth mentioning that the research process has not come across any attempt to look for local content.

Source: Research outcome and team observations

4.1.3.6 Services & 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.

Services in public libraries in Egypt are mainly in Arabic with a limited amount of content in other languages, mostly English. Science, technology and some arts content is available in English and very limited in other foreign languages (French, German, Spanish and others). Content in Arabic represents almost 90% of the available content in libraries, and mostly focus on general literature and references. In some libraries, governmental information and laws are provided, however this is not mainstreamed. Newly established libraries, in an effort to attract more young adults have also made it a point to include resources for human development in general, however this has remained limited in nature.

4.1.3.7 Types of Uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information & 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 3.4 Charts: Information Needs and complement here as needed:

Most of the users are seeking information related to their studies, especially in areas related to art, humanities, literature, and novels. Parents and children seek information related to education, and children's books.

4.1.3.8 Number, Type and Frequency of Users

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs **Error! Not a valid result for table..** Complement here as needed:

additional details not covered in section 4.2.3

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 & communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

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

Most of the interested users have the capacity to use the venue to seek the traditional services of access to books. The use of technology is not as common as the traditional services offered in public libraries. Libraries offering digital ICT service have focused on capacity building programs for users to address this issue, and as a point of attraction to the library.

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: Most training programs have focused on skills beyond knowledge and information seeking. As an example, libraries offering activity programs have provided craftsmanship training programs.

ICT specific training courses: Introductory courses in digital ICT usage and internet

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.

Public Libraries are occasional as a destination that users visit on daily basis. Users seek information and the public libraries services when they have time to spare. Moreover, the frequent users are seasonal in their visits to public libraries. Most of the adults tend to be more frequent than students and children during the school year. On the other hand, youngsters use public libraries more during the summer vacations.

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: ie, 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.

Users think that public libraries are as places for learning and improving knowledge yet they do not think that public libraries are cool. Seeking knowledge and/or information at the public libraries is perceived as an activity for the young people and students not the general public to seek general information.

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.

There are no activities that pertain to social appropriation of information, as well as generation of new knowledge within public libraries.

4.1.3.14 Trust, Safety & 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?

As far as content is concerned, public libraries are generally perceived as trusted places, while safety and security depends on the location of the library.

4.1.3.15 Gaps and Opportunities in information & services offered

What other information gaps & 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)

With the modernization of the educational system, that includes programs to allow students to develop research skills, more usage of libraries could be perceived if it contains appropriate content. This requires a more solid link with the educational institutions to help create a more successful model. Regarding digital ICT services, public libraries are competing with many entities that provide access to ICT and the fact that they are packaged with other activities make it more attractive to younger users.

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 & public support, regional and international context)?

Public libraries that were established in the last decade have made use of the huge drive through the support of the First lady of Egypt. This political support has created a new wave of libraries, namely the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Mubarak Public Library, and the Integrated Care Society libraries. While these libraries have witnessed success, through political will and public support, the governmental public libraries in general have not capitalized on this environment. They remain very limited in reach and resources. While the legal and regulatory framework is not posing any limitations on these libraries, the bureaucratic system and lack of funding hinders their growth.

4.1.4.1 Local & National Economy

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

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

Local economy is affecting the access to public information. In rural areas, where local economy is limited, people's priorities are providing basic needs more than seeking access to information. The

government's allocation of resources for the libraries sector is also limited, due to the fact that the national economy is under a lot of stress. This is more so in public libraries that follow local governments administratively. Only a recent expansion of NGOs focusing on libraries has seen public libraries with larger funding opportunities, however these libraries remain limited in numbers.

4.1.4.2 Legal & Regulatory Framework

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

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

There is no particular legal framework for the public access to information in Egypt however the government is leading investment and promotion of public libraries. One of the main issues under discussion now is the new law being drafted to make a framework for information use and sharing specially through media. This new law is not directly related to public libraries as venues for accessing information however it might affect the use, share, and access to information in Egypt.

4.1.4.3 Political Will & Public Support

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

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

The government is investing in building new libraries as a result of the First Lady's national initiative to establish libraries in rural areas. The government is also keen to facilitate access to technology in Egypt. Libraries have been equipped with computers and connectivity in many areas but the people's capability to use of technology and ICT is limited.

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? (ie, national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

Several individual networks of libraries exist within the public libraries in Egypt. These networks are mostly driven by the fact that several libraries are administered by the same organization, and are mainly concerned with the administration of these libraries. Logistically, most public libraries are overlooked by the national book authority, however their funding and administration is done by local government. These entities remain as an isolated set that operator individually. Among the notable examples of this is the network of the National Library and Archives of Egypt, which manages 18 public libraries in greater Cairo metropolitan. This network is most administrative and the amount of knowledge and resource sharing within this network is limited. Recently established libraries administrated by the Integrated Care Society (ICS), are organized in a network of 13 public libraries in greater Cairo. The ICS network, in addition to being an administrative network, allows for knowledge sharing amongst the different location especially on engaging the community. They also enforce a unified impression of libraries by putting tight procedures on operations. However, there is no integration in the services provided, and the library management

dictates the priorities of each individual library. They create a competitive environment for funding opportunities from the ICS.

Although in a sense different, the Egyptian Libraries Network (<http://www.egyptlib.net.eg>) is a database that lists the different libraries in Egypt. The network is managed by the Cabinet Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC) and aims to allow users to search the different libraries within the network. The lack of electronic catalogues in most libraries has worked towards limiting the access of the network to listing of libraries in Egypt.

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.

Only a limited number of partnerships have been established to support public libraries. These libraries are administered and established as NGO, namely the Integrated care society and the Mubarak public library. While the later was established through a fund provided by the German "Bertelsmann Foundation", and have sought funding from a variety of funding agencies. The Integrated Care society is also following suit in access to donor agencies and public donations with the support of the First lady of Egypt.

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 2008/2009

Local currency name Egyptian Pounds amount (local currency) 61,190,000

Approx. equivalent in USD 11,437,383 based on exchange rate of 5.35 on date Aug 15th, 2008.

The estimate funding is for the the general book authority in Egypt, which encompasses more than just the public libraries in Egypt. The research team would estimate the funding for libraries as about 10-15% of this total budget. It is worth mentioning that the budget includes salaries and running cost of libraries in Egypt.

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	79,038,777,000	

Education	28,261,149,000	Education is a major spending element for the Egyptian government.
Other (Health)	5,583,091,000	
Public Libraries	61,190,000	This figure is the funding for the general book authority, with the public libraries receiving only a fraction of this funding.

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:	80	This figure rises to 100% in public libraries administered by the government.
International donors:	10	The huge contrast in funding between the government administered libraries and libraries such as the Biblotica Alexandrina, Mubarak Public libraries, and the integrated care society. This small subset of libraries have an influx of donor money towards their operation, which is absent in the case of governmentally administered public libraries.
National donors:		
User fees / services:	10	This is mostly in the form of subscriptions and fees for attending special activities including digital ICT access.

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?

Funding for government administered libraries is allocated by the local government. While the funding is allocated in the general budget of Egypt, local governments are responsible to spend this fund.

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?

In most of the public libraries, user fees are far from being sufficient to cover the running cost of the library. Other services provided in the library are for additional fees, and they are planned for cost recovery in general. The lack of funding, and individual sustainability limit the potential expansion of services and resources within the public libraries and make maintaining the quality, variety and creation of new activities a huge hurdle.

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.

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)	40	
Building Infrastructure	20	
Utilities	30	
Staff Training	10	
Computers / Technology	0	Computers are in the most cases on a donation or a loan program from MCIT
Total	100%	

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?

Funding has generally remained the same, however, costs have risen significantly in recent years. This in turn has a huge effect on the growth of public libraries in Egypt.

4.1.6 Case Example for Public Libraries: Mubarak Public Library

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.

Introduction:

The library is located in the West Bank of the river Nile in western side of Cairo, which is in Giza Governorate. The library is hosted in an old palace that was built by an old Egyptian family with the name of Al-Tahawiya. The palace was later nationalized by the Egyptian government after the 1952 revolution by the free officers. Abdel-Hakim Amer, who is one of the senior revolution council members, lived in the palace for some time. The building is considered of major significant to the Egyptian history and it is one of the nice historic buildings that are well kept.



In 1995 the building was turned into a library with the support of the Integrated Care Society ICS, Bertelsmann Foundation, and the Egyptian Ministry of Culture. The German Bertelsmann Foundation provided funds and training for the library for 5 years.

Beneficiaries:

MPL has around 20,000 active users that come from different socio economic and educational backgrounds. The majority of the users were young people and children however there were few seniors. Many of the users at the time of the visit were students who seemed to be involved in education related reading and/or research. People enjoy the libraries services at all the floors in a nice friendly atmosphere. The garden is also used for the users' convenience.

**Facilities:**

The library has an advanced main circulation desk that is accessible at the ground floor facing the entrance and desks at each floor to help users with information and checking out books. The first floor is dedicated to children's books, while the second and third are dedicated to general books. The last floor has a theatre and administrative offices. The library has a computer lab that is dedicated to the use of computers and internet. It also has a computer lab that is dedicated to children educational games and activities. There is a large computer lab with 30 PCs in the side of the garden. The labs were first equipped by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology through the IT Clubs national initiative and later upgraded by MPL. There is a multi media center that has VCR, cassette player, few computers (that were under maintenance at the time of the visit). There are children's rooms that are used for workshops and educational activities for young users.

Services:

The library has a wide range of services that include:

- 1- Access to books targeting different ages
- 2- Access to Audio and visual materials
- 3- Cultural activities; such as art workshops and theatre,
- 4- Access to computer and internet
- 5- Access to newspapers, magazines and periodicals
- 6- Cafeteria



MPL has a unique atmosphere giving the architecture of the building and the friendly staff. The team consists of staff, part timers and volunteers during the summer and mid year terms. The staff is well trained to help and support the users' needs at almost all times. MPL shares with other libraries like the Integrated Care Society ICS's libraries in the common friendly and enabling atmosphere.

4.2 Venue # 2: Academic and Specialized Libraries

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?

While academic libraries are accessible to most, they have a close relationship with learning and research. The target audience of these venues are students and researchers engaged in scholarly activity, and this reflects on the selection of content presented. This is also reflected in the affordability of accessing the library in general, more so that users seek information on a per demand basis. However, funding and lack of awareness of the role of libraries in research have diminished the growth of academic libraries. Academic libraries are organized in a network within each individual institution, which usually entertains a central library and individual faculty and departmental libraries. While the central library focuses more on arts and humanities, libraries in individual faculties host material relevant to the area of specialization. Academic libraries have mostly provided access to selections of text books and research journals, however the lack of appropriate funding has limited the quality of this selection and in several key libraries donations have acted as a primary resource of updating libraries. This is magnified with the increasing stress of limited funding in general to academic institutions and its effect on libraries as a limited priority. As a matter of fact, some libraries are driven to be financially sustainable, which is a very difficult task to achieve. Recently the Egyptian Universities Network (EUN), in partnership with the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), has intervened to provide access to online electronic scientific resources to state owned academic institutions. This is in addition to access to offline research databases that has been available in academic libraries for some years. Unique to academic libraries, on the other hand, is the availability of scholarly output produced within the hosting institution to researchers. This material has been the focus of a limited number of digitization activities in some libraries. Another intervention that is currently being championed by MCIT is the introduction of IT-clubs in libraries to provide users with general access to ICT.

Specialized libraries, on the other hand, are divided into two groups based on their hosting institutions belonging to either (i) research institutions or (ii) commercial institutions. With the exception of some key research libraries, specialized libraries are usually small and poorly kept facilities. In some cases they are a few shelves of books that are only accessibly to a few affiliated individuals.

Academic libraries are hosted in educational institutions which are in major urban areas, more so focused in the greater Cairo, which hosts 32 universities from the total of 44 universities in Egypt. In addition, Cairo also acts as host to the major research specialized libraries such as the National Research Center library and the National library of Agriculture. This in turn reflects that the limited outreach to remote communities in Egypt. In addition, with the majority of these libraries

hosted in governmental organizations that work the official business hours in Egypt play to limit the accessibility to the general audience being served.

Generally, staff in academic libraries are trained as librarians, and engage in a limited amount of training to provide services presented. Recently, and driven by the program to increase the capacity of civil servants, ICT capacity has been improved. However, this capacity has not been directed towards assisting users find information online. Specialized libraries, on the other hand, are usually book keepers and not necessarily librarians by training.

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)?

Cairo stands out as the clear favorite with regards to access to academic and specialized libraries in Egypt where it plays host to over 50% of these libraries. As a matter of fact, the most significant academic libraries in Egypt are almost all in Cairo, including Cairo University library, AUC library and the National Research Center library. The general public could access the academic libraries with relative ease, should the need arise. The cost of using the library is rather limited and highly affordable to most users especially that it could be on a per-use basis. However, one of the main obstacles to the utilization of the libraries has remained lack of funding and resources in addition to lack of awareness of the role of a research library, even to those involved in research tasks. Outside Cairo, only a few universities exist, and academic libraries hosted within these institutions are generally located in a few major cities in governorates.

