PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION & ICTs
PHASE II REPORT

Namibia

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

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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 25 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

Namibia, classified as a lower-middle income country with a GDP of 4.1%,[1] is a sparsely-populated country with a population of 2.1 million and a population density of about 2.5/km. Due to the largely arid and semi-arid nature of the country, and the large distances between towns, most of the population lives in the larger towns of Windhoek, Swakopmund and Walvis Bay, and more than 65% in the smaller towns of northern Namibia. The traditional definition of urban versus rural is therefore not appropriate in this context as resources such as community resource centers, schools, clinics and libraries are largely concentrated within these geographical town areas. More than 50% of all schools (>720 schools), for example, can be found in the north of the country.

1.3 Country Overview

Overall ICT access is very limited throughout the country. A recent household survey indicates that the Internet is mainly accessed at the workplace or through schools.[2] Out of a total of 854 households surveyed in urban and rural areas, only 51 had household members that had used the Internet and of these members only 3.9% had an email address. Internet access is unreachable for many due to the limited number of fixed lines, the high costs of Internet access (despite slowly decreasing prices), the lack of electricity and the lack of bandwidth availability. The Namibian population is however characterised by high mobile phone usage, due to extensive geographic coverage (>65%) and 100% coverage

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[1] Source: National Planning Commission (2006 figures).
http://www.npc.gov.na/publications/National_Accounts_1996_to_2006.pdf

[2] Gillwald, A. (ed.) (2005). Towards an African e-Index. Household and Individual ICT Access and Usage across 10 African Countries. ResearchICTAfrica.net.

along all the arterial roads. Mobile telecommunications are likely to be the area where the most significant advances in ICT access can be made in Namibia. A significant means of communication can be found through the publication of SMS messages in local newspapers. This is offered free of charge to readers. In addition, more than 70 percent of users under the age of 25 are making use of Internet Relay Chat (IRC) and using mobile chat rooms with Mig and Mixit.

	Internet Subscribers		Broadband Subscribers			
	Subscribers (000s)	Subscribers per100 inhab.	Users (000s)	Users per100 inhab.	Total (000s)	Per 100 inhab.
	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007
Namibia	90	4.34	101	4.87	0.3	0.01
South Africa	4'279.2	9.02	3'966.0	8.16	335.1	0.7
Africa	**9'674**	**1.15**	**51'982.3**	**5.43**	**1'805**	**0.2**

Source: International Telecommunication Union[3]

The telecommunications and regulatory environment is challenging, with a monopoly in fixed line telephony, two mobile operators, and no provision for the use of VOIP (Voice over internet Protocol) by the public. The lack of certainty in the regulatory environment has been a limiting factor and there is a need for service- and technology-neutral licenses. The process of creating an Information and Communications Bill was started in 1999 and has reached the Cabinet Committee for Legislation, the last step before tabling in Parliament, only in July 2008. The primary delays were caused by the incumbent, government owned telecom. However, Namibia is now in the position to avoid mistakes made elsewhere.

The policy environment is in flux as the existing ICT policy is in the process of being updated during 2008. This process should be completed by August 2008 and the participative processes are in place to allow for a wide range of contributions. A significant feature in the ICT policy landscape was an ICT conference which took place in August 2007. The Conference was held under the theme "ICT for poverty reduction and sustainable development". This was attended by a cross-section of ICT players, governments, academics and NGOS. Several working groups were established to draw up recommendations for the development of an ICT strategy. The report of the Conference was submitted to Government and the Cabinet accepted the recommendations and established the Cabinet Taskforce on ICT. The President of Namibia also accepted a key recommendation of consolidating all ICT activities into a Ministry of Information and Communication Technology in April 2008, which has been put in place. The taskforce has recently met to take forward proposals in a number of areas. In the short-term the most critical are 1) public access to information and 2) the improved administration of the .na domain. There is also an increased emphasis on ICT skills development.

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[3] http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/icteye/Reporting/ShowReportFrame.aspx?ReportName=/WTI/InformationTechnologyPublic&RP_intYear=2007&RP_intLanguageID=1 (sourced 18 July 2008)

The Minister, Hon. Joel Kapanda, is changing the structure and strategic focus of the Ministry from being an Information and Broadcasting mouthpiece of government, to a contact point for citizen access to information and services from government.

1.4   Research Rationale, Sample, and Methods

This research study was initiated in early 2008 and consists of two phases – Phase I combined desktop research, telephonic and face-to-face interviews with key decisionmakers and experts, and selected site visits to readily accessible venues in Windhoek and Gobabis. Additional information was gleaned from the very limited number of available published and unpublished research reports to which the research team had access.

Phase II included a field survey which was undertaken during June and July 2008. Four types of venues were researched – public libraries, schools, educational institutions and commercial internet cafés. Schools were included in the survey (although excluded from studies in the other countries) since this is the main vehicle for ICT provision in Namibia. Venues were chosen based on accessibility to the community, the availability of ICTs at the locations, and the presumption that there would be more than 20 users per day. The limited availability of public ICT access points (outside of SchoolNets) resulted in a very limited sample for this study.

Public libraries

Site visits were done in four locations but surveys could only be undertaken in two public libraries:

- National Library, Windhoek: The first public ICT access point to include computers and internet access for the public.

- Greenwell Matongo, Windhoek: The only community library in the country to have ICT access for the public. However, at the time the survey was being done renovations were taking place and no users could be interviewed.

- United Nations and UNESCO Libraries, Windhoek: Easily accessible libraries with Internet access. Also well-known among Namibians.

Schools

Surveys were conducted in the following locations:

- Heroes Private School, Ondangwa – Not many learners were using the SchoolNet facility in the North and the research team needed to establish whether this was because they now had access to ICT at the school.

- SchoolNet Headquarters – the busiest of all public access points and situated in the previously disadvantaged suburb of Katutura in Windhoek.

- Gobabis Community Center – The only MPCC still functioning and providing access to the Internet. Operated in collaboration with SchoolNet.

Educational Institutions

Two locations were visited:

- Namibian Institute for Educational Development (NIED), Okahandja – The public information available covers all aspects of formal education, and teachers and students use NIED as the main resource centre.

- Institute of Information Technology, Windhoek – the fieldworkers used for the Phase II survey are studying at the institute and the student body could be used as a focus group.

Internet Cafés

Nine Internet cafés were visited but only five were included in the survey:

- Windhoek – Four commercial sites were identified in the CBD as well as the Internet cubicles in the Post Office. All are centrally located and therefore very accessible to the public.

- Okahandja – Situated in the CBD this was thought to be more accessible to the public than NIED.

- Rehoboth – Three sites were identified that provide access and possible information sites. The cafés were also chosen to see if a reason could be found for the previous USAID project failure which established two ICT sites in the town.

Two questionnaires were used, one for users and one for operators. The questionnaires were customized for local conditions. Due to the size of the country, and the sensitivity of the public to participating in surveys, a team of locally-based researchers familiar with each area was deployed and coordinated by the Namibian key researcher.

Data capturing and analysis was done centrally by the research team under supervision of the Namibian researcher.

1.5   Information Needs of Underserved Communities

There is pent-up demand for the use of ICTs, given the huge distances and geographic isolation of large parts of the population. The provision of electricity is a particular challenge and alternative energy sources are in use and/or being investigated e.g. solar power and wind energy by MTC (mobile operator) and SchoolNet Namibia. The extent of the problem is illustrated by the fact that only 6.1% of rural households have access to electricity. In urban areas, access to fixed line telephony is the major limiting factor. The large proportion of youth in the country also points to the need to focus on this target group and particularly on the use of ICTs in improving the quality of education. There is however a need to bring down internet costs, for example, some libraries charge about

N$20 per hour (about US$ 2.63), which is beyond the reach of most of the public. The government has established Edunet, an educational ISP, which has been able to offer subsidized internet rates to educational institutions.

The government's intention to introduce ICTs into schools, including the allocation of budget, indicates a level of commitment to the rollout of ICTs. What is however not clear is the extent to which existing policies will allow schools to make their ICT resources available to the local community. This points to a possible future need for expanding the establishment of multipurpose community centers, or providing existing facilities with ICT access.

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

Strengths: This study is occurring at the same time as the recognition by the National Government and key stakeholders that "the importance of ICT lies not in technology per se, but in the ability to create information and accessibility by the intended user".[4] SchoolNet has recently been selected as the preferred implementation partner and a submission has been made outlining the parameters for a Community Information Resource Centre (CIRC) Business Plan Process.

Weaknesses: Namibia has a limited number of public ICT access points, but beyond the SchoolNet initiative there have been few successful sustainable projects. A recent status quo report on community centers (August, 2008) reveals that of 59 such government operated community centers in the country, only two have ICT access. Two major projects were undertaken to provide public ICT access points. The first project, completed in 2004, was implemented by the Ministry of Regional, Local Government & Housing & Rural Development. The project was to create information centers at local government level (towns, villages, etc.) and these access points were meant to be available to the local community. The project failed primarily because staff members made use of the equipment and were not inclined to allow public usage for fear of breakage and theft. The second project in 2003 was funded by USAID with the intention of establishing Internet Cafés at existing places of business. The businesses, primarily SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises), were identified and the equipment and two years of running costs were funded. However, as soon as the donor funding was withdrawn all the cafés closed down as they were unsustainable. The major lesson to be learnt from both these projects is that public ICT access points will have to be funded for longer periods of time until usage within the communities makes them self-sustainable. This would probably be for a period of ten years or more.

Opportunities: The newly created Ministry of Information and Communication, and its recognition and emphasis on creating public ICT access points, should be seen as a promising move towards achieving widespread access. The recognition that information centers should all include basic infrastructure such as photocopiers, fax machines and computers, whether they are housed in libraries, schools, health clinics or even police

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[4] Focal Point Magazine, June 2008

stations, is a milestone. It has also been suggested that each center should have additional technologies such as scanners, speech recognition, webcams, etc. and should allow for VOIP and video conferencing.

1.7   Salient Findings

General findings

The characteristics of users can be divided by age group, namely those above and below 25. Most users above 25 use the Internet for work and keeping in touch with their business colleagues. The Internet is seen as an information source and very little time is spent on using it as an entertainment medium. This is probably because of restrictions in the workplace, as well as the high costs of telephony for home dial-up services.

Many of the younger users (below 25) have access to ICTs for which they do not have to pay, for example free access at their places of study or on their parents' account. If they must pay for usage, such as through the use of their mobile phones, they do not wish to download. They use mobile services to keep in touch with their social network (chat) and to make appointments with one another (SMS). Their usage of the Internet is for emails, but most prefer social network sites where messages are sent across the network rather than to an individual friend. If they download from the Internet, they access music and films, mostly through pirated means. There are very few gender differences in terms of usage.

The major problem is the digital divide between the urban and non-urban areas. As with all other amenities, the major centers have the same facilities as in Europe or elsewhere, while the non-urban areas do not even have the basic amenities.

Libraries

There are 56 functional community libraries with an additional three to be opened by the end of 2008. Most libraries are small with only one room to accommodate ICTs, shelves and a service counter. Plans are underway to build regional libraries with more space. Computers are available in 21 libraries, but only five have internet access. A further ten libraries will have computers by the end of the 2008/09 financial year and an additional 10 libraries per year will be provided with computers until 2010/11. These are generally provided for administrative access, but librarians may also provide access to the public if requested.[5] The National Library in Windhoek has seven computers for computer and internet access, although these are very old and do need replacing. A computer lab with 10 computers will be installed in the National Library by the end of 2008. In addition there are a number of specialist libraries and resource centers for teachers (about 17), and adult education (about 3), but these do not provide broader public access. A community library based in the less developed area of Greenwell Matongo in Windhoek is currently being renovated and will provide a computer lab with 10 computers. The renovations are to be completed by the end of July and the computer lab installed by October 2008.

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5   National Library of Namibia Website, list of all libraries http://www.nln.gov.na/nis/address.html Accessed 2 March 2008. Updated information provided through personal communication, 11 March 2008.

Schools

The largest number of access points is currently set up through schools and the activities of SchoolNet Namibia (see case example). Out of a total of about 1626 schools, 700 have access to ICTs and of these 280 presently have consistent internet access for learners and teachers. About 40 (20%) of these schools offer ICT access to the local communities. SchoolNet Namibia has been providing technical support and 24/7 Internet access to these schools. In those schools without water and electricity they have used wireless technology in combination with solar power and diesel generators. Further rollout of ICTs to schools will take place through the TechNa! Initiative and the Ministry of Education. Tenders were requested for the provision of computers and internet access to schools. Implementation has been problematic and to date SchoolNet Namibia still remains the largest provider of ICTs and support to schools in the country.

Multipurpose Community Centers (MPCCs)

Multipurpose Community Centers are being set up by the government in each of the 13 regions, with a planned rollout for three regions per year. Each of these MPCCs is equipped with television sets, video recorders, DVD players/recorders, computers, printers, photocopiers, projectors and screens, generators and small public address systems. Training is provided to community members in the use of the equipment. Six centers were established in late 2007/early 2008 in three regions (Kavango, Kunene and Omaheke) and feasibility studies have been conducted in a further three regions (Hardap, Otjozondjupa and Omusati).[6] Due to the remoteness of the sites, and the recent flooding in the northern regions which made local travel impossible, site visits could not be carried out.

Youth Development Centers

There are a few multipurpose community centers in place which have a particular emphasis on youth development, but site visits in Windhoek revealed no ICT access at the youth development centre in Katutura, although basic ICT literacy training was offered. There is a thriving youth centre at Gobabis, a town about 200km outside of Windhoek, the Ounongo Technology Centre. This was established in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth, National Services, Sport and Culture. This is however essentially run by a local NGO.

