
PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION & ICTs
PHASE II REPORT

Kazakhstan

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

PACT
Peace Avenue 24
PO Box 49/761
Bayanzurkh District
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 210349

Preliminary version: Feb 15, 2008

Draft 1: June 15, 2008.

Final Report: August 15, 2008

University of Washington
Center for Information & Society
4311 11th Avenue NE, Suite 400
Box354985
Seattle, WA 98195 USA
www.cis.washington.edu
cisinfo@u.washington.edu

© 2008 University of Washington Center for Information & Society (CIS). The views expressed in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Washington or CIS.

Recommended citation:

Pact (2008). Public access to information & ICTs: Kazakhstan. Public Access Landscape Study final report, presented to University of Washington Center for Information & Society (CIS), Seattle.

Table of Contents

The table of contents is generated automatically. Right-click on it and select "update field" to update page numbers.

1	Extended Executive Summary	4
1.1	Research Project Overview	4
1.2	Introduction	4
1.3	Country Overview	4
1.4	Research Rationale, Sample & Methods	5
1.5	Information Needs of Underserved Communities	6
1.6	Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities in Key Public Access Venues	7
	Strengths	7
	Weaknesses	7
	Opportunities	7
1.7	Salient Findings	8
1.8	Key Recommendations	10
2	Methodology	12
2.1	Venue Selection	12
2.1.1	Venues Studied	13
2.1.1	Other experiences of public access to information that are not quite "Venues"	13
2.1.2	Other Existing Public Access Venues, not included in this study	14
2.2	Inequity Variables	16
2.2.1	Socio-Economic Status	16
2.2.2	Educational level	17
2.2.3	Age	18
2.2.4	Gender	18
2.2.5	Location	18
2.2.6	Other Inequity Variables	19
2.3	Data Gathering Techniques	20
2.3.1	Literature Review	20
2.3.2	Individual Interviews	22
2.3.3	Group Interviews and Focus Groups	25
2.3.4	Site Visits	25
2.3.5	Surveys	25
2.3.6	Other Data Gathering Techniques	26
2.3.7	Most Useful Contacts	26
2.4	Research Trustworthiness & Credibility	28
2.4.1	Research Limitations	28
2.4.2	Team Qualifications	28

3	Country Assessment	30
3.1	Overall Country Assessment	30
3.2	Real Access Framework	30
3.2.1	Access	30
3.2.2	Capacity	32
3.2.3	Environment	33
3.3	Information Needs of Underserved Communities	34
3.3.1	Where is Information Available?	34
3.3.2	What are some of the Key Barriers to Access the Information that Underserved Communities Need?	35
3.3.3	How do users experience different types of public access venues?	35
3.3.4	Inequity Environment in the Country	36
3.3.5	Freedom of Press and Expression & Right to Information	37
3.4	Charts: Information Needs, Users & Uses	38
3.4.2	Salient Initiatives to Help Meet Critical Information Needs by Underserved Communities	45
3.5	Economic, Policy & Regulatory Environment	48
3.5.1	National & Local Economic Environment	48
3.5.2	National & Local Policy (legal & regulatory) Environment	49
3.5.3	Regional & International Policy (legal & regulatory) Environment	50
3.6	Collaboration Practices and Opportunities across Venues	51
3.7	Buzz Factor: Public and Government Perceptions about what is “cool”	51
3.8	Legitimate Uses	52
3.9	Shifting Media Landscape	52
3.9.1	Mobile phones	53
3.9.2	Web 2.0 tools & use	53
3.9.3	Combination of different media	53
3.9.4	Other shifting media landscape examples	54
3.10	Health Information Needs	54
3.10.1	Sources of Health Information	54
3.10.2	Types of Health Information	55
4	Venue-Specific Assessments	56
4.1	Venue # 1: Public Library	56
4.1.1	Overall Venue Assessment	56
4.1.2	Access	56
4.1.3	Capacity & Relevance	59
4.1.4	Enabling Environment	66
4.1.5	For Publicly Funded Venues only: Revenue Streams	68
4.1.6	Case Example for Public Libraries	70
4.2	Venue # 2: Public Access Site (PAS)	73
4.2.1	Overall Venue Assessment	73
4.2.2	Access	73
4.2.3	Capacity & Relevance	75
4.2.4	Enabling Environment	80
4.2.5	For Publicly Funded Venues only: Revenue Streams	81

4.2.6	Case Example for Venue # 2: PAS	83
4.3	Venue # 3: Internet Café	88
4.3.1	Overall Venue Assessment	88
4.3.2	Access	88
4.3.3	Capacity & Relevance	90
4.3.4	Enabling Environment	95
4.3.5	Case Example for Venue # 3: Internet Cafe	97
4.4	Venue # 4: Population Service Center (PSC)	101
4.4.1	Overall Venue Assessment	101
4.4.2	Access	101
4.4.3	Capacity & Relevance	103
4.4.4	Enabling Environment	108
4.4.5	For Publicly Funded Venues only: Revenue Streams	109
4.4.6	Case Example for Venue # 4: Population Service Center	111
5	SUCCESS FACTORS & STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS	114
5.1	Summary of Lessons in country	114
5.1.1	Information Needs	114
5.1.2	Where people go	114
5.1.3	Access, Capacity & Environment affect Public Access	114
5.1.4	Role of ICT	115
5.2	Success Factors & Recommendations	115
5.2.1	Where to Invest Resources	115
5.2.2	Key Success Factors	116
5.2.3	Role of ICT	116
5.2.4	Top Ten Recommendations	116
6	APPENDICES	119
6.1	List of Countries included in Research	119
6.2	Overview of Research Design	120
6.3	Annotated Country Profile (form 2)	122
6.4	Other Appendices	123

1 Extended Executive Summary

1.1 Research Project Overview

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

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

1.2 Introduction

This research report on Kazakhstan was prepared by two local teams under supervision and guidance of PACT Mongolia in 2008.

1.3 Country Overview

Kazakhstan is the 9th largest country in the world in terms of territory and is among countries that have the least population density with a little over 15 million people living in its vast territory. Rich in natural resources, mainly oil and gas as well as metal ores, including large deposits of uranium, Kazakhstan has an economy that is largely dependent on the extraction of these resources. Surging oil, gas and metals prices on worldwide markets in recent years allowed the country to enjoy near 10% GDP growth in 2002-2006. However, the country was affected by the world's financial liquidity crisis in 2007 due to dependencies on credits from abroad by the banking sector; the country's booming financial and construction sectors were affected the most. GDP increased by only 8.5% that year and economic growth is expected to slump further in 2008. Growth of money supply and increasing food prices have caused a sharp increase in inflation rate which was 18.8% at year-end 2007. Experts expect the economy to improve its shape only by the end of 2008, given the government continues its reforms and is able to manage the inflation rate and provide appropriate assistance to the troubled sectors of the economy.

Rapid economic growth in recent years, high literacy levels, President's long term vision and new government programs were among the key driving factors for increased computer and internet penetration in Kazakhstan, allowing the country's information society to develop. Rising disposable incomes allow more and more Kazakhstanis to buy computers. Decreasing internet tariffs (although still relatively expensive compared to EU member

states) and increasing availability of broadband internet in large cities allow for easy access to information worldwide as well as promoting information sharing and interaction between citizens. Implementation of state Reduction of Information Inequity and Implementation of Electronic Government in the Republic of Kazakhstan programs will provide access to key government services in the near future for all but especially to underserved and vulnerable groups, such as unemployed, military personnel, children living in orphanages, government employees, employees of government funded organizations and students.

1.4 Research Rationale, Sample & Methods

The research process was divided into two phases. During Phase 1, a Draft Country Report was prepared by local research team in Kazakhstan. The Draft Country Report included a Country Profile, a Country Assessment and an early draft of Lessons & Recommendations.

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

Phase 2 involved a deeper assessment of public access to information and ICTs in Kazakhstan.

For the purposes of this research, the following venues were identified:

- Libraries – the most widespread and most common venue for access to information,
- Public Access Sites (PAS) – this type of venue includes sites created as a part of the framework for the State Program on Reduction of Information Inequity, that include information kiosks, internet access centers and internet access points at Kazakhtelecom (national telecom operator) and Kazpost (national postal service provider).
- Internet cafés – internet access points that usually charge a fee for access, sometimes they are a café with few PCs offering internet access and sometimes they are a part of a computer gaming club.
- Population Service Centers (PSC) – newly established government-funded points of access to government services, government information, banking and etc. The number of them is rapidly growing and the range of information and services offered is also rapidly expanding.
- WiFi hotspots – usually free and hosted by restaurants and cafés.
- Public Internet Centers (PIC) – internet access centers hosted by NGOs and international organizations.
- Educational Institutions. – schools, colleges and universities that usually limit access to students.

Research methods included desk research, interviews and surveys. Desk research involved studying of over 100 documents that included various reports of international development agencies, such as UNDP and WorldBank, Kazakhstan State Programs, local and international periodicals, and various websites that deal with information society issues.

Interviewees were selected to ensure diversified information gathering. For each venue, the team identified the following interviewee groups: heads, midline managers and clients. Individual questionnaires for each interviewee category based on the research framework were created. Separate questionnaires were used for each interview. The interviews took place in the venues to demonstrate the capacity of the venues, when needed. Between 5 to 30 clients were interviewed in each venue, keeping their names anonymous. ICT experts were also interviewed to cross-check the gathered information. In addition, each venue visited was observed in action.

It was planned to survey four venues at three locations with ten surveys completed at each venue for a total of 120 surveys. Three locations were selected: Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan representing large city, Kokshetau, a smaller city located in the North of Kazakhstan and Esik, a small rural town located in Almaty oblast in South-East of Kazakhstan. However, the team ran into a problem of reaching the interview quota in Astana, Kokshetau and Esik, at some of the venues. To overcome this, a total of six rural areas were visited instead of one to get enough respondents. The team discovered no users of Public Access Centers and no Public Service Centers in rural areas. For this reason, Almaty, the country's largest city was chosen for Public Service Center venue and 30 surveys were completed there.

Generally, the team approached users as they exited the venue or, for small venues with small number of users, the users were approached as they were using the services.

Two different teams worked on preparation of the reports for phase 1 and phase 2. For the Phase 2 survey process, there were two survey teams used – one for South Kazakhstan and one for North Kazakhstan.

The following research limitations should be highlighted:

- limited sample size: it was difficult to find users at some of the venues, some venues were not operational, teams were forbidden to enter some of the venues.
- time and financial constraints: it was difficult to cover so many venues in the timeframe provided with the amount of money allocated to fund the research team.

1.5 Information Needs of Underserved Communities

Kazakhstan ICT development and equity experts believe the following information is the most demanded: (1) Employment search; (2) Information about civil responsibilities, rights and procedures of their implementation (taxes, passport and other documents issue, registration of land and other property rights, obtaining certificates, etc.); (3) Welfare allowances and compensations (offices to go to, procedures, eligibility requirements,

amounts); (4) Institutions able to provide information about protection of civil rights and interests, both governmental and non-governmental, including exact location and list of services provided.

Additionally, the citizens of Kazakhstan are interested in information on education, health and healthcare, news and politics, financial information as well as various personal information.

These types of information are demanded via ICT as well, although the range of ICT services is rather limited. The existing sources of information are more a formality and information is rarely updated.

1.6 Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities in Key Public Access Venues

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
Public libraries		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries are widespread throughout the territory of Kazakhstan • Traditional venue for access to information • ICT services are free of charge to members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hours of operation • Libraries do not publicize their services • No programs to reach out to underserved segments of the population • Considered outdated and “not cool” • Need to train staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can become excellent venues for information access if ICTs are offered and staff are trained.
Public Access Cites		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government funding and support, free to use • Covering most of the country • Fully ICT enabled • Online government services will be of high demand by the population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of local content • Limited number of information services offered • Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Internet access is provided they can become the #1 choice as a public access venue • Additional services can be offered • Raising awareness
Internet Cafes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operated as private businesses • Stable and rather fast Internet connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rather expensive • Lack of local content • Location • Concern by parents about safety of children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business approach ensures sustainability and higher customer satisfaction than any other venue type

Population Service Centers		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government funding and support • Covering most of the country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited number of information services offered • Location • Public awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility to become one-stop-shop venues • Raising awareness

1.7 Salient Findings

Current information needs of Kazakhstanis are limited to information on various government services, education and personal information. Very few respondents indicated news as information they seek. Soviet mentality, low computer literacy and lack of sources are believed to be parts of the reason for this. Another critical limitation to access to information is underutilization of information by the people, i.e. even when people have access to information they rarely take advantage of it. Further development of access to information, including through ICTs, must be accompanied with activities and programs to develop the culture of information use. Corruption is one of the factors affecting equity access to information in Kazakhstan, which is heavily bureaucratic. Traditionally, personal connections or bribes make document issuing quicker and better quality. Usually personal connections or recommendations are more efficient in speeding up the document issue process.

The traditional sources for information related to government services are Akimats (local governments) and other executive authorities, including divisions, departments, passport sections of Ministry of Justice and migration services. Population Service Centers is a new venue for government related information with the first PSC opened in 2006. These centers are to become one-stop-shop type venues for all citizen-to-government interaction.

Libraries also have good capacity in providing different kinds of information. In many senses they are the only information access point that correspond to requirements: territorial accessibility, adequate material resources, presence of consultants, accessibility for disabled, and presence of minimal free information services and/or moderate fees for services.

Some Kazakhstanis enjoy access to information through the internet. Internet access is usually available at home or at the place of work/business. Internet cafés, computer clubs and WiFi hotspots are also gaining popularity as an alternative for accessing internet. Public Access Sites are being launched around Kazakhstan, however, the majority of them are still not operational. Public Access Sites are being established as a part of State Reduction of Information Inequity Program and will provide access to future e-government services as well as to the Kazakhstan’s segment of the internet. Two types of public access sites are planned under the program: the first type includes information kiosks with touch screens and built-in printers (type I); the other resembles a telecenter or internet café with computers, scanners, printers and other equipment (type II). Lack of access to the World

Wide Web (WWW) will be among the hindering factors for the wide use of these kiosks by the citizens.

Information services provided to the population by the appropriate state bodies are not well organized. Even though the location of such services is well-known, the system of these services makes obtaining this information difficult. Bureaucracy and corruption are also among hindering factors for government services.

Lack of local content is one of the key barriers to information access, as noted by many respondents. Government and experts agree that there is not enough local content in Kazakhstan, especially in the Kazakhstan portion of the internet. The survey team has also noted that the majority of government information kiosks installed are not online and some are not even powered.

PSCs use the “one-stop-shop” principle to provide state related information and government services to citizens. Additionally, they usually host banks, photo, printing and copying services, as well internet access kiosks on their premises. PSCs are usually well located physically in cities. Accessibility for disabled and ergonomics remain an issue. Technologically, the centers are quite advanced; some offering internet access, digital printing, copying and photo services, and some have digital cueing equipment, as cues remain a large problem at most government offices that require government to citizen interaction. All government services offered at PSCs assume use of government databases by the clerks, with plans to allow self service as e-government is being rolled out. Generally, the services of PSCs are considered affordable by the population. Although PSCs have banks and government information kiosks installed, all of the survey respondents noted that they came in to seek specific government service, such as the issue of a new state ID, passport, birth certificate and etc. None of the respondents in PSCs were aware of the kiosks and information services they offer. This venue type is primarily for access to government information and services, as well as to facilitate roll-out of e-government services. It is not primarily intended for personal information access on a wide range of topics. However, these venues do have potential to become access points to wide array of information, especially in rural areas.

Libraries are widespread throughout the territory of Kazakhstan and there is usually one available even in remote rural areas. They range from large national libraries that include a vast selection of books, audio and video content, as well as access to internet and electronic databases, to small libraries in rural areas that only have a limited selection of books and periodicals. In some areas libraries are believed to be the only source of access to information and thus they are considered a principal element of information infrastructure in the country. Libraries are usually frequented by the informed groups – such as scientists, students, some NGO and business representatives. Traditionally, libraries do not publicize their services because earlier these services were limited and now they need additional funding which is not available.

Internet cafes are a very important venues for access to all sorts of information for all categories of users. In addition, they are providers of more affordable means of communication with other people (IP telephony, e-mail, instant messengers). Some provide

computer gaming services in addition to internet access, while others are primarily gaming clubs with some machines allocated for internet access. Most of the internet cafes have modern computer equipment, are clean and easy to use. Usually well managed, there are always customers there. At some gaming clubs in large cities it is often difficult to get an empty computer for use. Although computers used for gaming are usually located separately, even the busiest gaming clubs are relatively quiet, including the gaming sections. Internet cafes are well positioned in terms of access. Despite higher prices than libraries and Public Access Sites, internet cafes offer significantly better experience for the user as they are usually for profit entities and customer satisfaction is of higher priority to owners and managers. This translates into better technology and wider spectrum of services offered.

Local planned initiatives related to public access are focused around two state programs currently being implemented. One is concerned with opening new Population Service Centers and the development of the existing ones by introducing additional services and making them true one-stop-shop venues for citizen-to-government interaction. The second state program is the Program on Reduction of Information Inequity that assumes opening new Public Access Sites and installation of new information kiosks.