Generally, academic libraries are divided into a central library that focuses on literature and arts and hosts the scholarly output produced within the university. Individual faculties host their own libraries in the domain of specialization. Libraries hosted in research centers are directed to the research focus of the institution they host and with the exception of the national research center are usually very limited in size and scope. While academic libraries in Egypt have remained mostly traditional in their content, services and infrastructure, recently they have added online access to e-subscription references. This has been introduced through the Egyptian Universities Network (EUN) and has been granted to all universities and research institutes that are under this network. General access to internet has also been introduced, mostly in locations close to the library and through the partnership with the IT-clubs program.

Specialized libraries are hosted in industrial establishments, and are generally accessible to the institute's staff members and not the general public. These libraries are usually very limited in size and entertain a limited amount of content.

Common to all libraries, individuals with special needs are not adequately served. Only recently have they been brought into focus and in most cases this implies addressing technological needs of visually impaired students through special software and equipment. Other services and other disabilities are not addressed accordingly.

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.

Physical access to the academic libraries in Egypt is open to the general public, and is not limited to student bodies. Some libraries limit access to certain individuals. This limitation might be in physical access, where some include special fees for the general public, or services provided. The library of the faculty of Agriculture in Cairo University, for example, charge 2EGP per visit for non-students and only allow on-premises use of their book collection. There is an annual membership fee of 200EGP which allow book loans for a limited period of time. Working hours are and additional factor that affects physical access to academic libraries. Working hours in general follow the governmental business hours (9am - 2pm), and hence limit significantly none-student members from accessing the libraries.

Common with most venues in Egypt, the needs of individuals with special needs are not met in most academic libraries. Only recently have newly established facilities been addressing their needs, both in physical access and in access to material for those who are visually impaired. While physical access has remained a difficult in most libraries, visually impaired students usually have to seek assistance of friends or family to help them in using the material available in the library.

On the other hand, specialized libraries in Egypt are mostly hosted by industrial organizations, and are in turn only with a limited selection and audience. The access to these libraries are only limited to employees of the corporation. A limited number of libraries are present in professional syndicates and also have a limited audience that could achieve access.

4.2.2.2 Appropriate Technology & 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.

Academic libraries in Egypt, other than the AUC library, remain mostly traditional libraries, with manual catalogues used to access books. Technology is slowly being introduced in academic libraries in Egypt. Libraries in the major metropolitan cities, Cairo and Alexandria, tend to be better equipped than academic libraries in the different Egyptian governorates. The use of technology has been championed by the Egyptian University Network and with the support of the MCIT. This is usually in the form of electronic subscription to digital research databases, online scientific publication, digitization of the library catalogue and direct access to computers, access to the internet, and printing. The later is the least popular activity in academic libraries in Egypt. The AUC stands out in this spectrum of libraries as the library with the most integration of technology in its operation. The AUC library, in addition to the services mentioned above provide remote access to its resources to patrons. Specialized libraries are usually very limited in scope and no technology assistance or used. The services are mostly access to physically available on shelf material.

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.

Sharing a similar reality with public libraries, the academic libraries' services are affordable to most of their target groups. The fees are generally modest and are collected in either on a daily basis, or through a membership fee that is monthly, quarterly, or annually. Non-registered students usually pay nearly double the membership fee of students, while faculty and their assistant staff get free access to the library. The affordability is also seen in the light of the need to the library. The library is the target of students, and researchers to address immediate and specific questions. Coupled with the limited awareness of students in general of the role of the library and references, this in turn reflects that the period of use of the library is limited. As a general conclusion, the service is relatively affordable to most of the students and researchers, and also affordable to external users. Specialized libraries are almost always fee of charge for individuals with access.

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?

All academic libraries have registration fees that are either on a per-use basis or for a duration that ranges from one month to one year. The fees are defined by the library's management and go through a set of approvals from management. The fees for services in state owned academic library only slightly vary from one institution to the other. It is worth mentioning that membership fees are mainly for using books on a loan-basis and not on-premises use. The AUC library offers its service for free for junior researchers and graduate students in state owned universities in Egypt.

It is worth mentioning that while registration fees grant users basic access to books, some of the additional services offered are for extra fees. These services include the likes of assisted research index search, printing, photocopying and other services offered at the library.

Indicate amount in local currency 30 EGP/quarter

Equivalent in US Dollars: 5.5 USD/quarter

Date of estimate May 2008

and local currency name Egyptian Pound

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:

There are two categories of digital ICT services offered in academic libraries (i) access to electronic subscription to digital research databases, online scientific publication, digitization of the library catalogue and (ii) direct access to computers, access to the internet, and printing. The later is through partnership with the IT-clubs program to establish access points and is usually only located in close proximity to the library. As a matter of fact, the newly established central

library in Cairo University has established a special access center for visually impaired individuals. The access to electronic resources is based on the campus wide access to electronic resources led by the Egyptian Universities Network (EUN). It is still a recent addition, and has been more popular as an on-campus service to faculty members. Recently established libraries have made offering digital service a key offering.

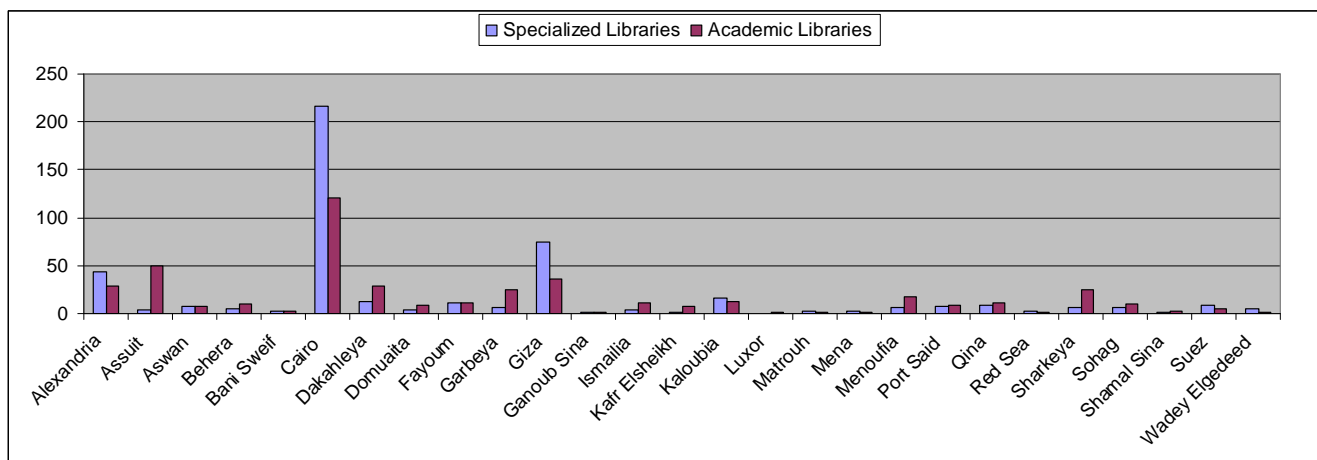
The diversity in the digital services offered in academic libraries is huge between different institutions, as well as within the same institute. Libraries in key universities such as Cairo and Ain Shams, located in Cairo, and Alexandria universities stand out as the most equipped. While within the same institution, faculty libraries are less equipped than central libraries, with only limited exception. Specialized libraries, almost unanimously offer no digital services.

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 major academic libraries are present in Cairo and Alexandria, within the four major universities in Egypt (Cairo University, Ain Shams University, Alexandria University and The American University in Cairo). These academic libraries are also joined by the library of several specialized institutions, such as the National Research Center and the likes, which collectively hugely differentiates between the size and magnitude of the libraries in urban and non-urban areas in Egypt. Cairo alone hosts seven public universities and 25 private universities. In addition, the vast majority of research centers including the national research centers' libraries that are located mainly in Cairo. Outside of Cairo, academic libraries are present in the confines of the universities that are in a few of the major cities of the different governorates beyond Cairo and Alexandria. These libraries are usually under funded and don't offer a wide selection of services.



The spectrum of academic and specialized libraries beyond major urban areas is dominated by specialized libraries. These libraries are mostly hosted in industrial organization, and are relevant to their line of business.

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:

N/A

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.

N/A

4.2.3 Capacity & 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)?

Generally, library staff in academic libraries are trained in library studies and are employed fulltime. While their background is relevant to the library operation, only recently have they been exposed to new technologies through training on ICDL mandated for governmental employees. The library itself serves communities of learning, and in turn it is generally assumed that they are familiar with how to use the library and hence libraries don't invest in any training programs. The staff in academic libraries vary in number depending on the size of the library, with larger libraries having staff that could exceed 50 employees. Specialized libraries on the other hand, and small academic libraries, are mostly very limited in size and scope, with many as small as a few shelves. Staff in these libraries are employees overlooking this resource and usually very limited in number and need not be with a specific background.

Academic and specialized libraries alike provide access to hardcopies of references. The collection mainly follows the scope of interest of the hosting institution. Central and major academic libraries are an exception, where they entertain a wider selection of material. The Egyptian Universities Network (EUN) has also led the activity of introducing electronic and online material in libraries. While CD-Rom based indexes have been available for many years, access to online resources has only recently been introduced. A few libraries have also integrated audio and visual resources in the selection they offer, however this has not been mainstreamed. While the selection of resources available remain limited due to lack of funding and focus on libraries. Most academic institutions are stretched for funding and the library falls far behind in their priorities.

Probably the only unique and complete selection of resources that are available in academic

libraries is the literature produced from within the institution. This selection is also currently being made available in the digital form, especially for digitally born content. Cairo university, in its newly launched central library is also leading a digitization effort of these resources in its possession.

Users are generally limited in number and frequency. This is mainly due to the fact that users access the library for specific and immediate needs for their research and coupled with the limited working hours and lack of awareness of the role of literature and the library to research. The later has been mostly due to the limited resources that are in academic libraries, especially for areas with a high rate of update such as technology and engineering. Undergraduate students also use the library, mostly as studying areas and in this case are frequent in their presence. Overall, libraries are trusted places both on the content and personal levels, however they are not perceived as cool places.

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.

The number of staff varies from one library to another, mostly in correlation to the size of the library. While a significant number of libraries are as small as a few shelves, more so specialized libraries, and in turn don't have dedicated staff but have a volunteer handling them, some libraries have up to 50 staff members. Typically central and major academic libraries have over 20 full time employees mostly composed of librarians, who are graduates of library studies. Additionally, support and administrative staff complete the staff members. Average libraries, such as individual faculty libraries have 5-20 staff members depending on the size of the library. Most average and large academic libraries have staff members with at least basic ICT capacity.

4.2.3.2 Staff Training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (ie, librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information & 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.

Libraries' staff on job training is quite limited in its frequency and quality. Most full fledged libraries are administered by librarians with appropriate degrees. This would apply to central and faculty libraries irrespective of the institution. Departmental libraries and many specialized libraries are a small set of publications that are overlooked by a volunteer from within with no mandatory training. Libraries offering digital services, such as internet access, or online or offline reference subscription usually train staff on using these tools.

4.2.3.3 Services Offered

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

<i>Services Offered</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1. Access to books and printed reference material	This remains the primary activity in academic libraries, and the only activity in specialized libraries. Unique to academic libraries, compared to other public libraries, is the availability of scholarly output from graduate degrees granted by the institution, as well as technical references and access to them.
2. Offline database Search	Offline reference and abstract database indexes have been provided in academic libraries prior to the presence of online resources. Users submit search jobs and results are returned through staff members administered search.
3. Microfiche access	Access to reference material on microfiche is an extension of printed material that has been utilized in academic libraries.
4. Electronic references	Through the EUN, academic libraries gain access to a selection of online scientific journals and databases. Users are allowed to access these resources in the libraries.
5. Audio/video services	A limited number of academic libraries avail a selection of multimedia content. It is mostly adhoc and not totally relevant to the scientific material provided by the library.
6. Internet Access	Access to the Internet is available in special computer labs. Where available, hardware is usually provided through a partnership with the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT).
7. Using meeting/conference rooms and facilities	Study rooms are available in libraries for student access.
8.	
9.	
10.	

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

Services differ from one library to another depending on the resources available at the library. There is a clear distinction between central libraries, and faculty libraries in the same institution. With the later having fewer resources compared to the central libraries. Departmental libraries are also usually limited to access to printer material. Another clear difference in the service is witnessed when comparing the larger institutional libraries, such as Cairo University, Ain Shams University, Alexandria University and the AUC, and smaller institutions. Libraries in non-urban areas usually provide a limited set of features. Typically researchers seek access to the larger libraries rather than their home university. Almost all specialized libraries provide only access to printed material and references.

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.

The only notable example is the services provided for the visually challenged users at Cairo university central library. Technology assisted access for visually impaired students help them access online resources and material on premises and provide Braille printing.