Telecenters and Cybercafés

Public ICT access points in urban areas are plentiful and easily accessible, however the usage rates are expensive (minimum about USD$ 4/hour). The commercial cybercafés are found mostly in Windhoek, Walvis Bay and Swakopmund, and towns or holiday camps frequented by tourists. Wifi spots have been set up in a number of hotels and tourist locations throughout the country but these are neither accessible nor affordable to the broader public. The City of Windhoek has a number of cybercafés in the central business area and suburban shopping malls - these provide gaming and as well Internet access. The Windhoek Post Office provides three Internet access points, but these do not appear to be

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[6] Information provided by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, April 2008

well-used. According to available information, no other post offices in the country provide ICT access.

The major telecommunications provider, Telecom, is rolling out a program to provide wireless internet access at their customer service centers throughout the country. The ICT infrastructure is in place in most urban areas, but usage uptake has been very slow. This is primarily because it is marketed under the SWITCH brand which provides CDMA wireless telephony – even though Telecom is not a licensed mobile operator. This is being addressed once the new Information and Communication Bill is tabled.

Rössing Foundation

The Rössing Foundation[7] has recently starting dedicating more resources to ICTs through a number of projects. Through a partnership with SchoolNet Namibia, ICT access is offered through its Community Training Centre in Ondangwa in the north of Namibia. The Rössing Foundation has also partnered with the Ministry of Education to run a computer-assisted programme in mathematics and science for local schools in Khomasdal, just outside Windhoek.[8]

Rössing is also working closely with the Namibia Training Authority (NTA) to ensure that the standards of training (including ICT skills) are standardized throughout the country. Their efforts at providing information access to communities will probably become part of the national CIRC efforts being supported by the Cabinet Taskforce on ICT.

1.8   Key Recommendations

1. The availability of ICTs in libraries is very limited but this presents significant opportunities for expanding ICTs into libraries, particularly since the highest usage is among the student population. This creates a range of possibilities in terms of the provision of the required ICT infrastructure, extensive Internet access, development of appropriate local content and the provision of mass ICT literacy training.

2. Limited ICT skills in government, schools and libraries are a severely limiting factor and an extensive ICT literacy campaign will be necessary to ensure the necessary leverage among users. ICT training should be included more prominently in the training of teachers and librarians, as well as civil servants.

3. There is limited to no data available on user patterns and perceptions in libraries – this type of information is required to inform library management on how best to provide services to their clients. There is also little understanding of the needs of older users (women and men) who at this stage are generally not users of library facilities.

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[7] Rossing is a large uranium open pit mine in Namibia, with Rio Tinto being the majority shareholder. The Rossing Foundation played a significant role during the apartheid era when Namibia (then South West Africa) was part of South Africa by providing educational opportunities to talented students of color who were denied access to the better schools.

[8] http://www.rossing.com/namibia.htm Accessed 8 April 2008

4. More research is needed to assess the availability of content in local languages, the extent to which this is required, the likely levels of demand and the type of content that could be developed for future use in libraries, schools and youth development centers. There may also be opportunities for local content creation by the youth through the youth development centers and proposed multipurpose centers. This could be set up as a work creation program throughout the country.

5. A Situational Analysis needs to identify all the existing community access points (clinics, libraries, recreational centers, craft centers, etc.) and indicate the various successes or failures. This information should be used to identify good practice models according to user needs in the identified areas. The various programs should be consolidated in as far as infrastructure and equipment being provided, with employees from the applicable Ministries providing the service.

6. Government services need to be identified that lend themselves to being provided electronically. Possible applications could include reminders to visit the clinic or informing a person once their identity documents are ready for collection. This will require the use of appropriate ICTs (e.g. text messaging by mobile phones) in the responsible Ministries.

7. Government websites must become more functional - at present most websites look appealing, but are far too clogged with graphics which make take long to download, particularly when bandwidth is limited and expensive. Information on the websites should also be updated more regularly.

8. The cost of computers and their software is limiting their availability. Government should therefore have a policy to support the use of Free and Open Source software (FOSS).

9. ICT training should be implemented in the school curriculum starting from pre-primary level. It is important that citizens have the skills to use the technology themselves.

10. Government services should be accessed free of charge through established Information Kiosks within integrated Community Information Resource Centers.

2 Methodology

In Namibia four types of venues were selected: 1) Public Libraries and those operated by international agencies such as the UNDP and the US Information Services (USIS); 2) Schools and educational institutions; 3) Community Centers and 4) Internet cafés (commercial and the post office).

The provision of ICT services by SchoolNet falls in two categories - in schools and as community centers in partnership with other stakeholders. Where SchoolNet provides services to community centers this is clearly indicated. SchoolNet provides access to rural and remote schools, but most of these schools do not provide public ICT access.

The following towns were chosen for the study: Windhoek, Ondangwa, Rehoboth, Gobabis and Okahandja.

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[9]	SchoolNet	Community Centers	Cybercafés
Total number in country	56	700	59	17
A. # in urban location	1	300	0	13
% offering ICT	100%	100%	17%	100%
Total # of people served (annual)	Not known	Not known	Not known	Not known
B. # in non-urban location	55	400	59	4

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[9] All libraries, except for the Windhoek National Library, have been classified as non-urban.

% offering ICT	2%[10]	90%	3%	100%
Total # of people served (annual)	Not known	Not known	Not known	Not known

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

In Namibia non-urban would refer to the areas where municipal services such as water, electricity and sewerage are non-existent. This also means that any public information points, such as clinics, would not have infrastructure besides basic power generation and water. Thus it is better to classify Namibia into three types of areas – 1) urban, which refers to municipalities that provide their own infrastructure; 2) semi-urban, where municipalities provide some or little infrastructure; and 3) non-urban, which refers to areas where the national government provides all services.

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

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

Other public access experience #1: Internet Cafés

Description :

The NamBizDotCom survey of 2004 revealed that there were 17 internet cafes whose sole means of income was through the provision of internet access. No updated figures are available. In reality, almost 90% of all tourism accommodation (about 1800 in 2004) provides internet access to their guests, as well as to the passing tourist trade. In areas where internet usage is sought, the public can make use of these services for a fee.

Total number in country: 17 (2004)

% offering ICT access: 100%

% in urban location: 100%

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

The tourism industry is an industry that works globally and therefore must have internet access as part of its daily business requirements. The tourist today expects such services (mobile, email, web browsing) throughout his or her stay and this is available in over 95% of the country. This does not however mean that the services are readily available to the public at an affordable fee.

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[10] Only Greenwell Matongo has internet access

Use by local citizens is also increasing as the network coverage increases and the cost of mobile phones with the appropriate technology (CDMA, 3G, EDGE, GPRS, etc.) continues to fall. The three mobile operators all provide internet and email facilities via their networks.

Other public access experience #2: Multipurpose Community Centers (MPCCs)

Description :

The multipurpose centers are called various names by the various Ministries and NGOs. The concept of collaborative provision of services to communities is now underway through the establishment of Community Information Resource Centers (CIRCs), but none have as yet been realized. The only government-initiated MPCC that is still operating is based in Gobabis and is being operated in collaboration with SchoolNet. Training takes place every morning and computer usage is free, with telephony costs for Internet.

Total number in country: 6

% offering ICT access: 1

% in urban location: 3

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

The operation of only one MPCC in the country is an indication of the previous lack of commitment to the rollout of public ICT access points. SchoolNet has been a viable operation and its presence and involvement in Gobabis is probably a contributing factor to the sustainability of this center.

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.

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

Namibia only gained its independence from South Africa in 1990 (and the town of Walvis Bay in 1994). This has meant that the legacy of apartheid, as in South Africa, has left huge discrepancies along racial lines in the country. Namibia lies among the countries with a very high GINI Coefficient (74.3%) and in 126th place in the world.[11]

Namibia's population is estimated at about 2.1 million (2006), with a population growth rate of about 1%.

The relatively high incidence of HIV/AIDS has taken its toll in terms of life expectancy which is estimated at 46.9 years (2005 estimate), as compared to the 2000 figure of 52.3 years. Almost 20% of the population between 15 and 49 is infected with HIV/AIDS.[12]

Blacks are in the majority, making up 87.5% of the total population and comprised of a number of ethnic groups – Oshiwambo, Nama/Damara, Herero, Lozi, Kwangali and Tswana. The White population, those of European descent, is estimated at 6%, and those of mixed origin 6.5%.

The distribution of income in the country is generally recognized as the most unequal in the world.[13]

Earnings Distributions

	Per Capita GDP	Percent of all GDP
Richest 5.4 %	13,491	52.00%
Next 33.8 %	1,479	35.60%
Next 27.5 %	417	8.20%
Poorest 33.3 %	177	4.20%
All Namibians 100%	1,400	100%

The use of racial categories is a very sensitive issue in Namibia and was therefore not assessed directly by the researchers. Generally users were asked to indicate their home language, which was in turn used to assess race/cultural groups.

2.2.2 Educational level

Primary school enrolment rates are estimated at 99.3% with a 76% completion rate for men and 85% for women. Girls outnumber boys in both primary and secondary

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[11] http://www.swivel.com/data_columns/spreadsheet/1748283?page=2. Accessed 9 April 2008

[12] http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/NAMIBIAEXTN/0,,menuPK:382319~pagePK:141132~piPK:141109~theSitePK:382293,00.html Accessed 8 April 2008

[13] http://www.usaid.gov/na/overview2.htm

education. The secondary school enrolment rate is estimated at 56.3 %.

Adult literacy has increased rapidly in recent years, with 83.5% of women over the age of 15 regarded as literate as compared to men at 86.8%.[14]   This compares well with the 1990 statistics at 74.9%.[15]

ICT literacy is very low in the country, which is in turn hampered by the lack of vocabulary for ICTs in Afrikaans, the language of choice for over 70% of the population.

Educational levels were assessed as part of the user survey.

2.2.3   Age

The 2001 Population Census shows that the country has a relatively youthful population with 39% of the population under 15 years of age and only 7% over 60.[16]

93% of those surveyed were under the age of 35. Particular effort was made to understand the needs and uses of ICTs in older age groups. This was found to be mostly for staying in contact with family and friends outside Namibia.

2.2.4   Gender

Women make up 50.4% of the population (2004) and 44% of the total labor force which is estimated at 1million.

47% of the users of the venues were female. Very little difference in gender usage is found amongst younger respondents. In social network usage as well as mobile connectivity it was noticed a higher percentage of females made use of these services regularly.

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.

Due to the largely arid and semi-arid nature of the country, and the large distances between towns, most of the population lives in the larger towns of Windhoek, Swakopmund and Walvis Bay, and more than 65% in the smaller towns of northern Namibia. The traditional definition of urban versus rural is therefore not appropriate in this context as resources such as community resource centers, schools, clinics and

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[14] World Bank Group. Gender Stats. http://devdata.worldbank.org/genderstats/genderRpt.asp?rpt=profile&cty=NAM,Namibia&hm=home Accessed 8 April 2008

[15] Millennium Development Goals for Namibia, World Bank, http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/ddpreports/ViewSharedReport?&CF=&REPORT_ID=1305&REQUEST_TYPE=VIEWADVANCED&DIMENSIONS=107

[16] Government of Namibia website, http://www.grnnet.gov.na/

libraries are largely concentrated within these geographical urban areas

In Namibia non-urban would refer to the areas where municipal services such as water, electricity and sewerage are non-existent. This also means that any public information points, such as clinics would not have the infrastructure besides the basic power generation and water. For this survey it was difficult to access non-urban centers. The definition used for practical purposes was to classify towns with few or no tarred roads as semi-urban. This included some underserved suburbs of towns.

2.2.6   Other inequity variables

Other Inequity Variable 1: Access to reliable infrastructure and facilities

During apartheid, as in South Africa, large numbers of the non-white population (which included the black and mixed-race communities), were forced to live outside the urban areas and at a distance from the central (and more desirable) centers of towns. This demographic is still in place although economics are more likely to be the driving force underlying choices in where to live nowadays. Generally these areas have fewer resources in terms of tarred roads, electricity, telecommunications, and access to government services, clinics, housing and schools.

The SchoolNet projects are concentrated in the previously disadvantaged areas and thus represent a true picture of usage in these communities.

Other Inequity Variable 2: Local languages

Namibia has 21 distinct languages, although English is the main language used in schools and in the business community. A large proportion of the population is conversant in Afrikaans. In terms of local content however, there is minimal material in local languages although there are some initiatives underway to encourage the writing and publishing of books for children.

The researchers all received basic ICT language translations into Afrikaans, as well as information sheets explaining the terminology in simple language. The interviews were conducted in local languages as required.

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.

15 – 20 documents reviewed.

There is little published information about ICTs in Namibia. Additional information

was gleaned from a number of published and unpublished research reports.

2.3.1.1   Most useful bibliography:

Gillwald, Alison (ed) 2005. Towards an African e-Index. Household and Individual ICT Access and Usage across 10 African Countries. Chapter 7. Namibia. Pp 106 – 119. ResearchICTAfrica.net

Stork, Christoph & Esselaar, Steve (eds) 2006. Towards an African e-Index. SME e-Access and Usage across 14 African Countries. ResearchICTAfrica.net

Report On The Conference On Information And Communication Technologies For Poverty Reduction And Sustainable Development, 2 – 3 August 2007, Safari Hotel Conference Centre, Windhoek. 20 August 2007

The ECA/IDRC Pan-African Initiative on e-Commerce -Regional Report on Southern Africa – March 2001

ICT Policy for the Republic of Namibia.

http://www.ictalliance.org.na/ictnam/docs/ICT%20Policy%20Main%20document.pdf

ICT policy documentation

http://www.ictalliance.org.na/ictnam/

National Library and Archive Services, Ministry of Education

http://www.grnnet.gov.na/grnabout.html

Vision 2030 for Namibia

http://www.npc.gov.na/vision/vision_2030bgd.htm

SchoolNet Namibia

www.schoolnet.na

Rössing Foundation

http://www.rossing.com/namibia.htm

National Planning Commission

http://www.npc.gov.na/publications/National_Accounts_1996_to_2006.pdf

National Library of Namibia Website, list of all libraries
http://www.nln.gov.na/nis/address.html

ICT Alliance of Namibia – Conference on Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development

http://www.ictalliance.org.na/ictnam/

USAID /NamibiaOverview

http://www.usaid.gov/na/overview2.htm

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.

