

Thailand



Responding institution:

The respondent has requested to remain anonymous.

Thailand previously participated in the World Report in 2001 and 2003. There are 919 public libraries, 225 university research libraries, 54 133 school libraries and 180 government-funded research libraries.

Except for public libraries, where there is 41-60% Internet access, other libraries enjoy 61-80% access. There is an average amount of local content on the Internet, but very much of this is available in local languages. Internet access is free of charge in public and school libraries. The national library also allows users to access the Internet free of charge. The literacy rate in Thailand is 93.5%.

The respondent has pointed out that the library association is not in favour of filtering information on library terminals and that such software is not widespread. The respondent nevertheless identifies the protection of children, safeguarding of national security, prevention of crime and safeguarding of public morality as reasons for supporting the use of filtering software.

According to the report, no anti-terror laws were passed in the past two years, and there have been no violations of intellectual freedom.

Most of Thailand's libraries provide information about HIV/Aids to readers, and special programmes promote reading and education on the topic. Information is also made available in Braille and on cassette tapes for

blind persons. As a result of education, high literacy and information levels, women play leading roles in all sectors of society. There are special programmes to meet the information needs of women.

The library association adopted a code of ethics in 1996. The Internet Manifesto will probably be adopted within the next two years. The same intention applies to the Glasgow Declaration.

User privacy and anti-terror legislation

According to the respondent, no anti-terror laws were passed in the past two years.

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

There have also been no incidents of the violation of intellectual freedom, according to the respondent. There are, however, several recent reports from Amnesty International and IFEX relating to freedom of expression and access to information in Thailand. These include the blocking of websites, harassment of journalists, attacks on radio stations, and calls from academics and students to change computer and media laws. There have also been reports of protests about censorship laws that threaten to curb freedom of the press. Other incidents reported in the popular press of bomb blasts that injured members of the public have also contributed to an atmosphere that favours the suppression of information.

Sources:

<http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/163/>

<http://www.ifex.org/es/content/view/archivealerts/163/>

http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=7754

HIV/Aids awareness

Most of Thailand's libraries supply information on HIV/Aids to readers. Special programmes promote reading and education on the epidemic. This information is also made available in Braille and on cassette tapes for blind persons.

Women and freedom of access to information

Education, literacy levels and information have led to women playing leading roles in all sectors of Thai society. The past and current presidents of the library association, for example, are women. Special

programmes to meet the information needs of women are still running at many libraries.

IFLA Internet Manifesto

The Internet Manifesto will probably be adopted by the library association within the next two years.

IFLA Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom

The same intention applies to the Glasgow Declaration.

Ethics

The library association adopted a code of ethics in 1996. The code is recited at the annual conferences, and librarians apply it in their daily work.

Main indicators

Country name:	Thailand
Population:	65 068 149 (July 2007 est.)
Main language:	Thai, English (secondary language of the elite), ethnic and regional dialects
Literacy:	92.6%
Literacy reported by respondent:	93.5%

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



Libraries and Internet access

Thailand contributed to the World Report series in 2003 and 2001. The following section compares data and answers from 2007 with the 2003 IFLA/FAIFE World Report and adds context from the respondent's estimates, where possible.

Library services

Estimated number of public libraries*:	919
Estimated number of school libraries:	54 133
Estimated number of university libraries:	225
Estimated number of government-funded research libraries:	180
Source of these numbers:	Office of the Education Council, Ministry of Education, 2005 Education Statistics of Thailand; Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Culture, Sport and Tourism Bureau 2007; National Library

Internet access

Population online**:	8 420 000 Internet users as of March 2005 (12.5%) (2003: 1.96% in 2001)
Percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users:	41-60% (2003: 61-80%)
Percentage of school libraries offering Internet access to users:	61-80%
Percentage of university libraries offering Internet access to users:	61-80%
Percentage of government-funded research libraries offering Internet access to users:	61-80%
In your estimate, how much local content*** is available on the Internet:	Average
<i>To what degree is content on the Internet available in local languages:</i>	Very much
Is the library association in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals:	No (2003: Yes, to a certain degree)
Is the use of filtering software widespread in your country's libraries:	No – yet used to protect children, safeguard national security, prevent crime and safeguard public morality (2003: No)
Is it free of charge for library users to access the Internet on library computers:	Yes, in public libraries and school libraries – the national library allows users to access the Internet free of charge (2003: Yes in research libraries; extra funds have been allocated by the state or other library authorities for Internet access in libraries)
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:	Yes, in some cases

* 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.