1.8 Key Recommendations

1. Public libraries do not advertise. A great portion of the public remains unaware of the services that their local library can, and does, offer. A concerted information and awareness raising campaign about the value of the local library will help to bring the population to the libraries.
2. Public awareness raising campaign is also necessary to inform the citizens of information kiosks available at PSCs. None of the respondents in PSCs were aware of the kiosks and information services they offer.
3. An awareness raising campaign is also necessary for e-government. The vast majority of the citizens do not understand the specific benefits e-government can bring to them even if they are aware of the concept. It is also necessary to have all government staff involved to fully understand what e-government is and what principles are key to its success.
4. Public awareness campaigns should be launched using modern PR and marketing techniques in identifying which approaches work best for which group. Banks in Kazakhstan are usually very successful in positioning and advertising their products and the government can learn from this experience and can adopt some tactics and techniques.
5. Currently, e-government portal provides a limited number of information services and the ones provided are of little relevance to the majority of population. The quality of these services is also low (i.e. the information is not provided in full and does not go into the necessary depth, the language is sometimes difficult to comprehend). It is

necessary to expand the range of interactive information services provided by e-government, focusing on the highly demanded services first. The quality of these services should also be improved.

6. Kazakhstan needs to ensure that citizens' freedoms are respected, including the freedom of expression, speech and access to information.
7. Experiences of media combination such as the annual question and answer session should be replicated in other forms of government to citizen interaction, including information on various government procedures. Combining various media types allows maximizing the impact and ensuring all groups involved are covered. Radio may not be appealing to young internet users while rural elderly population will never choose other option.
8. Disabled and marginalized groups require particular affirmative action to be brought up into information society. Government needs to identify these groups very specifically and allocate resources to include these groups into its programs related to development of the information society in the country. Program on Reduction of Information Inequity fails to identify specifically such groups the disabled, orphans and homeless as vulnerable and needing assistance to gain access to information, including government services. The program does not mention prison inmates when it comes to increasing computer literacy levels while this may be a good chance to help some of them to integrate back into the society when they are released. Government sponsored public access sites should include these groups when targeting population and advertising access.
9. It is necessary to develop local content, especially local content available online. Everything from news and entertainment portals to e-commerce websites need to be developed and popularized in the country.
10. Although obvious, it is necessary to increase computer literacy and internet penetration in Kazakhstan.

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.

This research focuses on the public access to information and communication landscapes in 24 countries, with specific focus on the information needs of underserved communities, public access to information and communication venues, and the role of ICT. Physical infrastructure and human resources of a variety of such venues, information content and service usage patterns, communication & knowledge production, as well as environmental factors such as governmental policies, geography, ethnic and linguistic differences etc were examined. For the purposes of this research, the following venues were identified:

Libraries – the most widespread and most common venue for access to information,

Public Access Sites (PAS) – this type of venue includes sites created as a part of the framework for the State Program on Reduction of Information Inequity, that include information kiosks, internet access centers and internet access points at Kazakhtelecom (national telecom operator) and Kazpost (national postal service provider).

Internet cafés – internet access points that usually charge a fee for access, sometimes they are a café with few PCs offering internet access and sometimes they are a part of a computer gaming club.

Population Service Centers (PSCs) – newly established government-funded points of access to government services, government information, banking and etc. The number of them is rapidly growing and the range of information and services offered is also rapidly expanding.

WiFi hotspots – usually free and hosted by restaurants and cafés.

Public Internet Centers (PICs) – internet access centers hosted by NGOs and international organizations.

Educational Institutions – schools, colleges and universities that usually limit access to students.

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	PAS	Internet cafes	PSCs
Total number in country	3272	1200	650	Over 100
A. # in Urban location	374	1000	550	Over 50
% offering ICT	100%	100%	100%	
Total # of people served (annual)	*	n/a	n/a	**
B. # in non-urban location	2898	200	100	Over 50
% offering ICT	6%	100%	100%	
Total # of people served (annual)	*	n/a	n/a	**
<p>Comments (comment especially on definition of urban / non urban in the country):</p> <p>There were 34 PSCs in Kazakhstan as of September 2007. There are at least 100 operational as of July 2008 with an actual figure being close to 200. However, the team was not able to get a confirmation on the exact number from the Ministry of Justice. As of August 2008, the website of the ministry claims only 34 centers opened in Kazakhstan, information that is obviously outdated.</p> <p>* On average, 4,200 users visit one library every year.</p> <p>** over 3 million people in 2007 in both rural and urban areas</p>				
2.1.1 Other experiences of public access to information that are not quite “Venues”				
<p>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).</p>				

Other Public Access experience # 1: Public Internet Centers (PICs),

Description :

Usually supported by international organizations and/or NGOs directly or through grants, they offer access to databases, literature and internet and have anywhere from 1 to 10 computers.

Total number in country: 20

% offering ICT access: 100

% in urban location: 15

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

International organizations and missions have a total of up to 10 public sites, all offering digital ICT. For example, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in September 2005 launched the Information Center for Development, located at the National Academic Library in Astana. This center was included in this study in the library section as it is an integral part of the library's infrastructure. There are also four Public Information Centers (PICs) established by the World Bank that offering digital ICT. Their limited numbers are also a hindering factor in their influence on the overall situation. They do, however, help with raising overall awareness of ICTs and allow for access to minorities and disadvantage groups.

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: NGO Resource Centers

Total number in country: about 100

% offering ICT access: 100%

% in urban location: 30%

Description of the Venue:

A number of NGO development projects created resource centers across the country. They provide limited access to ICT only to their target groups because they are not capable of providing free access to everyone and target groups cannot pay for the access due to high rates. There are about 100 NGO resource centers and all of them offer digital ICT.

Reason why it was not included in the study:

Most of the NGO resource centers are not open to the public on walk-in basis.

Other Venue not studied# 2: Educational Institutions

Description :

Schools, colleges and universities

Total number in country: 8800

% offering ICT access: 95%

% in urban location: 50%

Description of the Venue:

Educational institutions of secondary education (elementary and high schools) are under direct supervision the Ministry of Education supervision. The total number of school students is 2,668.5 thousand in 7,802 schools. According to the Ministry of Education, 95% of schools have Internet connection (this includes 94% of rural schools). Instruction is in 7 languages. During the next 3 years Kazakhstan will build 100 new schools to eliminate study in 3 shifts and to close depreciated school buildings. There is 1 computer per 25 urban secondary school students (including multimedia labs) and 1 computer per 24 rural students. The Ministry of education has prepared for implementation of the Multi-service Information Education System (MIES). The project term is 2007-2009. The project will provide schools with unlimited broadband internet access via KazSatNet.

The 830 *educational institutions of specialized secondary education (colleges)* have the total of 558,700 students (including 450,525 students in colleges and 108,175 students in professional schools). According to the National Program data, there must be 100% ICT. However, official confirmation was not found.

There are 175 *higher educational institutions* (Universities, Institutes, Academies etc.), which have 768,400 students. During the last few years Kazakhstan has been actively introducing distance learning. As of 2007, 16 higher educational institutions are running experimental distance learning programs using specially developed software. The government has restructured its funding for student scholarships to emphasize technical, innovative and management professions. The government allocates 10,965 scholarships for technical professional education, which is 33% of the total government scholarships.

Reason why it was not included in the study:

All educational institutions are a very important element of access to information. However, the vast majority of schools, colleges and universities have restricted access to premises and, most importantly, to libraries and computer labs making them inaccessible to the public.

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

The socio-economic status is one of the important criteria since access to ICTs is considered generally expensive in the country, largely due to the lack of adequate competition in the telecom sector. Rising prices and increasing inflation, as well as economic troubles in 2007 and 2008 have further increased the impact socio economic status has on the use of ICTs. The following range for this variable was used:

High income: Upper High Income - US\$56,145 and above annually and High Lower income - US\$18,716 – 56,144 annually.

Medium income: “Although estimates vary, some analysts calculate that middle class represents 25% of the total population and consume 50 – 80% of the financial value of all goods sold in Kazakhstan. Other experts estimate this group as ranging between 18% and 60% of the population. To highlight the discrepancies between foreign and local statistics, the group can be divided further into three subgroups: a lower middle class, regular middle class and the upper middle class.”(Daly J.C.K., 2008)

Daly further defines these subgroups thus:

Medium High income - US\$9,001 – 18,715 annually. According to the National Statistics Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan, this is estimated at 3.7% of the total population and 30% of the middle class.

Medium Regular income - US\$6,001 – 9,000 annually. This is an estimated 70% of the middle class.

Medium Low income - US\$3,501 – 6,000 annually. In 2006 Kazakhstan’s Statistics Agency calculated the monthly income level of the lower middle class to be 35,000 tenge or US\$290 per month, for an annual salary of US\$3,480.

Low income: Includes Low income according to Daly - US\$768 – 3,500 annually and income below the subsistence level - US\$0 – 767 annually. In 2006 Kazakhstan’s Statistics Agency calculated the subsistence level at US\$64 per month (8,410 KZT) or US\$768 annually. In 2007, the subsistence level was increased to \$1195 USD (12,004 KZT). At the same time, the percentage of people living below subsistence level decreased from 18.2% in 2006 to 12.7% in 2007.

Both urban and non-urban locations were visited, as poorer people tend to live in rural areas. Libraries and free public access centers were surveyed as these are the preferred venues for people with low income. WiFi hotspots were included in the study as people with higher income tend to use internet at restaurants and cafes on their own notebooks instead of using internet cafes or libraries.

It should be noted that as of January 1, 2007 Kazakhstan has a flat 10% personal income tax rate. Additionally, 10% of pre-tax income is deducted and deposited into the mandatory pension fund system.

2.2.2 Educational level

The following categories for level education were used, suggested by Brunner J.J. and Tillet A. in their research “Higher Education in Central Asia; the challenges of modernization – an overview” (January, 2007):

No formal education: The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan protects the right to access to kindergarten. Children typically start kindergarten at age of 3.

Elementary education: Primary (elementary) school starts at age of 6 and includes completion of grades 1-5. Primary education rights are protected by the Constitution; primary schools are state-owned and are free to all citizens and residents of Kazakhstan.

Up to high school: Includes secondary school of grades 5-11. Secondary education rights are protected by the Constitution. Upon completion of lower secondary (grades 5-9) there are three options available and graduates of all options are eligible to enter university:

1. Complete secondary education. General secondary school includes grades 10-11.
2. Initial professional education. These are educational programs designed for 2 or 3 years, some professional training requires 4 year programs. Lyceums (a type of vocational schools) combine basic professional education with general academic education and require 3 years for completion. Usually teenagers go to vocational schools after completing intermediate education - finishing the 9th grade.
3. Enter college (not included in this category)

College/University: Includes colleges that provide both academic general and advanced professional education. Programs last for three or four years. This category also includes technical/trade schools.

Higher education (universities). This category includes university graduates. Kazakhstan offers state support (in the form of grants) for 30 percent of applicants from rural areas.

This variable was addressed by including libraries where students and people with college and university education are likely to be found, Public Service Centers, where citizens will

go regardless of their education level as all of them need to interact with government in one way or another and Public Access Sites, which are located in places such as Akimats (mayors' offices) and post offices, where people of various education level can be found.

2.2.3 Age

The Demographic and Migration Situation in Republic of Kazakhstan in 2006 report has the following descriptions of the age categories:

Youth (0-14 years). This group comprises about 24% of the population.

Adult (15 – 65). This is the largest group, which makes about 68% of the population.

Senior (over 65). This group makes up almost 8% of the Kazakhstan population.

The following breakdown by age was used in the research process: 0-14, 15-35, 36-60, 61 and over.

To address this variable, It was assumed that younger age groups will attend internet cafes and use WiFi hotspots more frequently, while the older population will make use of libraries more often.

2.2.4 Gender

This category is very straightforward. According to the Demographic and Migration Situation in Republic of Kazakhstan in 2006 report, there are about 48% of men and 52% of women in the country.

Gender is a variable in accessing information in Kazakhstan, as the results of this research confirm. Often men are less inclined or able to access information, especially in rural areas.

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.

According to the National Statistics Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as of January 1, 2008 there were 8,230,319 or 52.9% urban population and 7,335,328 or 47.1% rural population in the country. Rural areas tend to have less developed infrastructure and this may impact on the ability of rural residents to access digital information. Rural area residents are also often more economically disadvantaged, which may prove a barrier to accessing electronic information.

Both rural and urban locations were visited in order to cover various locations. Moreover, large cities (500,000 + inhabitants), small cities (less than 500,000 inhabitants) and rural villages were visited.

2.2.6 Other Inequity Variables

7. Language skills	Kazakh	People without Russian and/or English skills will have problems with equitable ICT access and services
	Russian	
	English	
8. Language spoken	<p>Kazakh – 64.4%</p> <p>Russian – 95%</p>	<p>The state language is Kazakh. Russian is designated as the “language of interethnic communication”.</p> <p>Written language is based on the Cyrillic script. In 2006 President proposed that Kazakhstan switch from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet.</p> <p>More info at www.osi.hu/fmp/laws.</p>
9. Physical abilities	Fully able person (Group III)	<p>The estimation of public access sites will be made from the point of view of accessibility to disabled people. It is very important to correlate the given indicator to the indicator “Social-economic status”.</p> <p>There are no official statistics available on % of people in each Group.</p>
	Partial disability of physical abilities (Disabled people of Groups III and II)	
	Full or essential disability of physical abilities (Disabled people of Group I)	
10. Competence level of IT specialists	High	The given criterion is important for ensuring the opportunities of using all potential ICT services in the country.
	Medium	
	Low	
11. Ethnicity	<p>Kazakh – 59.2%</p> <p>Russian – 25.6%</p> <p>Ukranian – 2.9%</p> <p>Uzbek – 2.9%</p>	<p>The Kazakh population is predominantly rural and concentrated in the southern provinces. The German and Russian populations are mainly urban and concentrated in the northern provinces.</p> <p>Sources:</p>

	Uyghur – 1.5% Tatar – 1.5% German – 1.4%	1. On Demographic and Migration Situation in Republic of Kazakhstan in 2006: www.stat.kz/RU/publishing 2. Library of Congress, Country Profile: Kazakhstan, Dec. 2006.
12. Religion	Muslim (sunni) – 47% Russian Ortodox – 44% Protestant – 2% Others – 7%	Freedom of religion is protected by the Constitution. National security amendments enacted in July 2005, imposed mandatory registration requirements on missionaries and religious organizations. According to statistics, there were 413 foreign missionaries, 58 non-traditional religious groups as of January 2006. Source: U.S. Governments report, 2006 International Religious Freedom Report on Kazakhstan, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

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.

Number of documents reviewed: 100+

Documents studied included various reports of international development agencies, such as UNDP and WorldBank, Kazakhstan State Programs, local and international periodicals, and various websites that deal with information society issues.

2.3.1.1 Most Useful Bibliography:

1. Kasymzhanova, K.; *The Libraries of the Republic of Kazakhstan: Staff and Continuing Education*, Almaty, Kazakhstan, accessed at www.gpntb.ru/win/inter-

events/crimea2006/disk2/176.pdf on July 21, 2008.

2. Mambetalieva, T., Beklemishev, A.; *E-commerce Legal and Regulatory Systems in the Countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus*. Studies in Trade and Investment, United Nations, New York, 2004.
3. Turgankulov, A. et al; *Status of Information Communication Technologies in Kazakhstan, Volume 1, 1997-2003*. UNDP Kazakhstan, Almaty, 2006.
4. Beklemishev, A., Tsekhovoi, A.; *Status of Information Communication Technologies in Kazakhstan, Volume 2, 2004-2006*. UNDP Kazakhstan, Almaty, 2006.
5. ICT-Marketing reports and databases:
 - Telecommunications Market in the Republic of Kazakhstan. A Review, 2006-2007, accessed at www.ictm.kz.
 - Cellular Communications Market in the Republic of Kazakhstan. A Review, 2006-2007, accessed at www.ictm.kz.
 - Internet and Data Transfer Market in the Republic of Kazakhstan. A Review, 2006-2007, accessed at www.ictm.kz.
 - IP Telephony Market in the Republic of Kazakhstan. A Review, 2006-2007, accessed at www.ictm.kz.
6. ICT-Marketing articles:
 - Internet Market Development in 2007 in Kazakhstan, accessed at www.ictm.kz.
 - Prospects of IP TV Development in Kazakhstan, accessed at www.ictm.kz.
 - IP Telephony and Prepaid Card Markets (2006), accessed at www.ictm.kz.
7. *Arna Company – Territory of Digital Comfort*, Kazakhstan Pravda Newspaper, 27 July 2007.
8. Ministry of Culture and Information, www.sana.gov.kz
9. Agency for Informatization and Communication, www.aic.gov.kz
10. Ministry of Education and Science, www.edu.gov.kz
11. Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, www.stat.kz
12. Microsoft Kazakhstan Press Releases, accessed www.microsoft.com/kazakhstan
13. Kazinform Information Agency, accessed at <http://www.inform.kz>
14. The Economist Intelligence Unit, accessed at www.eiu.com

15. Kazakhstan Legal Portal, accessed at www.zakon.kz

16. Information Initiative Foundation, accessed at www.os.kz

Reports:

- Internet for Civil Society Institutions. Project Report
- Kazakh Language in Information Space. Project Report

Publications:

- Kazakhstanskaya Pravda
- UN Advances Open Source
- President of Peru will Decide the Destiny of Windows in the Country
- Novell Linux Desktop Gains New Positions in Europe
- Liter Newspaper
- IP Telephony World
- Between the “Black” and “White” Software
- General Session of the Civil Alliance of Kazakhstan. Towards an Open Society.
- SME Market is a Real Chance for Open Source in Russia

17. State Program for Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Semi-annual Program Report. January – June 2007.

18. July – December 2007 Report of the Central Unit of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan, www.e-gov.kz

19. 2006-2008 Government of Kazakhstan Program / Ministry of Economics and Budget Planning of the Republic of Kazakhstan

20. Kazakhstan IT Portal, accessed at www.profit.kz

21. International Research and Exchanges Board, accessed at www.irex.org

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.

