

Users' perceptions of the benefits of ICT in public libraries in Germany

Final report

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Executive summary

Objectives and research approach

TNS, an independent research company with a global presence, was commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation to conduct research across 17 EU countries to identify perceptions and types of use of public libraries. The purpose of the research was to understand the impact that public libraries in the EU have on users' lives.

The research included:

- a workshop among the study stakeholders to discuss the priorities for the research;
- desk research, to collate key data concerning libraries;
- a survey of a representative sample of the population aged 15 and over in each of the 17 countries;
- a survey among library users and public access computer (PAC) users aged 15 and over, in each of the 17 countries, conducted in libraries; and
- qualitative research among library users and library staff.

This report provides a brief overview of the results for Germany and compares the results to the EU total.

The public library landscape

- The desk research estimates that there are 9,550¹ public libraries in Germany, which equates to 1.2 libraries per 10,000 population, compared with an average of 1.3 libraries per 10,000 population across the EU. Of the 9,550 public libraries, 3,340 have a salaried director and staff, while the other 6,210 libraries have a voluntary director and staff.
- Computer access is offered by 30% of public libraries in Germany.

Library and PAC usage

- An estimated 11.4 million adults in Germany, around a sixth of adults in the country (16%) had used a public library in the last 12 months, compared with just under a quarter (23%) of all adults across Europe.
- An estimated 1.5 million adults in Germany, 2% of adults, had used PACs in the last 12 months, significantly lower than the average of 4% of adults across the EU.
- PAC users in Germany had the same gender profile and a similar age profile to the EU average, but were more likely than the EU average to live in a city or large town.
- The primary motivations of PAC users in Germany and across the EU are the free nature of the service together with the lack of other options that people have.
- Overall, it is estimated that 0.3 million PAC users in Germany had nowhere else to access the internet, or to access the internet free of charge.
- The value placed on the PAC service was lower among users in Germany than the EU average. Overall, 75% of PAC users in Germany said that the library's computer and internet connection services were valuable, compared with 92% of all EU PAC users. Less than a sixth (15%) of PAC users in Germany said the service was extremely valuable, significantly lower than the EU average (36%).
- Satisfaction with computers and the internet at public libraries, although reasonable in Germany (68%), was much lower than the EU average of 91%.

¹ German library statistics 2011: <http://www.hbz-nrw.de/angebote/dbs/>. Retrieved September 26, 2012

Perceptions and impacts of public libraries

- 'Free access to computers' and 'free access to the internet' were rated as important by 37% and 38% respectively of library users in Germany, which was lower than the equivalent figures of 69% and 71% of users across Europe.
- Around three fifths (62%) of the general public in Germany (including both library users and non-users) felt libraries were either very effective, effective or fairly effective at meeting the needs of their local community, in line with the average across the EU of 64%.
- 38% of the public in Germany felt that public libraries merited more financial support than at present, on a par with the EU average (40%).
- Overall 81% of PAC users in Germany said their PAC use had delivered at least one impact for them, on a par with the average across the EU (83%) and representing approximately 1.0 million people in Germany.
- Library users in Germany were more likely than the EU average to strongly agree that public libraries 'Have highly skilled librarians' (55% Germany compared with 43% EU) and 'Are accessible to everyone' (84% Germany, 70% EU).

Informal and non-formal learning

- In Germany 23% of library users had taken part in an educational activity in a library in the last 12 months, which was on a par with the EU average of 25%.

Employment and use of PACs for business

- Almost a quarter (23%) of PAC users in Germany had used library computers in the last 12 months to support some employment related activity, below the EU average of 30%. This represents an estimated 0.3 million PAC users in Germany who had used PAC for employment related activity.
- An estimated 66,000 PAC users in Germany had used a PAC to apply for a job in the last 12 months, and an estimated 14,000 adults were successful in securing employment by this means.

E-government and active citizenship

- The library survey found that around one in five PAC users in Germany (20%) had used PACs to interact with public authorities in the last 12 months, similar to the EU average of one in four (24%).
- Overall, three in ten PAC users in Germany (31%) had used PAC for civic engagement activities in the past 3 months, slightly higher than the average for users across the EU (26%). The two most common community engagement activities were seeking information on consumer/legal rights (16% Germany compared with 11% EU) and reading and posting opinions on civic or political issues via websites (13% Germany compared with 14% EU).

1. Background and methodology

1.1 Context for the research

Public libraries across the European Union (EU) have long played an important role in communities by providing free access to information, guidance from trained librarians, and public meeting space. As meaningful participation in society increasingly requires access to digital information and resources, many public libraries in the EU have expanded their offerings to include access to information and communications technologies (ICTs) like computers and the Internet.