About 31 individuals interviewed.

Information gathering was undertaken through interviews (telephonic and face-to-face) with key decisionmakers and experts, and selected site visits to readily accessible venues in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia, and Gobabis, an agricultural centre about 200 km from Windhoek. There are only a small number of key players in the ICT arena in the country, with government and the telecoms players being the most significant aside from SchoolNet.

Contacts were made with the following institutions.
- Government Departments and Institutions
  - Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
    - Permanent Secretary
    - Deputy Director
  - National Planning Commission
- Libraries
  - National Library of Namibia
  - Greenwell Matongo Community Library (Katatura)
- Telecenters / Phone shops / Cybercafés
  - Post Office, Windhoek CBD
  - NamibNet, Windhoek
- Youth Development Centers
  - Ounongo Technology Centre, Gobabis
  - Youth Development Center, Katutura (Windhoek)
- Schools
  - SchoolNet Namibia Community Center / Support Center, Katutura
  - A. Shipena High School, Katutura
- International Donors / Foundations
  - UNESCO
  - Rössing Foundation (now National Training Authority) Library
- Telecom Namibia

2.3.3 Group interviews and focus groups

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

3 group interviews or focus groups.

Three group interviews were undertaken with students at the Institute of Information Technology (IIT) in Windhoek. The first group of students is studying for the International Business Diploma through Cambridge University, the second group PC Engineering and the third software development.

Pilot testing of the survey questionnaire was done with the students, all aged between 19 and 25 and predominantly white and of mixed origina. It was found that answers were almost all identical across all three groups. In addition their educational levels were all post Grade 10. It was felt that these questionnaires would skew the results and are thus not included in the survey results. However the following points of interest are noted:

- All students used mobile telephones;

- More than 80% of the students use more than ZAR 100 (US$13) on air time per week;

- The most popular mobile activity was "chatting";

- All students were registered on social networking sites, primarily Facebook.

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).

19 site visits.

Windhoek National Library – The users at the library were ICT literate and were prepared to assist with the survey.

SchoolNet Headquarters – This was the most used venue of all and most users in the afternoons were school learners using the computer facilities rather than internet access.

Greenwell Matongo Community Library – On the first visit there were two computers with internet connections. However no one was observed using the PC's, even though the library was overcrowded with learners. When the survey was conducted, the researchers found renovations taking place and were not able to conduct any surveys.

Internet Cafés Windhoek (5) – The five sites visited did not provide any users

who were willing to provide information except at the main Post Office. The other users were generally in a hurry and were mostly foreign tourists.

International Libraries Windhoek (2) – Two libraries were visited namely United Nations and the UNESCO library. Neither library allowed users to use email or copy to and from memory sticks. During the site visits very few users entered the facilities. It must also be noted that the UN library has police officers at the entrance desk. This could be very intimidating to potential users.

Institute of Information Technology Windhoek – The users were mostly students who used the internet during their free time.

Gobabis Community Centre – The student researchers visited the center twice but found the same users there on the second occasion.

Namibia Institute for Educational Development – a government institution responsible for development of curriculum and training materials. The Internet connection had been down for a few months and the librarian indicated that the internet was not needed as they have all the books needed for the Namibian school system. NIED does provide public access, but most local users from the town know that internet connectivity is erratic and only come to collect hardcopy information.

Internet Café Okahandja – Only three users were willing to answer the survey. The owner of the establishment also refused to allow the researchers onto the premises and the interviews were done on the street.

SchoolNet Ondangwa – There were on average five users per day. The usage increases considerably during periods when the schools give learners assignments.

Heroes Private School, Ondangwa – The learners used the facilities regularly and were extremely ICT literate.

Rehoboth Internet Cafés (3) – Three cafés were visited over two weeks but the number of users in this town 90 kilometers south of Windhoek was small. A café with 14 computers was established in 2003 under the USAID program but nothing remains of the equipment or owners.

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	SchoolNets	Internet Cafés	Educational Institutes
# of **urban** venues surveyed	2	1	1	-
# of **semi-urban** venues surveyed	-	2	4	2
# of respondents in **urban** venues	50	37	5	-
# of respondents in **semi-urban** venues	-	25	17	31

Survey description and comments:

The survey was planned to run over a two week period. The pilot phase was undertaken over two days with three researchers doing the questions at the same time. The first round of interviews was undertaken in June 2008. The venues were all notified in advance. The second round of interviews was conducted in early July 2008. The UN libraries and Internet Cafés were visited several times, both morning and afternoons, to assess if there were any users.

Several problems were encountered during the course of the survey, the major one being that respondents did not have time to assist. The survey approach is also relatively unknown to most people in Namibia, especially amongst the users of the venues being surveyed. Some respondents were also concerned that their ICT usage might be limited if they assisted in the survey.

The following venues were included in the survey:

Windhoek National Library – The library is situated opposite the Government Park in the Central Business District. The building also houses the Directorate of Libraries, the National Archives and the National Reference Library. It is on one of the main arterial roads and is accessible by taxi and bus. The facilities are extremely modern and well-used.

SchoolNet Namibia Headquarters – The SchoolNet headquarters is situated in Katutura, a former black suburb of Windhoek. The facility shares a building with various cultural and youth programs including a campus of the College of the Arts. It is situated close to a main shopping center and close to the Katutura State Hospital and Katutura main Police Station. The computers use only open source software.

Greenwell Matongo Community Library, Windhoek – The Library is situated just off an informal settlement next to the Goreangab Dam and just behind the water reticulation works. It is situated next to a satellite police station and is easily accessible for residents; however, it might be difficult or expensive to get to the locality via taxi.

Internet Cafés Windhoek (5) – All the cafés are situated on the main street, Independence Avenue, and are easily accessible. The sites are all well furnished and have modern equipment. Except for the Post Office, users are almost all tourists.

United Nations Library Windhoek – The library is situated on Independence Avenue around the corner from the CBD police station. The facility has two police officers manning the entrance and very strict rules on usage of the computers for "legitimate information searches" only.

Institute of Information Technology Windhoek – IIT is situated in the eastern side of Windhoek, (higher income area), opposite one of the larger decentralized shopping malls. The students are mostly from higher income households as the courses, mostly internationally recognized, are expensive. It is less than 100 meters from a taxi rank and is flanked by two major bus routes. The facility has over thirty terminals with access to the Internet. It is also an ICDL (International Computer Drivers' License) testing center.

Gobabis Community Center – The community center is housed within a government building just off the main street of Gobabis. The facility is well equipped and shares infrastructure with the regional SchoolNet office. The centre provides computer training from Monday to Thursday in the mornings. Computer usage is free but Internet users must pay telephone costs.

Namibia Institute for Educational Development Okahandja – The Institute is located two kilometers from the town and is an educational building complex for teachers, trainers, curriculum developers, etc. The library is well stocked with books but the Internet connection does not work most of the time. It is very difficult to access with public transport and has very few external users.

Internet Café Okahandja – The café is situated in a converted house in the CBD, typical of most businesses in the semi-urban areas. The area and employees would make it very difficult for people from previously disadvantaged groups to use the facility. Most of the users are regular users and know each other well. A detailed assessment was therefore not completed for this venue type and a short overview is presented in Section 6.4 of this report.

SchoolNet Ondangwa – The facility is part of a complex together with the Rössing Foundation. It is on the 60km main road between Ondangwa and Oshikati.. The surrounding area houses over 40% of the population, but most are subsistence farmers. The facility is well equipped, but has very few users. Usage does increase before examinations or when students are given assignments. Most of the people in the area walk to their destination and would therefore not make the effort unless strictly necessary. There have been floods in the area during the past six months, and this has made some areas inaccessible.

Heroes Private School Ondangwa – The school is also situated off the main road (see above) and has better facilities than the government schools in the area. Many of the learners also have internet access at home as they come from higher income households.

Rehoboth Internet Cafés (3) – All three cafés are situated on the two arterial roads of Rehoboth in the vicinity of the CBD. They each have two computers for public use and also provide business services to the public, for example the typing of résumés, business plans,

business cards, stationery, etc. The connections are dial-up and telephony costs are expensive. The ethnic divide in Rehoboth between Basters/Coloreds and the black inhabitants is the cause of lack of usage by the black peoples. The District was purchased by the Baster in the previous century and the black people who have settled there are often hesitant to use the facilities predominantly owned by the Basters.

2.3.6   Other data gathering techniques

None

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.

Lodewyk van Graan, Chairperson of the ICT Alliance / CEO: Institute of Information Technology. Tel: + 264 61 253141 Fax: + 264 61 253102 email: lodewyk@iit.com.na

Mbeuta Ua-Ndjarakana, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Tel: +264 61 283 9111, Fax: + 264 61 251297, email: muandjarakana@mib.gov.na

Theo Schoeman, Owner, Schoemans Office Systems, Windhoek. Tel: +264 61 3703000 Fax: +264 61 232201 email: theo@schoemans.com.na

Joris Komen, Executive Director: SchoolNet.   email: joris@schoolnet.na

Bravismore Mumanyi, National Library, Windhoek – MEC. email: bmumanyi@mec.gov.na

Coenraad Coetzee, GM ICT, Telecom Namibia, Tel: +264 61 2019211, Fax: + 264 61 239844

Laurent Evrard, Computer Center, Polytechnic of Namibia, Tel: +264 61 2079111, Fax: +264 61 2072261

Johan Van der Merwe, Bank of Namibia, Tel: + 264 61 283 5186, Fax; +264 61 2835067, email: Johan.Vdmerwe@BON.COM.NA

Johan van Wyk, Director, Ministry of Education, Tel: +264 61 2933111 Fax: +264 61 228641, email: jvanwyk@mec.gov.na

Mathew Haikali, Director, Media Institute of Southern Africa, email; director@misanamibia.org

2.4 Research Trustworthiness and Credibility

2-3 paragraphs

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

To ensure minimum bias, the field researchers were trained on ICT concepts and the various ICT questions by a trainer from the PC Engineering / Software development unit of IIT.

Additionally, the areas surveyed included a typical colored/Baster area (Rehoboth), black majority tribe (Ondangwa), minority black tribe (Gobabis) and then the predominantly white urban areas in Windhoek and Okahandja.

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.

1) The number of users at public ICT access points was much lower than anticipated.

2) More than 70% of the users surveyed were under the age of 25. This might skew the generalizations on usage as users over this age bracket were not represented in the survey. It does however indicate that the ICTs are definitely more widely used by the youth and that future ICT initiatives will have to make concerted efforts to reach older target groups.

2.4.2 Team qualifications

1 paragraph

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

Tina James has more than 25 years experience in the field of ICTs, particularly in South Africa and Africa. Work undertaken to date has drawn on her wide range of experience in the management of multidisciplinary projects in both the fields of ICTs and environmental information management, ICT policy and strategy development, program design, and facilitation of participative processes. As Senior Programme Officer and Senior Advisor to the Canadian International Development Research Centre's (IDRC) Acacia (1997 – 2001) Programme, which addressed the use of ICTs by disadvantaged, rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa, she was responsible for project development and implementation as well as support for planning activities. She has operated as a consultant since 1997, and recently established icteum consulting, which is based in South Africa. Her prior work experience includes various ICT-related management positions at the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). She is an associate lecturer of the University of the Witwatersrand's LINK Centre in Johannesburg on gender and ICTs and serves on the International Taskforce on Women in ICT.

Milton Louw has been involved with the Internet and ICT activities since 1992 when he

was responsible for Information and Communication at the Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He represented Namibia at the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in Paris, France (1993-1996) where he was responsible for investment promotion. In 2001 he worked on the report for Southern Africa for "The ECA/IDRC Pan-African Initiative on e-Commerce". In 1999 he started his own company that has created a company and persons database for Namibia. Since 2000, he has worked to develop an economic information model that includes a census of all businesses in Namibia, including the SME's. He is presently the Secretary for the ICT Alliance and on the Secretariat of the Cabinet taskforce on ICT. He has a communication network of over 1,500 individuals, mostly senior management and entrepreneurs that subscribe to his bi-weekly email newsletter.

A team of students from the Institute of Information Technology was used to carry out the survey in the various venues and towns. These students were in the first year of study towards the Cambridge International Diploma in Business. They were chosen to contribute to this study because of their experience in marketing surveys undertaken for several commercial entities as part of their practical work assignments. In addition all students are ICT literate and will complete their ICDL as part of their studies. It was also important that the students could speak the vernacular languages they might encounter.

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?

Namibia, classified as a lower-middle income country with a GDP of 4.1%,[17] is a sparsely-populated country with a population of 2.1 million and a population density of about 2.5/km. Due to the largely arid and semi-arid nature of the country, and the large distances between towns, most of the population lives in the larger towns of Windhoek, Swakopmund and Walvis Bay, and more than 65% in the smaller towns of northern Namibia. The traditional definition of urban versus rural is therefore not appropriate in this context as resources such as community resource centers, schools, clinics and libraries are largely concentrated within these geographical town areas. More than 50% of all schools (>720 schools), for example, can be found in the north of the country. In terms of local government, the Namibian Government differentiates between city, town and village. Generally speaking, the urban centers (city) would provide their own municipal services including water, electricity, sewerage and roads. The towns might provide certain services but not yet be able to develop a road network (semi-urban), and the villages would not be able to provide any of the services themselves.