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:

Most of the content that is available is books, periodicals and publications relevant to educational and research activities within institutions. Humanities are usually instructed in Arabic, and the references and material available in the library are in the same language. On the other hand, scientific material in other fields is mostly in English. Hence the references available are in Arabic, scientific material is in English. While mechanisms are in place to obtain content, it is both limited in funding and scope and doesn't truly fulfil the requirements to enhance the content in libraries. Several libraries have benefited from targeted donations that have revived the value of these libraries.

Other Content Needed:

The primary role of academic libraries is to support educational and research activity, and hence recent and focused references are key to maintaining a quality library. While recent additions of online subscriptions have helped create resources of value in libraries and remove duplication of resources in different institutions, a more complete selection of these resources is required. In addition, books and more so focused selection, are required to assist research in various fields.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

In the academic libraries researched, other than scholarly material generated from within the university, there were not many local content generated. The libraries have steady and consistent strategies to define the content from outside sources more than using the local content available.

Source:

4.2.3.6 Services & 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.

Services in academic libraries in Egypt are a mix of English, Arabic and, with a lesser degree, other languages. Science, technology and some arts content is available in English and very limited in Arabic and other foreign languages (French, German, Spanish and others). There is information in some libraries about the government, laws and services, however this is not common. Most of the old academic libraries have text books and less on services or non specialized/general interest content. It is worth mentioning that the scholarly output generated at the academic institutions and admitted into the academic libraries need at least a summary written in Arabic to be attached if the thesis is in other languages.

4.2.3.7 Types of Uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information & 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:

Most of the users are research oriented in subjects related to their studies especially in areas of sciences, arts, humanities, and literature. Researchers in sciences and technology tend to use online resources more aggressively compared to other researcher in other disciplines.

4.2.3.8 Number, Type and Frequency of Users

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs, **Error! Not a valid result for table..** Complement here as needed:

While number of users are limited, and usually targeted to their immediate needs to access references, they are usually frequent users. The users are mostly at the graduate level and utilize the library during the academic year. In addition, a limited number of undergraduate student use the library a study areas during the semester. Across the board, access to academic libraries has a sessional pattern where the access to the library is higher during the school year.

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 & communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

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

Most of the interested users have the capacity to use the venue to seek information. Access to hardcopy material remains as the primary activity in academic libraries. Recently, and driven by the users with technology background, electronic resources are better utilized. These users have the capacity required to access this type of content.

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: N/A

ICT specific training courses: N/A

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.

Academic libraries are mostly accessed by graduate students on a per-demand basis. Students sometimes utilize the library premises as study areas, and in turn this service dictates the high level of integration of information seeking in academic libraries.

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: ie, 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.

Users perceive academic libraries are as places to access reference material. This is slowly changing to general access to information both online and offline. Academic libraries have not grown to become cool venues, but rather more directed access to content to address immediate personal needs in research oriented activities. It is worth mentioning, that access to reference remains to become a main stream research activity that students are encouraged to do.

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.

The most significant use of information available at academic libraries is access of reference material. Among the unique content in academic libraries is locally generated research by graduate students. It is mandatory that a copy of the research conducted in the hosting institution

be present in the library. In addition, the newly renovated central library in Cairo University is engaged in digitizing the special collection of material as well as locally generated research material and providing it electronically for users. This is probably the only notable activity to generate content within academic libraries.

4.2.3.14 Trust, Safety & 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 as trusted places. Safety and privacy are also inherited from the value of the hosting institution, and is usually high since academic libraries are located -usually- inside an educational institution.

4.2.3.15 Gaps and Opportunities in information & services offered

What other information gaps & 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)

As technology is still at an early stage of integration in academic libraries, there is a room for improvement and development in those areas. Advancing technology infrastructure and increasing the scope of material accessible online would help increase the usability of academic libraries. In addition, digitization of exciting material and introduction of the digitally born content into academic libraries would help the advancement of its utilization. This would also help integrate the different libraries with relative ease to help maximize the effectiveness of the limited resources available for academic libraries.

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 & public support, regional and international context)?

Libraries have received diverse attention in the last few years. While generally libraries have been demoted as a priority for funding in academic institutions, there has been some support in integrating digital services through the support of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT). This support has come through the Egyptian University Network (EUN) which has availed access to several online scientific resources to all academic institutions in Egypt. This has not been match with an increase of awareness of the role of libraries and in the amount of resources available in the library in general. The amounting pressure of funding on governmental state universities has limited the amount of resources accessible to libraries. As a matter of fact, libraries might be required to sustain their own activities through generation of funding due to the lack of resources. Many libraries have depended on influx of donations to maintain any form of content and updated resources. However, these donations have been very scarce and only trickle to some libraries from their alumina. Specialized libraries on the other hand remain mostly neglected and funding very limited. They are mostly dependent on initiatives

of individuals in the host organization and receive limited resources to sustain.

4.2.4.1 Local & National Economy

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

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

The government's allocation of resources for higher education is limited, of which only a small portion goes to the library. This limited funding is currently not enough to maintain any significant level of quality and progress in the academic libraries. This is in contrast to the library of the American University in Cairo which has consistently received the required funding to maintain an acceptable level of service, however the library focuses on the disciplines of the university which are mostly in business, humanities and the arts. Recently, the EUN has taken the initiative to provide site licenses to electronic resources through funding from MCIT to academic institutions. This has boosted the quality of resources available at academic libraries, and has integrated well with the growing habit to access digital content in general. It is worth mentioning that with tightened budgets for state owned educational institutions libraries are starting to find funding more scarce and might be expected to produce avenues for funding and cost recovery.

4.2.4.2 Legal & Regulatory Framework

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

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

There is no particular legal framework for the public access to information in Egypt, more so when it pertains to academic libraries.

4.2.4.3 Political Will & Public Support

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

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

While the support of the government in building new public libraries, championed by the First Lady, the academic libraries are yet to received the same interest. Additionally the lack of awareness with research communities to the role of libraries has diminished the drive and support to invest in academic libraries. However, the MCIT support to increase access to digital ICT, increasing digital content and electronic resources has helped create a new reality in academic libraries. Technology is seen as one of the tools for improving access to knowledge and information in the academic libraries, and many have started to integrate these technologies.

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? (ie, national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

The academic libraries in Egypt are structured in several interconnected networks. Within each institution, individual faculties have their own libraries that address the resources relevant to their field. In addition, a central library in academic institutions covers topics in humanities and arts in addition to being a repository of scholarly material generated by within the institution. Across institutions, the Egyptian Universities Network is putting effort in providing resources to academic institutions in a coordinated fashion. However integration of these libraries is very limited. Among the efforts of the network is create a common catalogue that should pave the way to better integrate academic libraries. These activities are mainly driven by the increased habit of accessing digital content

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.

There are a limited number of partnerships that are established to support academic libraries. The Supreme Council of Universities and the Egyptian Universities Network have working relations with different entities such as the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), The Ministry of Higher Education, the Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC), Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA) among others to provide digital access to research content. Additionally, some partnerships have been created to aim to help boost content in academic libraries, including the partnership with the library of The Library of Congress. Despite the fact, these partnerships have only helped to provide access to content, and have not worked to integrate the academic libraries into a network.

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?

N/A

4.2.1 For Publicly Funded Venues only: Revenue Streams

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

4.2.1.1 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 .

4.2.1.2 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		
Education		
Other (name)		
Public Libraries		

Other Comments:

4.2.1.3 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:		
Other (name)		
Other (name)		
Other (name)		

Other Comments:

4.2.1.4 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?

Funding is coming from the government's main budget through the Ministry of Higher education and the university management. In fewer cases libraries receive funds from international organizations and/or individual donors. In the case of the faculty of Agriculture Library, a donor who graduated from the same school donated the new building.

4.2.1.5 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?

In most of the libraries, users' fees are not covering the running cost of the public library. There is a sustainability issues that libraries have to have donation from external sources in order to cover their running cost. Users fees do not cover the libraries cost.

4.2.1.6 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)		
Building Infrastructure		
Utilities		
Staff Training		
Computers / Technology		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

4.2.1.7 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?

As mentioned above the government is trying gradually to reduce the government funding to academic libraries. This is the most pressing issue for the libraries and their management. They have been thinking on channels to raise funds on their own. In most cases the revenue that is generated through service provision is not covering the running cost of the library, which is the main challenge for all the libraries. It is worth mentioning that we could not verify or find out accurate information about the government's strategy on this.

4.2.2 Case Example for Venue # 2: Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University

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 & Photo here.

Introduction:

Cairo university is the oldest and one of the most respectable public universities in the country. The faculty of Agriculture was established in 1889 as an independent Agriculture school then joined the Egyptian University in 1935. The library was established in 1912 and moved to a new building in 2001 that was built in an oriental style to match the surrounding architecture of the old university's buildings. The new building was donated by one of the school's alumni, "H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohamed Al Qasimi" the ruler of Sharjah, UAE.

<http://www.iti-worldwide.org/pages/wtd/07wtdbio.htm>

Beneficiaries:

Most of the library's beneficiaries are the faculty's students however it is open for external students and the public for 2 EGP/day. Researchers and faculty have more privileges than regular students, where they can check out the books for 15 days renewable to another 15 days while students cant. The library's beneficiaries other than the students are mainly agriculture engineers who come to seek knowledge and information on problems they face in their work.

Facilities:

The two story building has 4 main reading halls, a multi media hall ("to support the electronic library"), a conference room, 5 smaller meeting rooms, and a cafeteria. The library has 132 computers in the different library's sections/offices including the library computer/multimedia lab. It has around 15,000 books in Arabic, 35,000 in English, 3500 M.Sc. theses, 2000 Ph.D dissertations, and many periodicals.

<http://www.agr.cu.edu.eg/>

Services:

The agriculture library, which is open from (9:00-17:00hrs) has a wide range of services that include:

- 1- Access to Arabic and English books and periodicals that are 75% Agriculture related and 25% general



knowledge.

- 2- Access to Audio and visual materials through the library's multi media lab.
- 3- Access to computer and internet (2EGP/hour),



- 4- Access to photocopier, scanner, color printer, a digital camera, CD writer within the library's building.
- 5- Cafeteria

The library is facing some financial sustainability challenges after the university decided to cut the subsidies this year. The library's management is considering a more diverse approach to its users' community to increase its income.



4.3 Venue # 3: Information Technology Clubs (IT-clubs)

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?

Information Technology Clubs (IT-clubs) are part of the national initiative to transform Egypt into an Information Society. The IT-clubs program, which is championed by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), is a telecentre model that aims to provide citizens with access to digital ICTs, and allow them to use ICT as a tool for development. IT-clubs were also designed to be an outlet for citizens on relevant e-government information and a means to drive socio-economic development using technology. There is an estimated 1700+ IT-clubs in Egypt. The distribution of centers across urban and non-urban Egypt follows closely the demographic distribution of the population of citizens. With urban areas accounting for almost 32% of the IT-clubs in Egypt.

A typical IT-club is composed of 10 PCs, a printer and internet access provided on a loan basis from the program for three years. The IT-club is established in partnership between the program and a civil society organization that would act as a host. Upon maturing the three year period, successful IT-clubs are granted the equipment. Since IT-clubs are hosted in civil society organization, this in turn means they are generally accessible to all communities. The only notable exceptions are individuals with special needs, who are only served by a limited number of IT-clubs (Four) through a partnership program between ICTDAR, and Vodafone. The IT-clubs program also defines a business model, which dictates the fees collected for different services. The fees are hugely subsidized, and more so for students who receive a special discount on the fees (50%). This is meant to encourage young adults to obtain ICT literacy and to facilitate the creation of a knowledge based society.

While most IT-clubs have focused, either out of demand or to achieve financial sustainability, on capacity building programs, with only some progressing to offer courses beyond basic ICT skills. A far second has been in providing access to the general public. The IT-clubs program has not systematically transformed IT-club staff into knowledge intermediaries capable to direct users to useful information sources. Several projects have targeted aggregating and encouraging communities to produce information that is locally relevant. These portals remain with limited success and traffic. Other projects have focused on increasing the integration and networking of IT-clubs to help create a better, stronger ecosystem for IT-clubs. While local capacity has been present in most IT-clubs, IT-clubs have been struggling to find local relevance, as well as maintain a financially sustainable model. This in turn has affected the quality of service provided in IT-clubs and they have been steadily losing ground and reputation as affordable access points for citizens

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)?

Access to the IT-clubs program is based on a platform that integrates civil society organizations in a partnership. Civil organizations that host IT-Clubs include Youth centers, NGOs, schools, community centers, media centers, cultural palaces, libraries, local authority offices, and professional syndicates. The nature of the hosting agency has a huge impact on the general audience of the IT-clubs they entertain. In order for an organization to host an IT-club it needs to provide in-kind support in the form of dedicated space appropriately furnished. This in-kind support is estimated to be worth \$3000 to \$4000. The organization is responsible to pay employment expenses for staff and training staff hired in the club as well as running expenses that range from \$150 to \$300 monthly. The organization is responsible about day-to-day management and supervision of the club, as well as appropriate reporting to MCIT. They also contribute in the creation of the business plan, as well as initiation of revenue generating programs that are suitable to their respective local community. In return, the IT-clubs program supplies computers on a loan basis, and internet connectivity for 1 year. The costs that the hosting agency is required to commit have limited the expansion of the program to more remote areas, where NGOs and the likes have scarce resources. This is reflected in the distribution of IT-clubs based on location.