There is a growing body of evidence about the ways public access to ICTs contributes to economic, health, education, and social development². For instance, the Global Impact Study on Public Access to ICTs, which covers five developing countries, found that those using Public Access Computers reported positive impact related to communication (79%), education (78%), access to government information (40%) and health (37%). More than 80% of public services in the EU are now fully available online,³ but in 2011, just 41% of the EU population used government services electronically.⁴ Today, some Europeans have their first experiences with computers or the Internet at a public library, and for some individuals this may remain the only place they can access ICTs (or access them without paying unaffordable fees)⁵.

Under the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the EU has set ambitious objectives in many of the development areas to which access-to-information efforts contribute – specifically employment, innovation, education, and social inclusion. EU Member States are expected to meet targets in these areas by 2020. There is anecdotal evidence that ICT access through public libraries can support the implementation of the specific growth, education, and cohesion policies related to the EU 2020 Strategy, such as digital skills and inclusion milestones described under the Digital Agenda for Europe (one of seven flagship initiatives of the Strategy) or informal and non-formal learning, which is mentioned in three of the seven flagship initiatives. In other policy areas, such as supporting a skilled workforce and connecting people to employment opportunities, public libraries' roles may be less obvious and additional data are needed to demonstrate the contributions of public libraries and help them secure EU support for their work.

This research, which includes EU-wide and country-specific reports, was commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation to illuminate the role of public libraries in supporting social and economic policies under the EU 2020 Strategy.

1.2 Research objectives

The main purpose of the research was to understand the impact that public libraries in the EU have on users' lives.

1.3 Research method

The research was conducted in the following seventeen countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Finland, France, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom.

² See [The Global Impact Study of Public Access to Information & Communication Technology](#) about the scale, character, and impacts of public access to information and communication technologies. Looking at libraries, telecenters, and cybercafes, the study investigates impact in a number of areas, including communication and leisure, culture and language, education, employment and income, governance, and health. Implemented by the University of Washington's [Technology & Social Change Group](#) (TASCHA), the Study is part of a broader research project supported by Canada's [International Development Research Centre](#) (IDRC) and a grant to IDRC from the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#).

³ [Eurostat](#), 2010

⁴ [Eurostat](#), 2011

⁵ Sciadas, G., with Lyons, H., Rothschild, C., & Sey, A. (2012). [Public access to ICTs: Sculpting the profile of users](#). Seattle: Technology & Social Change Group, University of Washington Information School.

The research involved several phases. First, desk research was carried out to collate existing information showing the public library landscape in the survey countries, using sources such as IFLA, national and local library statistics, local library associations, national statistical offices, Eurostat, Eurobarometer and so on. Survey work was carried out in October/November 2012.

- A representative sample of 1,026 members of the public aged 15+ in Germany (17,816 across the 17 countries) were interviewed regarding their usage of libraries, computers in libraries and their attitudes towards libraries (note – there was no maximum age limit on the sample).
- Interviews were carried out in libraries. In Germany, 710 interviews were conducted with people who had not used Public Access Computers (PACs) in libraries (12,537 across the 17 countries) and 708 with those who had (11,716 across the 17 countries). The interviews in Germany were conducted in 25 libraries which were selected and contacted with help from a representative of Deutscher Bibliotheksverband e.V.. Respondents were interviewed face-to-face.
- Qualitative fieldwork was conducted, consisting in each country of five 60-minute depth interviews with library managers and four 90-minute group discussions with PAC users. At least 3 libraries were represented in each country, in both urban and semi-rural locations.

Survey results were weighted to ensure that the final results were representative of the population within each country. Weighting was also applied to rebalance the weight of each country within the pan-European totals, in proportion to the population size.

1.4 This report

This report provides a brief overview of the results for Germany and compares the results to the EU total. EU results are based on findings from the 17 countries included in this study. Individual reports for each country surveyed have been produced as well as an overall report⁶.

Throughout this report where we refer to:

- A 'library': This means a public library, which anyone can go to, and does not include school, college, or university libraries'
- PAC user/usage: This refers to usage of a public access computer to access the internet within a public library, and is based on those who responded affirmatively to the following question:

Have you used a public access computer in a public library to access the internet in the last 12 months? Please do not include using your personal computer or smart phone in the library.

- A library user: This means someone who has visited a public library in the last 12 months

Throughout this report comparisons are made between the findings in Germany and the average across the EU. The EU average is calculated based on responses from the 17 countries in the survey. It should be noted that figures for Germany are *included* in the EU average, which has the effect of lessening the statistical power of comparisons between the Germany and EU figures.

While most of the data is presented in terms of percentages, on a number of occasions throughout this report data have been grossed up to represent the population of Germany and are presented in terms of estimated numbers.