Overall ICT access is very limited throughout the country. A recent household survey indicates that the Internet is mainly accessed at the workplace or through schools.[18] Out of a total of 854 households surveyed in urban and rural areas, only 51 had household members that had used the Internet and of these members only 3.9% had an email address. Internet access is unreachable for many due to the limited number of fixed lines, the high costs of Internet access (despite slowly decreasing prices), the lack of electricity and the lack of bandwidth availability. The Namibian population is however characterized by high mobile phone usage, due to extensive geographic coverage (>65%) and 100% coverage along all the arterial roads. Mobile telecommunication is likely to be the area where the most significant advances in ICT access can be made in Namibia. A significant means of communication can be found through the publication of SMS messages in local newspapers. This is offered free of charge to readers.

Schools

The largest number of access points is currently set up through schools and the activities of

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[17] Source: National Planning Commission (2006 figures).
http://www.npc.gov.na/publications/National_Accounts_1996_to_2006.pdf
[18] Gillwald, A. (ed.) (2005). Towards an African e-Index. Household and Individual ICT Access and Usage across 10 African Countries. ResearchICTAfrica.net

SchoolNet Namibia (see case example). Out of a total of about 1626 schools, 400 have access to ICTs and of these 215 presently have consistent Internet access for learners and teachers. About 40 (20%) of these schools offer ICT access to the local communities. SchoolNet Namibia has been providing technical support and 24/7 Internet access to these schools. In those schools without water and electricity they have used wireless technology in combination with solar power and diesel generators.

Libraries

There are 56 functional community libraries with an additional three to be opened by the end of 2008. Most libraries are small with only one room to accommodate ICTs, shelves and service counter. Plans are underway to build regional libraries with more space. Computers are available in 21 libraries, but only five have Internet access. A further ten libraries will have computers by the end of the 2008/09 financial year and an additional 10 libraries per year will be provided with computers until 2010/11. These are generally provided for administrative access, but librarians may also provide access to the public if requested.[19] The National Library in Windhoek has seven computers for computer and Internet access, although these are very old and do need replacing. A computer lab with 10 computers will be installed in the National Library by the end of 2008. In addition there are a number of specialist libraries and resource centers for teachers (about 17), and adult education (about 3), but these do not provide broader public access.

Telecenters and Cybercafés

Public ICT access points in urban areas are plentiful and easily accessible; however the usage rates are expensive (minimum Nam$ 30 per hour / about US$ 4). Commercial cybercafés are found mostly in Windhoek, Walvis Bay and Swakopmund and towns or holiday camps where there is tourist trade. Wifi spots have been set up in a number of hotels and tourist locations throughout the country but these are neither accessible nor affordable to the broader public. The City of Windhoek has a number of cybercafés in the central business area - these provide gaming and as well as Internet access. The Windhoek Post Office provides three Internet access points, but these do not appear to be well-used. According to available information, no other post offices in the country provide ICT access.

Multipurpose Community Centers

There are plans to set up regional centers in each of the 13 regions of the country with infrastructure provided through the National Planning Commission. Each of these MPCCs will be equipped with television sets, video recorders, DVD players/recorders, computers, printers, photocopiers, projectors and screens, generators and small public address systems. Training is provided to community members in the use of the equipment. Six centers were

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19National Library of Namibia Website , list of all libraries http://www.nln.gov.na/nis/address.html Accessed 2 March 2008. Updated information provided through personal communication, 11 March 2008.

established in late 2007/early 2008 in three regions (Kavango, Kunene and Omaheke) and feasibility studies have been conducted in a further three regions (Hardap, Otjozondjupa and Omusati).[20] Due to the remoteness of the sites, and the recent flooding in the northern regions which made local travel impossible, site visits could not be carried out.

A recent report (August 2008) on the status of MPCC Projects in the Government of the Republic of Namibia clearly indicates that only the following Ministries have information centers. Only two of these centers have ICT access.

Ministry	Region	Town	ICT –Internet Access
Gender Equality and Child welfare	- Caprivi - Kavango - Otjozondjupa - Kunene - Oshana - Okongo - Hardap - Oshikoto - Khomas	- Katima Mulilo - Rundu - Tsumkwe - Opuwo - Ongwediva - Okongo - Kalkrand - Tsintsabis - Windhoek	- Yes - Yes
Youth, National Service, Sport & Culture		- Luderitz - Keetmanshoop - Windhoek - Okakarara - Usakos - Otjiwarongo - Khorixas - Opuwo - Outapi - Ashakati - Eenhana - Divindu - Okahao - Katima Mulilo	None
Education	- Caprivi - Hardap - Kunene - Erongo - Oshana	6 centers 2 centers 2 centers 2 centers 2 centers	None have ICT's

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[20] Information provided by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, April 2008

	• Oshikoto	• 2 centers	
	• Otjozondjupa	• 4 centers	
	• Ohangwena	• 1 center	
	• Kavango	• 4 centers	
	• Omaheke	• 1 center	
	• Karas	• 3 centers	

Youth Development Centers

There are a few multipurpose community centers in place, with particular emphasis on youth development, but site visits in Windhoek revealed no ICT access at the youth development center in Katutura. There is a thriving community centre at Gobabis, a town about 200km outside of Windhoek. This was established in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth, National Services, Sport and Culture. This is however essentially run by a local NGO working together with SchoolNet.

ICT literacy training

ICT literacy training is taking place through NGOs such as CECS (Community Education Computer Society), PeaceCorps Namibia and WorldTeach, as well as through private institutions such as the Institute for Information Technology (IIT). CECS has an agreement with the Namibian Ministry of Education so that students can gain practical experience through assisting schools with ICT literacy training. The National Library has also used CECS to provide training to librarians where ICT access will be provided in future.

The Ministry of Education in Namibia has undertaken to certify the computer skills of all teachers and students in Namibian schools in the period from 2007 to 2012, using the ICDL international certification program. The ICDL Foundation of South Africa will assist in providing Quality Assurance services as part of their regional commitment to supporting the ICDL program across Namibia.[21]

Technical support

The Ministry of Education has set up a National Education Technical Support Services Center based in Windhoek. It is still in its infancy and support is basically dependent on regional capabilities such as that provided by SchoolNet Namibia and other commercial IT players. The Ministry has approved the establishment of a new regional support structure for technical support. Volunteers are also used through institutions such as SchoolNet.

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[21] Source: http://www.mec.gov.na/ - 19 July 2008

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)?

There is pent-up demand for the use of ICTs, given the huge distances and geographic isolation of large parts of the population. The provision of electricity is a particular challenge and alternative energy sources are in use and/or being investigated e.g. solar power and wind energy by MTC (mobile operator) and SchoolNet Namibia. The extent of the problem is illustrated by the fact that only 6.1% of rural households have access to electricity. In urban areas, access to fixed line telephony is the major limiting factor. The large proportion of youth in the country also points to the need to focus on this target group and particularly on the use of ICTs in improving the quality of education. There is however a need to bring down Internet costs, for example, some libraries charge about N$20 per hour, which is beyond the reach of most of the public. The government has established Edunet, an educational ISP, which has been able to offer subsidized Internet rates to educational institutions.

The government's intention is to introduce ICTs into schools, including the allocation of budget, which indicates commitment to the rollout of ICTs. What is however not clear, is to what extent existing policies will allow schools to make their ICT resources available to the local community. This points to a possible future need for expanding the establishment of multipurpose community centers, or providing existing facilities with ICT access. This has been recognized by the Cabinet and a directive has been given to the ICT Taskforce to audit what programs are in place and find a way of combining projects in future.

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)?

Namibians over the age of 25 will use ICT and more specifically Internet applications primarily for work purposes. Most people under the age of 25 are using ICTs for personal and social interaction with their peers, as well as for personal entertainment, movies, music, games, etc.

There is no real local content, government websites do not always work, and the information required is often not available. The Internet is still primarily a content platform for government and business rather than an integration of the business process to streamline the organizations' activities.

On the positive side, the high level of literacy and formal education means that most Namibians, once given access, would be able to make use of information sources with very little assistance. The level of technological skills, from PC engineers to graduate degrees, is quite high. This has been primarily due to the investment in human capital by the mining and financial services sectors.

3.2.3 Environment

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

At this stage there appears to have been limited activity in the provision of information services and there is little evidence of active e-government implementation, despite this being a component of the government's service to the citizen. This may be partially attributable to the low levels of ICT skills and capacity within the government itself. There is limited material available in local languages, and most is produced in English.

The telecommunications and regulatory environment is challenging, with a monopoly in fixed line telephony, two mobile operators, and no provision for the use of VOIP by the public (VOIP is not illegal, only the reselling of such a service on a commercial basis). The lack of certainty in the regulatory environment has been a limiting factor and there is a need for service- and technology-neutral licenses.

The policy environment is in flux as the existing ICT policy is in the process of being updated during 2008. A significant feature in the ICT policy landscape was an ICT conference which took place in August 2007. This was attended by a cross-section of ICT players, governments, academics and NGOs. Several working groups were established to draw up recommendations for the development of an ICT strategy. A taskforce was appointed and this has recently met to take forward proposals in a number of areas. Of most critical in the short-term are 1) public access to information and 2) the improved administration of the .na domain. There is also an increased emphasis on ICT skills development.

The Government of Namibia has put in place a fifteen-year plan, the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP), to improve education, and expects to allocate an estimated N$2 billion (US$ 263 million)[22] over this period. It has however indicated that this is insufficient in the short-term. ETSIP includes the Tech/Na! component which aims to roll out ICTs in schools. As of June 2007, about 40 schools were connected.[23] The rollout has however been slow and there have been recent newspaper reports which indicate problems in the delivery of computers to schools. This may point to a potential capacity problem in being able to deliver. TechNA! includes secondary schools in the first phase, but the intention is to roll out ICTs to all schools by the end of Phase 2. All libraries are included as part of the

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[22] 1 US$ = about 7.60 NAD (20 July 2008)

[23] Frederick Philander. Namibia: First Phase of ETSIP On Track. New Era, Windhoek 21 June 2007
http://allafrica.com/stories/200706210651.html Accessed 28 February 2008

second phase. Youth centers in the regions also offer computer training.

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

In Namibia, the general public perception is that the search for information is defined as "gathering ideas to know more". In 2007, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (precursor to the present Ministry of ICT) undertook a "Service Delivery Assessment Report" that examined the search of information by Namibians across all channels of communication. More than 94% of people had access to radio, 70% had access to mobile phones, 13.4% to computers and only 8.8% access to Internet. In studies where information requests by the general public were measured, the following information/activities are requested:

- Crime
- Education in general
- Health matters
- Corruption
- HIV/AIDS
- Employment creation
- Violence against women and children
- Poverty reduction
- Agriculture

However in our study, more than 50% of the respondents were looking for assistance in finding education-related material. In general, computers are a natural extension for these users of the traditional library role. Another important factor was assistance in finding work-related information, for example job opportunities and interview techniques. However, very little of this type of information was available. The need for this information is directly related to the younger user base at these facilities. There have been various programs to provide employment search functionality from different Ministries, most notably the Ministry of Labor, but none have thus far been able to keep such electronic information up-to-date.

Source: Service Delivery Assessment Report – Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2007

3.3.1 Information sources

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

- (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.
- (ii) Indicate the sources of data for this assessment

Local content is lacking in Namibia. A typical example is trying to find data on population sizes in the various towns in Namibia. It is easier to physically approach the National Planning Commission and make photocopies of the information available from the 2000 census than to obtain it via the Internet. Government websites tend to present static information and are not always up to date. The Ministry of Finance does however present its national budget information on its website. (http://www.mof.gov.na/)

Source: Research team, personal communication

3.3.2 Key barriers to accessing the information that underserved communities need

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

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

Most underserved communities have more pressing (and often unmet) priorities to satisfy their basic physiological needs of sufficient food and access to clean drinking water. Droughts, alternating with floods have created havoc in the subsistence agricultural sector (over 60% of the population) and this is being addressed as a priority.

However, the government is making use of ICT, and specifically text messaging to provide information on food aid and potential health hazards.

Source: "Government offers free food" – New Era 25 July 2008

3.3.3 Ways users experience different types of public access venues

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

Most users in the survey (learners and students) use the various centers (libraries, community centers) for accessing educational information and see the ICT infrastructure as an extension of their ability to access this type of information.

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.

Due to Namibia being a part of South Africa until 1990, it fell under the apartheid laws enforced at that time. The Black population (which included the black and mixed-race communities) were denied access to good education, lived in areas where infrastructure was minimal (water and electricity), roads were generally in poor condition and this part of the population had to travel long distances to employment in the cities and towns. Presently the situation has improved but there are still wide discrepancies in income, access to education, living standards and career advancement opportunities often due to lack of education and sufficient role models.

There are also political influences that come into play in determining positions of power in the government.

Earnings Distributions

	Per Capita GDP	Percent of all GDP
Richest 5.4 %	13,491	52.00%
Next 33.8 %	1,479	35.60%
Next 27.5 %	417	8.20%
Poorest 33.3 %	177	4.20%
All Namibians 100%	1,400	100%

The distribution of income in the country is generally recognized as among the most unequal in the world.[24]

3.3.5   Freedom of press and expression and the right to information

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

Ownership of the four major daily papers ranges from 1) ownership by the major opposition party; 2) Free Press of Namibia (a liberation newspaper) and 3) New Era, a government newspaper. [25]

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[24] http://www.usaid.gov/na/overview2.htm

Newspaper	Publisher	Distribution	Frequency
Allgemeine Zeitung	Democratic Media Holdings (Pty) Ltd	National	Daily
New Era	New Era Publications Corporation (Government)	National	Daily
The Namibian	Free Press of Namibia (Pty) Ltd	National	Daily
Die Republikein	Democratic Media Holdings (Pty) Ltd	National	Daily

Reproduced from: Media Institute of Southern Africa, 2006

There are concerns that the media in Namibia is showing deteriorating standards and that a code of ethics should be drawn up by the industry.[26] There have also been calls for the establishment of a media council.

