FAST ⚡ FACTS

Recent Statistics from The Library Research Service

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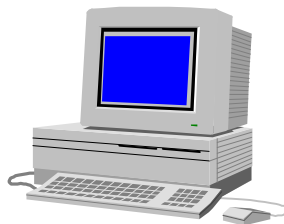
ACLIN & Internet Services in Colorado Public Libraries, 1997

While many still think of libraries primarily as warehouses for books, almost all of Colorado's public libraries now provide electronic access to information. The two primary channels of such access are ACLIN, the Access Colorado Library and Information Network, and the global Internet. ACLIN includes OVER 230 library catalogs and other informational databases.

Electronic Access to Information

The most ubiquitous form of electronic access to information in Colorado public libraries is to ACLIN. All Coloradans living in public library service areas of 5,000 or more can consult ACLIN at their libraries. The overwhelming majority of the state's smallest public libraries also provide ACLIN access.

Electronic Access to Information at Colorado Public Libraries, 1997

Public Library Service Area Population	Libraries with Electronic Access to Information	
	ACLIN	Internet
100,000 & over	100%	100%
25,000-99,999	100%	85%
10,000-24,999	100%	86%
5,000-9,999	100%	83%
2,500-4,999	87%	53%
1,000-2,499	78%	52%
Under 1,000	75%	42%

Types of ACLIN & Internet Access

Each public library provides access to ACLIN via one of three means: dial access, dedicated line, or a combination of both. Four out of five of the state's largest libraries, those serving 100,000 and over, rely on dedicated lines with dial access as a back-up. About half of libraries serving between 10,000 and 100,000 rely mostly on dedicated lines, but the other half have exclusively dial access. Smaller libraries are even more dependent upon dial access.

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Types of Internet access follow a similar pattern, with the exception that dependence upon dial access increases dramatically once the population of a service area drops below 25,000.

Public Access and Staff Supervision

Public access to ACLIN without staff supervision increases steadily with the size of public library service areas. Nine out of ten libraries serving 25,000 or more provide such unencumbered access, and a third of the state's smallest libraries provide it. Three out of four libraries serving 100,000 or more provide unsupervised access to the Internet, but such access drops off sharply after that. In service areas between 2,500 and 100,000, only about one library in five provides it.

Remote Access

Remote access to the Internet via public libraries is less common. Remote access to the Internet is provided only by some of the state's largest libraries, those serving 100,000 and over. Two out of five of these libraries provide remote Internet access via the library. ACLIN is accessible via the World Wide Web or, in text-only mode, via dial access nodes located statewide.

Internet Services Available to the Public via Libraries

Three out of five public libraries in Colorado provide public access to the Internet, but of those three, only two provide graphical access to the World Wide Web; one provides text only access. Fortunately, however, the libraries most likely to provide full Internet access are ones that serve larger populations. One-third of libraries serving 10,000 and over provide graphical Web access. Such access is rarest among libraries serving fewer than 2,500. Half of the state's libraries serving 100,000 and over provide access to telnet and gopher services, but those services are rarely available via smaller libraries. As of early 1997, only a small handful of public libraries provide e-mail accounts to their patrons, and those libraries tend to serve very small populations (1,000 to 10,000). In all likelihood, such libraries are located in small, isolated communities where there are few, if any, local Internet service providers.