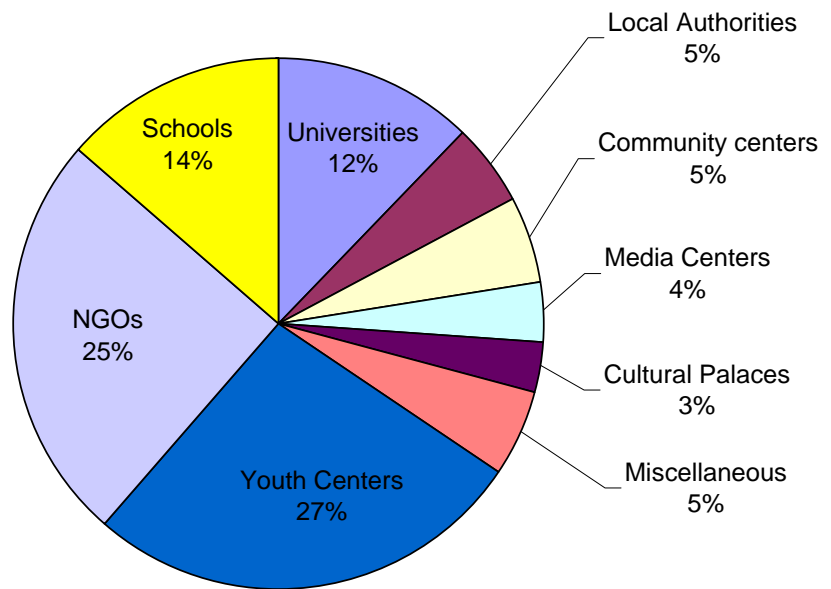
IT-clubs are generally accessible to communities, both in respect of location and affordability. Although there IT-clubs program has sought inclusion of all societies there remains a few underserved communities, namely individuals with special needs and remote communities. In addition, while initially planned to be a sustainable program, most IT-clubs have struggled to maintain financial sustainability, which in turn is reflected hugely on the quality and expansion of the services they provide. The program has also largely focused on capacity building programs on basic ICT, and has left free access as an additional service where users seek their own information needs. A limited number of supporting programs have sought the integration of information portals in It-clubs, namely the Egypt ICT Trust Fund community portal which focuses mainly on SMEs.

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.

The model of IT-Clubs dictates that a hosting agency is supposed to a civil society organization. Civil society organizations that host IT-Clubs include Youth centers, NGOs, schools, community centers, media centers, cultural palaces, libraries, local authority offices, and professional syndicates. The nature of the hosting agency has a huge impact on the physical access of IT-clubs. While some IT-clubs are hosted in organizations that limit access to certain communities, such as those in university campuses, the vast majority are publicly accessible to the general public (The figure illustrates the distribution of the IT-clubs based on the hosting organization). Again, similar to most public venues in Egypt access to individuals with special needs is very limited. Individuals suffering from physical challenges would find it difficult to access IT-clubs in general. Additionally, only recently has there been a program, in partnership with ICTDAR and Vodafone, to equip four telecentres (out of a total of 1700+) with tools for visually impaired individuals. The pilot program facilitated software and hardware in three IT-clubs.



4.3.2.2 *Appropriate Technology & 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 IT-clubs are equipped as a standard telecentre, with the majority equipped with the PCs supported by the MCIT program. The program provides 10 PCs, a printer on a three year loan basis in addition to internet connectivity for one year. The quality of the equipment is generally less than the state-of-the-art, with some older IT-clubs who have not gone through upgrades entertaining PIII and PIV computers that are overused and with limited resources. The overall quality of the facility is low and poorly kept, although might be sufficient for the basic capacity building programs that have proven to be by far the most engaging activity in IT-clubs. IT-clubs located in non-urban areas, more so those in rural areas, are usually less fortunate regarding available technologies, with poor sustainability and cost recover affecting heavily the upgrade of technologies available. The lack of local expertise and accessories in rural non-urban areas also adds to the magnitude of this diversity in the overall quality of the technologies available in the IT-clubs.

These are several services that are offered in IT-clubs, this includes training and capacity building programs, internet and email usage, general access to computers, printing and faxing, as well as

content development. By far, training and capacity building programs are a clear leader in the services provided, not only in IT-clubs in Egypt but in regional telecentres. Most capacity building programs focus on basic ICT literacy and computer usage, with some offering ICDL and advanced material depending on the surrounding community. It is worth noting that

1. Similar to most activities related to ICT in the region, the success of training programs directly relates to quality of the certificate issued. This stems from the local perception of the importance of certificates outlining education, and that most attendees are young adults looking for improving their employment opportunities. It is worth noting that the IT-clubs program has not established a certified training program. It is through partnership with multinational programs such as Microsoft UP, Intel Learn and Cisco Academy that they IT-clubs have been able to attract users.
2. The IT-clubs program has adopted Microsoft technologies in this implementation. This falls in line with the major trend of adoption of Microsoft technology by e-Government applications. As a matter of fact, most people relate Microsoft technologies with computers and are unaware of the concepts of Open-Source.

Egypt ICT Trust Fund has developed a community portal to support SMEs. Through a partnership with several IT-clubs the portal is being populated and utilized. This service has been popular in the pilot phase, while it has not been mainstreamed beyond that. This service is more popular in non-urban areas, mostly in major cities, across Egypt since the bridge the gap of information that urban areas are more previlaged with.

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.

In the operating IT-clubs provide their services at a relatively affordable price. The main challenge that was apparent from the research process was financial sustainability that have a major effect on the provision and quality of services provided. The affordability is mainly in comparison to compititive venues, namely cyber cafés, with the margin of difference reducing dramatically since their inception. However, the quality of service is hughly affected by the lack of financial sustainability in IT-clubs. It is worth mentioning that the IT-club program presets pricing policies for services provided, in addition to a business model that alocates 30% of the revenue towards financial sustainability, and the rest towards personnel. The model has not been widely adopted since many believe it is impractical with the low revenue, higher cost of personnel and the increasing prices of maintaining the facilities as they grow older.

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?

IT-clubs have a unified business model and fees structure that is mandated by the program. Fees are charged based on direct access to the computers in the IT-clubs. Users pay for computer access, printing and capacity building programs when available. The 2 LE/hour charge could purchase a modest meal for one adult, or about 8 loafs of bread which is the main staple of food in Egypt. The pricing scheme also provides a 50% reduction for students, intended to encourage them to access and develop capacity in ICT. There are no limitations worth mentioning in access, except those that appear due to time allocation to capacity building programs and internet connectivity. Only a limited number of IT-clubs act as intermediaries of information, and have trained staff to facilitate the access to information.

Indicate amount in local currency 1 EGP/hour (for students) 2 EGP/hour (otherwise)

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.10 USD/hour (for students), 0.19 USD/hour (otherwise)

Date of estimate May 2008

and local currency name Egyptian Pound

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:

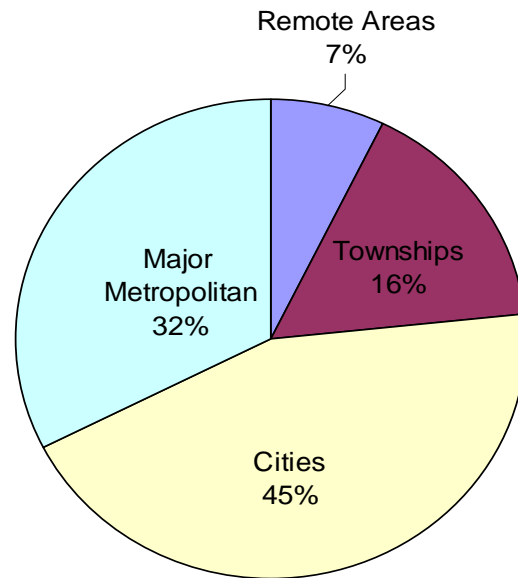
Services are in most cases the same in all regions in Egypt. However, those in urban areas are more privileged with access to internet connectivity and technically knowledgeable support staff. IT-clubs larger in size and in urban areas tend to be better kept, and the level of service higher. Others smaller in size or in more remote areas are less so and sometimes fail to secure internet connectivity and service to computers causing a huge deterioration of the IT-club.

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.

One of Egypt's challenges is the concentration of population in major cities in general, and more so in Cairo and Alexandria. While the number of IT-clubs have steadily increased since the start of the IT-clubs program in 2000, the distribution of IT-clubs follows closely the demographic distribution of the population. Almost 32% of the IT-clubs are in the major metropolitan areas, considered urban areas in this study. Cities, townships and remote areas represent 44%, 16% and 8% respectively. This is hugely affected by the amount of institutional support present in the major urban areas to drive the creation of IT-clubs. The size of the IT-clubs is also in correlation with the region, with the ones that are larger present in the major urban areas.



Date	Number of IT-clubs
April 2008	1714
Dec 2007	1698
Dec 2006	1442
Dec 2005	1293
Dec 2004	1055
Dec 2003	618
Dec 2002	427
Dec 2001	300
Dec 2000	50

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:

N/A

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 gender issue is still a factor that affects access to IT-clubs in Egypt in general. Despite the significantly larger ratio of patrons to IT-clubs that are females compared to cyber cafés (45% vs. 20%) this falls short of the ratios of enrollment in capacity building programs which is biased towards females. There is also a difference in this ratio between Upper Egypt, where communities are more conservative in gender issues, than other locations and regions in Egypt. Additionally, females surveyed indicated that they refrained from accessing cyber cafés and preferred to access the internet in IT-clubs.

4.3.3 Capacity & 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)?

The model of IT-clubs directed by the program requires that hosting organization, in addition to establishing and furnishing the premises, should provide administrative and technical staff for the IT-club. Generally, IT-clubs have at least one staff member with a fair amount of ICT knowledge. While the technical staff were expected to be graduates of the professional capacity building program organized by MCIT, the current situation witnesses mostly self learnt staff members. The staff members, while could manage some ICT skills, lack the ability to become information mediators and knowledge intermediaries. This is mostly due to the lack of adequate capacity building and the focus of IT-clubs on training programs, hence free access time is limited in general.

While there exists some content of national relevance in Arabic, it is very limited in nature and not well publicized. Locally relevant content is still lacking, with IT-clubs and other supporting programs finding it difficult to encourage the creation of such content. As a matter of fact, content and its generation was one initial set of tasks assigned to IT-clubs to engage in at the beginning of their establishment. Arabic content and that related to the daily socio-economic activities of the surrounding communities has been the target. Very few IT-clubs have helped to develop or engage in generating local content. Some IT-clubs that were supported by international organizations were encouraged to work with Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) to act as access points to some online extension centers, which entailed exchange of information and generation of local content and knowledge in the area of agriculture. However, the vast majority have remained passive in this regard. Other initiatives to create content have been established and some have sought content related to socio-economic development and SMEs, namely the Community Development Portal (CDP).

Since there has not been a mainstreamed influx of relevant information, access to the internet has remained for personal needs, such as email and general browsing. While some users have developed a routine visit to IT-clubs, cost of access and lack of local information remain major

factors in limiting user access. Most of the users of IT-clubs are young adults, and more so those who frequent it, with basic or better ICT skills.

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.

A typical ITC would have three or four staff members. The staff includes a manager, 1 one or more trainers and an administrative/financial assistant. As a matter of fact the program is modeled in a way that it mandates that organizations willing to host an IT-clubs should provide the staff members to cover these functions. The number of staff members and the functions they assume depend on the size, location, and the host organization of the IT-club. Larger facilities, which are mostly if not totally in urban areas, have in turn a bigger staff size, while smaller facilities outsource the management and administrative tasks to their hosting organization and in some cases commissions training staff to conduct capacity building programs

4.3.3.2 Staff Training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (ie, librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information & 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.

The program of IT-clubs mandates that at least on of the staff members demonstrates capacity in ICT. As a matter of fact the IT-clubs program was seen as an employment opportunity for individuals completing capacity building programs organized by MCIT. While the later has not been the case, IT-clubs have depended on local and home grown individuals to run and overlook the centers. Many of the staff members have university degrees, and have grown capacity in basic ICT. However, the capacity of the staff has not systematically grown in creating staff members that are information resourceful and capable to maintain the equipment available. Several staff members have developed some of these skills on their own, driven by their willingness to gain better knowledge and understanding and to distinguish themselves from other centers. This is truer in larger more active IT-club.