The media has in the past been accused of targeting specific political figures and parties and there have been cases where journalists have been threatened or censored. In general, though, the perception is that the Namibian media is relatively free.

3.4 Charts: Information Needs, Users, and Uses

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

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[25] Interview, Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Windhoek.

[26] http://www.misa.org/researchandpublication/democracy/STID%2006.pdf Accessed 11 April 2008

3.4.1.1 Users, by type of venue

Users profile (estimated proportion of users in each category, %)		Public Libraries				Community Centers				Educational				Internet Cafe			
		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
		General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Gender	Male	72%				54%		52%					13%	60%			53%
	Female	28%				46%		48%					87%	40%			47%
Age	14 and under	11%				30%							26%				18%
	15-35	89%				70%		88%					58%	80%			82%
	36-60							12%					16%	20%			
	61 and over																
Education level	No formal education																20%
	Only elementary					20%											
	Up to high school	80%				60%		10%					80%				50%
	College or university	20%				20%		90%					20%		100%		30%
Income bracket (approx)	High	10%											10%	25%			
	Medium	80%						100%					80%	50%			100%
	Low	10%				100%							10%	25%			
Social	High	10%						50%				50%		25%			

status (approx)	Medium	80%		10%	50%		50%	50%	100%
	Low	10%		90%				25%	
Ethnicity (if appropriate)	Black	80%		92%	96%		80%	60%	53%
	Colored	10%		5%			10%	20%	41%
	Indian							20%	
	White	10%		3%	4%		10%		6%

Source*: User survey*

Comments It is very clear from the study that the legacy of apartheid and the subsequent income disparities have led to most white and colored households having access to the Internet and thus not making as much use of the public access centers.

3.4.1.2 Information People Seek, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Community Centers				Educational				Internet Café			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Business		34%				19%		20%				3.2%		40%		58%
Education		62%				78%		52%				23%		20%		6%
Health																
Agriculture																
Government services								8%								
Entertainment		4%				3%		4%						20%		
News								4%				3%		0.6%		
Personal								4%				16%		20%		1.8%
Other								28%				3%				2.4%
												48% left blank				

Source: *User survey*

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

Almost 22% of the respondents were using the centers to conduct some form of business. Many of the users were contacting or researching businesses with the aim of applying for employment.

3.4.1.3 Uses of ICT, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Community Centers				Educational				Internet Café			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Email		52%				65%		40%				39%		6%		38%
Chat		8%				30%		8%				6%				
Web browsing		46%				65%		36%				26%		6%		62%
Blogs & social networking		12%				3%		12%				3%		12%		
Commerce & business																
Phone or webcam																
Games		8%				19%		8%				10%				
Other		14%				3%	3%	4%				23%				

Source: *User survey results*

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

Interestingly, about 20% of computer users were not using the Internet, but word processing applications and printing.

3.4.1.4 Frequency of Use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Community Centers				Educational				Internet Cafe			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
First visit		4%				8%	8%					6%				18%
Rarely (less than monthly)		4%				6%						3%		22%		29%
Occasional (about once a month)		6%				3%	16%					3%		20%		29%
Regular (about 2-3 per month)		8%				6%	16%					3%				24%
Frequent (about once a week)		26%				35%	8%					30%		20%		
Daily (about every day)		52%				42%	52%					55%		40%		

Source: User survey

Comments:

3.4.1.5 Barriers to use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Community Centers				Educational				Internet Cafe			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Location, distance						27%	16%					35%				
Hours of Operation		48%				5%	12%					16%				
Cost		4%				3%	16%					48%				
Lack of skills/training		10%				38%								16%		6%
Not enough services		54%				38%	28%					74%		33%		6%
Not in right language						3%						13%				
Not enough content		6%				13%										
Other		6%										10%				6%

Source: *User survey*

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

There were very few "other", however a large percentage (37%) felt there were no barriers to the use of the venues This was especially noticed at the library and community centers.

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:

There have been two major projects undertaken to provide public ICT access points. The first project was implemented by the Ministry of Regional, Local Government & Housing & Rural Development and completed in 2004. The project was to create information centers at local government level (towns and villages) and these access points were meant to be available to the local community. The project failed primarily because the staff members made use of the equipment and were not inclined to allow public usage for fear of breakage and theft, among others.

The second project in 2003 was funded by USAID with the intention of establishing Internet Cafés at existing places of business. The businesses were identified (primarily SME's) and the equipment and operational costs were funded for two years. However, as soon as the donor funding was withdrawn all the cafés closed down.

The major lesson learnt from both these projects is that public access points will have to be funded for longer periods of time until usage within the communities makes them self-sustainable. This may have to be up to ten years or more.

The Government has recognized that information centers should all include the basic infrastructure whether they are housed in libraries, schools, health clinics or even police stations.

More information: *Establishment of Community Resource Information Centers – SchoolNet,*

ICT Alliance of Namibia

3.4.2.2   Ongoing initiatives:

This study is occurring at the same time as recognition by the Government and key stakeholders that "the importance of ICT lies not in technology per se, but in the ability to create information and accessibility by the intended user".[27] SchoolNet has been selected as the implementation partner and a submission was made by them outlining the parameters for a Community Information Resource Center (CIRC) Business Plan Process.

More information: *ICT Alliance of Namibia*

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[27] Focal Point Magazine June 2008

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.

Two major pieces of legislation will be tabled in Parliament within the next year. The first is the Information and Communication Bill which provides the legal framework for the industry and establishes an Independent Regulator. The second bill is the Electronic Transactions Bill that includes the Namibian Domain Name Authority, Data Protection as well as privacy provisions.

The government has also embarked on a review of its Information Policy, which will include a Broadcasting policy that should be released for public comment during August 2008.

Source: http://www.ncc.org.na/; ICT Alliance

3.4.2.4 Planned initiatives:

The Cabinet, through the recently appointed ICT Taskforce, has identified the following key areas to be addressed for 2008/9:

• Free / Libre Open Source Software policy must be adopted

• Copyright legislation must be amended to include Creative Commons licensing

• Development of Broadband access (infrastructure) must be accelerated

• Separate infrastructure ownership and usage of telecommunications

• Universal Service Fund must be clearly defined and administered

• Local companies must get preference in tenders

• Tax incentives for ICT skills development should be investigated.

More information: www.ictalliance.org.na/ictnam

3.5   Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment

3.5.1   National and local economic environment

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

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

The local economy, as elsewhere in the world, is facing a recession with recent increases in interest rates and fuel prices. Furthermore, the exchange rate fluctuations are having an impact on many goods imported into Namibia.

The interest rates have remained stable (as compared to two rate changes in South Africa during the same period), but the banks are recording more repossessions of houses and vehicles so the purchasing power of consumers is being severely dented.

Trends: The Namibian Government is spending more than N$ 2.39 billion (US$314 million) over five years (2006-2011), on the upgrading of the Education sector. This includes the upgrading of teacher and student skills in ICT. The Government has also realized the importance of ICT if it wishes to reach its vision 2030 program.

Mixed signals have however been noted in the budget of the Minister of Finance in 2008. Close to N$2 million (US$ 131 thousand) was allocated for the creation of an ICT Policy in 2007. However, less than N$ 200 000 (US$ 26,300) was allocated for its implementation in the present financial year.

The government is also looking at fiber optic landing points from both the eastern and western Africa cabling projects (SAT3, EASSY). However, there is still no clarity on where the decision making power lies in this regard.

Source: http://www.ncc.org.na/

3.5.2   National and local policy (legal and regulatory) environment

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

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

The telecommunications and regulatory environment is challenging, with a monopoly in fixed line telephony, two mobile operators, and no provision for the use of VOIP by the public. The lack of certainty in the regulatory environment has been a limiting factor and there is a need for service- and technology-neutral licenses.

The policy environment is in flux as the existing ICT policy is in the process of being updated during 2008. A significant feature in the ICT policy landscape was an ICT conference which took place in August 2007. This was attended by a cross-section of ICT players, governments, academics and NGOS. Several working groups were established to draw up recommendations for the development of an ICT strategy. An ICT taskforce was appointed and this has recently met to take forward proposals in a number of areas. Of most critical in the short-term are 1) public access to ICT and 2) the improved administration of the .na domain. There is also an increased emphasis on ICT skills development.

Trends: The creation of a Ministry of ICT and the delegation of ICT services to the public is a step in the right direction. The Ministry is presently preparing a strategic plan and is expected

unveil its plan of action before September 2008.

This new Ministry expects to oversee the creation of an implementation body (commissions) that would allow Namibia to harness the power of ICTs as tools to accelerate socio-economic development.

The challenge is to create a robust Ministry that:

i. develops policy and regulates the business being done in these sectors;

ii. ensures access to all its citizens; and

iii. the protection of civil liberties.

To do this, the Ministry has to focus on three areas (possibly agencies):

a. Namibian Communications Commission

- regulated through the Information Bill – dealing with all regulatory aspects of communication

b. Namibian Computer Agency

-to promote the accelerated diffusion of IT in every socio-economic sphere

c. Central Informatics Body

- oversee the implementation of IT in government and ensure that civil servants are literate

Source*: ICT Alliance of Namibia*

3.5.3 Regional and international policy (legal and regulatory) environment

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

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

The most important factors facing ICT development in Namibia are Internet connectivity and the availability of bandwidth (both infrastructure and speed). The present disagreement between the NEPAD network and the EASSy cable, primarily because of South African interests, has led to confusion amongst political leaders on which of the cable projects should be supported. In addition, the movement of political leaders with the latest cabinet reshuffle in April 2008 has led to Ministers requiring briefing on the various programs.

Trends:

An article recently appeared in www.itweb.co.za that states "Africa is over-investing in

broadband and could be stuck with a major glut in capacity that could last up to a decade." Many ICT experts however believe that with changes in Internet usage through the increased use of video sites such as YouTube would lead to more access by African nations once speeds reach international standards.

Source: ICT Summit – Telecom, Windhoek 16/17 July 2008; www.itweb.co.za

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.

The creation of Edunet, an ISP specifically geared towards educational institutions, is a good example of collaboration. The partners in the provision of subsidized Internet access are Telecom Namibia and SchoolNet Namibia and a trust was created in 2003, the XNet Development Trust, to drive forward this initiative. It is an integral part of the TechNa! (ICT in Education) initiative of the Ministry of Education.

SchoolNet Namibia has established collaborative relationships with schools and a few community centers in which they provide technical support, training and computers (hardware and software), as in the case of the Ounongo Technology Centre in Gobabis. Various international donors have been collaborating with the Government of Namibia in the provision of ICTs among others e.g. Millennium Challenge Account, Finland, Sida (Sweden), UNESCO, Book Aid International, and the Luxembourg Agency for Development Cooperation.

At this stage, there are few institutional opportunities beyond schools and, to a more limited extent, in libraries. The government's intention to roll out MPCCs in all the regions creates an opportunity for the sharing of scarce resources within specific geographic locations – potential areas of collaboration include shared training, first level technical support and the sharing of content development in a particular region.

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

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

Amongst politicians the "buzz factor" of ICT is the creation of access points in each of their own constituencies. In addition, many citizens see access to ICT as increasing their chances of gaining employment. The unofficial employment rate is over 40% and many of these are unskilled workers with very few literacy skills. The feeling amongst many unemployed

people is that with basic skills training in ICT, they would be able to find employment.

The most common buzz words being used are:

- eGovernment and mGovernment;

- eID's and ePassports; and

- eHealth

There is little awareness among both citizens and government that the importance of ICT does not lie in the technology per se, but in the ability to create information and accessibility by the intended user. This can also be seen in the survey results where very few respondents mentioned the lack of local content as a barrier.

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.

The age groups surveyed see the usage of social networks and chat as "necessary for their future". A few even indicated they would think twice before accepting a job with a company that does not allow access to social networking sites.

The boundaries between trivial and legitimate are becoming blurred, as can be seen in the business community where many are also joining networks for the sharing of ideas and opportunities, increased networking and social interactions such as birthday reminders and the exchange of personal information.

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.

Out of a population of 2 million people, there are already over 1 million mobile users. With more than 45% of the population under the age of 15, this indicates that there is close to market saturation for the adult market segment.

3.9.2   Web 2.0 tools and use

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

This has not had much effect in Namibia. In fact, many users are using features pre-web, such as Internet Relay Chat which can be accessed via mobile phones.

In discussions with various role players it was mentioned that because of the low level of available (and affordable) bandwidths, many African users prefer to use services with low graphic content as mobile charges relate to the amount of content downloaded. Uploading of content has not yet become popular with most users e.g. YouTube.

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 and TV, other print media, street theatre, songs, etc.

The convergence phenomenon has led to unique combination of mobile and traditional media. For example, a daily newspaper publishes an A3 page of SMSs received from readers every day. This has replaced the readers' letters almost completely. Another example is the transmission of text messages via the music television stations that are broadcast during the traditional "dead" times (14H00 – 17H00). In Namibia this has become so popular that a weekly "yellow" newspaper prints four pages of A3 classifieds as a pull-out.

In Namibia users are likely to become even younger and accessing more information via text-based systems. The most popular applications are expected to be interaction between voice and data on behalf of the user. One example is an educational mobile application developed by the CSIR in South Africa where the user sends a text message and receives an automated voice response which reads back the encyclopedia entry for the word.

