

Public Libraries and the Digital Divide

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Select an issue that is important to information professionals. Write a 2-3 page paper using relevant library literature to analyze the issue. There are many, many possible topics including, but not limited to, the following suggestions.

- Privatizing the public library
- Internet filtering software in libraries
- Libraries using social networking sites
- Best practices for library education
- Getting rid of the reference desk
- Using non-librarians for reference service
- The role of libraries in relation to national security
- Libraries and the digital divide
- “Cultural bias” in the organization of information (Rubin, p. 232)
- Libraries and intellectual freedom

If you are uncertain about whether you have selected an appropriate issue, please ask me.

Do background reading on the topic (3-4 articles from alternative viewpoints). Write a discussion of the issues as you perceive them. Cover both sides of the issues. Your analysis should consider such questions as:

- Why is the topic important?
- Is this a new issue or a continuing, unresolved question?
- Is it more important for one type of library (public, school, etc.) than for others?
- What library mission(s) or value(s) should be considered in a discussion of this topic?

A successful Issue Briefing will include a clear, concise description of the issue, cogent explanations of each side of the issue, identification of principles, ethics, or values that underlie each perspective, identification of relevant professional standards, and evidence of a literature search with proper citations and bibliography in APA format. Your paper should be double spaced, in 12-point Arial, Verdana or Calibri (or similar) font. References must be cited for each of the materials used to complete the assignment. For more information, see the Writing Guidelines.

Post your briefing in the [Discussion Board for Issue Briefings](#). Review at least one peer's submission and provide substantive feedback.

### Public Libraries and the Digital Divide

In order to participate in a digitally connected world, individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, including African Americans and non-English speakers, rely on public libraries as their main access point for utilizing computer applications. However, sufficient As a core value, librarians strive to bridge a

The United States government, private employers, and American citizens rely on public libraries as an access point for internet access and training for computer applications. However, reduced city, state, and national budgets established for libraries impede the ability of libraries to provide information and communication technology (ICT) resources, such as computers, which are vital for citizens to participate in a digitally connected society. With an insufficient number of computers to meet the needs of patrons, a digital divide exists between those who have access to computers and those who do not. This issue is further complicated, as once people gain access to the computers, they need digital literacy skills in order to utilize and navigate the technology. In an attempt to promote digital inclusion, which strives to ensure access and knowledge of internet and computer applications, libraries offer education classes, work with academic institutions, and lobby Congress for funds necessary to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century Americans.

## References

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- Jaeger, P.T., Bertot, J.C., Thompson, K.M., Katz, S.M., & DeCoster, E.J. (2012). The intersection of public policy and public access: Digital divides, digital literacy, digital inclusion, and public libraries. *Public Library Quarterly, 31*(1), 1-20.
- Kinney, B. (2010). The internet, public libraries, and the digital divide. *Public Library Quarterly, 29*(2), 104-161.
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