4.3.3.3 Services Offered

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

Services Offered	Comments
1. Access to computers	This includes general computer access, desktop and publishing applications and printing service.
2. Access to the Internet	Access the emails, the internet and to search.

<p>3. Capacity building programs</p>	<p>Training programs include basic and advanced level ICT skills. Almost all IT-clubs have adopted Microsoft technologies as their basic ICT platform. The quality of the certificate provided dictates the success of the capacity building programs provided. Through partnerships with Microsoft, Intel, and Cisco and the likes some of the programs have attained more success than others.</p>
<p>4. Access to online government services; train tickets, exams results, university admission..etc</p>	<p>Only a limited number of IT-clubs have developed internal capacity to become information hubs to citizens. This has by far not been mainstreamed, despite several supporting programs.</p>
<p>11.</p>	
<p>12.</p>	
<p>13.</p>	
<p>14.</p>	
<p>15.</p>	
<p>16.</p>	
<p>Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:</p>	
<p>Several IT-clubs have solely focused on capacity building programs, driven by the fact that they are among the most rewarding service financially, and the huge demand. This is mostly the case for centers that have limited or unstable internet connections. In addition there are several other active governmental programs, including the free internet and PC for every home initiatives, that facilitate personal ownership of computers and access driving more IT-clubs to focus on training and capacity building programs. This is more so in major urban areas, while in rural areas internet access also plays a significant role. It is worth noting that despite the fact the major bulk of IT-clubs with limited internet access are in the rural areas. Another notable aspect it that a small portion of the IT-clubs have included gaming in their offering, mostly to tap into this large market.</p>	
<p><i>4.3.3.4 Programs for Underserved Communities</i></p> <p>Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).</p> <p>If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.</p>	
<p>The IT-clubs program was developed to focus on youth in underserved communities. While this focus has reflected on the general audience of users who are youth with post secondary education,</p>	

the geographic distribution of IT-clubs, on the other hand, doesn't totally comply with this focus. Only a fraction of IT-clubs are present in rural and underserved communities, while most are in urban non-rural areas. IT-clubs in general don't distinguish the services in different areas, however the individual circumstances of the IT-club dictates the services, and it quality, offered. There are only a limited number of IT-clubs that offer services to specific communities such as individuals with special needs.

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:

IT-clubs focus on being access points to ICT, and only a limited number have some content available on premises. Among this content are reference and training material. Some IT-clubs have on hand digital content relevant to general knowledge and education, however this is not mainstreamed and remains individual efforts. An even smaller number of IT-clubs have developed, and published online, local content, namely in Luxor where touristic information has been developed through the Technology Access Community Center in partnership with the UNDP.

Other Content Needed:

Specialized content in areas related to socio-economic activities of the local communities is what should be fundamentally available at IT-clubs. Health, education, agriculture, public events, and others should be available on local IT-clubs online, as well as offline. Governmental information, despite being present online also need to be better facilitated to users through IT-clubs.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

Initiatives such as that in Luxor to document touristic information are no longer in place due to the lack of local government support. In some IT-clubs, mostly remote communities, content has been developed to support local business. Among the notable examples are in Beni Suef, where an agriculture based organization established an IT-club aiming to use technology to promote its own work through access to information and knowledge that are relevant. In a very remote oasis, Siwa, local people managed to use the internet to network with importers of agriculture products in Italy. While most of these initiatives remain isolated and relatively small, two more founded initiatives for providing content are present. These are the Community development portal (<http://www.kenanaonline.com>) and the Mega-club portal (<http://www.ict-megaclub.com.eg>). These portals offer public services online aimed at meeting the economic and social needs of local communities. The portals, and more so the community development portal, offer local information, community news, agricultural information, SME related material and laws, in addition to access to knowledge sources and training material. There are other portals that offer governmental information including the government gateway (<http://www.alhokoma.gov.eg>). This portal provides access to many governmental services and information.

However, the amount of content available in local languages (Arabic) is very limited, and that with local relevance are even more scarce. There is a need to grow more local, community relevant,

content to help make IT-clubs geared towards becoming a catalyst for socio-economic development.

Source: UNDP Egypt, MCIT, Egypt ICT Trust Fund

4.3.3.6 Services & 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.

Access to the main government's portal (e-government) is one of the target services at IT-clubs. While most of the content on the portal is in Arabic, some services are provided in English. The portal's main language is Arabic with some services provided in English. Through the portal several services are accessible, however, the portal remains to be more inclusive to services of local relevance. Another notable content portal is the Community development portal (<http://www.kenanaonline.com>) which target local content generation addressing the economic and social needs of local communities. The portal offers local information, community news, agricultural information, SME related material and laws, in addition to access to knowledge sources and training material, all of which are in Arabic. While the portal aims to have communities provide the content on the portal, this activity has not been effective and most of the content has been provided through digitizing information. There are other websites that present a variety of content relevant to local communities such as health issues pertaining to women and children, educational material and resources, however they go without heavy publicity and communities and IT-club staff are unaware of them.

4.3.3.7 Types of Uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information & 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:

By far the most popular service offered in IT-clubs is capacity building programs. A far second is general access to the internet, where users seek access to personal email and information on the web. Users general access news, entertainment and search for their information needs. Among the most popular types of information are those related to politics, religious information, sports information and music. Chat is also a popular service when allowed in the IT-club.

4.3.3.8 Number, Type and Frequency of Users

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs, **Error! Not a valid result for table..** Complement here as needed:

Most individuals access the IT-clubs for capacity building programs. Those who graduate from this phase and use the IT-club for general access usually are regular visitors. The vast majority of the users are young adults with, or still enrolled in, post-secondary education. The users are also mostly considered middle class, since the higher social class could afford personal access and

lower income brackets find it hard to relate to IT-clubs. The number of users vary from one IT-club to another, and there are several factors that come into play in this regard, including the quality of the service provided, the accessibility and publicity of the IT-club to local communities and the needs of local users. While more successful IT-clubs in urban areas have focused on training, which in turn is reflected by a large number of users, however they are not recurring, and mostly there for the duration of the capacity building program. In contrast, successful IT-clubs in non-urban areas have a better balance of users accessing ICT and receiving capacity building programs, and hence more repeating visitors are observed.

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 & communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

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

With the many capacity building programs in basic ICT offered in Egypt, the users generally have medium to high capacity to use ICT. However, many users still remain to be more capable to find their personal information needs with ease online. Communities in more urban areas are more familiar with available information sources compared to those in rural and non-urban areas. The lack of content in Arabic and poor search technologies for the language have helped this issue remain a major problem in general access to information in Egypt.

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: Introduction to computers (IT essentials, Unlimited Potentials), through some partnerships, with companies such as Microsoft, Intel and Cisco, some of the capacity building programs lead to certification from these companies. As a matter of fact the success of any capacity building program is related to the partners involved. Some IT-clubs have also look to include soft skills in their training programs, however it is still on a very limited scale.

ICT specific training courses: Almost all training courses provided are ICT specific as mentioned above.

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.

While a large portion of the users surveyed indicated that they frequent IT-clubs at a regular rate, it is mostly for personal needs and access to the internet rather than systematic information provided by the IT-club. As it stands, the cost and lack of relevant content hinder integration of the IT-clubs to become a part of the daily routine. They are also not tied to educational institutes and in most cases put limitation on entertainment (games and chat). While some cyber cafes offering gaming have become part of the daily routine for youth, the IT-clubs have not achieved the same level of integration. In addition, outreach to the local community has been absent in most cases. The public awareness of the IT-clubs program is very weak. In order for the IT-clubs to be integrated within the daily routine they need to

1- Increase the level of public awareness

2- Finding means to consolidate information needs of communities, and to give capacity to IT-club staff to work as information mediators would help create a more relevant environment, more so in non-urban areas.

3- Increase outreach and integrating with local organizations, especially schools. The ability to make ICT relevant to daily chores would help spearhead the usage of IT-clubs within local communities.

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: ie, 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.

There is a discrepancy between urban and non-urban communities with respect to the awareness levels of IT-clubs. While non-urban communities are generally more aware of the local IT-clubs, communities in urban areas are less likely to know about IT-clubs. Individuals aware of IT-clubs perceive them as safe, secure and helpful. This is reflected in the level of appreciation of users for the presence of IT-clubs in general. However they indicate that there is lack of resources, up-to-date technology and services offered, which hugely limits the expectations of IT-clubs. While people appreciate the capacity to learn ICT, they don't think of IT-clubs as "cool" as they used to be on the launch of the program. This is further supported by the lack of quality in the service provided compared to other outlets for ICT.

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.

Sharing knowledge within the IT-club communities is believed to minimal with the exception of email, chatting and few other regular use of ICT. The main area where IT-club users tend to share knowledge is through participation in online forums that discusses topics of interest. Some users are engaged in cinema, sports (especially football/soccer), music (and music downloads), movies, religious information, news and others. Education comes as one of the areas where users become active, especially in seasonal terms. Blogs and social media are another medium that is quickly gaining ground in Egypt, helped with a more proactive younger generation in terms of the use of these tools.

4.3.3.14 Trust, Safety & 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?

IT-clubs are generally trusted venues, usually run by local NGOs, university, government or semi government institutions. This in turn reflects on the perception of the general public of the safety of these venues. Another aspect is how people perceive IT-clubs as being safe for young women to spend time, and receive ICT instruction. It is worth mentioning that users generally receive online information with trust, and don't question its validity in most cases.

4.3.3.15 Gaps and Opportunities in information & services offered

What other information gaps & 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)

Local content and local content generation channels are quite limited in IT-clubs, and in general in Egypt. Some users expressed their interest and enthusiasm about building local web portals, where content of their interest and relevance is generated and made available. Building mechanisms to document local knowledge is a huge opportunity that would reflect immediately on local communities.

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 & public support, regional and international context)?

The IT-clubs have been considered as the flagship of the accessibility objective set forth by MCIT to provide public access to information and ICT capacity building programs. IT-clubs have also been envisioned as a major anchor for the creation of the Egyptian Information Society and the e-Government program. While the political will has been strong in supporting the creation of the IT-clubs program, the communities have not acted in return with the same enthusiasm. Economic priorities, both with hosting organizations and users have played a huge factor in the current lack of strong presence of IT-clubs in remote areas. Users have challenges to perceive IT-clubs as being relevant to their daily routine despite all the public momentum present to develop this program.

The IT-clubs program has been boosted as a public-private partnership, where civil society organizations host IT-clubs with the support of MCIT. While they have remained as isolated entities, there are currently more effort being placed in networking IT-clubs to help create a more supporting environment for IT-clubs. This effort is also tied into a more regional networking for telecentres through the support of telecentre.org.

4.3.4.1 Local & National Economy

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

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

The cost of access to IT-clubs, although heavily subsidized, is still beyond the abilities of a significant amount of low income families. This has impacted the mainstreaming of usage and integration with the daily routine of many. With 16.7% reported to be beyond the poverty line (1100 EGP annually for an average family of 5), the burden of usage of IT-clubs is heavy. In addition, medium and high income families have made use of falling hardware and connectivity prices, rendering the IT-clubs irrelevant as an access point, since it doesn't add any significant value though its services. This is especially significant when coupled with the perception of the internet being a source of entertainment and not a source of information and potential gain. This is in comparison to the huge adoption of other forms of ICT, namely the mobile phone. While the number of internet users in Egypt is currently almost 10 million, the number of mobile subscribers has reached 35 Million. While this is the case from the user perspective, the institutions hosting IT-clubs also face challenges to establish the venue. The limited resources in some of these establishments dictate that they can't provide the requirements mandatory to host an IT-club.

4.3.4.2 Legal & Regulatory Framework

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

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

There is no particular legal framework for the public access to information in Egypt however the government is leading investment and promotion of the information society. One of the main issues under discussion now is the new law being drafted to make a framework for information use and sharing specially through media. This new law might affect the use, share, and access to information in Egypt.

4.3.4.3 Political Will & Public Support

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

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

One of the mandates of the recently created Egyptian Ministry for Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) is to support and empower the information society in Egypt. This follows in line with the efforts that have been established by the Egyptian Cabinet Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC) and the Regional Information Technology and Software Engineering Center (RITSEC) in the 1990's. MCIT has initiated several key projects and initiatives to bridge the internal and external digital divide. One of the key efforts initiated by the ministry in 2000 was the IT-Club initiative. This is coupled with programs to increase the PC and internet penetration across Egypt, through the PC for every home and free internet initiatives respectively. The drive for e-government programs is also heavily supporting the creation of an enabling environment for ICTs in Egypt. IT-clubs are an essential part of these programs, as to act as outlets for the w-government services and to act as information intermediaries. However, this vision has not yet materialized.