Number of individuals interviewed: 120+

Interviewees were selected to ensure diversified information gathering. For each venue, we identified the following interviewee groups: heads, midline managers and clients. Individual questionnaires for each interviewee category based on the research framework were created. We used separate questionnaires for each interview. The interviews took place in the venues to demonstrate the capacity of the venues, when needed. Between 5 to 30 clients were interviewed in each venue, keeping their names anonymous. ICT experts were also interviewed to cross-check the gathered information. In addition, each venue visited was observed in action.

Experts in ICT development in Kazakhstan:

Mikhail Tunin
Executive director
Information Initiative foundation
office 12-13, 73 a Utegen Batyra st., Almaty, Kazakhstan,
050062 (tel. 7 727 2258251)
e-mail: mtyunin@os.kz
www.os.kz
www.ict.os.kz

Oleg Chernyshov
Director
Center of Analyses and Forecasting of East-Kazakhstan Oblast
Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan
+7 7232 57 89 61
e-mail: chernyshov@centr.kz
<http://analitik.kz>

Libraries

Zhanna Abenova, The Senior specialist of the Electronic Service Department of the National Library, heads of city libraries in Almaty, Tel. +7 7272 67 28 58

Zhazira Alimkulova, The head of the Electronic Service Department of the National Library, heads of city libraries in Almaty, Tel. +7 7272 67 28 58

Kabiba Akzhigitova, Library Director of Pushkin Oblast Library, East Kazakhstan Oblast Ust- Kamenogorsk, Tel. +7 7232 26 71 74, www.pushkinlibrary.kz

G. Daribayeva, Deputy Director of Pushkin Oblast Library, East Kazakhstan Oblast Ust-Kamenogorsk, /www.pushkinlibrary.kz

Makpal Nurgaliyeva, Director of Seifullin Oblast Library, Almaty Oblast, Taldykorgan city
Tel. +7 701 282 5419

Gulnar Mukhambetova, Specialist of Seifullin Oblast Library, Tel. 24 74 67

Meiramkul Nabiyeva, Chief of Rayon Library, Akchi Village, Tel. +7 701 284 47 14

Munai Tpasova Zhumakhan, Chief of Akchi village library, there is no telephone in library.

Population Service Centers (PSCs)

Khvan Valeri Gerasimovich, The Head of Center of Information System of Almaty, Tel. +7 701 111 1267

Alexander Shymanskiy, Responsible for “E-Government” State Program Realization in Taldykorgan city, Tel. +7 705 140 0730

Public access centers

Khvan Valeri Gerasimovich, The Head of Center of Information System of Almaty, Tel. +7 701 111 1267.

Alexander Shymanskiy, Responsible for “E-Government” State Program Realization in Taldykorgan city, Tel. +7 705 140 0730.

Educational institutions

Natalya Smolyakova, Director of Secondary School #116, Tel. +7 7272 25 23 31.

Natalya Pasechnikova, Teacher of Secondary School #116.

Lev Bogatyrev, The head of information center of Taldykorgan University.

Zaure Darimbetova, Director of Secondary School # 2 in Taldykorgan city, Tel. 24-14-97.

Natalya Pak, teacher on informatics of Secondary School # 2 in Taldykorgan city.

Internet cafés

Alexei Murin, Director of internet café “Matrix” in Almaty, Tel. +7 701 788 0211

Bakhit Sabitov, Senior Manager “Omega Sector” Internet café in Samal district in Almaty city, +7 7272 64 34 28, <http://cybersport.kz/>

Stanislav Kraskov, Director, “MobiDic” Internet café in Taldykorgan city, Tel. +7 777 234 3508

Vaslat Akhmetov, Director of “Game on-line” Internet café in Taldykorgan city, +7 701 726 5242

International organizations, International missions

Gulaina Zhalmukhanova, IATP Kazakhstan Coordinator, Internet Access & Training Program (IATP), Tel: (327) 291 35 46, Cell: +7 701 122 3880, gzhalmukhanova@irex.kz

Stanley Currier, Country Director, American Council for international education/ACCELS, currier@americancouncils-kz.org, www.americancouncils.org

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).

n/a number of group interviews or focus groups.

There were no group interviews or focus groups conducted.

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).

The following number of site visits were conducted during Phase 2 of the research. The statistics of site visits during Phase 1 are not available.

Total number of site visits: 29

Astana: 4

Almaty: 4

Kokshetau: 3

Rural areas in Almaty Oblast: 18

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	PAS	Internet cafes	PSCs
# urban venues surveyed	2	2	3	2

# non-urban venues surveyed	2	0	2	0
# respondents in urban venues	25	17	38	30
# respondents in non-urban venues	15	0	11	0

Survey description & comments:

It was planned to survey four venues at three locations with ten surveys completed at each venue to total 120 surveys. Three locations were selected: Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan representing large city, Kokshetau, a smaller city located in the North of Kazakhstan and Esik, a small rural town located in Almaty oblast in South-East of Kazakhstan. However, the team ran into a problem of reaching the quota in Astana, Kokshetau and Esik at some of the venues. To overcome this, a total of six rural areas were visited instead of one to get enough respondents. The team discovered no users of Public Access Centers and no Public Service Centers in rural areas. For this reason, Almaty, the country's largest city was chosen for Public Service Center venue and 30 surveys were completed there.

Generally, the team approached users as they exited the venue or, for small venues with small number of users, the users were approached as they were using the services.

2.3.6 Other Data Gathering Techniques

Other Data Gathering Technique 1: No other data gathering techniques were used.

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. Mikail Tunin

Executive director

Information Initiative foundation

office 12-13, 73 a Utegen Batyra st., Almaty, Kazakhstan,
050062 (tel. 7 727 2258251)

e-mail: mtyunin@os.kz

www.os.kz

www.ict.os.kz

2. Oleg Chernyshov

Director

Center of Analyses and Forecasting of East-Kazakhstan Oblast

Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan

+7 7232 57 89 61

e-mail: chernyshov@centr.kz

<http://analitik.kz>

3. Kairat Imanaliyev

Director

Namys Public Association of Disabled People with High Education

Almaty, Kazakhstan

Tel. +7 727 226 06 02

Mob. +7 701 778 6939

E-mail: namys@bk.ru

4. Andrey Andreev

Director

“Legal Initiative”

Almaty, Kazakhstan

Tel. +7 727 47 18 24

e-mail: legin@nursat.kz

5. Adil Jalilov

Director

“Media Net”

Almaty, Kazakhstan

Tel. +7 7272 72-48-29

E-mail: adil@medianet.kz

www.mwdianet.kz

6. Arman Kyrykbayev

Director of the Department of public policy and public communication

Ministry of Culture and Information of Kazakhstan

Tel. +7 7172 74-05-23

7. Iva Dobbychina

Director

“Freedom House Kazakhstan”

Tel. +7 701 782 0121

e-mail: dobichina@freedomhouse.org

8. Stanely Currier

Country Director

“American Councils” / IREX

Almaty, Kazakhstan

Tel. +7 7272 79 80 96

Mob. +7 705 454 77 57

e-mail: currier@americancouncils-kz.com

www.americancouncils.org

9. Kuanishbek Yeskeyev

Chairman

Agency for Informatization and Communication
www.aic.gov.kz/ru/ruk.asp?stat=2

10. Yuriko Shodzhi
Resident Representative
United Nations Development Programme in Kazakhstan
Almaty, Kazakhstan
Tel. +7 7272 582-643
www.undp.kz

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.

Two different teams worked on preparation of the reports for phase 1 and phase 2.

For the Phase 2 survey process, there were two survey teams used – one for South Kazakhstan and one for North Kazakhstan.

The research drew on the opinions and research of other authors.

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.

Limited sample size: it was difficult to find users at some of the venues, some venues were not operational, teams were forbidden to enter some of the venues.

Time and financial constraints: it was difficult to cover so many venues in the timeframe provided with the amount of money allocated to fund the research team.

2.4.2 Team Qualifications

1 paragraph

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

Phase 1:

“KAMEDA” Research and Consulting Centre, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Phase 2:

Andrew Beklemishev. ICT Consultant with over 7 years of experience in Kazakhstan’s ICT sector. Author of various papers on ICT sector of Kazakhstan and Central Asia, Mr. Beklemishev is currently the Country Director with IDC, the premier ICT market

intelligence consultancy. His personal research interests include e-government, telecommunications and wider ICT use for development. He is currently pursuing an International Executive MBA degree at HEC Paris and his Master thesis is focused on business approaches to ICT use for development.

Sergey Olexuk, Executive Director of MedSocInform Foundation, an NGO focusing on monitoring and evaluation and specializing in HIV/AIDS and ICT Development fields. Assisted with survey process in South East Kazakhstan and Almaty.

Adil Rodionov, Ph.D. candidate at the Eurasian University at the Department of Social Studies. Assisted with survey process in the North Kazakhstan and Astana.

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?

Kazakhstan is the largest landlocked country in the world with low population density and low internet penetration. Publicly accessible information venues are thus very important to the development of the information society in the country.

Libraries are the most common type of a public information venue, thanks to the legacy of the Soviet Union, when libraries were mandatory in nearly every settlement. However, currently the infrastructure at the libraries is very outdated, with little ICT use, except for the large national libraries in major cities.

Internet cafes are still small in numbers and are not widely popular. Public access centers are being opened and information kiosks are being installed throughout Kazakhstan. However, most have low public awareness and lack internet connectivity.

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)?

Kazakhstan's telecommunication's backbone is formed by the networks of seven major operators and consists mostly of optical fiber lines, although satellite and wireless radio relay connections are widely used as well.

Kazakhtelecom, the largest telecom operator in Kazakhstan, has the largest network that predominantly consists of fiber optic lines with the total length of its network near 12,000 kilometers with maximum data transmission rate capabilities of 10 Gbit/s between three largest cities and 1 Gbit/s between other cities of the country. Some of the other major operators have built their own fiber optic networks and are continuing the investment in this activity, while others are relying on Kazakhtelecom's infrastructure.

Satellite communications are used widely in the vast territory of the country providing a cost

effective way to cover large distances. Some telecom operators, such as Nursat (owned by Kazakhtelecom) rely almost exclusively on digital satellite connectivity as the backbone for their networks.

Fixed line penetration in Kazakhstan reached 20 lines per 100 inhabitants early in 2008 and is expected to reach 23% by year end, according the Agency on Informatization¹ and Communication of Kazakhstan (AIC). At the same time, mobile penetration has reached 78 users per 100 inhabitants (although the number of active users is smaller). According to mobile operators, near 100% of country's population are living under the coverage of mobile communications networks.

According to the AIC, internet penetration in Kazakhstan has reached 11% early in 2008 and is expected to reach 15% by year end. These figures are believed to be exaggerated, although a level of 8% is believed to be quite reasonable by the experts. Internet access tariffs offered by Kazakhtelecom are quite high compared with that of the EU member states, especially for businesses, and are considered generally expensive for the population at large. Recent government mandated decreases in price for broadband DSL-based access have improved the situation slightly, although more drastic measures are necessary².

High internet access prices are the result of limited content available on websites hosted in Kazakhstan and most internet traffic generated by the users in Kazakhstan coming from abroad; the balance of traffic coming into the country and going out of the country is skewed highly towards the latter and internet service providers in Kazakhstan end up paying high tariffs to interconnecting operators from other countries. In many other countries traffic coming in and going out balances out and internet service providers simply exchange traffic with each other. Long distances in Kazakhstan only add up to the problem increasing costs further. Kazakhtelecom, the operator with the largest network in Kazakhstan, has introduced lower cost tariffs that allow access only to websites hosted in Kazakhstan (Kaznet). These tariffs are about 10 times lower than regular internet tariffs and access to Kaznet is also being introduced at government funded information kiosks.

Kaznet, however, is a very small network of websites when compared to the internet. Specifically, as of January 2008 there were 23600 domain names registered in .kz domain space. However, according to various estimates there are no more than 6000 websites in .kz domain space and only half of them are being updated. To compare, there are near 150 million websites worldwide. There is no wonder that most of the internet traffic in Kazakhstan is coming from abroad.

Access to the internet using wireless technologies such as WiFi and WiMax is starting to appear in Kazakhstan recently, but mainly in three largest cities, including the capital, Astana. A small number of WiFi hotspots were introduced in these cities, mainly at hotels, restaurants and cafes. New hotspots will be appearing soon.

¹ Informatization: an organizational, social, economic, scientific, and technological process aimed at forming and developing information resources and systems based on the use of information technologies to meet the information needs of individuals and businesses.

² \$40 USD per month for 256kbit/s ADSL connection. Available in most large cities, some towns and very few rural areas. Restricted to private users only. Business tariffs start with \$145 USD per month for unlimited 128 kbit/s and \$522 USD per month for unlimited 256 kbit/s ADSL connections; prices go up exponentially as speed increases.

Independent telecom operators are starting to introduce WiMax based access to the urban population. Largely disadvantaged inhabitants of smaller cities and rural areas spread through the vast territory of the country make up for about half of the country's population and are yet to experience the wonders of today's technology.

Internet cafes are yet another option for internet access in Kazakhstan. Prices are generally affordable and attract a lot of students and young adults. Public access centres are starting to appear in libraries and government service centres but are yet to become a viable option for information access due to low public awareness and many organizational and technical issues (some are still not connected to the internet, for example).

The privately owned TV market has grown by about 15-20% and in the next 5 years will increase to 1.5 million customers. Until 2005, the cable TV market was monopolized by Alma TV. In 2006 three new companies – Secatel, Digital TV and Icon TV – announced the start of network building, but only in Almaty City. This sector became very attractive for investors, which resulted in the increased number of players in the market. Today 65 cable network operators provide services in all large cities of the country.

Cable TV accounts for four-fifths of the legal commercial TV market. The majority of the networks operate in local markets. Only two operators have branches in other cities – Alma TV is present in 6 cities and Secatel works in 4 cities. Almaty is the most prospective region for cable TV development. One-third of commercial TV customers live in this city (200,000 customers out of the total of 600,000 customers in the country). Almaty City and the suburbs are expected to have 500,000 commercial TV customers in 5 years' time. Total annual cable TV revenues in Almaty will reach \$50,000 USD.

However, cable TV remains expensive for the majority of the population. As a result, mainly in small towns and villages, people pay once to buy satellite antennas and do not pay for TV itself (piracy). This leads to variations in signals – large and advanced stations encode their signal, which reduces unauthorized access. Customers prefer pay TV. The main reason is that the Kazakhstani stations are not ready to deliver products of quality similar to the top Russian and other foreign channels. Besides, the operators can combine foreign and local channels in single packages. Another advantage of these operators is that they are not subject to the Media Law and therefore are not obliged to broadcast in two languages and to limit re-broadcasting TV programs of other channels by not more than 50%.

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)?

Computer literacy level in Kazakhstan was estimated at little less than 10% in 2007 while computer penetration was no more than 5% that year, according to the AIC. These two numbers are key to understanding the reality of internet penetration in the country: a computer illiterate person with no computer will have a much tougher chance of using the internet.

Lack of local content causes limited access of population to information that can directly influence their rights and interests and imposes language barriers (there is very little content in Kazakh language). People speaking only Kazakh are significantly limited in getting information they need.

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)?

Rapid economic growth in recent years (Kazakhstan enjoyed near 10% GDP growth in 2002-2006), high literacy levels, President's long term vision and new government programs were among the key driving factors for increased computer and internet penetration in Kazakhstan, allowing the country's information society to develop. Rising disposable incomes allow Kazakhstanis to buy computers. Decreasing internet tariffs (although still relatively expensive compared to EU member states) and increasing availability of broadband internet in large cities allow for easy access to information worldwide as well as promoting information sharing and interaction between citizens. Implementation of state Reduction of Information Inequity and Implementation of Electronic Government in the Republic of Kazakhstan programs will provide access to key government services in the near future for all but especially to underserved and vulnerable groups .

The State Reduction of Information Inequity program was adopted in 2007 and aims at increased both computer literacy and computer penetration in the country. Two government subsidized projects were launched at the end of 2007 that promise to supply the citizens with affordable computers. One is implemented by private sector with government support and is called TECATA. The plan is to manufacture 100,000 computers annually under the new TECATA brand with the assembly conducted at the Alatau IT City Technopark just outside of Almaty, country's largest city. Although initially the computers will be sold in Kazakhstan only, there are plans to increase production to 200,000 PCs annually and export them to neighbouring countries. Another project, called Ashyk Alem (from Kazakh: Open World) is implemented by AIC itself and provides a bundle of a locally assembled PC, Microsoft's Vista Starter Edition software and 10 hours of dial-up internet access for near \$350 USD. It can be argued that decrease in customs tariffs for computers as well as other incentives are more efficient ways to increase computer penetration levels than direct subsidies. However, such efforts as Ashyk Alem still deserve praise for decreasing the country's digital divide.

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

Kazakhstan ICT development and equity experts believe the following information is the most demanded: (1) Employment search; (2) Information about civil responsibilities, rights and procedures of their implementation (taxes, passport and other documents issue, registration of land and other property rights, obtaining certificates, etc.); (3) Welfare allowances and compensations (offices to go to, procedures, eligibility requirements, amounts); (4) Institutions able to provide information about protection of civil rights and interests, both governmental and non-governmental, including exact location and list of services provided.

Additionally, as the survey process has shown, the citizens of Kazakhstan are interested in information on education, various personal information and, to lesser extent, news and politics, health and healthcare and financial information.

These types of information are demanded via ICT as well, although the range of ICT services is rather limited. The existing sources of information via ICT are very limited in their coverage and often non-existent. Additionally, the information itself is rarely updated.

Source: *interviews with experts, surveys*

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 traditional sources for information related to government services are Akimats (local governments) and other executive authorities, including divisions, departments, passport sections of Ministry of Justice and migration services. Population Service Centers is a new venue for government related information with the first PSC opened in 2006. These centers are to become one-stop-shop type venues for all citizen-to-government interaction.