⁶ Quick, Prior, Toombs, Taylor and Currenti (2013): *Cross-European survey to measure users' perceptions of the benefits of ICT in public libraries* (funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation)

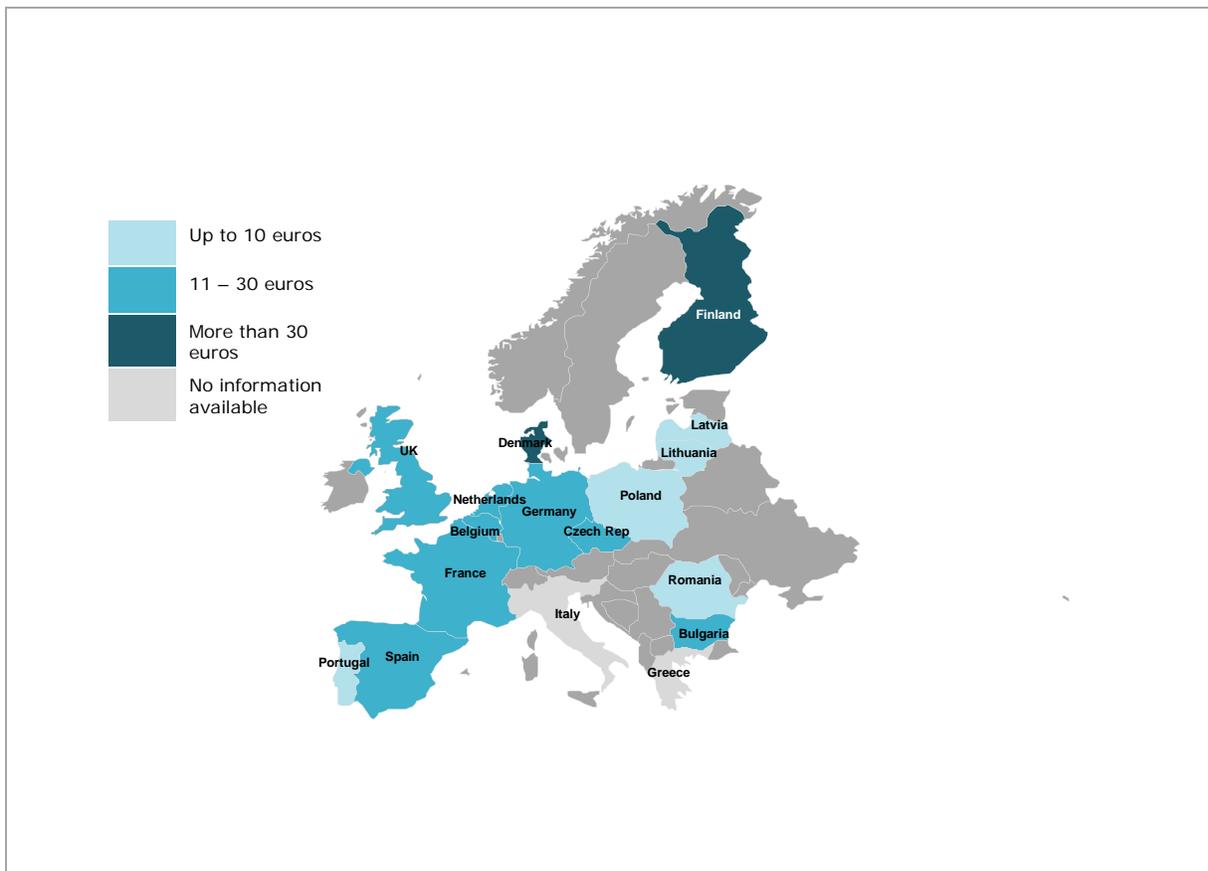
2. The public library landscape and internet provision

There are 9,550 public libraries in Germany (2011), which equates to 1.2 libraries per 10,000 population, compared with an average across the 17 EU countries of 1.3 libraries per 10,000 population. Of these 9,550 public libraries, 3,340 have a salaried director and staff (mainly located in cities or large towns with a population of at least 5,000 people), while the remaining 6,210 libraries have a voluntary director and staff (mainly located in rural areas and run by communities as well as by churches).

The German public library landscape is organized de-centrally. There neither exists a countrywide library law nor a central control through a governmental institution. Therefore, public libraries are funded and operated by communities and churches only. As a result, many public libraries are under pressure, considering the tight financial situation many communities are facing and usually adult users have to pay an annual fee. Children and other groups such as unemployed people still can use the library services free of charge.

Annual public spending on libraries per capita in Germany was about 11 Euros. This was below the average for the EU. The following map gives the broad pattern of expenditure across Europe.