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 younger generation (>25 years) of mobile users is using GPRS enabled phones as a minimum to allow them access to the Internet Relay Chat (IRC) sites such as MXIT and MIG33. These sites allow users to log onto the Internet without any additional downloads – which cost money – and text all other users in the chat rooms. If a user wishes to speak specifically to one other user, they can enter a private chat room. Furthermore, the users can also send media such as pictures to one another.

This form of social networking is much cheaper than the Internet, and is becoming part of a "24 hour" connected culture.

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):

30%	36.3%	3%	3%
clinic/hospital	friend	health worker	public access venue (library, community center, etc)

Comments: Almost 30% do not indicate where they are successful at locating health information. This could be linked to the age groups of the respondents and that many are still living within a family unit where this is someone else's responsibility.

Count of Survey No.	
Health Info Community Center	Total
Clinic/Hospital	50
close to public	1
Community center	7
community center	1
Friends/Family	60
health Worker	5
Library	2
Other	1
Private Internet	5
Public Internet	7
Public venue	5
School	2
(blank)	19
Grand Total	165

3.10.2 Types of health information

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

2.4 %	17%	5.5%	10.3%	17.6%	3%
HIV / AIDS	disease prevention	how to locate healthcare	child health information	remedies/drugs	Other

Comments: There is uncertainty about whether respondents understood that drugs refers to medication as opposed to drugs as in 'drug abuse'. Almost half of the respondents (46.7%) did not answer the question.

4 Venue-Specific Assessments

4.1 Venue 1: Public Libraries

4.1.1 Overall venue assessment

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

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

There are 56 functional community libraries with an additional three to be opened by the end of 2008. Most libraries are small with only one room to accommodate computers, shelves, service counters and reading areas. Plans are underway to build regional libraries with more space. Computers are available in 21 libraries, but only five have Internet access. A further ten libraries will have computers by the end of the 2008/09 financial year and an additional 10 libraries per year will be provided with computers until 2010/11. These are generally provided for administrative access, but librarians may also provide access to the public if requested. The National Library in Windhoek has seven computers for computer and Internet access, although these are very old and do need replacing. A computer lab with 10 computers will be installed in the National Library by the end of 2008. In addition there are a number of specialist libraries and resource centers for teachers (about 17), and adult education (about 3), but these do not provide broader public access.

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)?

Libraries are generally used by younger members of the population such as schoolchildren, students and job seekers. There are intentions to introduce mobile libraries to service remote villages and communities, as well as to service schools. In addition, the government is setting up a network of regional study and resource centers, using the Millennium Challenge Account. These will create much-needed study areas. The intention is to expand this to 150 smaller centers. The National Library is also collaborating with the government's youth development centers by providing library resources and staffing the libraries in all 13 regions.

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.

Libraries tend to be situated in the central business districts of the smaller towns. Although generally Namibian towns are not very large, this would still mean that previously disadvantaged

communities would have to travel longer distances to reach libraries, either by taxi or walking. This means longer walking distances or travel by local taxis.

4.1.2.2 Appropriate technology and services

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

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

Uptake of technology, especially mobile telephony, has been exponential particularly among the youth. There is also anecdotal evidence that there is pent-up demand for Internet access but this has not been assessed. The almost total lack of computer and Internet access to date means that communities have had little exposure to ways in which it can be integrated into their lives. Generally however, there is a need to encourage stronger use of the libraries but this requires a stronger emphasis on the development of content in local languages. The expense of ICT access is likely to be a major inhibiting factor.

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.

At this stage, the few libraries that offer Internet access do so free of charge. The library membership fees are also low.

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?

Annual library fees are N$1(Namibian dollars) for children 1 – 15 years and N$6 for persons 15 years and older (April 2008). There is no fee for Internet access, but there are charges for photocopies

Indicate amount in local currency N$ 6.00

Equivalent in US Dollars: US$ 0.80

Date of estimate 20 July 2008

and local currency name NAD (Namibian Dollar)

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:

Most of the libraries in the smaller centers are no more than a single room (or two) and would only offer basic lending services, provided by a library assistant. There is no centralized cataloging

system in place and most of the smaller libraries are still using manual card systems. Libraries which have computers may have their holdings on a local database. The intention is to use the funding from the Millennium Challenge Account to upgrade the library management system. Libraries play a significant role as places of study. For example, the National Library has small meeting rooms and private facilities for study as well as desks in the main library area. There are generally used by students. In contrast, the Greenwell Matongo Community Library consists of a single large room which houses books, as well as two computers, but has provided several rows of seating for schoolchildren to read and study. The library is well-used despite being hot and cramped.

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.

Libraries are located in the major and smaller towns in all of the 13 regions as follows:[28]

- Caprivi – Katima Mulilo, Ngoma, Kaliyangile, Linyanti, Kabe and Kongola
- Erongo – Swakopmund and Walvis Bay
- Hardap – Mariental and Rehoboth
- Karas – Keetmanshoop, Karasburg and Lüderitz
- Kavango – Rundu, Mukwe, Shinyungwe and Mpungu
- Khomas – Windhoek, Katatura, Okuryangava
- Kunene – Khorixas and Opuwo
- Ohangwena - Endola
- Omaheke – Gobabis
- Omusati – Outapi, Okahao
- Oshana – Ongwediva and Okatana
- Oshikoto – Tsumeb and Ondangwa
- Otjozondjupa – Otjiwarongo, Grootfontein, Tsumkwe and Mangeti Dunes

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[28] A full list of Namibian libraries can be found at http://www.nln.gov.na/nis/address.html Accessed 15 August 2008

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

1. Caprivi	4. Karas	7. Kunene	10. Omusati	13. Otjozondjupa
2. Erongo	5. Okavango	8. Ohangwena	11. Oshana	
3. Hardap	6. Khomas	9. Omaheke	12. Oshikoto	
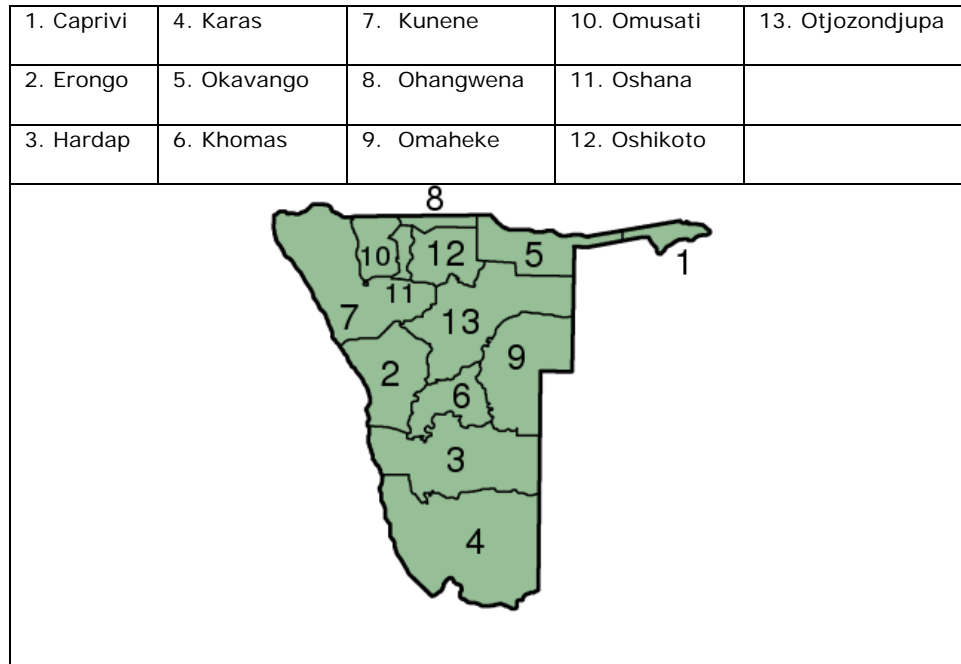
Source: Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regions_of_Namibia

Description of map:

There is no available map of the distribution of the libraries. The map above shows the 13 regions in Namibia.

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.

Physical facilities in libraries are limited and the provision of ICTs is likely to require additional budget for larger rooms, electrification and wiring, and additional security due to the higher risk of theft of electronic goods.

All the libraries (which will in future be referred to as Multi-Purpose Community Centers) indicated the need for computers, photocopiers, projectors, scanners and DVD recorders. Surprisingly, none of them indicated that they required an Internet connection. Eight of the 11 regional directors responsible for the libraries did have their own personal email addresses though – accessible from their work computers.

4.1.3   Capacity and relevance

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

Low levels of ICT literacy exist, although the extensive use of mobile telephones by the youth is indicative of a culture ready for broader exposure to ICTs. In addition, the access of schoolchildren to ICTs due to SchoolNet Namibia's activities will result, in the longer-term, in a future workforce with basic ICT skills. The major concern, however, is the general lack of visible ICT access points in the country outside of the school environment. There will need to be a massive ICT awareness and literacy campaign, with ICT access points provided at affordable prices. Alternatively the use of mobile telephony should be exploited due to high levels of penetration in the population.

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.

Smaller libraries would be staffed by a library assistant and a cleaner. In a larger library there would be a librarian as well as an assistant and cleaner. In 2006, three of the regions introduced the following structure:

Community
Library

Regional Centre:
Professional Librarian

Community
Library

-Senior library assistant
- Library assistant

Community
Library

-Senior library assistant
- Library assistant

-Senior library assistant
- Library assistant
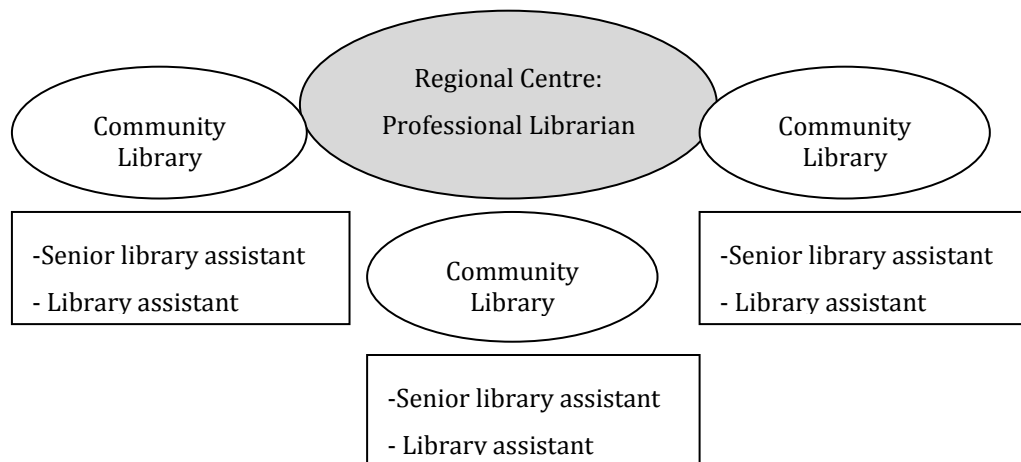
4.1.3.2 Staff training

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

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

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

Training has been provided to those librarians where ICT access is provided. This has been done in collaboration with a local NGO, CECS, which is putting librarians through the International Computer Drivers' License (ICDL) training. This appears to be the most common and widely accepted, accredited ICT literacy training course in the country. Specialized librarian courses have been funded by the Millennium Challenge Account (book selection), and UNESCO (electronic resources in local languages).

4.1.3.3 Services offered

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

	Services Offered	Comments
1.	Loan collection	This includes books which may be taken out of the library for a limited period of time
2.	Reference collection	Materials which may not be taken out of the library
3.	Daily and weekly newspapers	These are made available for reading in the library
4.	Magazines	These are made available for reading in the library
5.	Computers	Some libraries have a computer for administrative purposes. There is however no centralized electronic cataloging system and book holdings are managed through a manual card system
6.	Internet access	This is only available at the National Library at Windhoek. Officially no content may be downloaded. The Greenwell Matongo library in Katutura (outside Windhoek) will have 20 computers from September 2008

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

No training courses are offered to the public.

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.

There are no specific programs to reach the underserved beyond an increased emphasis on the rollout of libraries into previously disadvantaged areas on the outlying boundaries of towns (see the case example for the Greenwell Matongo Community Library). The intention is that librarians trained in ICT literacy will be able to assist the public once computers have been installed.

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:

None

Other Content Needed:

There needs to be more coordination between the libraries and the education departments to ensure that relevant curriculum support materials are made available. The Education department has for example created electronic curriculum and support materials but none of these have been found at libraries.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

The Namibian Institute for Education Development (NIED) has developed educational material to be used with the curriculum.

Source: *Interviews with key players*

4.1.3.6 Services and information available in local languages

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

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

Very little has been published in local languages. Further research is needed to verify this situation in other parts of the country. A limited number of books are produced in local languages. The major newspapers (New Era, Sun, Republikein, Allgemeine Zeitung) are produced in English except for the latter which is in German. The Sun does include sections in local languages.

4.1.3.7 Types of uses

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

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

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

Generally libraries are used by job seekers, university students and schoolchildren for school projects and study purposes. The reading of newspapers is also a well-used service. At the National Library, the available computers may be used for searching but officially no downloading of materials is allowed. Computers are booked for 45-minute periods at no charge. The National Library intends to introduce a computerized session management system.

Results from the user survey show that web browsing (47%) and emails (35%) were the most common uses for the internet in the National library. A rather large number, 20.6%, were just marking time and not using the computers for any specific reason. 5% were using the computers to play games

4.1.3.8 Number, type, and frequency of users

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

No data is kept specifically on ICT use in the National Library. The user survey for this study relied on users who were using the computers for Internet access. 89% of the users were aged between 15 and 35 years, and the remainder (11%) under the age of fifteen. 98% of the users were Black with the remaining 2% being White. Most of the users visited the library daily (52%) or about once a week (26%).