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? (ie, national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

IT-clubs are loosely tied together through the program that is administered by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT). The IT-club management provides infrastructure support and management guidelines. These guidelines include potential operation methods and pricing. Additionally Microsoft has launched a web-portal to help facilitate networking between IT-clubs (Mega Club Portal <http://www.ict-megaclub.com.eg>). However, knowledge sharing and monitoring have neither been enforced nor encouraged. Recently a project to increase the level of networking and knowledge sharing between IT-clubs is currently being implemented in partnership between Egypt ICT trust fund, UNDP and telecentre.org. The empowering communities through telecentre networking project will focus on the most active 200 IT-clubs and implement mechanisms to help increase the level of networking between IT-clubs in Egypt. It will also aim to integrate them within a network of telecentres worldwide, and also play a central role in networking telecentres in the MENA region. The project has been launched in April 2008.

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.

IT-clubs are boosted as a public-private partnership that includes the government, civil society and the private sector. The government provides funding for the equipment and capacity building programs for the staff. The civil society organizations provide the location (appropriately furnished and prepared) and the staff members. They are also responsible for community outreach and delivery of the service. The private sector provides technical support and internet connectivity. Several multinational companies have intervened to support IT-clubs, including Microsoft Egypt, Cisco, and Intel. These companies general support IT-clubs with capacity building programs and material.

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?

describe

4.3.1 *For Publicly Funded Venues only: Revenue Streams*

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

4.3.1.1 *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 .

4.3.1.2 *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		
Education		
Other (name)		
Public Libraries		

Other Comments:

4.3.1.3 *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:		
Other (name)		
Other (name)		
Other (name)		

Other Comments:

4.3.1.4 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?

4.3.1.5 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?

The fees for using IT-clubs have been set through the management of the program to 1EGP per hour for students. This fee is set to encourage the target audience to use the IT-clubs. Other users are charged 2EGP per hour. The prices are still competitive with cyber cafes, yet the quality of service and equipment is hampered by the limited revenues for this fee standard. The revenue of the fees is supposed to be structured to cover running costs, employees and trainer costs and sustainability funds. Capacity building programs are conducted at different rates depending on the level of the course and quality of the certificate provided. Through some partnerships with organizations such as Microsoft, Intel and Cisco, capacity building programs are provided for free on Unlimited Potentials (UP), Intel Learn and Cisco Academies program respectively. Overall, IT-clubs have failed in most locations to achieve total cost recovery, which has in turn affected the overall quality of services offered in the IT-clubs.

4.3.1.6 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)		
Building Infrastructure		
Utilities		
Staff Training		
Computers / Technology		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		

other (name)

Total 100%

Other Comments:

4.3.1.7 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?

4.3.2 Case Example for Venue # 3: Technology Access Community Center (TACC), Zagazig, Sharkeya

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 & Photo here.



The Technology Access Community Center (TACC) is the first telecentre in Egypt, and probably the MENA region. The TACC started in 1998 and has since grown in size. It is located at 90 minute drive from Cairo. Zagazig is the capital city of the governorate of Sharkeya. The TACC is located next to the governorate main offices, with a central location within the city. The TACC in Zagazig was part of a program that started in 1998 and involved the establishment of 3 telecentres. In addition to the telecentre in downtown Zagazig, the other centers were located in the Chamber of Commerce and at the 10th Ramadan city investors association (This is located in the industrial city of 10th of Ramadan, a new urban area almost 40Km outside of Zagazig). These centers are now independent entities.

However, each individual telecentre had developed a niche of the services to provide. The TACC in Zagazig focused on community and educational development services. This stemmed from the central location in the city, and the proximity to the University of Zagazig. It is worth noting the TACC was the first establishment in Zagazig to provide internet service to the public, and was a revolution and changing point for many of its regulars. Although the internet remains to play an important component of the services of the TACC, it has been downplayed with the increase in the number of cyber cafés that sprang around town.

In addition to its regular staff, the centre had an outreach team of five UN Volunteers (UNVs). The volunteers had specialized in the areas of SMEs, Education, NGOs, Health and Agriculture. They used laptop computers to introduce communities in rural areas around Zagazig to the benefits of ICTs. The conducted group events in these areas and explained the ways IT can help in these different sectors. All the services of the TACC, including these events, were for free to the community. By the end of the funding for the project in 2001 the TACC ownership was transferred to the governorate office, however it remains an independent entity with the governorate

structure.

Beneficiaries:

The management of the centre aspire to revive community outreach activities again, however lack of finances are hindering these plans. They are development oriented, and their earlier experience with such activities makes them believe in it significantly. Finances remain the major bottleneck and this is why they revert to being mostly a training facility that provides service to people coming to them, rather than outreaching to other communities. The centre has several success stories, including Mohamed, Heba and Ahmed, and Magdy Naizy. In the following I will present some of these stories, however, I do think that the success stories they have are all old regulars at the centre and new stories should be addressed.



Mohamed is a 17 year old high school student. He has been a regular at the TACC from its very early stage. At the time, he was 12 or 13 and in the TACC discovered new talents. Mohamed enjoyed web design, and more specifically flash design. One of his web designs received an international recognition and won prizes in its category. He has since moved to carry on an e-commerce website in Arabic for selling and purchasing collector "banknotes" and "coins". He was initially an amateur collector and sought to seek this hobby further to develop into a business. He started by access to e-bay and other such services and now has designed his own website (<http://www.egycoins.com>). He has engaged in mechanisms of e-payments and has developed an understanding of ways to conduct business on the internet and seems to be interested to continue this project and expand it. He is still developing an English version of his website. His involvement in this activity has made him research the ways to access the quality and value of these collector items and he is currently known within this community. He also provides a service through his site to sell collector items for customers for a fee.

Magdy Neizy, is a researcher in the area of environmental research. He had trouble finding material to complete his masters degree. He had tried to access information through other outlets but wasn't successful, that brought him to the TACC to access the internet in 1999. He found the staff at the TACC very resourceful, especially the UNVs, and was able to access information regarding his field of study. They helped him create and email account and develop internet search abilities in his area. Now he feels extremely comfortable on the internet. He has outreached to associations and groups working in his field of research and has become actively interacting with the scholarly community since. A lot of these interactions are currently searchable through most search engines. He has since finished his masters and is currently working on his doctoral degree in the same field. He remains a regular at the TACC, and has opt to use the facility and work in this environment rather the purchasing his own computer.

Facilities:

Entering both facilities showed a great level of care involved. The place was clean and the equipment is well maintained within the limited budget they work with. As a matter of fact the computers in the TACC were still in the same cases they had in 1998, although they underwent several upgrades (Since I am writing this report after visiting other locations I actually feel more strongly that the management respects the equipment and users enough to maintain this as compared to other establishments). They have also developed a solid foundation of technical support in the centre. As a matter of fact they have been approached with the IT clubs project to join the program and provide technical support in the vicinity. However, this as not materialized due to logistic reasons. The IT clubs management asked them to join the program without giving any support (The IT clubs project usually gives up to 15 computers per centre), and provide technical support in the region at their own expense. They proposed providing it at the TACC, however the request to do it on-site would have been stressing their finances beyond their abilities.

Services:

The TACC now provides is challenged to keep the operation running. The main influx of financial income is from training courses. Unlike the other training centers, the TACC provides certified training programs. This has maintained the influx of trainees who aspire that this certification can help them find jobs and employment opportunities. Providing internet access is also a revenue generating activity. Although this revenue is very limited due to the current rate of 1 EGP per hour, which is marginal compared to the charges of 10 EGP for the same service in the TACC many years before (At the time when the TACC was the only centre offering internet service in the whole city).. It is worth mentioning that at the time, and despite the high cost it was very busy with people aiming to access the internet. The centre also support research activities and has developed "information officers" who help users locate information they need quickly and efficiently.

4.4 Venue # 4: Cyber Cafes

4.4.1 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?

Cyber cafés in Egypt have gone through different phases and developments in the last few years as the topology of internet access has shifted across the country. The increase of personal computers, and decrease in internet access costs have all taken their toll on cyber cafés. While they are based on revenue generating business models, compared to IT-clubs, and hence respond better to users requirements. In turn, cyber cafés are able to access to different users, at different times, in different locations in contrast to IT-clubs and other public venues which need to adhere to certain regulations. In addition, the current change in the ICT spectrum have driven the huge shift of interest has been seen in cyber cafés towards entertainment, namely digital media and gaming.

The different phases of cyber cafés have also affected the role they play as public venues for information. In the last decade when the use of the internet was growing, the cyber cafes were very popular as access points to the internet. This popularity started to gradually decline as access to the internet got easier than at the beginning of this century. Even among the cyber cafes owners, a significant number of the operators and/or operators stressed that running a cyber café is no longer profitable as it used to be when they started their business. Some cyber cafés remain to serve communities that need access, such as tourist, however this is only a fraction of the cyber cafés listed in Egypt.

Despite the changes that cyber cafés have undergone, their image has remained negative in general. In their early days of inception, the negative image was largely driven by the image of the internet. While the negative image of the internet has reduced, the shift of cyber cafés to being more entertainment centers for gaming, chat and digital media have made them more as hangouts and waste of time for younger generations. This in turn has all through affected the male to female ratios of users in Cyber cafés.

4.4.2 Access

2 – 3 Paragraphs:

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

Access to Cyber Cafes depends on the location and the surrounding community. As a small business, cyber cafés invest in making their physical access simple through being well located in the neighborhoods and/or streets where their premises are. Like most other venues in Egypt, individuals with special needs are left out, and special consideration and requirements they might need are not readily available. The technological setup of cyber cafés is similar across Egypt, where typically it would be composed of 2-20+ PCs. The amount of funding available would

dictate the number and quality of these PC.

Competition has driven prices of access to cyber cafés down dramatically in last few years. In addition, with other factors and initiatives increasing the number of personal access to individuals, cyber cafés has somewhat shifted into becoming entertainment outlets, including gaming and even more network games. Despite the fact that as a business, cyber cafés model their prices to suit the local communities, low income households remain with limited access and more remote less privileged communities are not attractive for cyber cafés to open.

4.4.2.1 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.

Cyber cafes are accessible to most of the people with difficulty for the special needs. The majority cyber cafes in Egypt have no facilities for special needs. As far as location is concerned, Cyber cafes are located at main streets, where people can find it easily. Since cyber cafés are mainly small businesses, their owners would invest in advertising and making the venue accessible and as visible as possible to the public. Nonetheless, and similar to most other facilities in Egypt, individuals with special needs are not serviced well in this venue, more so visually impaired individuals

4.4.2.2 Appropriate Technology & 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.

Cyber cafés mainly have services that are technology based that involve direct access to computers. Access to the internet has been, and remains to be, the main activity, while access to computers (for typing), and/or playing online and network games that are also provided in many cyber cafes with the later being on the rise. The majority of cyber cafés have the adequate technological capacity to deliver this service. Basic computers are available, with most cyber cafés keep them well maintained and current. On the otherhand. internet connection is mainly via a leased line/ADSL and in some cases it is a dial-up connection which is limited to only in very small cyber cafes in remote areas such as Farafra Oasis, Bahriya Oasis and some villages in Upper Egypt. The quality of technology deployed in cyber cafés usually surpassed that of IT-clubs, with some, especially those providing games, needing to have state-of-the-art equipment.

4.4.2.3 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.

As a result of the high competition and reduction of the cost of access in the last few years, prices for services at cyber cafés have gone down dramatically, making it more affordable to different

segments of society. Being a business, the fees associated with accessing cyber cafés depend heavily on the location, and local communities. Cyber cafés aim to attract local users to make their business viable, and hence tailor their service accordingly. While some cyber cafés have been established to serve low income and remote communities, this is not mostly the case and the cost of accessing cyber cafés remains a significant cost for lower income societies and remote communities, making it a bad business decision to serve them.

4.4.2.4 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?

Fees are charged to users on a per usage scheme. Services such as internet access, and computer access are charged by the hour, while printing and other business services are charged by the amount of usage. There are no limitations to the access at cyber cafés, however it is mandatory for users to be registered and their usage logged which is free of charge.

Indicate amount in local currency 3 EGP/hour (average, actual value may differ)

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.56 USD/hour

Date of estimate May 2008

and local currency name Egyptian Pound

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:

In urban areas where higher income communities exist, and a significant number of the inhabitants have personal access to computers, cyber cafés tend to provide entertainment such as network games or digital media, and provide access to only a limited number of individuals. On the other hand, while entertainment and gaming remain a major activity of cyber cafés, in non-urban, under privileged and rural areas they service as access points to communities. A third category of cyber cafés serve tourists and visitors to Egypt during their stay, and in this case electronic communication, including voice service becomes more popular.

4.4.2.5 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.

There are no official statistics on cyber cafés in Egypt, since there is no governing body for these establishments. It is worth mentioning that the cyber cafés need to obtain a licence to operate, which was initially with the Ministry of Culture, and has only recently shifted to the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. Cyber cafés also need to register with the local police authority, and are subjected to mandatory checks. Despite this, there are no publically available statistics on the distribution of cyber cafés in Egypt. However, based on observations, cyber cafés are spread in most locations in Egypt, more so in cities in non-urban areas. Their role

has become more of entertainment, than public access in some regions, and size and services provided are generally dependent on the nature of the local community they serve. Again, similar to most other venues in Egypt major urban areas would have the larger, better equipped service compared to non-urban and remote locations. Also the pricing of the service in remote areas reflects on the quality of service and infrastructure present in cyber cafés in these regions.