Figure 1: Annual spending on libraries per capita



Source: TNS desk research

Computer access is offered by 30% of public libraries in Germany, due to the fact that many of the 'voluntary' libraries are not well equipped.

The proportion of public libraries with internet access in Germany is 24%, again due to the fact that many libraries are 'voluntary' and not well equipped.

Eurostat data (2011) for Internet access at home shows that Germany has one of the highest levels in Europe, with 83% of households having access to the Internet, compared with an EU average of 73%. It may therefore be expected that demand for and usage of PAC services would be lower in Germany than in other countries.

3. Library and PAC usage

3.1 Access to libraries and PACs

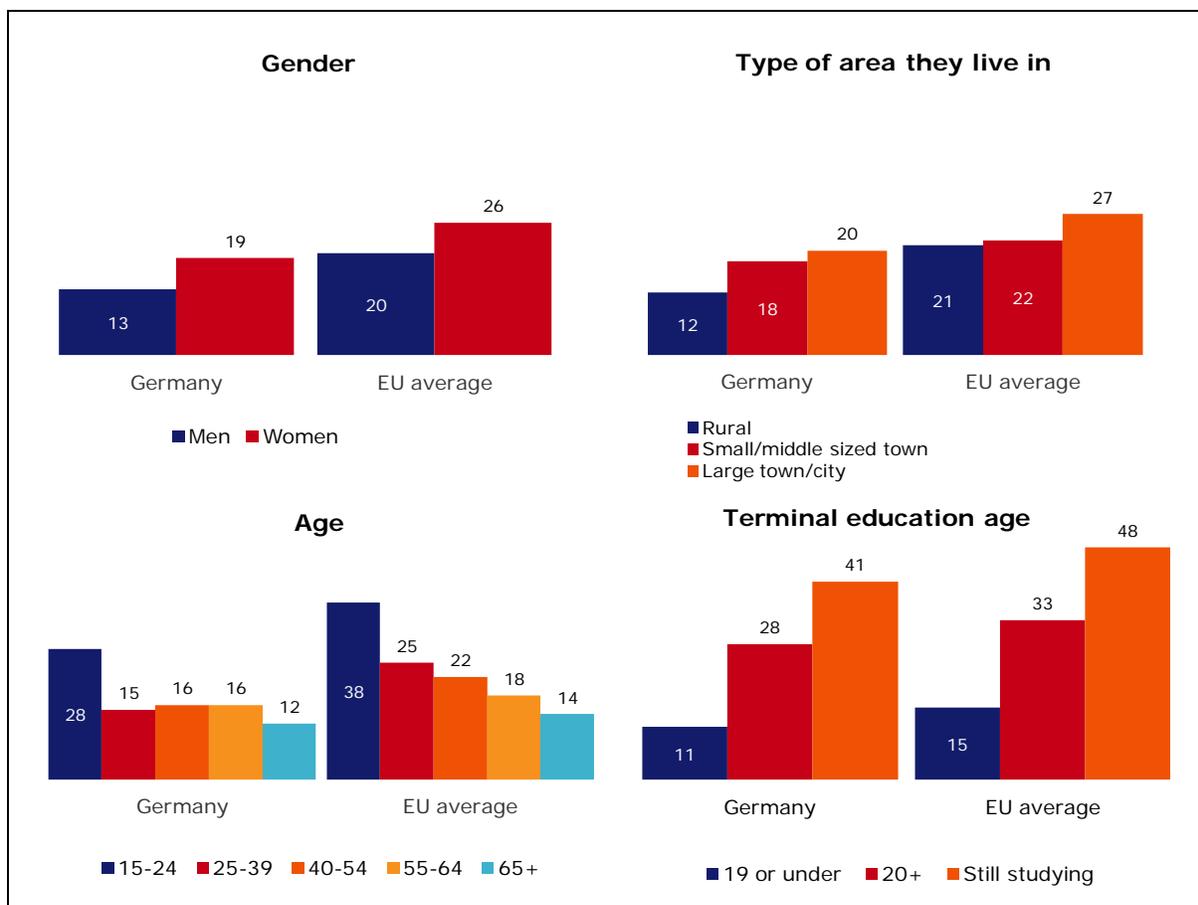
Library usage in Germany was below the EU average:

- An estimated 11.4 million adults in Germany, a sixth of adults in Germany (16%) had used a public library in the last 12 months, compared with just under a quarter (23%) of all adults across Europe.
- An estimated 7.3 million adults, a tenth (11%) of adults in Germany, had used a library at least once a month, against an EU average of 14%.