4.1.3.9 Users Capacity to use information and services offered

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

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

There has been a rapid increase in literacy rates in Namibia. This has led to a more positive attitude towards libraries and reading. For the past ten years a Read-a-Thon has been in place to stimulate more reading. In the past, libraries were generally seen as the territory of the white, elitist minority in the country. To some extent, this stigma still persists.

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

ICT specific training courses: none

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.

No data available and further primary research is required, particularly among the youth who are the largest users of libraries. Due to the high penetration of mobile phones, the use of SMS / mobile texting is extensive and relatively sophisticated, particularly since it is provided at a very low cost.

4.1.3.12 Users perceptions about the venue

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

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

Most of the population considers other services from government to be more important than the provision of information via libraries. Students and scholars understand the purpose of libraries very well due to programs such as the Read-a-thon event which is organized to encourage reading. There is not a strong reading culture in the country, although the increased literacy rate has resulted in a more positive attitude to libraries.

4.1.3.13 Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

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

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

There is little social appropriation since so little ICT access is provided through libraries. ICTs are largely used for educational purposes in the national library. The reading room at the Greenwell Matongo library is well-used by children reading books and working on school assignments.

4.1.3.14 Trust, safety, and privacy

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

This has not been assessed. In general Namibians have a high regard for the written word and would trust the information received at a library.

4.1.3.15 Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

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

ICT presence is very low outside of schools, and there needs to be an exponential increase in ICT access points, accompanied by mass ICT literacy training, to encourage the use and uptake of ICTs

to the majority of the population.

The 2007 Service Delivery Assessment Report indicates that the types of information requested includes: Crime; Education in general; Health matters; Corruption; HIV/AIDS; Employment creation; Violence against women and children; Poverty reduction; and Agriculture. The user survey undertaken for this study revealed that most of the users were of school going age and the information sought was thus more related to homework or subjects they have to do projects on.

4.1.4   Enabling environment

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

The Education and Training Sector Improvement Program (ETSIP), has been put in place by the Ministry of Education. N$600 million has been assigned to ETSIP, with support from the Millennium Challenge Account. N$ 6 million has been assigned over a seven-year period ending in 2013, to the national library system. This is also part of the government's Vision 2030 plan. This national library system is benefiting directly through the development of improved infrastructure (including ICTs), improved procurement of books, commissioning of works in local languages and the provision of schoolbooks to libraries.

4.1.4.1 Local and national economy

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

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

Budgetary limitations have affected the rollout of multipurpose community centers and ICT access in libraries. However, with funding from the Ministry of Education and the Millennium Challenge Account, through ETSIP, there is now an increased emphasis on support for educational and library institutions.

4.1.4.2 Legal and regulatory framework

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

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

There is no legislation regarding the public's right to information, nor are there laws regarding privacy and data protection. The media is the largest pressure group in terms of gaining more access to information, but is also the least observant in terms of privacy issues.

The Government has proposed a media council that has been a bone of contention. The Government also proposes under the present Electronic Transaction Draft Bill to make ISPs responsible for the removal of content considered undesirable. The issue is being addressed by industry which wishes to see it deleted from the bill.

It has been noted through discussion with librarians that they consider the usage of the ICT at libraries to be for information of an educational nature only.

4.1.4.3 Political will and public support

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

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

There is no real political "champion" of libraries and their usage at present. One of the most prominent figures in Namibian athletics, Frank Fredericks, is however an ardent supporter of education and specifically of supporting reading weeks at the various library venues.

4.1.4.4 Organization and networking

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

All the libraries fall under the Ministry of Education, Library and Archive Services and form part of the national network of community libraries. This includes specialist libraries such as ministerial libraries, museum libraries, school libraries, etc.

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.

Rössing Foundation is working together with various role players including schools and libraries throughout Namibia. They have been providing community libraries since before Independence, but have in recent years taken more of a role in providing materials at library venues than the actual operational aspects of community libraries.

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?

One of the most important social factors affecting the use of libraries and the loan of books is the number of people who have loaned library books and not returned them. The library service does not wish to release the numbers involved, primarily because their systems are not electronic and control has been lax.

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 2006/7

Local currency name NAD (Namibian Dollar)   amount (local currency) N$ 38,683,000

Approx. equivalent in USD based on exchange rate of US4 = N$7.60 on date 20 July 2008.

Budgetary limitations have affected the rollout of multipurpose community centers and ICT access in libraries. However, with funding from the Ministry of Education and the Millennium Challenge Account, through ETSIP, there is now an increased emphasis on support for educational and library institutions.

4.1.5.2 Relative size of budget

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

Relative Size of Budget for same year	Total budget (local currency)	Comments
Total national budget	17,144,695,000	
Education	3,946,622,000	Primary, Secondary, Tertiary and Adult Education
Health (primary healthcare)	1,883,082,000	
Public libraries	38,683,000	Falls under education budget

Other Comments:

Source: 2007-2008 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure – Ministry of Finance

http://www.mof.gov.na/Budget%20Documents/2007-08/2007-08%20Estimates%20of%20Revenue%20and%20Expenditure.pdf

4.1.5.3 Sources of funding

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

Other

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:	16,437,932,705	
International donors:	118,190,000	
National donors:	-	
User fees/services:	70,000	

Comments:

The figures above indicate only the National Budget estimates for 2008/09. The allocation from the ETSIP program was not made available from the Ministry of Education. The primary reason behind this reluctance is the large amounts of money already spent on computers and computer equipment for schools. However, many of these have not been delivered but are still warehoused.

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?

This information was not made available to the study by the responsible Government Ministry.

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?

See 4.1.2.4. Users are charged nominal annual membership fees for usage of the library services.

4.1.5.6 Cost categories

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

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

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)	66%	
Building infrastructure	12.7%	
Utilities	20%	
Staff Training	0	None indicated under this budget item
Computers/technology	0	None indicated under this budget item
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

Source: 2007-2008 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure – Ministry of Finance[29]

4.1.5.7 Recent changes and future trends

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

The Namibian Government has embarked on an education upgrading program (ETSIP) and has requested assistance from various donor sources. The Millennium Challenge Corporation has contributed US$ 304.5 million over a period of five years. Education will receive US$ 145 million that is expected to improve the sector's effectiveness, efficiency and quality. The project will also finance improvements in libraries and community resource centers.[30]

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.

Greenwell Matongo Community Library, Katatura

The Greenwell Matongo Community Library is situated in a residential part of Katatura, a 'township' on the outskirts of the City of Windhoek. A small police station is based next door. The

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[29] http://www.mof.gov.na/Budget%20Documents/2007-08/2007-08%20Estimates%20of%20Revenue%20and%20Expenditure.pdf

[30] New Era Newspaper, 29 July 2008

community library was built in 2005 as a joint venture between the City of Vantaa, Finland and the City of Windhoek. Due to its existence within Katatura, it is more accessible to the largely black population which would otherwise have to travel to the central area of the city, a distance of about 10 km. The library is a bustling hub of activity in the afternoons when primary and secondary school students use its facilities. As can be seen from the photographs, the physical facilities consist of a single large room which houses a small book collection and three computers with free access. About half of the room is filled with chairs which are used by the students for reading and study purposes. This is by far the largest use of the library facilities.

Photocopy services are available and provided by the librarian from behind a counter attached to a small office. The library has several copies of the daily newspapers, which looked well-used and are easily accessible.

The Book Collection of the Greenwell Matongo Community Library

The Library Counter with Librarian

Students using the computers in the library

Study and reading area in the library room

4.2 Venue 2: SchoolNet Namibia

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?

Although schools were generally excluded from the 25-country study, they were included for Namibia since they represent the largest number of ICT access points in the country. SchoolNet Namibia was established in 2000 and is an ICT-support, training and deployment organization for schools in Namibia.[31][32] (see case study at the end of this section). Out of a total of about 1626 schools, 700 have access to ICTs and of these 280 presently have consistent internet access for learners and teachers. About 40 (20%) of these schools offer ICT access to the local communities. SchoolNet Namibia has been providing technical support and 24/7 Internet access to these schools. In schools without water and electricity, wireless technology has been used in combination with solar power and diesel generators. SchoolNet Namibia has recently been asked to put together a business plan to collaborate with the Ministry of Education for the rollout of ICTs in all schools in the country.

More than 700 schools have been supplied with computer labs by SchoolNet. Of these, around 280 have Internet access.[33]

The distribution of SchoolNet installations is as follows:

Windhoek and surroundings   18 schools
Owamboland   About 200
Ondangwa   20
Rundu   5
Gobabis   6
Grootfontein   6
Katima Mulila   5
Caprivi   5

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)?

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[31] www.schoolnet.na

[32] http://getopenlab.com/olmambo/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1186&Itemid=114

[33] Conflicting numbers were provided for the numbers of schools with ICT and/or those with Internet connectivity.

Most SchoolNet installations are situated inside the classrooms of existing schools with electricity supply and telephone access. (Many rural schools do not always have such access.) The management of the computer class is done by students themselves with a prefect system and an assigned teacher.

The hardware is generally two generations behind (i.e. Pentium 3 at present), and only Open Source software is used. This was a decision taken by SchoolNet early in its inception. The maintenance and upgrading of the equipment is managed by students who have received training from SchoolNet staff.

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.

The main aim of SchoolNet is to provide computers and ICT access to rural schools. If an installation does take place in a town, it will always be in the previously disadvantaged areas, (former black townships) which are located on the outskirts of Windhoek and other smaller towns.

4.2.2.2 Appropriate technology and services

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

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

School computer labs are generally provided with 20 computers, most of which are refurbished. Subsidized Internet access is provided through XNET (see case example). All computers are equipped with Open Source operating systems and software. In addition they all include content under the Creative Commons License. This is especially useful for scholars as content related to school curricula and encyclopedias are all freely available. An offline version of the Wikipedia is also made available, as are games (mathematics, alphabet).

In those schools that do provide community access, the schools provide computer training at about N$ 50 per month. Schoolchildren and teachers are provided with free training.

A Helpdesk is provided through the head office in Katutura, Windhoek. This operates Monday to Friday from 8 – 5pm and calls are logged. Remote diagnostics are carried out.

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 charges are for Internet access only; all other ICT services are free. Schools are charged N$300 per month for servicing, maintenance and the provision of software. However, there have

been problems with payments to SchoolNet Namibia.

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 for using the computers. Users are expected to pay N$ 5 per hour for Internet access.

Indicate amount in local currency NAD 5.00

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.66c

Date of estimate 21 July 2008

and local currency name Namibian Dollar (NAD)

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.

Close to 90% of all school installations can be found in the four Northern regions, which is home to the majority of the Owambo group. This is one of the most neglected areas in the country, primarily as it was a war zone before Independence.

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:

No maps are available.

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.

SchoolNet Namibia runs a competition every three months, in which the first prize is a computer, the second prize a camera and the third a CD.

4.2.3 Capacity and relevance

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

SchoolNet offices operate largely with volunteers from the community, who are provided with online training courses and ongoing on-the-job training. These volunteers assist schools in servicing and maintaining their equipment.

Volunteers are also used to train school staff and students. They are paid for living costs only. Generally they are sent out to new school installations for one month. About 75% of these volunteers eventually secure employment through Telecom Namibia, University of Namibia, NAMPOWER and the Polytechnic. Since 2000, more than 1 500 volunteers have been trained in computer skills, networking and training other trainers.

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.

There are no permanent staff members in the school installations. Students, under the guidance of a teacher, are responsible for all access in the school computer labs. In each region there is a regional office with technicians who will service the facilities when required.

4.2.3.2 Staff training

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

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

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

Generally speaking, the teacher assigned is also responsible for the school library and/or computer classes such as word processing.

SchoolNet volunteers are trained by SchoolNet. All training courses and materials are in English.

4.2.3.3 Services offered

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

Services Offered		Comments
7.	Computer usage	Computer labs are used for general office applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, etc
8.	Internet access	Where scholars have internet access, this is generally through slow lines with minimal download capacity, which limits its use to email and basic web browsing. At the SchoolNet office in Katatura, usage is limited to one hour per user during busy times.
9.	Photocopying	Provided through the SchoolNet Head office, mainly used for school projects. All shared facility installations offer the service as well – those that are not based on a school premises.

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

No additional services are offered by SchoolNet.

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 installations are aimed at previously disadvantaged 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:

None – all available content is derived from existing open source software content which is suitable for schoolchildren.

Other Content Needed:

School curriculum, Namibian history and culture.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

None

4.2.3.6 Services and information available in local languages

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

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

Very little has been published in local languages. Further research is needed to verify this situation in other parts of the country. A limited number of books are produced in local languages. The major newspapers (New Era, Sun, Republikein, Allgemeine Zeitung) are produced in English except for the latter which is in German. The Sun does include sections in local languages.

4.2.3.7 Types of uses

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

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

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

The users in the SchoolNet venues are mostly using email (35%) and web-browsing (45%), the latter being used mainly for researching school projects.

4.2.3.8 Number, type, and frequency of users

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

 Users tend to use the venue on a regular basis and often daily (47%). It is presumed that most of them stay in close proximity to the center.

	Community		Community Total
How often do you visit this location?	Semi-urban	Urban	
2 to 3 visits monthly	4	2	6
Daily	13	16	29
First Visit	2	3	5
Frequently	2	13	15
Once a month	4	1	5
Rarely		2	2
Grand Total	25	37	62

4.2.3.9 Users capacity to use information and services offered

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

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

All the users were able to help themselves, even though qualified staff are available to assist them. The user survey revealed that the biggest barriers were not enough services available (31%) and the operating hours (32%) of the venue.

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: None

ICT specific training courses: SchoolNet has been involved in training volunteers and these volunteers in turn provide training to teachers and learners.

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.