Libraries also have good capacity in providing different kinds of information. In many senses they are the only information access point that correspond to requirements: territorial accessibility, adequate material resources, presence of consultants, accessibility for disabled, and presence of minimal free information services and/or moderate fees for services.

Some Kazakhstanis enjoy access to information through the internet. Internet access is usually available at home or at the place of work/business. Internet cafés, computer clubs and WiFi

hotspots are also gaining popularity as an alternative for accessing internet. Public Access Sites are being launched around Kazakhstan, however, the majority of them are still not operational.

Source: interviews with experts, surveys, site visits

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.

Information services provided to the population by the appropriate state bodies is not well organized. Even though the location of such services is well-known, the system of these services makes obtaining this information difficult. Significant time, additional reference information, additional documents and more competent staff are needed. Bureaucracy and corruption are also among hindering factors for government services. The majority of information services or document preparation requires payment. Even though the fees for each individual service is not high, the total amount for a package of services may reach \$50, which is a significant limitation for vulnerable groups.

Lack of local content is one of the key barriers to information access, as noted by many respondents. Government and experts agree that there is not enough local content in Kazakhstan, especially in the Kazakhstan portion of the internet.

The limited number of information services offered is a concern for many, especially at PSCs and libraries. Prices are a barrier to many when it comes to the internet cafes.

Additionally, survey respondents are concerned with hours of operation of the facilities (they are usually not opened in the evenings and on weekends) as well as their location (often too far away, in the next town or city).

The survey team has also noted that the majority of government information kiosks installed are not online and some are not even powered. This is most likely due to problems in the roll-out process and measurements of the results. The Agency on Informatization and Communication was, most likely, eager to report that the kiosks were installed, but failed to verify they are functional and connected. It is believed that those kiosks will be online in the near future.

Source: interviews with experts, surveys, site visits

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?

Although PSCs have banks and government information kiosks installed, all of the survey respondents noted that they came in to seek specific government service, such as the issue of a new state ID, passport, birth certificate and etc. None of the respondents in PSCs were aware of

the kiosks and information services they offer.

Libraries are usually frequented by the informed groups – such as scientists, students, some NGO and business representatives. Traditionally, libraries do not publicize their services because earlier these services were limited and now they need additional funding which is not available. That is why libraries do not take advantage of their capacity as sources of information for the general public. Books are the most sought after source of information at libraries. Exam preparation is usually the only information need that students try to satisfy by going to the libraries, they tend to use internet for about every other information need.

Internet cafes are mostly used for personal services such as email and chat, entertainment, such as games, as well as employment search functions.

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.

The major vulnerable groups in terms of ICT access can be classified by:

Wealth. One can distinguish poor people with the monthly income below \$200/family member. At the present time in Kazakhstan most information services are paid for and free public access does not provide the required information. Therefore, lack of money is a serious constraint for access to information through ICT (insufficient money to buy a computer, pay for Internet connection, visit Internet cafes, mobile communication, etc.).

Physical abilities. This category includes Group I and II disabled people. Disabled people in Kazakhstan do not get the infrastructure to fully implement their rights and capabilities. People from Group I – people unable to move without assistance; and Group II – movement is significantly limited, very much depend on external assistance. This is a medical classification stipulated in the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Disabled people from these groups cannot access Internet centers and most likely cannot afford to Internet connection at home. Furthermore, there is a lack of specialized digital equipment for these people.

Lack of ICT education and skills. This group includes several categories: pensioners, rural citizens and labor migrants. These categories did not receive ICT knowledge and skills in a timely manner and today's situation in ICT education does not provide the opportunity to acquire this knowledge (lack of the following: free courses, programs tailored for these groups, ICT specialists and acknowledged need in ICT).

Language skills. English and Russian are the major ICT languages in Kazakhstan and the forecasts are that the prevalence of Russian will be increasing. Therefore access to ICT is limited for the population not proficient in these two languages. The Kazakh language is developed at household

level. Technical, literary and other segments of Kazakh are developing too quickly. The majority of the population cannot keep up with this pace, and poorly understands the “new” Kazakh. This means that the language cannot effectively be used in everyday life. Since the USSR period the urban population has primarily been Russian-speaking and the Kazakh speakers have mostly lived in rural areas.

Territory. The rural population is significantly limited in access to ICT due to poorly developed infrastructure. According to the 2003-2005 Rural Development Program of the Government, Kazakhstan primarily uses the infrastructure (power grids, networks, roads, canals) constructed during the USSR era. The majority of infrastructure is renovated and upgraded in larger cities such as Almaty, Astana and “oblast centers” (province capitals). The infrastructure is renovated/upgraded very rarely in some villages and nothing at all is done in distant villages. The industrial capacities are obsolete and physically they have deteriorated.

The mentality of some potential users is also a constraint to digital ICTs. There is little demand for information services provided by the local providers despite their readiness to provide advance information services, such as broadband internet access or IP television.

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 general public does not fully understand the essence of the “freedom of press” notion. The key media in the country are television and printed periodicals. Media in both of these categories usually belongs to media holding companies owned by the governing elite and thus the people do not have access to alternative information. Alternative information from the opposition is usually located on the web, because access to TV and printed media is closed. Censorship is present, especially with regards to political information (e.g. there is no information about a criminal case brought up in the United States against an American citizen dubbed Kazakhgate, which involves country’s senior level officials, there is also no information on political and social consequences of the current economic crisis in the country, etc.).

Information about lifestyles, social and economic issues is usually not censored, which creates an illusion of absence of censorship in the country. According to freedom of speech experts (International Human Rights Bureau in Kazakhstan, Transparency International) and Kazakhstan journalists, the current legislation in the country does not allow for establishing and developing basic freedom of speech. There are several reasons for that including absence of private (independent) printed and electronic media and legal limitations that don’t create an enabling environment for diversity and pluralism in the media.

An illustration of the situation and developments in the area of freedom of speech is the recently suggested change of legislation. The Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Kazakhstan suggested amendments to the legislation regarding defamation. Miklos Harasti, OSCE Representative for Freedom of Press, asked the Minister of Interior to withdraw these recent draft amendments. “The suggested amendments in several respects contradict with Kazakhstan’s obligations to OSCE regarding freedom of press” wrote the Representative in his message to Minister Baurzhan

Mukhamedzhanov. In his letter Mr. Harasti reminded the Minister that the Bureau of the Representative for Freedom of Press was at that time working on comments to the April draft law on mass media, which suggested statements regarding defamation, which differed from the amendments of the Ministry.

Having listed the disadvantages of the new suggestions, Mr. Harasti added, “Despite the fact that the Ministry of Interior amendments delete the words ‘in the mass media’ from the Criminal Code provisions about libel and insult, journalists still may be punished as criminals for professional errors. The amendments keep the special protection of the President. Criticism of some categories of government officials remains a deed punished with imprisonment”.

Besides, Mr. A. Rikhter, Director of Information Rights Institute of the Russian Federation said “The budget may not be supported by any limitations of freedom of press”. According to Mr. Rikhter, the issue is neither the cost of media registration nor the media registration procedure in Kazakhstan. “The issue is yet different – mass media registration exists to have the opportunity to punish them later, or to know the number of media, or to know what media are there in the country”, explained A. Rikhter. At the same time Mr. Rikhter said “Constitution of Kazakhstan is a model for ensuring human rights and liberties, which should be followed, because it (the Constitution of RK) very well stipulates all human rights and liberties”. Mr. Rikhter explained that the Constitution of Kazakhstan well complies with the international norms and therefore “it is not necessary to quote some international norms, just quote the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan as a model”, he concluded. In other words Article 19 of the UDHR is upheld within the Constitution of Kazakhstan, but the enabling environment has not been realized in practice.

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	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Ethnicity (if appropriate)	Kazakh	84%	83%	27%	n/a	n/a	55%	n/a	n/a	n/a	71%	n/a	78%	35%	0%	n/a	n/a
	Russian	8%	9%	60%	n/a	n/a	17%	n/a	n/a	n/a	19%	n/a	11%	39%	0%	n/a	n/a
	Ukrainian	8%	9%	7%	n/a	n/a	7%	n/a	n/a	n/a	10%	n/a	0.0%	7%	0%	n/a	n/a
	other	0%	0%	7%	n/a	n/a	21%	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	n/a	11%	19%	0%	n/a	n/a

Source: Surveys

Comments, including comments on other inequity variables.

There are no ICT services offered at rural libraries visited during survey process.

The team was not able to find any users at Public Access Sites in rural areas. None of the information kiosks, except one, observed by the team were connected to power outlets.

Public Access Sites and Internet Cafes have ICT based information services only, thus no answers in “General Use” category.

Although ICT services are available at Population Services Centers, none of the interviewees have used them, hence the 0s in “ICT Use” for PSCs.

Caste system is not applicable to Kazakhstan.

3.4.1.2 Information People Seek, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Public Access Sites				Internet Cafes				Population Service Centers			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Education	52.8%	52.8%	76.5%	n/a	n/a	39.3%	n/a	n/a	n/a	28.4%	n/a	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Health	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	n/a	n/a	3.6%	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.0%	n/a	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Agriculture	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	3.6%	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.0%	n/a	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Government services	2.8%	2.8%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	0.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.7%	n/a	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Entertainment	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	7.1%	n/a	n/a	n/a	14.9%	n/a	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
News	5.6%	5.6%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	17.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	10.8%	n/a	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Personal	19.4%	19.4%	17.6%	n/a	n/a	14.3%	n/a	n/a	n/a	27.0%	n/a	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Other	8.3%	8.3%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	14.3%	n/a	n/a	n/a	16.2%	n/a	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a

Source: Surveys

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

"Other" types of information sought at public libraries includes news, health and work related information

"Other" types of information sought at PASs include work related information and financial information.

"Other" types of information sought at internet cafes includes work related information, movies and music.

3.4.1.3 Uses of ICT, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Public Access Sites				Internet Cafes				Population Service Centers			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Email	36.4%	36.4%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	46.2%	n/a	n/a	n/a	43.4%	n/a	42.1%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Chat	10.9%	10.9%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	19.2%	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.3%	n/a	21.1%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Web browsing	34.5%	34.5%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	26.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	28.9%	n/a	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Blogs & social networking	1.8%	1.8%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	0.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.9%	n/a	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Commerce & business	3.6%	3.6%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	3.8%	n/a	n/a	n/a	6.6%	n/a	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Phone or webcam	3.6%	3.6%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	3.8%	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.3%	n/a	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Games	1.8%	1.8%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	0.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.6%	n/a	26.3%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Other	7.3%	7.3%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	0.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.9%	n/a	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a

Source: Surveys

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

“Other” at public libraries means digital book downloading and reading.

“Other” at urban internet cafes means downloading and viewing of movies.

“Other” at rural internet cafes means online dating sites.

3.4.1.4 Frequency of Use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Public Access Sites				Internet Cafes				Population Service Centers			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
First visit	8.0%	8.0%	20.0%	n/a	n/a	5.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.9%	n/a	18.2%	53.3%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Rarely (less than monthly)	16.0%	16.0%	40.0%	n/a	n/a	17.6%	n/a	n/a	n/a	10.5%	n/a	18.2%	36.7%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Occasional (about once a month)	16.0%	16.0%	20.0%	n/a	n/a	11.8%	n/a	n/a	n/a	13.2%	n/a	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Regular (about 2-3 per month)	12.0%	12.0%	6.7%	n/a	n/a	17.6%	n/a	n/a	n/a	18.4%	n/a	27.3%	3.3%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Frequent (about once a week)	24.0%	24.0%	13.3%	n/a	n/a	29.4%	n/a	n/a	n/a	28.9%	n/a	27.3%	3.3%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Daily (about every day)	24.0%	24.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	17.6%	n/a	n/a	n/a	21.1%	n/a	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a

Source: Surveys

Comments:

Although ICT services are available at Population Services Centers, none of the interviewees have used them, hence the 0s in “ICT Use” for PSCs.

3.4.1.5 Barriers to use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Public Access Sites				Internet Cafes				Population Service Centers			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Location, distance	27.6%	11.1%	24.0%	24.0%	29.4%	36.8%	n/a	n/a	16.3%	2.6%	26.1%	21.7%	6.7%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Hours of Operation	10.3%	14.8%	12.0%	12.0%	23.5%	36.8%	n/a	n/a	14.0%	23.7%	34.8%	34.8%	3.3%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Cost	10.3%	33.3%	8.0%	4.0%	11.8%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	18.6%	26.3%	13.0%	13.0%	6.7%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Lack of skills / training	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	4.7%	2.6%	8.7%	13.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Not enough services	10.3%	11.1%	52.0%	56.0%	11.8%	15.8%	n/a	n/a	14.0%	10.5%	13.0%	13.0%	20.0%	50.0%	n/a	n/a
Not in right language	6.9%	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	0.0%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Not enough content	6.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	5.3%	n/a	n/a	4.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23.3%	50.0%	n/a	n/a
Other	27.6%	25.9%	0.0%	0.0%	17.6%	5.3%	n/a	n/a	27.9%	31.6%	4.3%	4.3%	40.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a

Source: Surveys

Comments:

Other for libraries includes “low internet speed”, “not enough computers”, “download limits”, “bad service” and “computer illiterate operators”.

Other for Public Access Sites includes “low internet speed”, “download limits”.

Other for urban internet cafes includes “low internet speed”, “download limits”, “slow connection speed”, “computer illiterate operators” and “bad ventilation”.

Other for rural internet cafes includes “insufficient advertising of internet café services in the rural area” and “slow connection speed”.

Others for PSCs include “long cues”, “too much time”, “bureaucracy” and “corruption”.

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:

Initiated by the President of Kazakhstan in 2001, the first state program that was concerned with development of information society was the Program on Formation and Development of National Information Infrastructure for 2001-2003 that further led to e-Government Concept in 2004, two e-government programs for 2005-2007 and 2008-2010, two Telecom Sector Development programs for 2003-2005 and 2006-2008 and the Program on Reduction of Information Inequity for 2007-2009.

A state program on telecommunications sector development (2003-2005) was detrimental to establishment of modern infrastructure for further development of information society in the country. It essentially an extensive plan for the development of the telecommunications sector that set out a series of goals and also enumerated a detailed methodology regarding the approach for dealing with problems in the telecom sector, the financing of various activities involved, the expected benefits of the program, and a substantial list of action points that needed to be undertaken in order to achieve the goals of the program.

E-government development strategy consists of the two e-government programs mentioned above and includes four stages: informational (2005-2006), interactive (2006-2008), transactional (2008-2009) and the information society stage (2009).

More information:

Agency on Informatization and Communication website: www.aic.gov.kz

Kazakhstan E-government Portal: www.e.gov.kz

3.4.2.2 Ongoing Initiatives:

The second telecom sector development program (2006-2008) was set to accomplish some of the goals that were set but not achieved by the first program as well as a list of new goals aimed and continued development of the telecom sector. Telecom sector deregulation, liberalization, increase of competition, and infrastructure development were and are among the top priorities of both programs, and, although some of the targets were not yet achieved (or were achieved only nominally) the program is contributing significantly to development of the ICT infrastructure in the country.

According to the state program “On Development of E-government in Kazakhstan for 2007-2009”, some Government agencies already provide interactive services, with a certain degree of success. For example, it is already possible to submit tax forms electronically and to check whether tax payments have cleared the system or whether there are any tax liabilities outstanding. All of this is done in real time using digital signatures, which sets Kazakhstan apart from many other countries. It is estimated that over 80% of businesses in Kazakhstan submit their tax reports electronically. The implementation of the e-tax systems has certainly motivated many businesses to harness the ICT and became a driving force for computer training of many accountants and businessmen. However, the e-tax system is still far from achieving its goals of efficiency, ease of use and transparency.

In an effort to promote e-government services and in order to increase access to communication infrastructure and information resources the Program on Reduction of Information Inequity in Kazakhstan was approved by the government of Kazakhstan in 2006. Three main goals of the program are: 20% computer literacy rate, 20% internet penetration rate and an increase in the role information systems play in life of an average citizen.

Among regional initiatives that Kazakhstan is involved in currently, the SILK/OCCASION projects stand out. They are being implemented in the region in the framework of the Science for Peace and Security Programme developed by NATO. The Silk network has connected for the first time the research and education networks in Central Asia through an internet connection based on satellite transmission.

More information:

Agency on Informatization and Communication website: www.aic.gov.kz

Kazakhstan E-government Portal: www.e.gov.kz

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.

Kazakhstan has seen its information access infrastructure deteriorate in the first ten years of its independence. As the economy picked up in the past seven years, the situation started to improve. Five years ago there were two major types of public access sites: internet cafes [paid Internet access services] and public access sites established by local non-governmental or international organizations [primarily free Internet access to all or select population groups].

Internet cafes have always operated as private businesses. They have provided stable and rather fast Internet connection to their users. By today many of the Internet cafes have evolved into large

Internet AND gaming clubs, where the majority of the audience are teenagers and young people. Starting as rather expensive venues due to the generally high ICT and communication prices, the Internet cafes are now becoming more and more affordable to the middle-class and lower-middle class population. Today Internet cafes are present in all cities and in some villages across the country.

Public Access Sites established by non-profit institutions were the pioneers in reducing access inequity in the country. From the mid-1990s they had been providing primarily free access to the Internet and printed information sources to either the general public or select target groups, such as NGO members, students, disabled people, etc. Some of these sites had satellite TV and VCRs for demonstrating educational materials. The majority were located either in the host organizations' premises or in public libraries. Some of these sites had also delivered ICT training to the population. Until recently, they had reached out to the provinces and had played a major role in developing ICT skills and providing access to information for a large portion of the population, because at that time computer equipment prices and communication rates were unaffordable to the majority of the population, especially vulnerable groups. Furthermore, many printed materials available at such sites were just impossible to find anywhere else.