4.4.2.5.1 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:

4.4.2.6 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 gender bias in cyber cafés is the most prominent in all venues studied, with almost 80% of the users being males. This is mostly due to the general perception of cyber cafés to be locations where young adults hang out, especially for gaming, and hence young females tend to shy away from these locations. In addition, communities generally remains to perceive the internet as a tool that could stand against the community values, and a waste of time. This factor is more significant in rural, non-urban areas compared to urban areas. In rural communities, stricter rules apply on girls and they are less likely to go out and have many outdoor activities. Public places are also less attended to by female community members.

4.4.3 Capacity & 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)?

Cyber cafés are based on revenue generating business model, and in turn they usually have limited number of staff. Resident staff members are expected to be resourceful with regards to logistics and assistance to users. Additionally, technology plays an important role in managing and monitoring the operations using some centrally managed software. More so with the regulations imposed on cyber cafés to have users registered and monitored for security reasons. Users are expected to have capacity in using ICT, more so as cyber cafés don't give capacity building programs and depend on providing only access as a service. With the prices of access going down, and individuals having personal access, cyber cafes have shifted towards providing more

entertainment, including digital media and games, more so networked games. In turn, regular users usually use cyber cafés as entertainment venues as opposed to information hubs. Users with specific information needs are usually less frequent in using cyber cafés and with no personal access to the internet.

There is practically no content being developed at cyber cafés themselves. However they act as outlets for online content. Users are mostly consumers of content, which is limited due to the lack of Arabic content and lacks a lot of local relevance in most cases. Most users use personal email, chat and browse through news online. Additionally cyber cafés are general perceived in a negative light, with more entertainment and gaming being utilized and that they are more "hang outs" for young males and the control on content being digested is low. While the general perception of the internet is becoming more accepting with the change in the general awareness of the role of technology in improving access to information and knowledge, cyber cafés have yet to benefit from the change in the understanding of technology and the internet.

4.4.3.1 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.

A typical cyber café would have 2-4 people as its staff. One manager, 1-3 support staff and in some cases one administrative/financial assistant are the main functions. The number and functions vary depending on the size, location, and the host organization of the cyber café.

4.4.3.2 Staff Training

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

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

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

The cyber cafes are basically small business, and hence they recruit staff that would be able to give minimal logistic and basic assistance customers. Staff members are not expected to be technically involved, and as a costing factor mostly are younger individuals. There is no systematic capacity building requirements for the staff members, but most they depend on personal knowledge, shallow or deep as it may be, to guide users to information. With the nature of the usage of cyber cafés being more for people with some experience or training in ICT, users generally find their own way online.

4.4.3.3 Services Offered

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

Services Offered

Comments

1.	Access to computers	Represents the cornerstone of the services provided in cyber cafés and the main revenue scheme. Fees are collected on a per usage scheme for time on the computer.
2.	Access to the internet	Internet access represents one of the attractions for users who have no other means to go online. While this was the main line of business of cyber cafés, falling prices for this service and the abundance of personal access to individuals have affected the value of internet access at cyber cafés.
3.	Access to printing and business services	Some cyber cafés have included printing, faxing and photocopy services in their business to provide revenue streams.
4.	Access to online government services; train tickets, exams results, university admission..etc.	Some cyber cafés have become outlets for information provided online, namely national educational certificate results and university enrollment. This information is provided online ahead of other traditional means, and cyber cafés have set prices for people to access this kind of information. Recently mobile operators have competed for this market segment and with the number of subscribers on the rise would make this service less lucrative in the future.
5.	Entertainment and Gaming	Entertainment, including gaming and network games, is a major service that cyber cafés depend upon, more so with the increase in personal access for individuals.
17.		
18.		
19.		
20.		
21.		

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

4.4.3.4 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.

No particular programs targeting underserved communities are available at any of the cyber cafes visited. The main motive for opening a cyber café is to generate revenue and make business, which in turn might be reflected on a reduced pricing for the services offered.

4.4.3.5 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:

Cyber cafes are ICT/internet services based venues, the internet and the online content represent the content in the ITCs context. There is no content that is developed locally and the cyber cafes focus more on the service provision than the content.

Other Content Needed:

Similar to IT-clubs, specialized content in areas related to socio-economic activities of the local communities is what should be fundamentally available at cyber cafes. Health, education, agriculture, public events, and others should be available. Cooperation with local IT-clubs would be of great value to the community as well as to the cyber cafes owners.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

Building websites for some small companies, educational institutions and different public access to information organizations.

Source: Research team's observations and user comments, UNDP Egypt, and MCIT Egypt.

4.4.3.6 Services & 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.

Cyber cafés mostly provide free access to the internet, and users are allowed to access content at their own pace and to suit their own needs. Some cyber café staff members are aware, being themselves users, of certain online content of local relevance, however the lack of a significant amount of such content render it unhelpful. Among the information outlets are the e-government portal which is a gateway to several governmental websites and information. Other than that, no

on premises content is generally available in cyber cafes, and it is mostly online material. This in turn reflects on the poor availability of content in Arabic, and more so local content.

4.4.3.7 Types of Uses

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

(iv) 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:

Access to the internet in general is the most popular service at cyber cafes that pertains to seeking information. Users' main use of technology is to use email services, access the news, search for needed information, religious information and consultancies, and some use it for entertainment and downloads.

4.4.3.8 Number, Type and Frequency of Users

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs, **Error! Not a valid result for table..** Complement here as needed:

The majority of users of cyber café are middle class young males that are currently enrolled in education. The ratio of female users is hugely overshadowed by the males, making it feel uncomfortable for females to use cyber cafés. Users tend to be regulars, and this in turn makes cyber cafés successful as businesses.

4.4.3.9 Users Capacity to use information and services offered

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information & 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 research's survey process covered a wide range of users in different areas, which provided the research team with a good account of the users' background and capabilities. Most of the users have medium to higher medium capacity to deal with technology, ICT, and information services that are offered at cyber cafes. This also is reflected by the fact that cyber cafés only rarely engage in capacity building programs, and patrons are assumed to be technology enabled.

4.4.3.10 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: Although very rare, Basic ICT skills are sometimes introduced

ICT specific training courses: All training provided is ICT specific, despite the fact it is very rare.

4.4.3.11 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.

As far as integration is concerned, the major role of cyber cafes is providing an easy and affordable access to internet and some relevant sites, information, knowledge and services that contribute to the information needs of the community. Although this does not happen in all the venues because it depends very much on the location, size, socio-economic of the community. While the integration of information offered might not be the main attraction in many cyber cafés, the entertainment aspect creates a more regular pattern for users. As a matter of fact cyber cafés are keen on creating a community of regular users to make their business viable and generate revenue.

4.4.3.12 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: ie, 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.

There has not been a particular mention or perception about cyber cafes being "cool", exclusive or not "cool" venues. Users seeking online access, and don't have the personal means or appropriate output, appreciate the presence of cyber cafés. Cyber cafes are perceived as places of service provision. However, in general cyber cafes are perceived as places where young people waste time, especially with the shift into being an entertainment outlet more so that public access. In such context, cyber cafes are negatively perceived.

4.4.3.13 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.

Sharing knowledge within the cyber cafes communities is believed to minimal with the exception of email, chatting and few other regular use of ICT. The main area where users tend to share knowledge is through participation in online forums that discusses topics of interest. Some users are engaged in cinema, sports (especially football/soccer), music (and music downloads), movies, religious information, news and others. Education comes as one of the areas where users become active, especially in seasonal terms. The end of the year and end of semesters make students refer to cyber cafes (and IT-clubs) for information, knowledge seeking and sharing among them.

4.4.3.14 Trust, Safety & 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?

Cyber cafes, despite being generally trusted as safe venues with regards to personal safety, have an issue with how people perceive and trust them regarding content they expose. People in general have a negative attitude towards cyber cafés, since they are perceived as outlets for entertainment, more so than information. With chat, games and digital media representing a significant portion of the activities conducted in cyber cafés, this impression is being solidified. Another aspect worth noting is the ratio between male and female users. Although there is no evidence of insecurity or unfriendly tendencies toward the female population, there is a perception that cyber cafes are for males. Societal perception of cyber cafés has been tuned as hangout locations for young males, and hence IT-clubs are seen to be trusted more as far as female users are concerned.

4.4.3.15 Gaps and Opportunities in information & services offered

What other information gaps & 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)

Local content and local content generation channels are significantly lacking. Generally, some users expressed their interest and enthusiasm about building local web portals, where content of their interest and relevance is generated and made available. However, cyber cafés are not the venue for such activities. This mind set could change with the increase of information through different initiatives, rendering online access a more systematic and trustworthy means of acquiring information.

4.4.4 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 & public support, regional and international context)?

The immediate impact of local economy on the cyber cafes has been the decrease of the number of users as a result of the economic burdens that leads to less spending on non basic needs. In other words, spending on access to the internet at public venues becomes less a priority for the average citizens. So, economically, the economic environment is not helping. On the other hand, the political/policy environment has been very promising in the sense that a lot of investment has been done to spread the use of ICT and establishing public venues. Encouraging national initiatives that help the less served communities to have better access to ICT and to public information has been also part of the national government's strategy. These efforts have all added to the reduction of access costs. In turn, many individuals have been able to secure their own personal access to the internet. These factors have collectively applied pressure on cyber cafés in general. This has led to some cyber cafés to shift their interest to more entertainment and

gaming, especially network games.

4.4.4.1 Local & National Economy

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

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

With changes in the national economy, several changes that affected the economic priorities of the average citizens. House hold budgets have been hit by significant increase in prices of basic needs therefore, people tend to have less surplus to address on other needs. In turn, access to information and knowledge at venues like cyber cafes is non basic to many Egyptians. Those who perceive it as one of the basic or main needs are mainly the well off who can afford the service at their finger tips. In other words, having their personal computers and connectivity at their homes. These factors have all added to the shift of focus of cyber cafés to be more entertainment outlets, rather than outlets for information.

4.4.4.2 Legal & Regulatory Framework

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

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

There is no particular legal framework for the public access to information in Egypt. One of the main issues under discussion now is the new law being drafted to make a framework for information use and sharing specially through media. This new law is not directly related to public access to information venues in general, and cyber cafes in particular, however it might affect the use, share, and access to information in Egypt. Recently, a new regulation was put in effect to regulate the user's profiles at cyber cafes by registering the personal data of each user. On the other hand, the research shows that not all cyber cafes are applying such regulations especially in urban areas.

4.4.4.3 Political Will & Public Support

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

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

Again although there is not particular framework of support to cyber cafes, the general national attitude toward ICT is very positive as part of the national strategy to bridge the digital gap.

4.4.4.4 Organization and Networking

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

In the 1990s, there were trials to form a syndicate for cyber cafés, but unsuccessfully. The government department of Cultural Development Fund under the Ministry of Culture was the regulatory body for cyber cafes. Now the authority of regulations and centrally monitor cyber cafes in Egypt moved to the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT). While this is a regulatory body, there is mostly for licensing and monitoring of cyber cafes. No knowledge sharing or networking of any kind occurs between different cyber cafés.

4.4.4.5 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.

There has not been any notable particular partnership to take note of regarding the cyber cafes.

4.4.4.6 Other Environment Factors

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

N/A

4.4.1 For Publicly Funded Venues only: Revenue Streams

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

4.4.1.1 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 .

4.4.1.2 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		
Education		

Other (name)

Public Libraries

Other Comments:

4.4.1.3 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:

Other (name)

Other (name)

Other (name)

Other Comments:

4.4.1.4 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?

4.4.1.5 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?

4.4.1.6 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)	
Building Infrastructure	
Utilities	
Staff Training	
Computers / Technology	
other (name)	
other (name)	
other (name)	
other (name)	
other (name)	
other (name)	
other (name)	
Total	100%

Other Comments:

4.4.1.7 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?

4.4.2 Case Example for Venue # 4: Venue Name

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 & Photo here.

Heba and Ahmed, both came to the TACC in 2002 to take training courses, and develop skill in the area of IT. They aspired that these courses would give them better opportunities to find a job. They did, although not as they initially planned. They found the internet and training an interesting service and went on to open their own cyber café.

They currently have 2 locations in Zagazig and have developed into a business. However, although it is a business they have developed a communal approach to it and provide service at a very reasonable price. They interact with the community they serve, and have become an integral part of it. In addition to internet access and gaming, they provide training sessions and connectivity to the local community (the service is at 35LE/month and

the bandwidth they have is spilt down to be 512kbps for the cyber café and 1mbps for the connectivity).