No data available and further primary research is required, particularly among the youth who are the largest users of community centers and SchoolNet facilities. Due to the high penetration of mobile phones, the use of mobile texting is extensive and relatively sophisticated, particularly since it is provided at a very low cost.

The availability of computers at schools has allowed the integration of ICTs into normal school 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: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are "cool" or "only for elites" etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue…

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

The SchoolNet areas at schools are well supported and most students see it as a privilege to make use of these facilities. Some students even skip their regular classes to make use of the facility.

4.2.3.13 Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

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

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

The younger generation in Namibia is making extensive use of mobile phones, and more specifically the chat features which use the Internet Relay Chat function fed through GPRS technology. Costs are therefore very low.

In addition, many users are sending classifieds and friendship requests, via text messaging, to the weekly newspapers which print these as a supplement.

4.2.3.14 Trust, safety, and privacy

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

This has not been assessed. In general Namibians have a high regard for technology and would trust the information received at SchoolNet installations.

4.2.3.15 Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

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

Most rural users have indicated that they need more specific information regarding their daily lives. This includes health, agriculture, and employment information.

4.2.4 Enabling environment

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

SchoolNet Namibia is well regarded nationally and internationally. However the Ministry of Education has had several issues with the organization and the Ministry has initiated its own roll-out of ICTs to the schools. This is currently under discussion but not as yet resolved.

4.2.4.1 Local and national economy

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

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

Budgetary limitations have hampered the roll-out of labs. The organization is primarily donor-funded and this funding source has been decreasing over recent years.

4.2.4.2 Legal and regulatory framework

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

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

The draft ICT policy currently under development makes specific mention of the need to include IT training in educational curricula and that it is to be introduced at the pre-primary level.

There is presently no legislation in place regarding the public's right to information, nor are there laws regarding privacy and data protection.

4.2.4.3 Political will and public support

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

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

The Ministry of Education has adopted a parallel process to SchoolNet Namibia to roll-out ICTs to the schools. To date, however, there have been concerns about the lack of implementation and as yet no installations have taken place.

4.2.4.4 Organization and networking

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

All SchoolNet facilities are housed at schools or community centers and they have the full technical support from the SchoolNet regional offices. As an NGO, SchoolNet Namibia is run as an independent organization.

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.

The partnership to provide ICTs at schools is known as Tech!Na. (http://www.tech.na/) Schoolnet is a partner together with other organizations and the ICT Alliance of Namibia. The Alliance as the advisor to Government has made recommendations on the strengthening of SchoolNet and the XNET Development Trust.

The XNET Development Trust was formed as a partnership between SchoolNet Namibia and Telecom Namibia in 2003 as a vehicle to provide affordable bandwidth connectivity to a variety of social sectors (such as agriculture, education and health).

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?

A major challenge exists in providing reliable electricity to most rural schools.

4.2.5 For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

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

4.2.5.1 Budget

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

Total Budget for Fiscal Year n/a

Local currency name NAD (Namibian Dollar)   amount (local currency) Not made available

Approx. equivalent in USD n/a based on exchange rate of n/a on date n/a.

SchoolNet Namibia is an NGO and budget figures were not made available.

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 (local currency)	Comments
Total national budget	17,144,695,000	
Education	3,946,622,000	Primary, Secondary, Tertiary and Adult Education
SchoolNet	Not Known	Not made available by SchoolNet Namibia
Public libraries	38,683,000	Falls under the Education budget

Other Comments:

No government funding is given to SchoolNet Namibia for its operations.

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:	0%	None provided by government unless through payment for services
International donors:	100%	All funding is provided from donor sources.

National donors:	-	All funding is provided from donor sources.	
User fees/services:	-	Not known	

Other Comments:

No information was made available.

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?

All funds are derived from donors directly.

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?

Not known. Cost recovery is undertaken through donor funding and through the recovery of installation costs at government schools. There have however been problems in cost recovery and there are outstanding amounts which have not been paid to SchoolNet Namibia for the rendering of technical support services.

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)	Not known	Not known
Building infrastructure	Not known	Not known
Utilities	Not known	Not known
Staff Training	Not known	Not known
Computers/technology	Not known	Not known
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

Information was not made available to the research team.

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

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venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is the outlook for the foreseeable future?

The Government has indicated that there must be a consolidation of public ICT access points and that SchoolNet Namibia should be the implementation agency. This is still under discussion.

A Situational Analysis needs to identify all the existing community access points (clinics, libraries, recreational centers, craft centers, etc.) and assess successes and failures. This information should be used to identify good practice models according to user needs in the identified areas. The various programs should be consolidated in as far as infrastructure and equipment being provided, with employees from the applicable Ministries providing the service. Budgets within the various Ministries need to be studied so that ways can be found to share resources more effectively.

4.2.6   Case example for venue 2: SchoolNet.NA – Youth Empowerment through Internet

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.

SchoolNet Namibia has been in existence since 2000 and is an ICT-support, training and deployment organization for schools in Namibia.[34][35] Through the XNet alliance, an agreement between SchoolNet Namibia and Telecom Namibia, it is providing provide Internet access to more than 400 schools in Namibia. Internet access costs run at about N$ 300 per month (about 20% of commercial rates). A combination of wireless technology and alternative energy sources such as solar power has been used.

The SchoolNet labs consist of 5 – 20 thin-client, refurbished computers with all the required hardware to allow internet access. It has also provided a free national helpdesk. Total costs for a school setup with one server and five computers is about N$ 15,000 (10 for N$ 20,000, and 15 for N$ 25,000 N$).

SchoolNet's *Kids on the Block* program gives young adults an opportunity to volunteer their services to schools for technical setup and support. This includes one month of start-up training for the teachers. These youth are sourced from the Polytechnic in Windhoek, among others. SchoolNet presently trains more than 100 young Namibians each year. Three satellite service centers are maintained.
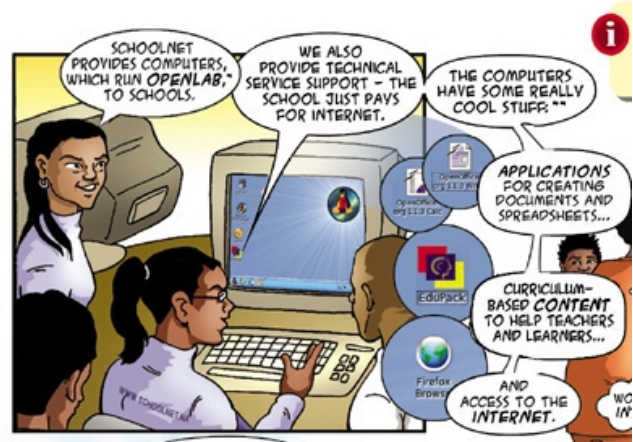
SchoolNet also provides relevant content to students and educators through its Edukar educational software suite such as a typing tutor, Wikipedia, games and books. SchoolNet Namibia promotes the use of free and open source software solutions

The SchoolNet Community Center in Katatura, Windhoek

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[34] www.schoolnet.na

[35] http://getopenlab.com/olmambo/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1186&Itemid=114

A. Shipewa Secondary School, Katatura – the SchoolNet lab

5 Success Factors and Strategic Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Lessons in Country

5.1.1 Information needs

What are the most critical information needs by underserved communities that are currently not being adequately met by public access to information and communication venues?

Most Namibians need access to information that will assist in improving their daily lives. This applies particularly to how they can access government grants such as drought aid, pensions and war veterans' pensions. There is also a growing need for health and agriculture-related information.

5.1.2 Where people go

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

Radio is still the most common means of obtaining information. Rural areas are too sparsely populated to provide more than the basic facilities in "settlement areas" or village centers. The main sources of information for citizens are via schools, health clinics and churches.

5.1.3 How access, capacity, and environment affects public access

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

The very limited ICT availability throughout most of the country means that the majority of the population has had no exposure to computers or the Internet, has few or no skills in ICTs and has therefore not integrated the use of ICTs into their lives. The widespread mobile network coverage has resulted in extensive use of mobile telephony.

5.1.4 Role of ICT

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

As for 5.1.3 above. The most promising ICT is the use of the mobile networks. This is already being harnessed in health campaigns such as the polio campaign. Future government information and communication initiatives should place a strong emphasis on the development of m-government applications.

5.2 Success Factors and Recommendations

5.2.1 Where to invest resources

How could additional resources (money, people, time, knowledge) be best used to strengthen public access to information and communication venues and practices in the country? (i.e., solutions that would make it more accessible, affordable, appropriate?)

An audit of all government contact points (schools, clinics, police stations, post offices, multi-purpose centers, etc.) has to be undertaken to measure the spread of such venues, as well as the physical facilities at each venue. This study will also have to determine the power and telecommunications facilities at these venues.

The Government has designated that all constituency offices (13 regions with 107 constituency offices) should be equipped with ICTs. The proposed Community Information Resource Centers must then make use of the fiber-optic backbone already rolled out to these constituency offices. A solution also must be found to equip these centers with alternative power sources such as solar energy as many are not on the national grid.

5.2.2 Key success factors

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

1. The rollout of ICT to schools appears to have been the most successful project in Namibia, despite the difficulties of dial-up access, little available bandwidth, long travel distances to provide technical support and the difficulties of providing reliable 24/7 internet access.
2. There are concerns about the lack of synergy and coordination between the various government departments regarding ICT rollout. Key players have strongly recommended the creation of an ICT ministry to provide the necessary coordination for successful implementation. This is now in place. The newly created Ministry of Information and Communication Technology has identified all the existing public access points presently managed by the various Ministries. A workshop was held in August to bring together all the role-players and identify the failures and successes in the various projects. In future, all public access points have to be coordinated by the Ministry of ICT.

5.2.3 Role of ICT

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

There needs to be more information relevant to local communities. For example, most subsistence farmers do not know what the market prices are for livestock and will sell a goat or sheep for necessities without knowing if they are getting a good price.

5.2.4 Top ten recommendations

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

11. The availability of ICTs in libraries is very limited but this presents significant opportunities for expanding ICTs into libraries, particularly since the highest usage is among the student population. This creates a range of possibilities in terms of the provision of the required ICT infrastructure, extensive Internet access, development of appropriate local content and the provision of mass ICT literacy training.

12. Limited ICT skills in government, schools and libraries are a severely limiting factor and an extensive ICT literacy campaign will be necessary to ensure the necessary leverage among users. ICT training should be included more prominently in the training of teachers and librarians, as well as civil servants.

13. There is limited to no data available on user patterns and perceptions in libraries – this type of information is required to inform library management on how best to provide services to their clients. There is also little understanding of the needs of older users (women and men) who at this stage are generally not users of library facilities.

14. More research is needed to assess the availability of content in local languages, the extent to which this is required, the likely levels of demand and the type of content that could be developed for future use in libraries, schools and youth development centers. There may also be opportunities for local content creation by the youth through the youth development centers and proposed multipurpose centers. This could be set up as a work creation program throughout the country.

15. A Situational Analysis needs to identify all the existing community access points (clinics, libraries, recreational centers, craft centers, etc.) and indicate the various successes or failures. This information should be used to identify good practice models according to user needs in the identified areas. The various programs should be consolidated in as far as infrastructure and equipment being provided, with employees from the applicable Ministries providing the service.

16. Government services need to be identified that lend themselves to being provided electronically. Possible applications could include reminders to visit the clinic or informing a person once their identity documents are ready for collection. This will require the use of appropriate ICTs (e.g. text messaging by mobile phones) in the responsible Ministries.

17. Government websites must become more functional - at present most websites look appealing, but are far too clogged with graphics which make take long to download, particularly when bandwidth is limited and expensive. Information on the websites should also be updated more regularly.

18. The cost of computers and their software is limiting their availability. Government should therefore have a policy to support the use of Free and Open Source software (FOSS)

19. ICT training should be implemented in the school curriculum starting from pre-

primary level. It is important that citizens have the skills to use the technology themselves.

20. Government services should be accessed free of charge through established Information Kiosks within integrated Community Information Resource Centers.

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 the Research

Algeria
Argentina
Bangladesh
Brazil
Colombia
Costa Rica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
Georgia
Honduras
Indonesia
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Malaysia
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 and 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 and communication, especially to underserved communities, and especially through the use of digital ICT: What are the needs, barriers, opportunities and 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 and 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 and analytical models

To inform project design, CIS adapted the Real Access framework (Bridges.org), analyzing public access to information and 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 and 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)

See previously submitted Form 2 for Namibia.

6.4   Internet Cafés in Namibia

The commercial provision of Internet services is flourishing in Namibia. Most major urban areas have multiple internet cafés catering for browsing, email and gaming. LAN-ing (gaming over a network) has also taken off and there are regular competitions. The Post Office and Telecom also provide internet access at some of their venues. Quite a few banks have started providing a small working area within the bank where clients can do Internet banking. The hardware and software available is state of the art, however the connection speeds are still very slow.

As these are commercial entities, a fee is charged per hour (+/- N\$30). This is not affordable to the majority of the population. Most of the users are not locals, but tourists or visitors from other countries. Most are using the internet for browsing (45%) and emails (36%). The users are also generally older – perhaps because it is during the day when most younger people are at school, or the costs are too high. Just over half (50%) are older than 25. (Fewer than 30% of all users interviewed were over 25).

The staff sizes are generally small (around one staff member per five computers), but are technologically well-trained.

The regularity of visits was much lower than all the other venues (fewer than 10% were visited daily). Also the type of service required was described as adequate by users and only 14% wanted more services.

The legal framework is still pending as the Information and Communication Bill has still not been tabled. In the policy framework, Government has clearly indicated that Internet Cafés will be allowed to provide additional services such as VOIP.

The biggest complaint from users is that some venues do not allow the use of memory sticks.

Some local content has been developed for social websites (www.namlish.com) and several gaming boards.