At present, computer equipment and ICT access is becoming more affordable. More and more people have access to these in their offices and at home. Besides, international donor assistance has been decreasing for such sites. This has resulted in a gradual "narrowing" of these sites' target groups (e.g. only members of a certain number of targeted NGOs) and/or collecting fees (usually moderate) for their services.

Wi-Fi Access at Restaurants. Over the past five years, many restaurants have started offering free Wi-Fi Internet connection. This is especially common for Astana and Almaty. As a rule, the free Wi-Fi services are presented by Internet service providers as advertisement of their connection quality. Therefore, the connection at the restaurants is stable and rather good. The majority of these service users includes middle class teenagers, students and middle-age people.

Public Libraries have started offering more modern materials (books and periodicals) and more materials in foreign languages. Besides, more libraries opened computer labs and TV/Video rooms for educational purposes (see more detailed descriptions in other sections of this Form).

Mobile Communication. All existing mobile operators in the country started providing mobile Internet connection to their subscribers. They provide both "mobile internet" (e.g. GPRS and EDGE for GSM) and WAP services. The rates are higher than those for the traditional fixed line networks. However, one advantage of these services is that they are available in the whole territory covered by one or another operator.

Government Information Kiosks and Population Service Centers. PSCs have first made it to the government agenda in 2005 with the first PSC opening in Almaty in 2006. There are now over 100 PSCs that provide access to government information and services. PSCs are also home to some of the information kiosks being installed under the State Program on Reduction of Information Inequity. These kiosks will provide access to the e-government portal and websites hosted in Kazakhstan. There are also banking, photography and other services available at the PSCs.

Overall, Kazakhstan has recognized the need to develop information access infrastructure through implementation of various state programs. Significant investments were and are being made to upgrade network infrastructure. As such, Kazakhtelecom, country's largest telecom operator and a de facto monopoly has built over 11,000 kilometers of fiber optic lines connecting all major cities of Kazakhstan. Population Service Centers are to be open in all urban and rural areas. Public Access Sites that include government information kiosks are being established over the territory of Kazakhstan.

Source: *State Programs and interviews.*

3.4.2.4 Planned Initiatives:

Local planned initiatives related to public access are focused around two state programs currently being implemented. One is concerned with opening new Population Service Centers and the development of the existing ones by introducing additional services and making them true one-stop-shop venues for citizen-to-government interaction. All of the PSCs assume access to information and access to Kazakhstani segment of the internet.

The second state program is the Program on Reduction of Information Inequity that assumes opening new Public Access Sites and installation of new information kiosks.

A regional initiative that is currently in the planning stage is the Trans-Eurasia Information Network (TEIN) that has been developing in the Asian region since 2000 and with the support and financial contribution of the European Commission since 2004. TEIN is an information and communication network linking research and education communities in different Asian countries with a large-scale internet connection. Thanks to the price and capacity, the network enables the research centers to exchange large amounts of data via internet, which would not be feasible under the regular terms of the internet connection provided by commercial internet providers.

The European Council recently adopted a Strategy for new partnership with Central Asia, where it suggests setting up the Europe Education Initiative for Central Asia and is considering implementing TEIN in the countries of Central Asia, including Kazakhstan.

More information:

Additional information can be obtained on the websites of the Ministry of Justice (www.minjust.kz) and of the Agency on Informatization and Communication (www.aic.gov.kz) and through the European Commission website .

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.

Rich in natural resources, mainly oil and gas as well as metal ores, including large deposits of uranium, Kazakhstan has an economy that is largely dependent on the extraction of these resources. Surging oil, gas and metals prices on worldwide markets in recent years allowed the country to enjoy near 10% GDP growth in 2002-2006. However, the country was affected by the world's financial liquidity crisis in 2007 due to dependencies on credits from abroad by the banking sector; the country's booming financial and construction sectors were affected the most. GDP increased by only 8.5% that year and economic growth is expected to slump further in 2008. Growth of money supply and increasing food prices have caused a sharp increase in inflation rate which was 18.8% at year-end 2007. Experts expect the economy to improve its shape only by the end of 2008, given the government continues its reforms and is able to manage the inflation rate and provide assistance to the troubled sectors of the economy.

Trends:

As the economy continues to expand so increase the individual incomes of citizens that allows for more free time to seek information as well as for spending on access to this information. Computer penetration increases as well as internet penetration. There are more and more businesses that operate as information service providers: cable and satellite TV operators, mobile operators, telecom operators, internet service providers, web hosting and web design companies. All these will drive the expansion of information society in Kazakhstan in coming years. However, if the wealth distribution will not be equal then the widening of the wealth gap will only amplify the digital divide.

Source: *Economist Intelligence Unit, WorldBank, UNDP, expert interviews,*

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.

The right to access information is not fixed in the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, but clause 20 admits the citizens' right to receive information freely. In the same clause it is said that censorship in Republic of Kazakhstan is forbidden.

According to Transparency Kazakhstan's report, in Kazakhstan there is no law on access of citizens to information. It considerably limits human rights in Kazakhstan, since it is accepted by Constitution minimal guarantees on information reception. The law could be a significant addition to this norm. Absence of legislation in the Republic of Kazakhstan regarding the term "information access" considerably complicates relations between the state and society, and also the development of electronic government and democracy. A number of nongovernmental organizations, both international (Freedom House Kazakhstan), and national (the Coalition "Oil incomes - under the control of a society") carry on dialogue with the Government and Parliament

of the Republic of Kazakhstan about the necessity of adopting such laws.

Sections 2 and 5 of the 22nd article of the **Law on National Security** of 26.06.1998, forbids “distribution in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan of printed products, TV and broadcasts of foreign mass media, the content of which undermines national security”.

Such laws are necessary in any modern and open society. However, without the law on access to information, opportunities for infringement and abuse are created.

The “Mass Media” law of Republic Kazakhstan adopted on July 23, 1999 N 451-I. regulates key questions of activity of the mass media and actual realization of freedom of speech.

The Informatization Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan adopted 8 May 2003. This Law regulates relationships in the areas of IT, constitutes the competence of the government agencies and the rights and obligations of individuals and legal entities in the area of IT.

The Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Informatization and Communication is the central agency responsible for the realization a state policy regarding information and communication.

A number of the primary goals of the Agency include issues of realization of a state policy in communication and information areas, participation in realization of standardization, certification and metrology in information and communications fields, realization of the state technical supervision and the control over communication and information.

Kazakhstan is a secular unitary state with the Presidential form of governance. This means that the power in the country is centralized and no activities are taken or decisions made without appropriate instructions from the national-level authorities.

Trends:

Kazakhstan is in the process of drafting a law on Information that is supposed to regulate all aspects of information in the country, including access. This law will be key to development of information society in the country.

Source: *Status of ICT in Kazakhstan* and expert interviews

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.

Kazakhstan tends to follow Russia in terms of policy and regulatory framework. This is the case for general approaches to regulation of information and development of the information infrastructure.

Trends:

Kazakhstan generally tries to harmonize its norms with international standards, including those regulating ICT sphere. Such is the approach Kazakhstan has taken in e-signature and e-document regulations where Public Key Infrastructure approach is used. The government of Kazakhstan is usually open to international best practices and tends to evaluate various choices carefully.

Source: Mambetalieva, T., Beklemishev, A.; *E-commerce Legal and Regulatory Systems in the Countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus*. Studies in Trade and Investment, United Nations, New York, 2004.

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.

Some Public Internet Centers and NGO resource centers have established partnerships among themselves and with external institutions, such as government organizations and other NGOs. Cooperation with the state is usually limited to providing free access to e-government services. Regional information networks are yet another way of cooperation between venues. Regional network of the central regional libraries of East Kazakhstan Oblast Area is an excellent example of this. Cooperation between PICs and NGO includes various computer literate and computer assisted training carried out by NGOs using PICs. An example of that are the trainings provided by the Center for Development and Adaptation “Phoenix” on computer literacy for medical workers and workers of NGOs.

There were no examples of significant collaboration by any of the venues with organizations working with disadvantaged communities such as orphans, homeless and disabled that were identified by research teams. Disabled and marginalized groups require particular affirmative action to be brought up into information society. Opportunities lie in linking NGO internet resource centers, PICs and PACs with orphanages, organizations working with the disabled and homeless to ensure their access to information. Government sponsored PACs should include these groups when targeting population and advertising access.

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.

E-government and Population Service Centers are the two “buzz” concepts for the government at the moment. President, Prime Minister and other senior government officials are often seen reporting on achievements of certain milestones in the e-government implementation program or how PSCs are helping to fight corruption or reduce waiting time. However, the public has not caught up on this and rarely understands what these two concepts exactly mean. This is partially due to PSCs failing to noticeably reduce corruption or significantly cut the times involved. When it comes to e-government, then reason is most often the poor understanding of what e-government is really about by the government itself. The same applies to the PSCs: something that was supposed to streamline procedures, improve service and fight corruption has largely failed at its task so far. Opportunities lie in promotion of both e-government and PSCs as vehicles to improve state service and allow access to information. Citizens should be aware what e-government is and what it can do to satisfy very specific needs of a very specific individual. Grasping the e-government as a concept is not possible for the population at large; it is all about showing how e-government can help make certain processes easier for the citizens. Public awareness campaigns should be launched using modern PR and marketing techniques in identifying which approaches work best for which group. Banks in Kazakhstan are usually very successful in positioning and advertising their products and the government can learn from this experience and can adopt same tactics and techniques.

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.

There is usually a concern by parents who have their children spend a lot of the times at internet cafés and computer clubs playing computer games. Although it can be argued that computer use in any way is beneficial to development of a child, computer games cannot be compared to doing research on the internet by the parents’ standards.

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.

GSM operators offer internet connectivity using GPRS service nearly nationwide and EDGE service in large cities. There are talks of rolling-out 3G services in near future. However, these services are not promoted enough and users are usually unaware of the benefits.

Apart from traditional voice services, SMS text messaging is very popular, both as a way to exchange text messages but also as a payment mechanism. Payment systems using SMS messages have recently appeared in Kazakhstan and users can pay for various services, including access to web databases, such as legal database Urist (www.zakon.kz) by simply sending an SMS. It is also possible to make charitable donations, vote in various online and TV polls, participate in drawings (sweepstakes), etc.

Internet access via mobile phones and mobile internet use is very limited in Kazakhstan, despite the availability of service and the coverage of mobile operators. It is the possibility to reach the majority of the population with little investment that is not recognized in the country. Kazakhstan can take advantage of mobile infrastructure and leapfrog to mobile internet without heavy investments into fixed line infrastructure. With the right devices available on the market, users across the country, and especially in rural areas can gain access to government websites and information resources available both locally and internationally. Emergency notifications are an especially important aspect of mobile telephony that can greatly benefit rural areas.

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).

Although the research team was not able to find any specific examples of Web 2.0 tools use in public access venues, it should be noted that online forums (message boards), blogs and commentary exchange on news portals are gaining more popularity in the country.

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.

Combination of different media in Kazakhstan includes telephone hotlines advertised on television, music video channels allowing shaping content by the viewers who vote through SMS messages, television shows that are available for download via internet, newspaper and magazine articles available online, transcripts of television interviews broadcasted via

websites and others.

An illustrative example of media combination is the President’s annual question and answer session with the general population of Kazakhstan. Questions for the session are taken via internet, SMS, telephone calls, letters, emails, online forms and live feeds via correspondents placed in all major towns of the country. President’s answers are broadcasted on the radios, television and the internet. This allows to ensure wideparticipation in the session by various groups.

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.

The government has recognized the phenomenon of internet and information sharing through online conferences and has conducted a number of online conferences in real time with the public. There is also anecdotal evidence of blocking of opposition websites due to controversial information posted on the websites themselves and sometimes posted by others in comments sections. Most of the opposition websites hosted in Kazakhstan had to be moved abroad. Anonymizer proxies were then advertised by opposition as a way of overcoming government IP address filtering. Blogging is gaining popularity with various NGOs and opposition using them as an alternative to news services.

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):

37%	17%	20%	10%
clinic/hospital	Friends/family	health worker	public access venue (library, community center, etc)

Comments: Additionally, people turn to internet in private points of access (i.e. homes) and to community when it comes to obtaining health information.

3.10.2 Types of Health Information

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

39%	10%	10%	41%	n/a
disease prevention	how to locate healthcare	child health information	remedies/drugs	Other

Comments: n/a

4 Venue-Specific Assessments

Complete one full assessment for each type of venue studied in the country.

4.1 Venue # 1: Public Library

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?

Libraries are widespread throughout the territory of Kazakhstan and there is usually one available even in remote rural areas. They range from large national libraries that include a vast selection of books, audio and video content, as well as access to internet and electronic databases, to small libraries in rural areas that only have a limited selection of books and periodicals. In some areas libraries are believed to be the only source of access to information and thus they are considered a principal element of information infrastructure in the country.

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)?

Usually ICT services are free of charge for library members. Membership fees to libraries are rather small and are affordable to almost any citizen.

Gender, age, ethnicity and, to a lesser extent, education level, are not constraints for ICT access in the libraries. Almost all republican and provincial libraries have ramps at their entrances for wheelchair user and other users with mobility issues. However, usually the movement of people with disabilities inside the library buildings is limited.

None of the studied libraries implements specific programs to reach out to underserved segments of the population. One of the main reasons for this is that the current capacity levels in the provincial, urban and rural libraries are sufficient only to serve existing, able bodied clients.

Almaty and Astana National Libraries are an exception for their ICT infrastructure and adequate number of human resources. Still, in 2007 the number of clients significantly decreased. The library workers believe the reason is broadband Internet access development in Almaty and Astana (i.e. the increased number of households with broadband access). Experts consider the reason for the decreased number of clients to be the passive attitude of the library system in informing and attracting clients (advertisements are almost completely absent). Only seven out of

fifteen computers were in use at the time of the research visit to the National Library. At the same time 1,500-2,000 people visit the library daily. The conclusion is that traditional book borrowing and the reading room remain the most demanded services.

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.

Almost all the libraries are accessible to all population, for they are located in central parts of the respective settlements. Most people know their locations.

Almost all republic and province libraries have ramps at their entrances, but no allowance has been made for navigation of wheelchairs by disabled people within the buildings. Accessibility is a problem not only limited to the libraries. Equal rights and opportunities for the disabled are declared in the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, but seldom realized in practice.

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.

No contradictions in the equity of service variables were identified during this research.

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.

Libraries provide access to ICT mostly for their members. The membership fees are considered affordable for the majority of the population. This is a general practice in all public libraries.

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?

Clients must pay a membership fee for a user ID (membership) that allows access to public library resources. This ID gives right to use library services, including ICT services.

The cost of the member's ID is as follows:

Indicate amount in local currency:

Multi-entry: 150 – 300 KZT

Single-entry: 40-70 KZT

Equivalent in US Dollars:

Multi-entry: \$1.25 – \$2.5 USD

Single-entry: \$0.33 – \$0.6 USD

Date of estimate August 2008

and local currency name KZT – Kazakhstan Tenge

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 first hour of ICT service use is free for all members. The second and subsequent hours cost between \$1.25 – \$2.5 USD depending on the size of settlement. The Director of the Taldykorgan Library noted that initially the provincial and city libraries used to offer information access services for fees to any population group (including non-members), but since 2007 they stopped doing this because it was prohibited by instruction from government agencies.

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.

Administrative unit:

	Number of facilities in each administrative unit	Number offering Digital ICT services
National	2	2
Republic	3	3
Oblast	29	29
City	339	339

Village	2898	92
---------	------	----

Location

	Number of facilities in this type of location	Number offering Digital ICT services
Urban	373	373
Rural	2,898	92

4.1.2.5.1 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:

Libraries are found virtually in every city, town and village of Kazakhstan

4.1.2.6 Other Factors affecting Access

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

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

In small, rural settlements libraries are not available to local residents. This puts these citizens at great disadvantage as they are unable to access materials for entertainment or information.

Public libraries do not advertise. A great portion of the public remains unaware of the services that their local library can, and does, offer. A concerted information and awareness raising campaign about the value of the local library will help to bring the population to the libraries.

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)?

The vast majority of public libraries in Kazakhstan, with exception of national libraries, have only two advantages in terms of CAPACITY ecosystem: country coverage (large number of public libraries) and books available. Otherwise, public libraries are considered outdated and not “cool”. The vast majority of librarians are quickly aging and are over 40-50 years old, according to one report and usually are of little help when it comes to use of new technologies. Younger generation

can now find news information and books online and thus visit libraries less frequently. Business community and news savvy individuals tend to buy newspapers and books or obtain them online instead of attending libraries.

People in Kazakhstan traditionally use information for education, professional development and entertainment. Regrettably, the population very rarely uses information to protect their rights and interests. Along with Internet access, other popular services of these venues are photocopying, scanning, printing and general computer use. A very limited number of people use venues of public access to information for web design, access to e-catalogues, creation of and access to databases.

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.

8,300 people are employed by public libraries in Kazakhstan.

National libraries: Are largest in library system, and have a staff that varies between fifty and seventy.

Republic libraries: On average the staff of national libraries numbers between forty and sixty-five people

Provincial and city libraries: On average the staff consists of between twenty and thirty people.

Rural libraries: Typically between four and seven people work in a rural library, including maintenance staff such as cleaners and security guards.

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).

