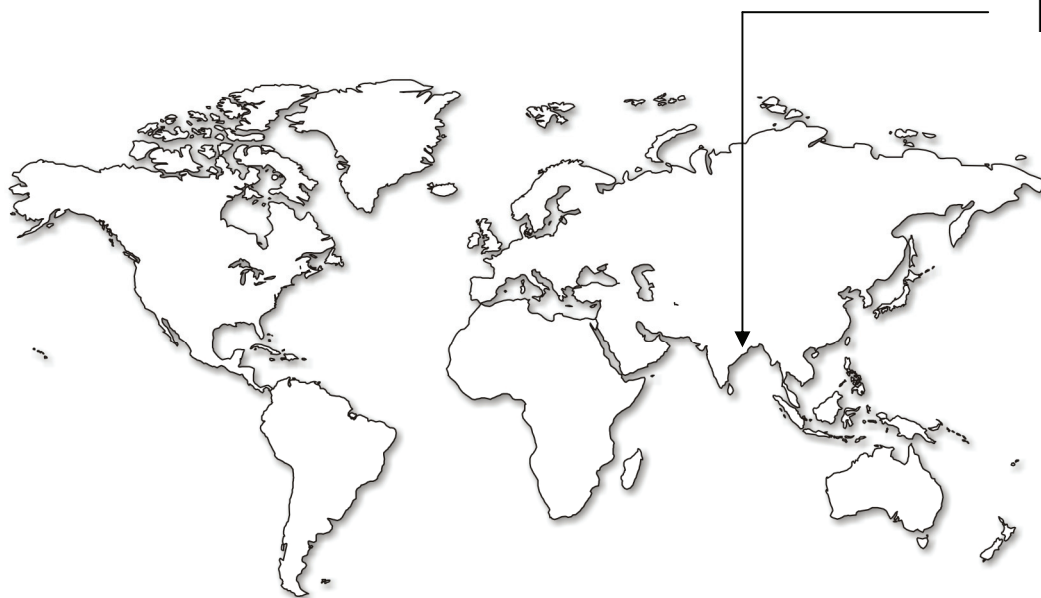# Nepal

Responding institution:

The respondent has requested to remain anonymous.

This is Nepal's third consecutive report since 2003. It indicates the existence of 600 public libraries, 25 university research libraries, 4 500 school libraries and 50 government-funded research libraries.

All of these libraries have less than 20% Internet access, with very little local content and also no content in local languages. Internet access is only free of charge in government libraries. The state has not made additional funding available for Internet access in the past two years.

Internet access was estimated at a very low 0.9% in April 2007 by Internet World Stats. Although the state acknowledges the importance of libraries for national development, funds are used in primary sectors such as agriculture and primary healthcare. Nepal has a literacy rate of 54% (48.6% in the 2007 *CIA World Factbook*).

The library association supports some degree of filtering of information, but there is no such software in the country's libraries. This means that even though the wish is to protect children, this is not possible in practice. However, considering the low Internet penetration, this is probably not a big issue.

There have not been any anti-terror laws in the past two years, and lawmakers have not yet considered their potential impact on users. According to the respondent, the keeping of records should not affect

library Internet users' freedom of expression. The report indicates that there have been no violations of intellectual freedom, which is contrary to reports by third-party sources.

Libraries in Nepal have a strong focus on HIV/Aids, with some having special collections on the subject. Certain non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international NGOs are involved in the provision of information to people who cannot read, but libraries are not. There are no library programmes to promote women's literacy, because libraries are not in a financial position to do so. The Ministry for Women has, however, led to several women-related activities that include special information programmes.

The library association has not yet adopted a code of ethics, but intends to do so within the next two years. The same applies to the IFLA Internet Manifesto and the Glasgow Declaration.

User privacy and anti-terror legislation

No anti-terror laws have been passed in the past two years, and lawmakers have not yet considered their potential impact on users' privacy. Lobbying by librarians is not very significant in this area. The keeping of records should not affect library Internet users' freedom of expression.

Reported incidents/violations of intellectual freedom in the past two years

The report indicates that there have been no violations of intellectual freedom, or censorship. There is, however, sufficient evidence from independent

analysts and observers that the recent situation in Nepal is discouraging. Press council members have been threatened with assault, the publication of the newspaper *Nepal Samacharpatra* was blocked, and journalists were harassed, detained and attacked by armed groups. There was even an incident where a bomb was thrown at a vehicle carrying journalists in the Terrai region. There are also accounts of newspapers being burned because of their content.

All of this has happened after calls by the Federation of Nepalese Journalists and IFEX for reforms to the media policy. The situation regarding freedom of access to information and freedom of expression remains uncertain, and libraries involved in maintaining access for their users also face an uncertain future.

Sources:

http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/83893/
http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/83699/
http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/83549/
http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/83544/
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http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/83409/
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http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/76814/

HIV/Aids awareness

Libraries in Nepal have been involved with HIV/Aids awareness programmes, and some libraries have special collections for users on the subject. NGOs and international NGOs operating in the country are involved in the provision of information to people who cannot read, but libraries are not.

Women and freedom of access to information

Libraries are not involved in programmes to promote women's literacy because they are not in a financial position to do so. The government has, however, established a Ministry for Women, which has led to several women-related activities that include special information programmes.

IFLA Internet Manifesto

The Internet Manifesto has not yet been adopted, but it is the intention of the library association to do so within the next two years.

IFLA Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom

The Glasgow Declaration has not been adopted yet but should be within the next two years, according to the respondent.

Ethics

The library association has not yet adopted a code of ethics, but the intent to do so within the next two years has been indicated.

Main indicators

Country name:	Nepal
Population:	28 901 790 (July 2007 est.)
Main language:	Nepali 47.8%, Maithali 12.1%, Bhojpuri 7.4%, Tharu (Dagaura/Rana) 5.8%, Tamang 5.1%, Newar 3.6%, Magar 3.3%, Awadhi 2.4%, other 10%, unspecified 2.5% (2001 census); many in government and business also speak English
Literacy:	48.6%
Literacy reported by respondent:	54%

Population figures, language and literacy are from the
CIA World Factbook, 2007 edition
(https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html).

Nepal

Libraries and Internet access

Nepal contributed to the World Report series in 2005 and 2003. The following section compares data and answers from 2007 with the 2005 IFLA/FAIFE World Report and adds context from the respondent's estimates, where possible.

Library services

Estimated number of public libraries*:	600 (2005: 600)
Estimated number of school libraries:	4 500
Estimated number of university libraries:	25
Estimated number of government-funded research libraries:	50
Source of these numbers:	Data obtained from the districts; Ministry of Education and Sports

Internet access

Population online**:	225 000 Internet users as of April 2007 (0.9%) (2005: 0.3%)
Percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20% (2005: Less than 20%)
Percentage of school libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
Percentage of university libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
Percentage of government-funded research libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
In your estimate, how much local content*** is available on the Internet:	Very little
To what degree is content on the Internet available in local languages:	Nothing, or practically nothing
Is the library association in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals:	Yes, to a certain degree (2005: No)
Is the use of filtering software widespread in your country's libraries:	No – the entire Nepalese society wants to protect children from unwanted information, but the availability of such system is not yet in place (2005: No)
Is it free of charge for library users to access the Internet on library computers:	Yes, in statutory research council libraries only (2005: No)
Has the state or other library authorities made any extra funding available for Internet access in the library system of your country in the last two years:	No (2005: No)

* Public library service points, including branch libraries.
** Online population numbers are from Internet World Stats (www.internetworldstats.com).
*** Local content is defined as content that originates in the country.