The prevalence of library use in the last 12 months, by different groups in Germany and across the EU, is shown in Figure 2. In Germany:

- Women (19%) were more likely than men (13%) to have visited a library, in line with the findings across the EU.
- Library usage in Germany was highest among those aged 15-24 (28%) as was the case with the EU average. Then in Germany, usage was consistent across the other age bands (15% of those aged 25-39, 16% of those aged 40-54, 16% of those aged 55-64 and 12% of those aged 65 and over. Overall, library usage levels in Germany were lower than the average levels for EU.
- Library use in Germany was lowest in rural areas (12%) compared with large towns and cities (20%) and smaller towns (18%).
- Library use was higher among those who were still studying – 41% of this group had used a public library in the last 12 months, not too much lower than the EU average.

Figure 2: Percentage of each group who had used a library in the last 12 months



Source: Omnibus survey – Q1. Have you visited a public library in the last 12 months?
 Base: Germany – All adults (1026), Men (463), Women (563), 15-24 (120), 25-39 (185), 40-54 (285), 55-64 (191), 65+ (245), Large town/city (201), Small town (479), Rural area (346), Finished education 19 or under (688), 20 or over (249), Still studying (65). EU - All adults (17816), Men (8521), Women (9295), 15-24 (2636), 25-39 (4152), 40-54 (4592), 55-64 (2937), 65+ (3496), Large town/city (5352), Small town (6653), Rural area (5633), Finished education 19 or under (9943), 20 or over (5500), Still studying (1801).

The profile of library users in Germany, compared with across the EU, was:

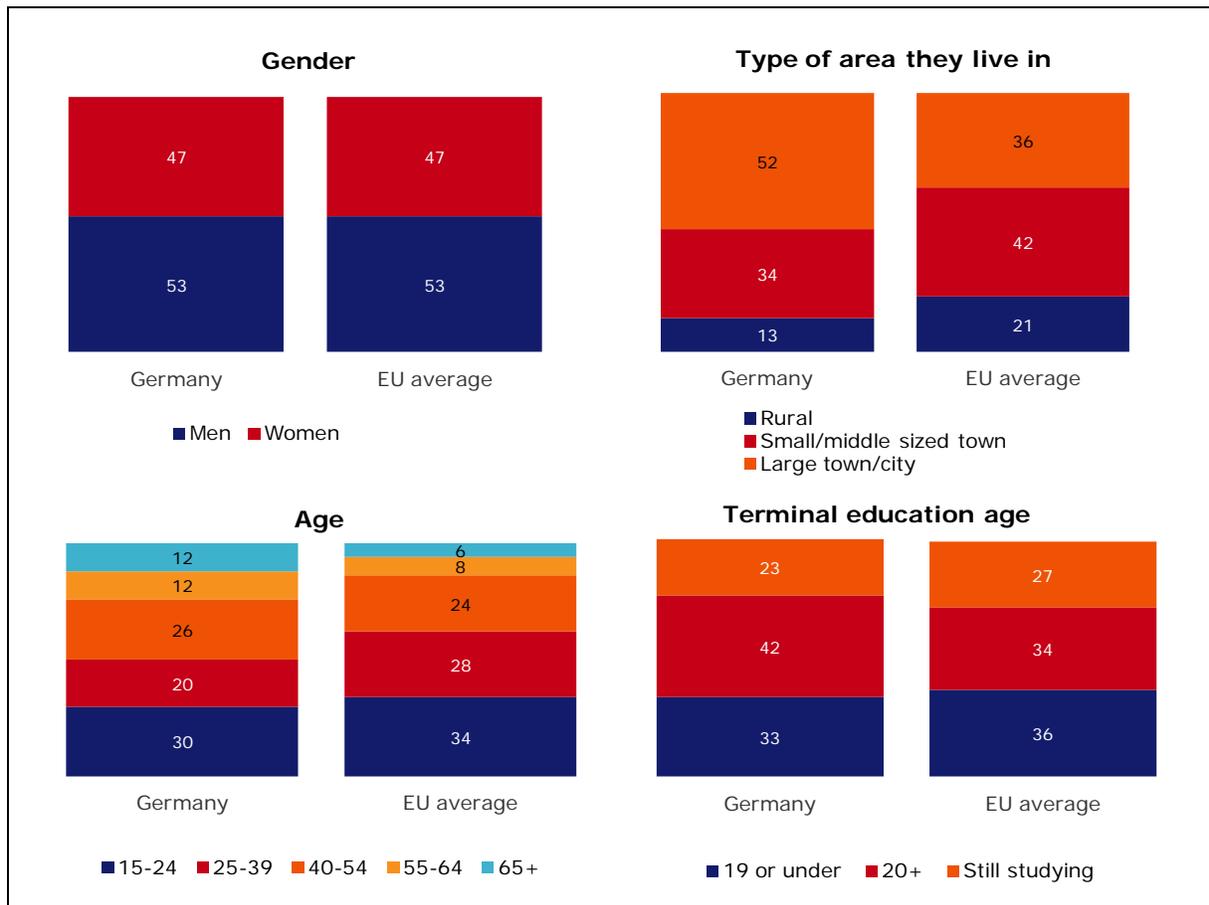
- 40% of library users in Germany were men, 60% women; on a par with the EU average (42% men, 58% women)
- Users in Germany had a similar age profile to the EU average – 22% were aged 15-24, 19% aged 25-39, 27% aged 40-54, 15% aged 55-64 and 18% aged 65+; compared with the EU average of 25% aged 15-24, 26% aged 25-39, 25% aged 40-54, 12% aged 55-64 and 12% aged 65+.