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

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

Library staff need to be adequately trained, and be graduates of a culture or literature related programs at universities. Currently, only 26% of library staff have university education. University students rarely choose to become library specialist. Government funds education of only 30 such students per year, which is very small compared with total number of libraries in the country (over 10,000). More often than not, librarians are older women who may not necessarily have received adequate training in digital technologies relevant to the library, including internet. Within the national, republic and regional libraries there are some professional experts and

advisers in the ICT field who can give qualified assistance to users. However, for regional and rural libraries it is typical that their ICT point people lack adequate ICT skills. As a rule when hiring staff, public libraries do not demonstrate strict requirements for candidates in the field of ICT knowledge – usually basic computer knowledge is required.

Working in libraries is not considered to be prestigious and is poorly paid; therefore it is difficult to hire qualified staff.

Government programs provide funding for staff training, but usually it is 1-2 workshops in province capitals and large cities once per quarter. At the same time not all distant library staff can attend those. Besides, the number of participants is limited (1-2 representatives from each 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.

<i>Services Offered</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1. Renting out books and magazines	
2. Computer use	
3. Reference materials	
4. Internet access	
5. Ordering electronic books from libraries of the world	As a rule, this is a paid service.
6. Telephone calls (including cellular telephones)	
7. Electronic translators	
8. Scanning, photocopying, typing	
9. Rent of conference rooms / press rooms	
10. Use of reference materials from the “closed depository” inside the library	

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

significance:

The aforementioned services are delivered only in the national, republican and provincial libraries. The situation is very different in regular urban and rural libraries – rural libraries have inadequate material resources, and their staff do not have appropriate ICT training, which results in poor service quality. Interviewees at the urban and rural libraries regret the fact that the libraries get insufficient government funding and organizational support to ensure the availability of updated materials. Rural libraries usually do not provide ICT services.

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.

None of the studied libraries implements specific programs to reach out to underserved segments of the population. However, the general attitude of the staff is to assist anyone who comes to the library as much as they can.

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:

Locally relevant content at libraries includes various text books and study guides, technical literature, books on history of Kazakhstan, popular literature and etc both in Kazakh and Russian, as well as some foreign languages.

Other Content Needed:

Experts believe that a lot of content at libraries is outdated, numbers of newly publishes books are limited. Additionally, some of the survey participants have indicated that there is not enough content in Kazakh language.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

Ministry of Culture and Information of Kazakhstan and Ministry of Education and Science are working on numerous initiatives to stock libraries with locally relevant content as well as publication of popular literature, textbooks and technical literature, especially focusing on Kazakh language books. These initiatives include such state programs as Reading Kazakhstan for 2007-2010, aimed at attracting Kazakhstanis to read books, Cultural Heritage Program for 2007-2009 focusing on preserving Kazakh culture, and State Program on Development of Cultural Sphere for 2006-2008 that deals, among other things, with promotion of publishing of new books.

Source: interviews, Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan

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.

As a rule, public libraries have at their disposal sufficient stock of literature covering almost all spheres of life both in Russian and Kazakh languages. Library employees know both languages and can communicate clients. Knowledge of English is not required by library staff, and the majority of library employees do not speak English. Predominantly (according to State Law on Mass Media of Republic of Kazakhstan) all instructions and informational materials placed in libraries for public access are written in Kazakh, particularly in rural areas and in regional centers.

Also it is typical for Kazakhstan to have regional divisions by language. For example, the southern and western areas of the country mainly use Kazakh when speaking, and central, east and northern regions use Russian language.

Today there is a legal requirement to provide information in 2 languages. Now all official information (statistics, legislation, programs and government reports about different issues) is available equally in Kazakh and Russian. As for information about historical development, culture, arts, technology and economics, it is mostly in Russian and the Kazakh-speaking audience has little access to it. Thus, the urban population which is largely bilingual has better access to human development information. Information resources are traditionally limited in rural areas, where the majority of the population is only Kazakh-speaking.

Consequently, the rural population has more limited access to information. The percentage of people speaking only Kazakh is constantly increasing, whereas the variety of materials in Kazakh in libraries is not increasing proportionately. The vast majority of Internet resources are also in Russian and English.

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:

The vast majority of users seek information related to education (52.8% in urban areas and 76.5% in rural areas). Also, quite frequently, users seek personal information and information related to entertainment. Other types of information sought at public libraries includes news, health and work related information.

Web browsing and email are the two most popular ICT uses of information at public libraries in

urban areas. There is no use of ICTs in rural areas surveyed.

4.1.3.8 Number, Type and Frequency of Users

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

When it comes to urban areas, users visit the library daily or frequently, are predominantly female (92%), aged 15-35, Kazakh (83%), with either high school, college or university education, in medium income bracket and medium social status. The high proportion of women visiting libraries is most likely due to the fact that men are more often preoccupied with work while women may have more free time to visit libraries. Additionally, there are more women involved in teaching professions in Kazakhstan and thus they tend to visit libraries more often.

In rural areas the situation is different: users visit the library either rarely or occasionally, with 20% of respondents visiting the library for the first time, 60% are males, age is 15-35 and 36-60. 100% of survey respondents at rural libraries have either college or university education. Majority (60%) are Russian and are in medium income bracket and medium social status.

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.

Generally, the capacity of the population is deemed to be adequate to use library services as the overall literacy level in Kazakhstan is very high (99.5%).

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: none available

ICT specific training courses:

The Electronic Education for the Population program in the libraries includes individual and group training in Kazakh and Russian. Besides computer and Internet skills, the participants learn to create PowerPoint presentations, demo versions of web resources, text scanning and recognition (FineReader) and photo editing (Adobe PhotoShop). E.g. the East Kazakhstan Province Library Training Center has conducted 99 trainings for 864 participants, which include 22 computer skills trainings, 42 Internet trainings and 34 workshops in special ICT topics. The participants consider that the most valuable aspect of these trainings are Internet trainings in English for teachers of English: Search Engines and Reference Resources on the Internet, E-Mail, Effective Internet Search Strategies, Internet Wikies and Blogs.

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 easily accessible centers to access information in any administrative and territorial unit of the country. There is a public library in every village, with a total of 3,725 public libraries in total. On average one public library serves 4,200 people.

Republic and regional libraries conduct free-of-charge computer literacy training sessions for various groups of a society: professional groups, children, pensioners, etc. However, this activity is more often than not limited to libraries working within the framework of international donor programs.

Library work hours are somewhat of a concern as most libraries close by 6pm, work half day on Saturdays and are closed on Sundays. This makes libraries inaccessible for general public that works normal business hours leaving them only half a day on Saturday as time to access the library.

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.

The traditional opinion is that libraries are not prestigious places to visit. The traditions rooted back in the Soviet era are that libraries are viewed as book storage facilities and are good for scientists, students and retirees. Internet cafes are becoming more popular with the population, especially with the younger segment.

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.

People traditionally use information for education, professional development and entertainment. Students of various levels frequent libraries as graduation requirements for degrees starting with university and higher require citations of literature written on the subject of dissertation/diploma paper. Regrettably, the population very rarely uses information to protect their rights and interests. Along with Internet access, other popular services of these venues are photocopying, scanning, printing and general computer use. A very limited number of people use venues of public access to information for web design, access to e-catalogues, creation of and access to

databases.

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?

The population trusts libraries, but mostly people do not think about this issue.

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)

In many small rural settlements libraries are not available to local residents. This puts these citizens at great disadvantage as they are unable to access materials for entertainment or information.

Public libraries do not advertise. A great portion of the public remains unaware of the services that their local library can, and does, offer. A concerted information and awareness raising campaign about the value of the local library will help to bring the population to the libraries.

Rural area libraries lack ICTs, specifically computers with access to internet.

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)?

Libraries are always located in the central parts of the settlements and every citizen knows where to find them. The government is implementing ICT support programs in libraries. Material resources at the libraries have improved. Library staff receive training, though the process is slow. Government support helps the libraries to reduce fees and design more flexible pricing policies.

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.

The national economy may not impact directly on user fees collected at the membership fees are reasonable for most of the population. However, funding to the libraries may be affected at national level should economic changes occur.

No other agencies except the government support public libraries on the regular basis. However, there are some examples of single charitable acts by large companies. E.g. in early 2007 KazMunaiGas National Oil Company provided equipment, books and materials to the Almaty National Library to establish a specialized modern library section on oil and gas. There are other examples of successful collaboration (e.g. with IREX and Soros Foundation Kazakhstan), but these programs are coming to an end and the amounts of support are decreasing.

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.

Recent amendment to laws promote publication of literature, especially with educational content, in Kazakh language thus creating content in local language.

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.

Experts have noted inadequate amount of political will in support of public libraries. Public support for public libraries remains low as well.

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)?

Nominally all the state libraries of the country are incorporated within the Library Association of Republic Kazakhstan (LARK). The mission of LARK is to preserve libraries as information support pillars in all spheres of human activity and as representatives of all social groups in Kazakhstan.

LARK is a member of International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, (IFLA), the American Library Association ALA and Library Assembly of Eurasia (LAE). It also cooperates with the Russian Library Association RBA, and the Association of Regional Library Consortia (ARLC).

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.

Historically, international organizations (mainly IREX and Soros Foundation Kazakhstan) set the basis for ICT public access venues in libraries. There was a total of 12 venues in Ust-Kamenogorsk, Karaganda, Petropavlovsk, Kostanay, Semey, Kzylorda, Shymkent, Pavlodar, Uralsk, Kokshetau, Almaty and Atyrau. As of today, the property has been transferred to the local libraries in 10 cities (except Almaty and Atyrau). The libraries received equipment and appropriate software. Staff received training to deliver services of providing access to information. The Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan built on this by issuing a number of documents such as the Program to Reduce Information Inequity, which provided almost 100% of national, republican, city and province libraries with equipment and Internet access. Today rural libraries are receiving this.

4.1.4.6 Other Environment Factors

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

There are no other factors that have been determined at this stage.

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 fiscal year

Local currency name amount (local currency)

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

The teams were not able to obtain total amount of budget expenditure on libraries. However, some libraries have indicated that the average budget for each oblast (regional) library is about KZT 50 million (\$416,000 USD) and KZT 10 million (\$83,000) for rural library.

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
(KZT bn)

Comments

Total national budget	2,887.87	2007
Education	455.43	2007
Culture, sport, tourism, information	122.21	2007
Public Libraries	n/a	The team was not able to obtain exact figures on budget expenditures on libraries. However, financing from libraries is part of financing on Culture, sport, tourism and information line item above.

Other Comments:

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:	100%	Government funding for libraries comes from both republic and local budgets.
International donors:		
National donors:		
User fees / services:		

Other Comments:

The interviewed heads of libraries at all levels explained that since the libraries belong to the government, 100% of funding comes from the government. Even in this case, if libraries provide fee-for-services (membership fees, equipment use and Internet access fees), all the collected money is transferred to the government and then comes back as government support. National and international donors have been providing and still provide support to some libraries. This is not done through direct transfer of money, rather single-time donations such as necessary equipment, furnishings, and materials are provided.

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?

All the collected money is transferred to the government and then comes back through annual government budget.

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?

There are membership fees, equipment use and Internet access fees. However, libraries cannot use them but they rather submit it to the state budget.

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)	10	
Building Infrastructure	30	
Utilities	40	
Staff Training	n/a	Training is provided for free by national and republic libraries
Computers / Technology	20	
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

The percentage of budgetary expenditures is approximate as the libraries interviewed were not able to provide exact amounts.

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?

There are no major changes in library funding in recent years. It is expected the situation will not change dramatically in the upcoming years either.

4.1.6 Case Example for Public Libraries

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

Very few libraries in Kazakhstan host internet access centers. The Pushkin Library of East Kazakhstan oblast is of the few and had established its internet access center within the *Transparent City* Project funded by Soros Foundation in Kazakhstan. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd phases of the *Transparent City* Project had been supporting the center for three consecutive years.

The Republic of Kazakhstan has a high level of information inequality. The center helped to provide the general public with access to information. Any library member (the membership is free) has access to this internet center.



Book section at the Pushkin Library
Photo: Olga Vlasenko, Expert Kazakhstan

There are two computer rooms in the center with a total of 10 workstations, a printer and a scanner. A broadband internet connection ensures high-speed. Attentive consultants are always there to help the clients.

Each visitor has 30 minutes to surf the Internet free of charge. The center provides quick computer skills training for visitors without insufficient PC knowledge.

The center also regularly provides free-of-charge computer skills training to different population groups, such as professional groups, university students, disabled children, retirees, etc. The center has conducted a total of 99 training workshops for 864 participants in 2007.

One of the recent initiatives of the center is creation of the Integrated Central District Library Information Network (ICDLIN) in East Kazakhstan Oblast. This is the first network project in the province to include rural libraries. The project received support from the East Kazakhstan Oblast Akimat (province government) and includes two phases.

The first phase started in 2003 with a budget of KZT 18 million (approximately \$130,000). This phase resulted in installation of equipment in 10 central district libraries. The equipment included a satellite station, two computers, a scanner, a black and white and a color printer, a copy machine and a video recorder. The district librarians received basic training in computer skills, Internet, and web design, as well as some more advanced training. At the present time the population in these districts has Internet and e-mail access, as well as opportunities for distance learning. Another service is electronic delivery of documents from the Pushkin Library or other information resources from the Kazakhstan National Libraries and international databases.

The oblast center regularly conducts online methodology classes for the district centers.

The ICDLIN forms a network culture and an open information space, which helps to decrease the



information gap between the urban and rural areas. The center is building an electronic education model to achieve this.

Participating libraries:

1. Glubokoye District Library (Glubokoye Village),
2. Zyryanovsk District Library, (Zyryanovsk City),
3. Karon-Karagay District Library (Bolshenarymskoye Village),
4. Kurchum District Library (Kurchum Village),
5. Ridder State Library (Ridder City),
6. Tarbagatay District Library (Aksuat Village),
7. Ulan District Library (Molodezhny Village),
8. Urjar District Library (Urjar Village),
9. Shemonaikha District Library (Shemonaikha Village).

The center cooperates with external groups, such as NGOs, authorities, etc. In collaboration with the local government, the center opened free access to the East Kazakhstan e-Government, government websites and portals.

Every day 60-70 people take advantage of the free Internet access



4.2 Venue # 2: Public Access Site (PAS)

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?

Public Access Sites are being established as a part of State Reduction of Information Inequity Program and will provide access to future e-government services as well as to the Kazakhstan's segment of the internet. Two types of public access sites are planned under the program: the first type includes information kiosks with touch screens and built-in printers (type I); the other resembles a telecenter or internet café with computers, scanners, printers and other equipment (type II). Lack of access to the World Wide Web (WWW) will be among the hindering factors for the wide use of these kiosks by the citizens.

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)?

Public Access Sites of second type are being opened at every major KazPost office (national postal service provider) and many Kazakhtelecom's offices. Government sponsored information kiosks are being installed at Akimats (an equivalent to Mayor's office), KazPost offices, some libraries, as well as other public venues and would be an excellent point of access, especially in rural areas.

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.

These venues are located in public places, such as city, province and district Akimats (mayor's offices), province libraries, universities, land committees (or similar institutions), post offices, airports, large supermarkets.

The general problem of accessibility for people with disabilities to public places is common for these venues as well.

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.

The PAS are equipped with modern computers, scanners and printers and information kiosks have printers built into them and provide touch-screen interface. Both allow access to government information and some services as well as the Kazakhstan's segment of the internet and thus technologically they are very appropriate for the task.

Online government services will be of high demand by the population once they are fully rolled out, despite low awareness level of the population and low computer literacy.

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.

The services are free of charge. Users would require a degree of computer literacy in order to interact with the digital ICT services, and literacy would be required to read the information available. Access for disabled groups is not always available.

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?

There are no fees associated with using either PAS or information kiosks.

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.

Both public access sites and information kiosks are distributed evenly across the territory of the country.

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:

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.

Electricity, internet connection, awareness, computer literacy.

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)?

It is difficult to assess the Capacity ecosystem for this type of venue as there are not that many operating at this point. However, the content that is already provided, but more importantly that will be provided in the near future is of high value and relevance to the public. The technology is not that complex for the urban areas, but difficulties can be foreseen in the rural areas where the population is less computer literate; sufficient training will be required. The government plans account for the training needs and it is estimated that over 2 million Kazakhstanis will receive computer literacy trainings by the end of 2009 according to the State Information Inequity Reduction Program.

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.

It is planned that PAS of type II will have at least one person as a full time employee designated as support person/consultant. PAS that will open at KazPost will have the staff of the whole post office that vary from 2 to 50, depending on location.

Information kiosks will not have any staff associated with them. The government program only includes technical maintenance support for the services. It is anticipated that the people will use the terminal on their own after reading instructions posted near the terminal.

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).

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

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

Overall capacity of the staff at managed Public Access Sites is inadequate to help users access information. Specifically, PASs assume that a computer literate person will come to use the services offered, which is not always a case.

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>
11. Access to Kazakhstan's segment of the internet	All websites hosted in Kazakhstan
12. Access to e-government services	There are not that many as of mid-year 2008
13. Printing	
14.	
15.	
16.	
17.	
18.	
19.	
20.	

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

As mentioned earlier, managed PASs can have more services as they are not limited technologically (i.e. additional devices can be connected to a computer, such as scanner), while information kiosks only have web browsing and printing capabilities.

The research team was not able to find any operational PASs in rural areas.

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.

All services offered at these centers are free of charge and therefore theoretically affordable to the entire population. All the PASs are located in public places and are accessible to any person. No specific disabled friendly services have been introduced. The majority of PAS buildings do not have ramps or any other special conveniences for the disabled. The government program also does not provide for special consultants to help people use the PAS. This leads to the conclusion that this PAS will be difficult to access for the disabled, older people and other underserved groups.

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:

PASs provide access to e-government services and Kazakhstan's portion of the internet. This includes e-government portal, websites of state agencies and organizations as well as all other websites hosted in Kazakhstan.