The connectivity service allows them to subsidize access cost. They provide specialized training for children aged 5-11 for a week at 1L.E./hr (this is the cost of access only, the training and material are subsidized). They have introduced a parental control policy within the area, which has allowed the community to interact with them

5 SUCCESS FACTORS & 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 & communication venues?

Information sought through public access venues has remained highly correlated to education in Egypt, and it has yet to grow into its broader sense to encompass the needs of communities. While most individuals remain to seek information through word of mouth, there is a drive to provide content in different avenues, however, critical mass is still to be attained. As a matter of fact, there is a drive to support the creation and utilization of educational material relevant to the Egyptian environment. The Egyptian Education Initiative (EEI) is currently the most active program that partners with several companies in the process to generate educationally relevant content. Additionally, the e-government program is striving to place public information online, however this has yet to become an established means of access to such information. Civil servants remain to possess information, which in turn adds to their value and potential revenue generated. This is also magnified with the central nature of the government and the limitation imposed through lack of legitimate access points for e-government service. Other forms of content are trickling down, though many content programs lead by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT). Several key programs have been launched, however they all fail to tap into the exact needs of communities served, especially those of remote nature.

Generally, information that supports socio-economic activity is of key importance to under served communities in Egypt. This includes employment opportunities and information regarding SME creation and marketing. While there are several programs to support these activities, the dissemination of this information has been highly limited. While the community development portal introduces some information regarding community examples of SME activities, they are not supported by mechanisms to establish these activities through integration of funding and marketing opportunities.

Agriculture is an important activity in Egypt, and relevant information is key to support this activity. While the extension officers system in Egypt has been a long established method for dissemination of information in Egypt, it has not addressed the overall needs of farmers. The FAO has piloted several approaches to integrate ICT into the extension officer program, however it has received limited audience. The integration of agricultural information and marketing information, especially in the newly reclaimed farming land is needed to help farmers become more productive and increase their profit.

5.1.2 Where people go

Where do people go for public access to information & communication in the country, especially underserved communities?

In most case, people access information through mass media especially television and word of mouth. The public phone shops, are also key in the means through which individuals communicate, although the increasing presence of mobile phones is hugely changing the roles of these shops.

Several of the public venues studied have gained popularity, especially with the younger generations. Public libraries, in their new form, are gaining popularity among their users who frequent them. Academic libraries are sought after by researchers for access to scholarly material of relevance to their work. The utilization of academic libraries remains limited in scope. IT-clubs have been modeled as public access venues to digital ICT, however they have mostly remained focused on capacity building programs. Nonetheless, cyber cafés are generally perceived as the location to access computers and digital ICTs, although they have also been oriented towards gaming and entertainment as opposed to general public access to information.

5.1.3 Access, Capacity & Environment affect Public Access

How do access, capacity and environment affect public access to information & communication venues in the country? (Refer to details under access, capacity & environment in research design document).

There is a huge political support for public access venues, laying a favorable foundation for their success. The support of Egypt's first lady to libraries in Egypt, and the support of Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) for IT-clubs and for public access in general have supported the creation of a new wave of venues for the public. The creation of programs to support internet access, and broadband as well as PC for every home initiatives have all increased the personal access to digital ICTs and the internet penetration in Egypt. However, the national economy has a major effect on the amount of investment in these programs, especially since they have been based on partnership with civil society organizations. The lack of integration of appropriate sustainability models has also been reflected in the high diversity of quality between the different venues of the same type, depending on the partner organization.

Capacity building programs have been widely introduced as a driver to transform Egypt into an information society, which has been one of the mandates of MCIT since its creation in 2000). These programs have utilized IT-clubs as a venue to conduct training to communities at reduced prices. Additionally, programs to increase the capacity of civil servants in basic ICTs have been in place, supported by the e-government programs. Overall these programs have increased the general awareness of ICT in different segments of society, especially young adults. However, the high illiteracy rate and the limited awareness of the importance of digital ICT have contributed to the slow pace of technology penetration, especially in under privileged areas. Relevant content, and mainly that which focuses on local needs, has also been limited, and has also contributed

further to the limited adoption across all segments of society.

It is worth noting that the public access venues are generally accessible to all segments of society. The business hours of operation, cost of transportation, and cost of utilization of services have all contributed to the limitation of access to public venues. While this is changing in some urban locations through new models of management of public access venues, it is still to take effect in under privileged and rural areas in Egypt. Probably the two most important factors that come to play in accessibility of public venues are educational level and gender. While the later is a reflection of cultural issues that restrict females accessing certain types of venues, such as cyber cafés, and other venues at late hours. The high correlation of ICT and libraries to education have also driven the focus of these venues on those individuals still in education, and on capacity building programs.

5.1.4 Role of ICT

What is the role of ICT in public access to information & communication? What untapped opportunities exist?

ICT is perceived as a tool to transform Egypt into the information society. The government has been a main driver for e-government, as well as a variety of initiatives to support public access to information and ICTs. IT-clubs are assumed to be the flagship of these programs to provide public access to ICT. In addition, ICT has been the driver for attraction and increasing the relevance of other public access venues such as public libraries. While there have been several efforts to increase the content accessible through these venues, it has yet to achieve critical mass. IT-clubs are intended as venues to consume and produce content. However the later has yet to materialize. While user generated content contribute the most to the increase of Arabic content online, they have mainly focused on news and personal spaces and have yet to be developed in capturing community needs and knowledge. Better networking amongst the IT-clubs to create relevant user generated content is an opportunity that has remained untapped to date, and requires the contribution of the different partners to achieve.

5.2 Success Factors & 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 & communication venues and practices in the country? (ie, solutions that would make it more accessible, affordable, appropriate?)

Assisting the creation of networks amongst public access venues in Egypt would help increase the knowledge sharing amongst these venues, especially in the creation of community relevant content and development of sustainability models. sustainability of public access venues has been a major issue effecting the outcome and continuation of these venues. It is interesting to note that while cyber cafés have been successful as a business, IT-clubs have not been sustainable and in many cases have not been able to maintain the quality of services provided. Deploying proper sustainability models would limit the drive in IT-clubs to transform into training centers and solidify their role as

public access to information venues. In addition, developing sustainability models would assist and insure the increase in the number of venues, especially in rural and underserved communities, hence creating a large outreach information network.

Establishing these networks would also be further strengthened with increasing the capacity of operators to work as information intermediaries. While a notable segment of the Egyptian society have received capacity in using ICT, it has yet to be more relevant to the vast majority who are not yet ICT literate. Operators should be able to bridge the gap and supply relevant information to the citizens through understanding their requirements and seeking the appropriate knowledge. They should also be able to aggregate the community requirements of content to drive content creation.

Content creation mechanisms should also be the focus of further development of public access venues, both through systematic methods, such as governmental portals and digitization programs, and through innovative means to understand and seek community relevant knowledge. Allowing individuals to influence and direct the content being provided would ensure the relevance, and models to align the needs of communities with the goals of content providers would develop these programs into an ecosystem of information.

5.2.2 Key Success Factors

What are the key success factors for public access to information & communication to meet information needs of the population, especially underserved communities, and especially through digital ICT?

- (1) The increase of the amount of relevant content in Arabic is key to community needs.
- (2) Increase in the amount of user generated content directed towards community information needs.
- (3) Increase in the partnerships established to sustain and roll out public access venues.
- (4) Increase in the partnerships between mainstream content providers and public access venues to guide the production of content.
- (5) Increase in the public awareness of the role of ICT in public access to information and utilization as a primary source of trusted information.

5.2.3 Role of ICT

How can public access to information & communication venues in the country be strengthened to offer more meaningful and equitable access to information, especially using digital ICT?

ICT remains to play a major role in public access venues, as a matter of fact the presence of ICT has boosted venues such as public libraries amongst younger generations. However, while the general public has adopted mobile communication with great ease and success, they remain slow adopters for other digital ICTs. Through the expansion of access to information, digital ICTs at large need to be more relevant to communities through knowledge intermediaries at public access venues, or through a push approach

in partnership with the already existing mobile operators to provide information..

5.2.4 Top Ten Recommendations

What are the Top Ten recommendations for public access to information & communication venues in your country? Make sure you include policy recommendations as part of them.

1. To increase the networking amongst individual venues, offering public access to ICT to better utilize resources, creation of support networks and to help create a broader, common, set of services.
2. Introducing, and developing capacity of, knowledge intermediaries in public access venues, capable to determine the information needs of communities and addressing them through appropriate channels of content providers.
3. Increase the public awareness of the role of ICT and public access venues, especially pertaining to e-government services.
4. Supporting public access venues with additional services to increase their relevance to communities, especially under privileged and rural communities.
5. Developing sustainable models for public access venues, helping the creation of successful partnership to increase their activities and service offers as well as increasing their availability and numbers.
6. Increasing and developing channels between content providers and public access venues to increase the volume and align the development of relevant content online.
7. Increase the amount of digitally born content present in libraries and online, and allow mechanisms to share and integrate basic library activities with new technologies at public access venues.

6 APPENDICES

Please attach on the next pages any other relevant information, resources or materials that can help understand public access information venues in the country.

6.1 List of Countries included in Research

Algeria
Argentina
Bangladesh
Brazil
Colombia
Costa Rica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
Georgia
Honduras
Indonesia
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Moldova
Mongolia
Namibia
Nepal
Peru
Philippines
South Africa
Sri Lanka
Turkey
Uganda

6.2 Overview of Research Design

The Center for Information & Society (CIS), in partnership with the Information School of the University of Washington, has as part of its core mission the investigation of how inequities in our global society can be reduced through improved access to information and communication technologies (ICT). As part of its research activities, CIS has brought together interdisciplinary teams of researchers to examine the needs, readiness and success factors for public access to information & communication venues through digital ICTs in 24 countries around the world.

Project Goal:

- Understand information needs, and opportunities to strengthen institutions that offer public access to information & communication, especially to underserved communities, and especially through the use of digital ICT: What are the needs, barriers, opportunities & success factors for public access to information and communication to help human development in countries around the world? For the purpose of this study, research is primarily focused on Libraries and Other institutional venues for which access to information has a significant role. This research includes understanding venues where digital ICT is currently offered, *and* also where ICT is not currently offered but there is potential and strong institutional support to include ICT (for example, some public libraries where digital ICT services are currently not offered, but there would be strong interest in offering them).

Libraries include public libraries and other types of libraries that are open to the public. **Other venues** include national initiatives that offer public access to information, either with ICTs (telecentres, cybercafés and the like) or without ICTs (post offices, community centers and similar) and are of significant importance in local contexts.

Project Purpose:

- Inform policy & funding decisions: Inform funders and government decision makers about future program direction and funding allocations
- Contribute to public knowledge: Disseminate results of in-depth country and comparative analyses, including research design & analytical models

To inform project design, CIS adapted the Real Access framework (Bridges.org), analyzing public access to information & communication through a total of 14 research categories grouped under the dimensions of **Access, Capacity & Relevance** and **Enabling Environments**. Adaptation was done in consultation with research partners around the world for the purposes of this study.

The implementation of this project is organized as a two-phase process:

Phase 1: Nov 07 – Feb 15, 2008

During Phase 1, a **Draft Country Report** will be prepared by local research teams in each country. The Draft Country Report includes a Country Profile, a Country Assessment and an early draft of Lessons & Recommendations.

The *Country Profile* is a collection of 50 general descriptive data points drawn from readily accessible sources; CIS pre-populates the reports for each country, and offers them for validation and comments by local teams. Country Profiles provide primarily statistical data that is intended to offer a quick snapshot of each country, including geography, political environment, demographics, economy, education and ICT infrastructure.

Using a common approach to define research processes, local teams will conduct initial fieldwork to inform a *Country Assessment*. The Country Assessment includes both a scan of information needs, especially for underserved communities; and an assessment of public access to information &

communication venues (with or without digital ICT services) and their environment, resulting in a better understanding of gaps, opportunities, and readiness of public access to information initiatives in each country.

During Phase 1, each country team will also complete an early draft of *Success Factors and Recommendations* focused on strengthening public access to information in the country, and identify potential themes and issues for further study in Phase 2.

Phase 1b: Feb 15-Mar 15, 2008

During this period, CIS will conduct a preliminary comparative analysis based on the Draft Country Reports from all participating countries, and suggest feedback and guidance for Phase 2 of the study. The comparative analysis will look for salient trends, emergent themes, patterns, and threads across regions. During this period, next steps will be determined for in-depth country research for Phase 2.

Phase 2: March 2008 – August 15, 2008

Phase 2 will involve a deeper assessment of public access to information and ICTs across all 24 countries. In particular, CIS is interested in deeper probing of the emerging themes and scenarios identified in Phase 1. A **Final Country Report** will include high level analysis, success factors and recommendations to strengthen public access to information and ICTs in each country. Final comparative analysis across countries, with analytical models and scenarios, will be completed by CIS after receiving the Final Country Reports.

Findings will be disseminated publically through reports, academic publications, conferences and consortiums. Each country team is expected to produce at least one publishable paper on their research and findings, plus additional papers emerging out of the comparative analysis and global findings. Publications will be part of the public domain, with the CIS web site, partners' sites, and other publication channels to be identified.