A tenth (11%) of those who had visited a library in Germany in the last 12 months used a PAC, which is lower than the EU average of 14%. When those who had not used a PAC were asked why this was, although the majority (79%) said they had no need to because they had a computer/internet at home, a significant minority of 5% said they did not know how to use computers or the internet, implying that there is potential for libraries to further increase their customer base for PAC.

In total, the survey found that 2% of adults in Germany had used PACs in the last 12 months, lower than the average of 4% of adults across the EU countries. This is estimated to be around 1.5 million adults within Germany.

PAC users in Germany had the same sex profile as the EU average and a similar age profile to the EU average, but were more likely than the EU average to live in large towns/cities, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Profile of those who had used a PAC in the last 12 months



Source: Library survey – C4. Have you used a public access computer in a public library to access the Internet in the last 12 months?

Base: All PAC users Germany (708), EU (11716).

Almost a half of users in Germany (47%) had used PACs once every three months or less often, which is the same as the EU average (47%). A fifth (20%) of PAC users in Germany made use of PACs at least once a week, compared with 23% across the EU, with 31% doing so once to three times a month (compared with 29% across the EU).

The qualitative research found that libraries tried to strengthen users' digital competence, and nearly every library had offerings for children and older people. Some examples of such offerings for older people included training in internet research for travel services, a topic which particularly interested older people. 'Wii bowling for seniors' was a monthly activity designed to encourage older users to use a Wii, and loans of eBook readers had been well-received by older people. For people with disabilities, one library had a PC allocated specifically to users with visual impairment or physical disability. Library staff were also available on an informal basis to help users who were seeking employment with writing job applications in Microsoft Office.

Key reasons users gave for using ICT in the library included its low cost, as often the service was included in the fee for the library card which was affordable and much more so than internet cafes. In addition, the library was seen to have a pleasant, calm atmosphere, again in positive contrast to internet cafes.

"I visited an internet café once – it was very stressful: you constantly put the next Euro into the slot. It is loud, dirty and you are allowed to smoke! In the library it is so nice and stress-free." (User, female, 40-64 years, Germany)

Other reasons for using library ICT included having no internet at home, and a conscious self-limitation of internet usage time, as some users did not want to spend too much time on the internet. They were afraid that if they used the internet at home they would lose themselves and spend too much time online (these users tended to be middle-aged and older people). Similarly, young people and pupils consciously used the library to concentrate on their school work as they felt at home they would be too distracted by other things. Further, library ICT services helped some users to overcome barriers to using ICT that they faced at home. They thought they don't have enough competence to use the internet at home and were afraid of threats, such as computer viruses. The library reduced this barrier because it provided infrastructure and online security.

"It is so convenient. I don't have to install anything at home or deal with technical issues." (Recent first time user, male, 40-64 years, Germany)

"My brother gave me a laptop as a present, but this is of no interest for me. I do not use it, I would have to invest time and nerves, but I don't see any benefit." (User, female, 40-64 years, Germany)