Other Content Needed:

Current e-government services are very limited in both numbers and scope to attract users and need further development to satisfy the demand. New services that are of the value to citizens need to be launched.

All experts have agreed that there is not enough local content in Kazakhstan and users mostly get information from the content hosted abroad (Russia and other countries).

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

State programs on e-government and reduction of information inequity aim at increasing the local content and introducing new e-government services.

Source: Expert interviews, *Status of ICT in Kazakhstan, Vol. 1 and 2.*

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.

All government websites and all e-government services are (will be) available in Kazakh and Russian.

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:

All activities at PASs are directly related to computer use. People are mostly looking for information on education (near 40%), news (18%) and personal information (14%). Interestingly, none of the users claim to be using government services despite the fact that PASs were established to provide access to e-government services. E-mail (46%), web browsing (27%) and chat (19%) are the most requested services at PASs. Other types of information sought at PASs include work related information and financial information.

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:

When it comes to PAS, users visit them at various intervals, however “frequently” was the most common response (29%). They are predominantly female (71%), aged 15-35, Kazakh (55%), with either high school, college or university education, in medium income bracket and medium social status.

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.

It is high provided that the people are informed and appropriately trained. The centers are accessible, conveniently located and free of charge. However, users need to have adequate computer skills to access the information, so overall the low levels of computer literacy obviously limit capacity.

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:

ICT specific training courses: The E-Government Development Program and the Program on Reduction of Information Inequity provide training for government and education workers. For example, during 2007, training was delivered in twenty-four schools in Taldykorgan. The courses were offered only for a month and the interviewees noted the low number of applications from the population. The interviewees site insufficient awareness amongst the population as the cause.

All trainings were conducted in Akimats and Secondary schools. The program on Reduction of Information Inequity stipulates additional computer literacy trainings offered to the public. It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of these trainings.

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.

Today it is difficult to evaluate the opportunity to integrate information received through this type venue because the system is not yet functioning. However, one may assume that the level of use/integration will be low in the beginning and will require additional resources first of all for informing and educating the public, as well as for training government employees. The second stage will require expanding the range of interactive information services provided. The centers have been placed in areas that the public accesses and gathers in in order to ensure that the process of accessing information can be integrated into everyday activities.

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.

The public is unsure of the concept and is negatively inclined towards the centers.

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.

This cannot be determined at this stage as all the centers are not yet fully operational.

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?

No specific concerns at this moment

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)

There are not that many e-government services available, although they are very desirable. On the other hand, the general population is computer illiterate and is generally unaware of e-government and its benefits.

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)?

Rapid economic growth in recent years, President's long term vision and new government programs on e-government and on Reduction of Information Inequity were among the key driving factors for creation of PASs in Kazakhstan. Generally increasing economic activity of the population requires efficient and cost effective ways to interact with the government. E-government is also a good way to address rising corruption issues in the country.

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.

Rapidly expanding economy allows for higher government spending on such initiatives as PASs and this has a positive affect for this type of venue.

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 are the following state programs that affect the PAS: Program on Formation and Development of National Information Infrastructure for 2001-2003 that further led to e-Government Concept in 2004, two e-government programs for 2005-2007 and 2008-2010, two Telecom Sector Development programs for 2003-2005 and 2006-2008 and the Program on Reduction of Information Inequity for 2007-2009. Additionally there are the following laws that affect the activities of PAS: Law On Electronic Document and Electronic Digital Signature, Law on Communications, Law on Informatization. All of these documents are believed to have positive affects on PAS – they promote their creation and provide for the necessary mechanisms for their

functioning.

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.

The leadership of Nursultan Nazarbaev, the President of Kazakhstan was instrumental to getting the ICT development on the government's agenda. The new government programs prove that the government is keen to bring about the necessary changes to implement e-government and improve the ICT infrastructure. Public support is limited due to low awareness: the numbers of the Kazakhstanis that understand what e-government is and, moreover, its advantages are very small. Low computer literacy and internet penetration rates only add to the problem.

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)?

Public Access Sites are not organized into any formal network or association, other than being physically connected to the Kazakhstan's segment of the Internet.

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.

Public-private partnerships for this type of venue are limited to private companies supplying equipment for PAS as part of government procurement process.

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?

Public awareness about existence of such venues is low. Initial consultations/training in use of this venue is usually not available, especially for PAS of type I. Increasing the list of information services provided through the public access venues will add to the attractiveness of PASs.

4.2.5 For Publicly Funded Venues only: Revenue Streams

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

4.2.5.1 Budget

Total Budget for Fiscal Year 2007

Local currency name KZT amount (local currency) 560,000,000.
 Approx. equivalent in USD 4,563,977 based on exchange rate of 122.7 on date January 1, 2008.

4.2.5.2 Relative size of budget

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

Relative Size of Budget for same year	Total budget (KZT bn)	Comments
Total national budget	2,887.87	2007
Education	455.43	2007
E-Government Program	22.1	2007
PAS	0.56	2007

4.2.5.3 Sources of funding

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

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

Other Comments:

All PASs are 100% government funded.

4.2.5.4 Paths and Flows of resources

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

Creation of PASs is funded by the state budget through an allocation to the Agency for Informatization and Communication which further funds National Information Technologies, a state owned company responsible for implementation of government IT initiatives.

4.2.5.5 Fees and Cost Recovery

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

Generally, there are no fees involved with PASs, except for those established by KazPost and Kazakhtelecom where small fees for access can be applied.

4.2.5.6 Cost Categories

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)
If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)		
Building Infrastructure		
Utilities		
Staff Training		
Computers / Technology		
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

No information available.

4.2.5.7 Recent changes and future trends

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

More PASs should be appearing in the country in the near future. Specifically, it is planned that by the end of 2008 over 2000 PAS will be functioning in the country.

4.2.6 Case Example for Venue # 2: PAS

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.

The Informatization and Communication Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan launched the first pilot version of e-government web portal in 2006. Later, mobile and information kiosk versions of the e-government portal were launched. The e-government portal is a practical mechanism to implement the concept of “one-stop-shop” government service delivery. The project is a part of the 2005-2007 State E-Government Program approved by the Presidential Decree of 10 November 2004.



The mobile version of the e-government portal is a step of the concept of single access to different government resources. Additionally, it increases the scope of information and service resource accessibility and allows the portal to be accessed through pocket digital assistants (PDAs) and smart phones, in addition to desktop PCs and notebooks.

The web portal version for information kiosks further expands the range of accessibility of e-government information and service resources. Information kiosks, alternatively called public access sites (PAS), have been installed in public places in all provincial centers and national-level cities. They provide free access to portal's resources.

The sensor screens (touch screens) of the information kiosks help interactive communication. Such information delivery technologies as ADOBE FLASH and XML were used to develop the program interface. Each kiosks is also equipped with a built-in printer that will allow to print out various information, as well as confirmation of transactions ones they are available through the portal.

Besides information services, the e-government portal offers e-mail, contacts, news and article subscription services.

Although there are now over 1000 government information kiosks installed, they are rarely used and are often not powered or not connected to the network. Specifically, during site visits



in June 2008 the team observed two information kiosks in urban areas of Kazakhstan for half a day each. One kiosk was located at the Population Service Center in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, the other at the Population Service Center (PSC) in Almaty, the country's largest city. Despite the fact that few thousand people visit each PSC daily, not a single person came to use the kiosks during the hours they were observed by the team. Furthermore, when the team asked an operator of a copy machine located next to the kiosk in Almaty how often the kiosk is being used, the response was disappointing: "Usually, only kids who come along with their parents come and play with the touch screen for few minutes". The "lonely" information kiosk is pictured here to the right.

When it comes to rural areas, the situation is even worse: during site visits in June 2008, over 10 information kiosks were located in rural areas not far from Almaty and none of these kiosks were operational. Specifically, all but one had no power. Below are the pictures of some kiosks found in rural areas:



Non-working information kiosk at Kaskelen library.



Unplugged kiosk at the Talgar Akimat (Mayor's office).



The only kiosk that was plugged-in was found at the Kaskelen KazPost office. However, the screen read "No internet connection available".

4.3 Venue # 3: Internet Café

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?

Internet cafes are a very important venues for access to all sorts of information for all categories of users. In addition, they are providers of more affordable means of communication with other people (IP telephony, e-mail, instant messengers). Some provide computer gaming services in addition to internet access, while others are primarily gaming clubs with some machines allocated for internet access. Most of the internet cafes have modern computer equipment, are clean and easy to use. Usually well managed, there are always customers there. At some gaming clubs in large cities it is often difficult to get an empty computer for use. Although computers used for gaming are usually located separately, even the busiest gaming clubs are relatively quite, including the gaming sections.

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)?

Internet cafes are well positioned in terms of access. Despite higher prices than libraries and Public Access Sites, internet cafes offer significantly better experience for the user as they are usually for profit entities and customer satisfaction is of higher priority to owners and managers. This translates into better technology and wider spectrum of services offered.

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.

Usually, Internet cafes are well located throughout cities and towns.

There are very few internet cafes in rural areas.

The majority of Internet cafes buildings and equipment are usually not accessible to the disabled.

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 technology offered is appropriate and relevant in the larger urban, cosmopolitan areas where users are technologically savvy and familiar with different technological tools.

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.

The fees are affordable for the people from the lower-middle class and higher. Poor people cannot afford Internet cafe services.

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?

Fees not related to ICTs at internet cafes are usually related to food and drinks. Prices vary significantly depending on location and target consumer segment.

Indicate amount in local currency

Equivalent in US Dollars:

Date of estimate early 2008

and local currency name Kazakhstan Tenge (KZT)

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:

100-500 (\$0.8-\$4.16 USD)	Per hour (with Internet access)
50-500 (\$0.42-\$4.16 USD)	Per hour (without Internet access)
30-50 (\$0.25-\$0.42 USD)	Data download (per 1 Mb)
10-45 (\$0.08-\$0.38 USD)	IP Telephony (Central Asia, per min)
10-30 (\$0.08-\$0.25 USD)	Scanning, (per A4 page)
10-20 (\$0.08-\$0.17 USD)	Printing (per A4 page)
5-10 (\$0.04-\$0.08 USD)	Photocopying (per A4 page)

Local currency name: Kazakhstan tenge (KZT)

There are usually more services offered at internet cafes in cities. At the same time, prices at the internet cafes in cities are usually higher compared to those of urban areas.

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.

Internet cafes are located across the territory of Kazakhstan. There are more internet cafes in urban areas than rural.

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:

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 prices for Internet cafe services are not affordable to poor people.

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)?

Most of rural citizens coming to cities usually do not visit Internet cafes due to lack of computer skills. Besides, most of them do not have sufficient Russian and English language skills, in which the majority of content is provided.

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.

The majority of Internet cafes operate 24 hours/day. Employees work in three shifts. The average number of full-time employees per shift is between four and six. A small Internet cafe of 5 computers or less may have one person per shift, while a large one, with 50-60 workstations, may have 10 and more full-time employees per shift, especially if additional services are offered.

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).

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

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

The vast majority of Internet café staff are IT students or other students proficient in IT.

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

21. Internet

22. Computer games

23. IP Telephony

24. Printing

25. Photocopying

26. Food and drinks

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

Survey teams have found that the range of services offered is uniform across Kazakhstan. However, rural internet cafes tend to be much smaller in size and tend to have older equipment.

4.3.3.4 Programs for Underserved Communities

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

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

These are for profit entities that make no allowance for disabled or economically disadvantaged users.

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:

Internet, games, movies.

Other Content Needed:

There is not enough local content in Kazakhstan and users are mostly interested in content hosted abroad (Russia and other countries).

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

State programs on e-government and Reduction of Information Inequity aim at increasing the local content, such as new government websites being created, expanded and popularized, as well introducing new e-government services that will drive the local content use.

Source: Expert interviews, site visits

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.

Users are able to access any materials on the internet depending on the limitations of their language skills. Users with Russian and Kazakh, for example, will be able to access much more information than users who only speak Kazakh.

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:

Education (28%), personal information (27%), entertainment (15%), including movie and music downloading and viewing, and work related information(16%), are the most frequently sought types of information in urban areas. The situation is different in rural areas where customers

usually seek entertainment (75%), personal information (13%) and education related information (13%).

When it comes to ICT use at libraries, the following services are most requested ones: email (36.4%), web browsing (34.5%), chat (10.9%), business and commerce (3.6%) as well as digital book downloading and reading (7.3%).

4.3.3.8 Number, Type and Frequency of Users

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

Frequency of use was spread across survey variables. Users are predominantly female, aged 15-35 years, Kazakh, with either high school, college or university education, in medium income bracket and medium social status.

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.

The majority of Internet café clients are teenagers and young people who have good or excellent computer and Internet skills. The disabled community practically never use Internet cafe services for two major reasons: absence of accessibility and unaffordable services
A limited number of senior citizens also use Internet cafe services, mostly IP telephone and e-mail. The frequent senior clients are relatively proficient in ICT.

4.3.3.10 Training Courses for Users

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

Training courses: No courses are offered.

ICT specific training courses: No formal courses are offered, although the staff is always ready to assist, train and explain.

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.

Provided that the users are able to afford the fees, the internet cafes are easy to integrate into daily routines as many of them operate twenty four hours per day, and even offer food, allowing the users to eat while using the internet. Many students in larger cities have already integrated internet cafes into their daily routines.

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.

For the teenagers and young people Internet cafes are places of not only access to information, but also places for socializing and playing computers games. In other words, they are places for "hanging out".

For the remaining categories they are primarily information access venues and sometimes providers of additional services (photocopying, etc.)

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.

Internet cafes are a very important (the key) venue of access to all sorts of information for all the categories. In addition, they are providers of more affordable means of communication with other people (IP telephony, e-mail, instant messengers)

Web cameras are becoming more and more popular. VOiP communication technologies are becoming increasingly widespread. Both of these technologies are frequently used at internet cafes, which are becoming key communication venues.

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?

Most of the users trust internet cafes and they are usually safe to visit. There are some concerns that parents have over safety of their children at some computer gaming clubs, which are internet cafes at the same time. These concerns are limited to children staying long hours at internet and gaming clubs, missing classes at school and being subject to various influences (i.e. drugs).

There are little concerns that users have for privacy and safety of data. The team often observed many users leaving their personal data on hard drives of internet cafes. However, this seems to be an issue on a country-wide basis where the knowledge of computers is limited and many who often consider themselves advanced computer users are not aware of many safety and security

issues. An experience of one of the team members at his MBA class with fellow classmates being executives of different companies, including large multinationals showed that most of them are unaware of simple measures such as securing USB flash disks from computer viruses. Specifically, many visiting international professors were infuriated with their computers getting infected by storms of computer viruses when students tried to copy class presentations.

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)

General computer use assistance should always be available as many customers of internet cafes in Kazakhstan are far from being advanced computer users.

Internet cafes offer access to the broadest range of information. The next step up for frequent users would be having a personal connection and computer.

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)?

ICTs are becoming increasingly popular. This, along with increasing levels of disposable income, makes these for-profit organizations quite sustainable. There is also a positive government attitude towards ICT, and programs supporting the development of ICT. Internet cafes have become substitutes for libraries for many people, especially teenagers and youth. Some constraints are the increase of home broadband Internet connections, school computerization and relatively high prices for these services.

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.

Initially Internet cafes were very expensive and affordable only by people from higher-middle class and above. As ICT advanced and the country's economy strengthened, the Internet cafe fees declined and people's income increased, thus making them more affordable to a much broader audience. Of course, there is an income level below which affordability is a barrier to access.

Development of broadband and Wi-Fi Internet connection (which has already started in Almaty and Astana) and further decrease in prices may eventually lead to decline in the number of Internet cafe clients. People who come to the Internet cafes not to "hang out", but just to have

access to information, may prefer to have this access at home.

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.

The main aspect of legal and regulatory framework affecting internet cafes is regulation of the telecommunication sector. Effective deregulation and increase in competition in the sector are key to reducing internet connectivity tariffs that are currently very high compared to those of many other countries, including the EU. This will allow for internet cafes to lower prices, increase speeds and offer additional services, such as IP telephony where it is not offered and streaming video, such as IP TV.

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.

There is little political will or public support shown to internet cafes directly. However, the government has been claiming that deregulation and reform of the telecom sector is high on its agenda, although the progress is very slow.

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)?

Some internet cafes are parts of local and some international internet café chains and franchises, There are at least four known chains with some having over ten internet cafes. At least one chain is international.

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.

There are no known partnerships supporting this type of venue.

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?

There are no other factors that have been determined at this stage.

4.3.5 Case Example for Venue # 3: Internet Cafe

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.

Cafémax is one of the more advanced Almaty Internet cafés and is a part of a Russian chain. In addition to the main center with near 200 computers, Cafémax has two smaller additional locations in shopping centers of the city. The main location is open 24 hours a day and has spacious premises with modern equipment, a VIP area, a smoking area and a separate gaming area where the clients can play local network games, and also challenge other country teams in online games, such as Battlefield, Age of Empires, and Command & Conquer 3.



The center has near 100 computers available in the main "internet access" section.



The games section has is located separately and has powerful PCs capable of running latest PC games.



The Center also has a 24-hour coffee house offering coffee, tea, bakery products, desserts, burgers, toasts, sushi and rolls to clients.

Internet access is rather expensive at Cafemax – it starts from 350 tenge per hour when there are few visitors and reaches 450 tenge during the peak hours when the place is full. The prices have not prevented the customers from utilizing the services.



Internet cafes in rural areas are much smaller and do not have such an array of services as Cafemax. For example, Internet café in Talgar, small town in the South East of Kazakhstan, (pictured above) not too far from Almaty, the largest city has only four computers available to clients.



Internet café in Kokshetau, a city in the North of Kazakhstan.

4.4 Venue # 4: Population Service Center (PSC)

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?

PSCs use the “one-stop-shop” principle to provide state related information and government services to citizens. Additionally, they usually host banks, photo, printing and copying services, as well internet access kiosks on their premises.

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)?

PSCs are usually well located physically in cities. Accessibility for disabled and ergonomics remain an issue. Technologically, the centers are quite advanced; some offering internet access, digital printing, copying and photo services, and some have digital cueing equipment, as cues remain a large problem at most government offices that require government to citizen interaction. All government services offered at PSCs assume use of government databases by the clerks, with plans to allow self service as e-government is being rolled out. Generally, the services of PSCs are considered affordable by the population.

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.

Common problems for public venues:

Low levels of accessibility by the disabled and ergonomics (not enough seating capacity, some centers have uncomfortable windows for interaction with government employees).

Other equity variables such as economic situation, language, education, etc. do not play a significant role.

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.

Both the technologies offered and information provided at the PSCs are appropriate for this venue where people come to obtain information on and use state services. The number of state services offered is small, however, more services will be offered in the near future as the government continues the reform transferring services from various agencies and ministries to PSCs.

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.

Services provided by PSC are considered generally affordable by the population.

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?

There are no fees to obtain information on government services. Fees are associated with issuing documentation or carrying transactions with the government, such as issuance of passports, IDs, payment for government services and etc.

Indicate amount in local currency

Equivalent in US Dollars:

Date of estimate

and local currency name

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 no fees for use of information kiosks provided at PSCs. Fees for printing, copying and digital photography vary significantly at every PSC as these services are usually provided by private sector companies.

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.

PSCs are available in all oblast capitals, as well as other large cities and some small villages. Additional PSCs will be opened in the near future in other areas and it is planned to have 418 PSCs operation by the end of 2009, according to the Ministry of Justice.

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.

Corruption is one of the factors affecting equity access to information in Kazakhstan, which is heavily bureaucratic. Traditionally, personal connections or bribes make document issuing quicker and better quality. Usually personal connections or recommendations are more efficient in speeding up the document issue process.

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)?

This venue type is primarily for access to government information and services, as well as to facilitate roll-out of e-government services. It is not primarily intended for personal information access on a wide range of topics. However, these venues do have potential to become access points to wide array of information, especially in rural areas.

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.

The number of staff ranges depending on the region and location. The staff can range from 10 up to 300 people in PSCs of large cities such as Almaty and Astana that serve thousands of people daily.

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).

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

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

There are trainings organized by the Ministry of Justice available to new PSC employees. Some managers of PSCs have received training abroad. There are no specifics available on the content and duration of these trainings.

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

27. Individual documentation

Including birth and marriage certificates

28. Business registration

29. Registration of property rights

30. Information related to above mentioned services and procedures

31. Obtaining various certificates.

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

There are currently 30 services offered by PSCs (issuing a passport is a single service, issuing state ID is a separate service) with over 100 services planned to be offered by the end of 2009. Government services offered at PSCs are uniform across all centers in the country.

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.

There are no such special programs

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:

Content at PSC is usually limited by information on state services at this point. Additional content is available through information kiosks installed, but they are very seldom used. Despite the fact that few thousand people visit each PSC daily, not a single person came to use the kiosks during the hours they were observed by the team. Furthermore, when the team asked an operator of a copy machine located next to the kiosk in Almaty how often the kiosk is being used, the response was disappointing: "Usually, only kids who come along with their parents come and play with the touch screen for few minutes".

Other Content Needed:

PSCs currently cover only basic information needs when it comes to state services with more services to be offered in the near future. Citizens require more information on all aspects of citizen-to-government interaction, as well as such state services as education, business support and etc.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

The government has started the implementation of PSCs in 2006 and the initiative is planned to span many more years opening new PSCs and developing the existing ones. It is this development that assumes additional services offered and development of new content.

Source: Ministry of Justice, site visits.

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.

All resources are in two languages - Kazakh and Russian

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:

100% of respondents noted that they used only government services at PSCs. These services include:

- Obtaining information on procedures and documents required for various government services
- Documentation services (issuing IDs, passports and etc)

- Obtaining certificates (birth, marriage, real estate)
- Registration and permissions (real estate)

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:

When it comes to PSC, users visit them at rarely (37%) and the majority of the respondents were visiting PSC for the first time (53%). This is not exactly the sign of growing awareness but rather the recognition of the fact that PSCs are being opened recently (only since 2006) and are the only place for many government services thus the prevalence of the first time visits. The visitors are both male and female (50%/50%), representing all age groups and most ethnicities, with either high school, college or university education, in medium income bracket and medium social status.

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.

Users capacity to take advantage of PSCs is rather high because PSC services cover all categories. Physical factors (accessibility for the disabled and corruption) may be the limitations. Corruption remains a problem at the PSCs despite the fact that PSCs were introduced as a tool to fight corruption.

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:

ICT specific training courses:

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.

PSCs will become integrated into lives of citizens very fast as there soon will be no alternative to them and everyone seeking state service will need to turn to PSC. The process itself proves to be rather difficult because the service, location and staff competence level are still inadequate.

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.

Very good perception because these services directly influence every individual.
All people without exception receive these services, as stipulated in the legislation
Interviewees note that the venues were:
“very time-consuming”
“usually the staff do not have adequate knowledge and skills”
“you always have to pay some additional dues”
“you go there only when you really need it”

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.

This innovation makes public access to routine state information easier (e.g. registration and permission procedures), whereas several years ago it took enormous amounts of time and effort, and involved collecting numerous signatures from different places and officials in order to complete even a simple civic matter.

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?

The confidentiality issue is controversial in Kazakhstan, and difficult to maintain.

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)

The main information needs are satisfied. But the process is so poorly organized and time-consuming that it eliminates the positive effect of getting information. Often people do not have the required time to access the information service or are forced to seek “less legal” ways to get their information.

Launching and encouraging the use of self-service information kiosks along with introduction of e-government services may significantly increase the quality and number of information services, as well as reduce corruption.

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)?

Economic growth and government’s reform oriented agenda are two driving forces for PSC introduction and development in Kazakhstan. Citizens and businesses are tired of burdensome government procedures that take up a lot of time and are often corrupt, making PSCs attractive to the public.

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.

Countries rapid economic growth allows for increased national and local government budgets that creating a favorable environment for funding of PSCs.

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.

The government of Kazakhstan is making amendments to the necessary legal acts to enable PSCs to offer more and more services. Since PSCs operate on one window principle, it is necessary to amend the government procedures to minimize citizen interaction with government representatives.

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.

The President and the government are determined to fight corruption and improve delivery of government services to citizens. Some improvements in this are can already be felt by the public, however, the initiative has failed to reach the desired effect so far.

The public generally supports the improvements, however, it has been disappointed with the effort so far.

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)?

All PSCs operate under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan and are connected into IT networks with access to various government databases.

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 is no information available on any notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue, although there are private sector subcontractors involved in the process of setting up and running the PSCs. All non-government services provided by PSCs, such as banking, photocopying, photography, and etc are provided by private companies.

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?

There were no other environment factors identified during the research process.

4.4.5 For Publicly Funded Venues only: Revenue Streams

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

4.4.5.1 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 2007

Local currency name KZT amount (local currency) 7 billion.

Approx. equivalent in USD 57,049,714 based on exchange rate of 122.7 on date January 1, 2008.

4.4.5.2 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 (KZT bn)	Comments
Total national budget	2,887.87	
Education	455.43	
E-government program	22.1	
PSCs	7	

4.4.5.3 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:	100%	
International donors:		
National donors:		
User fees / services:		

4.4.5.4 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 PSCs comes from the budget of the Ministry of Justice, which is a part of the government budget and requires approval of the parliament of Kazakhstan.

4.4.5.5 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?

Fees vary in size and cover everything from issuing a state ID to making a photocopy. There are no fees associated with informational services.

4.4.5.6 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)		
Building Infrastructure		
Utilities		
Staff Training		
Computers / Technology		
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

n/a

4.4.5.7 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?

It is expected that the funding for PSCs will increase in the near future as more PSCs are opened and more services are introduced. The first funding for PSCs was allocated in FY 2005 and expected to increase every year through FY 2009.

4.4.6 Case Example for Venue # 4: Population Service Center

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.

On April 23, 2007 Almaty opened the third Population Service Center (PSC) based on the “one-stop shop” principle. The PSC is on Hojanov St. in specially redesigned premises with the total area of 3,666 sq. m.

There are 60 operators accepting and issuing documents at the PSC. It has all the information posted on walls and an electronic visitor optimization and calculation system. Moreover, it has such supporting services as a notary office, a photographer and a photocopying center. The total number of employees is

84 people, including 12 consultants.

Zhanargul Hasenova Deputy PSC Director told us that about 1,000 – 1,200 people visit the center daily.

“If a visitor’s documents are in full order, servicing him/her will take 2-3 minutes. If the documents are not ok, obviously it will require additional time” said Ms. Hasenova.

The PSCs are part of the National Plan to implement the President’s Address to the Nation of 18 February 2005 “Kazakhstan on the way to accelerated economic, social and political modernization”.

The essence of the PSCs is to create the most convenient conditions for the population in getting quality government services, reducing corruption and bureaucracy, eliminating other administrative barriers and offering information assistance.

The PSC offers over 80 types of government services: accepting and issuing documents of the justice, land property and tax authorities. The function of preparing the documents (passports, TRNs, SICs, etc.) is still in the domain of respective government agencies. Therefore, the PSCs are the intermediaries between the population and government bodies. The PSC sends orders to prepare documents to appropriate government agencies; when the document is ready, the PSC receives it and gives out to the requestor.

At the same time Zagipa Baliyeva, Minister of Justice, stated this new PSC takes into account criticism about disadvantages of the previously opened PSCs.

“I am sure the Ministry of Justice employees will make any effort to properly handle the documents of our respected citizens” Minister said.

Ms. Baliyeva also spoke about plans to open new PSCs. She said the Ministry was searching for buildings and preparing tender documents for government purchases of goods and services.

The PSCs will issue IDs, driver’s licenses, TRNs, land property documents, legal entity registration certificates, etc. The first stage of PSC creation was 1 November – 31 December 2005 and the second stage started on 1 January 2006.

According to the Minister, the PSCs will have electronic queuing and 30-40 operators will serve people at a time.

“The “one-stop-shop” PSCs will help to reduce corruption, by eliminating contact between the citizen

and the party preparing documents” Baliyeva noted.

The following pictures were taking at a PSC in Almaty in August 2008.



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?

Current information needs of Kazakhstanis are limited to information on various government services, education and personal information. Very few respondents indicated news as information they seek. Soviet mentality, low computer literacy and lack of sources are believed to be parts of the reason for this. Another critical limitation to access to information is underutilization of information by the people, i.e. even when people have access to information they rarely take advantage of it. Further development of access to information, including through ICTs, must be accompanied with activities and programs to develop the culture of information use.

5.1.2 Where people go

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

The notable venues of public access to information are: Population Service Centers (PSC), public access sites (PAS), state and private libraries of all levels, educational institutions (schools, colleges and universities), NGO resources centers and Internet cafes.

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).

Kazakhstan's access infrastructure is under development and is currently one of the hindering factors affecting access of individuals to information. Lack of competition in the telecom sector and inefficient regulation result in high internet tariffs. Low levels of computerization in schools and universities hold computer literacy levels. However, ongoing investment into physical infrastructure, fast growth of mobile communications, and cheaper computers will allow for better access to information in the future.

Computer literacy level in Kazakhstan was estimated at little less than 10% in 2007 while computer penetration was no more than 5% that year. This significantly limits opportunities for public access to information using ICTs, the most efficient way of information dissemination. However, the government plans to increase both numbers to 20% by 2010, along with internet penetration.

Lack of local content causes limited access of population to information that can directly influence their rights and interests and imposes language barriers (there is very little content in Kazakh language). People speaking only Kazakh are significantly limited in getting

information they need.

The environment is currently favorable for the development of information society in the country. Rapid economic growth in recent years, high literacy levels, President's long term vision and new government programs are among the key driving factors for increase computer and internet penetration in Kazakhstan. Increased government spending on creating new local content (publishing books and textbooks, creating websites), additional funding for libraries, investments in Population Service Centers are creating the necessary environment for the information society to develop. Rising disposable incomes allow Kazakhstanis to invest more time and money in educating themselves and their children which in turn increases the hunger for information. Implementation of state Reduction of Information Inequity and Implementation of Electronic Government in the Republic of Kazakhstan programs will provide access to key government services in the near future for all but especially to underserved and vulnerable groups .

5.1.4 Role of ICT

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

The role of ICTs in public access to information is currently limited in Kazakhstan considering low levels of computer literacy and internet penetration. However, the role ICTs play in access to information is ever more increasing. Rising disposable incomes allow Kazakhstanis to buy computers. Decreasing internet tariffs (although still relatively expensive compared to EU member states) and increasing availability of broadband internet in large cities allow for easy access to information worldwide as well as promoting information sharing and interaction between citizens.

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?)

Resources (primarily knowledge) should be invested in assisting the Government of Kazakhstan with implementation of international best practices in development of the country's information society. This assistance will be highly helpful in areas of e-government implementation and reform of government services. It is clear the government is determined to improve its current services offer and it is also clear that it needs advice on best approaches.

Assistance to public libraries is also necessary. The librarians are some of the lowest paid government employees and library budgets do not allow for installation of modern

equipment and training of personnel. Implementation of financial sustainability models for libraries can drastically improve the situation.

Help on approaches on raising awareness and popularizing both libraries and e-government services is also necessary.

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?

There are two simple key success factors that encompass enormous difficulties when implementing: making sure the demand for information is there and then ensuring that information can be delivered. Situation in Kazakhstan revolves exactly around these two factors: the citizens are reluctant to search for information even when it is available as they are simply unaware that this information exists and that it can benefit them directly, and the means for information delivery are very limited or non-existent. Thus, to be successful in meeting the information needs of the population it is first necessary to show that information is there and that it can benefit the individual directly, and then it is necessary to provide the information in most effective and efficient way, which will be different for different groups.

A key success factor that applies to any donor in Kazakhstan is ensuring the government buy-in and taking the full advantage of existing government programs. Resources of the government in Kazakhstan are vast and helping to spend them efficiently will always result in a success story.

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?

ICTs should play the key role when it comes to providing access to information and the country is already taking advantage of these new technologies. Such services as e-government, e-commerce, e-education, e-libraries are very appealing to Kazakhstan. ICTs are also the most efficient way to ensure access to information in the country where towns are separated by large distance and the population density is very low. It is much easier (and less expensive) to create one access point in the village, train the people on using it and provide access to a central e-library book database than investing in physical library infrastructure, publishing books and ensuring timely delivery of periodicals. E-government can provide services to citizens regardless of their location very fast, avoiding any cues, and most importantly, eliminating contact with government clerks and thus minimizing possibilities for corruption.

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. Public libraries do not advertise. A great portion of the public remains unaware of the

services that their local library can, and does, offer. A concerted information and awareness raising campaign about the value of the local library will help to bring the population to the libraries.

2. Public awareness raising campaign is also necessary to inform the citizens of information kiosks available at PSCs. None of the respondents in PSCs were aware of the kiosks and information services they offer.
3. An awareness raising campaign is also necessary for e-government. The vast majority of the citizens do not understand the specific benefits e-government can bring to them even if they are aware of the concept. It is also necessary to have all government staff involved to fully understand what e-government is and what principles are key to its success.
4. Public awareness campaigns should be launched using modern PR and marketing techniques in identifying which approaches work best for which group. Banks in Kazakhstan are usually very successful in positioning and advertising their products and the government can learn from this experience and can adopt some tactics and techniques.
5. Currently, e-government portal provides a limited number of information services and the ones provided are of little relevance to the majority of the population. The quality of these services is also low (i.e. the information is not provided in full and does not go into the necessary depth, the language is sometimes difficult to comprehend). It is necessary to expand the range of interactive information services provided by e-government, focusing on the highly demanded services first. The quality of these services should also be improved.
6. Kazakhstan needs to ensure that citizens' freedoms are respected, including the freedom of expression, speech and access to information.
7. Experiences of media combination such as the annual question and answer session should be replicated in other forms of government to citizen interaction, including information on various government procedures. Combining various media types allows maximizing the impact and ensuring all groups involved are covered. Radio may not be appealing to young internet users while rural elderly population will never choose other options.
8. Disabled and marginalized groups require particular affirmative action to be brought up into information society. Government needs to identify these groups very specifically and allocate resources to include these groups into its programs related to development of the information society in the country. Program on Reduction of Information Inequity fails to identify specifically such groups as the disabled, orphans and homeless as vulnerable and needing assistance to gain access to information, including government services. The program does not mention prison inmates when it comes to increasing computer literacy levels while this may be a good chance to help some of them to integrate back into the society when they are released. Government sponsored public access centers should include these groups when targeting population and advertising access.
9. It is necessary to develop local content, especially local content available online. Everything from news and entertainment portals to e-commerce websites need to be

developed and popularized in the country.

10. Although obvious, it is necessary to increase computer literacy and internet penetration in Kazakhstan.
11. Human resource problem. Only 2,000 IT specialists are trained every year, whereas the market demand is 5-7 times higher. The level of education in Kazakhstan institutions is poor due to lack of material and technical resources, decreasing numbers of qualified teachers and high corruption. New projects, venture funds, adaptation of educational programs to real IT market demands and attraction of former citizens who emigrated in 1990s-2000s can create conditions for quality IT education. The country needs to form a digital culture, ICT use in basic education for university students and increased material resources.

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.

6.3 Annotated Country Profile (form 2)

Attach here an updated copy of the annotated Country Profile (Form 2).

6.4 Other Appendices

Attach other appendices here, as needed.