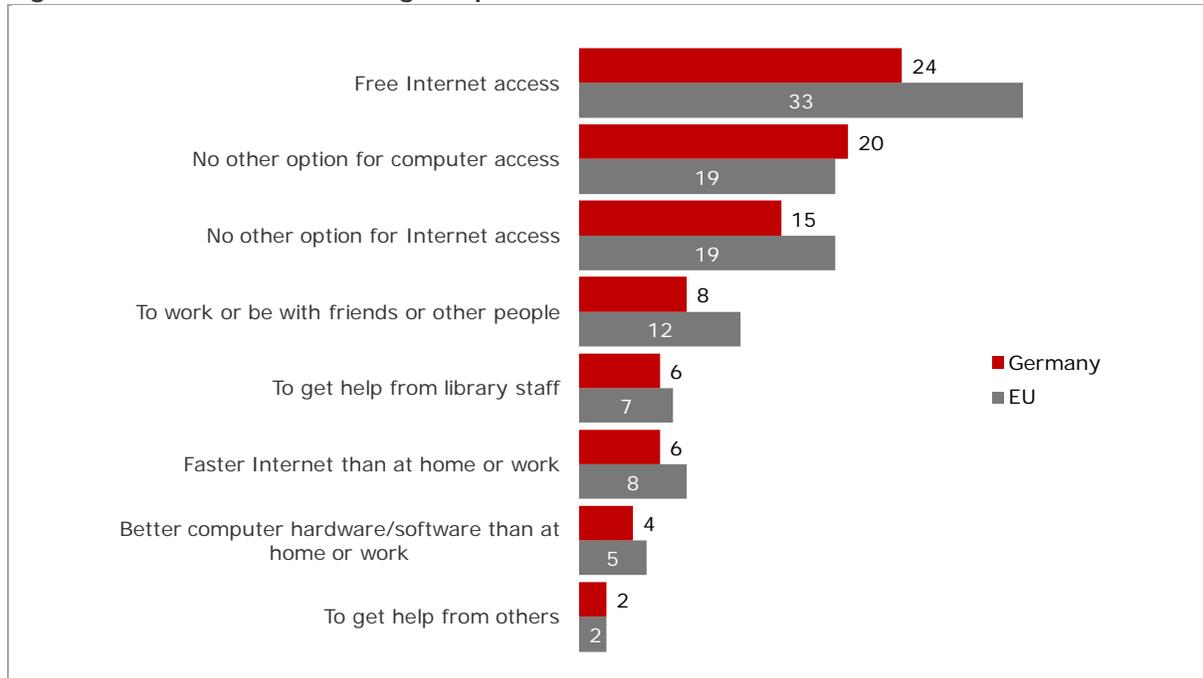
Social aspects of library ICT use also motivated some users for whom the library provided a structure for their life, a reason to leave their home and have social contacts. For pupils and students it was a motivation to meet with friends to learn together.

"I have retired early! I am sick, I have to move and leave my home!" (User, male, 40-64 years, Germany)

3.2 Reasons for using PACs

PAC users interviewed in the in-library survey were asked what their main reasons were for using computers, the internet and software in public libraries within the last 12 months. It is clear that in Germany and across the EU, the primary motivations for PAC users are the free nature of the service together with the lack of other options that people have. PAC users in Germany were slightly less likely than those in other countries to have said that they had no other option for internet access (15% in Germany compared with 19% across the EU).

Figure 4: Main reasons for using computers in libraries



Source: Library Survey - C8 What are the main reasons you have chosen to use computers, Internet and software at public libraries in the last 12 months?

Base: All PAC users- Germany (708); EU (11716)

PAC users were also asked two more direct questions as to what other options they had, firstly regarding where else they could access the internet from, and secondly, where else they could access the internet *'for free'*. In Germany, 10% of PAC users said that they had no other options for accessing the internet (compared with 11% across the EU), and a further 18% that there was no other source of free internet for them (compared with 14% across the EU). Overall, it is estimated that 0.3 million PAC users in Germany (28% of PAC users) had nowhere else to access the internet, or to access the internet free of charge.

Those who indicated that they had no other options for accessing the internet tended often tended to come from 'digitally excluded' (and often 'socially excluded') groups, which clearly highlights the role of PACs in the future of the EU's 2020 Growth Strategy. Specifically, the following groups were particularly likely to indicate that they did not have any other options:

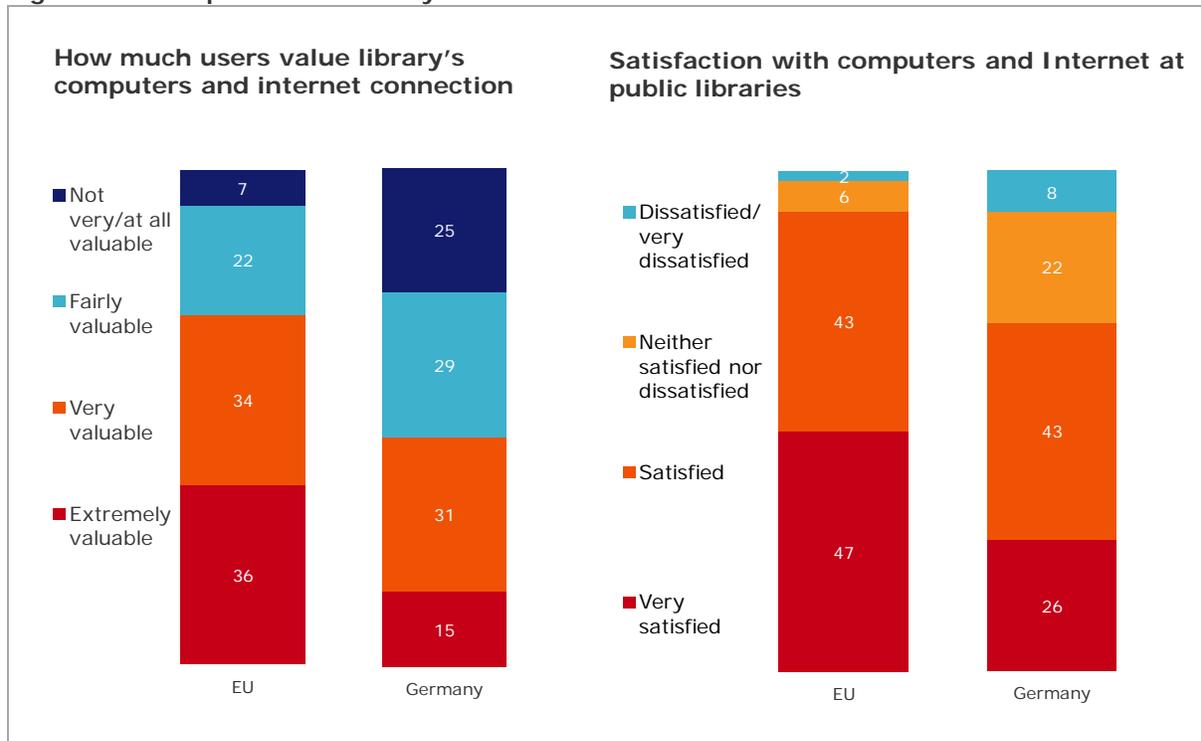
- Older people – 19% of PAC users aged 65+ had no alternative internet access, compared with 6% of those aged 15-24
- Those who were not in employment – 12% had no alternative for internet access, compared with 8% of the employed.

The value placed on the PAC service was lower among users in Germany than the EU average, as shown in Figure 5. Overall, 75% of PAC users in Germany said that the library's computer and internet connection services were valuable, compared with 92% of all EU PAC users. Less than a sixth of PAC users in Germany (15%) said the service was extremely valuable, compared with 36% across the EU.

The library's computers and internet connection were valued slightly more highly by users in Germany aged 55-64 (22% of this age group rated the services as extremely valuable).

Satisfaction with computers and the internet at public libraries was very high among EU users as a whole and reasonable in Germany, as shown in Figure 5: 68% of users in Germany were satisfied. Again, users in Germany were less likely to say they were satisfied with computers and internet at the library than EU users as a whole; 26% of users in Germany said they were very satisfied, compared with nearly a half (47%) across the EU.

Figure 5: Value placed on PACs by users and satisfaction with PACs



Source: Library survey - C30 How much do you value the library's computers and Internet connection? & C31 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your access to computers and the Internet at public libraries?

Base: All PAC users. Germany (708); EU (11716)

In Germany, around three-quarters of PAC users (74%) said that when they go to a library to use a computer, they find a free computer straight away, and a further 17% that they have to wait for no more than 10 minutes. These waiting times are less than the averages reported across the EU (72% of PAC users find a free computer straight away, and a further 16% wait for no more than 10 minutes).

In the qualitative strand of this research, the number of PCs in each library ranged from 12 to 600, depending on the size of the library, and all libraries offered internet services and Microsoft Office software on some of their PCs. In general, libraries tried to maintain technical progress, but PCs were more up to date in some libraries than others. For example, in Bayreuth the library had been opened in a new building last year, so all computers were only one year old whereas in contrast, in Bremen most of the computers were purchased 8 years ago.

All libraries included in the qualitative research in Germany offered Wi-Fi, in most cases for free, and an increasing number of visitors accessed the internet via their own device. Due to the growing Wi-Fi usage some libraries thought about reducing fixed PC workstations or replacing fixed devices with virtual desktops, which could be run centrally. All libraries had printing facilities and some also had a scanner.

The quality of infrastructure varied across branches in some areas, for example in Hamburg, while the central library's ICT facilities were up-to-date and well equipped, that of local branches was partly outdated and did not have the same performance and software.

Overall, users were satisfied with the library equipment, even with outdated hardware and software. These users had no internet at home and so accepted the library equipment as being of a normal standard. Users who could compare with ICT equipment at home or elsewhere were more critical and more likely not to be satisfied if the infrastructure was outdated. The number of available computers seemed not to be an issue in any of the libraries. In peak times there might be waiting times, but this was perceived as acceptable. However the Wi-Fi connection was an issue in one library because the connection was not stable or consistent.

4. Impressions of public libraries

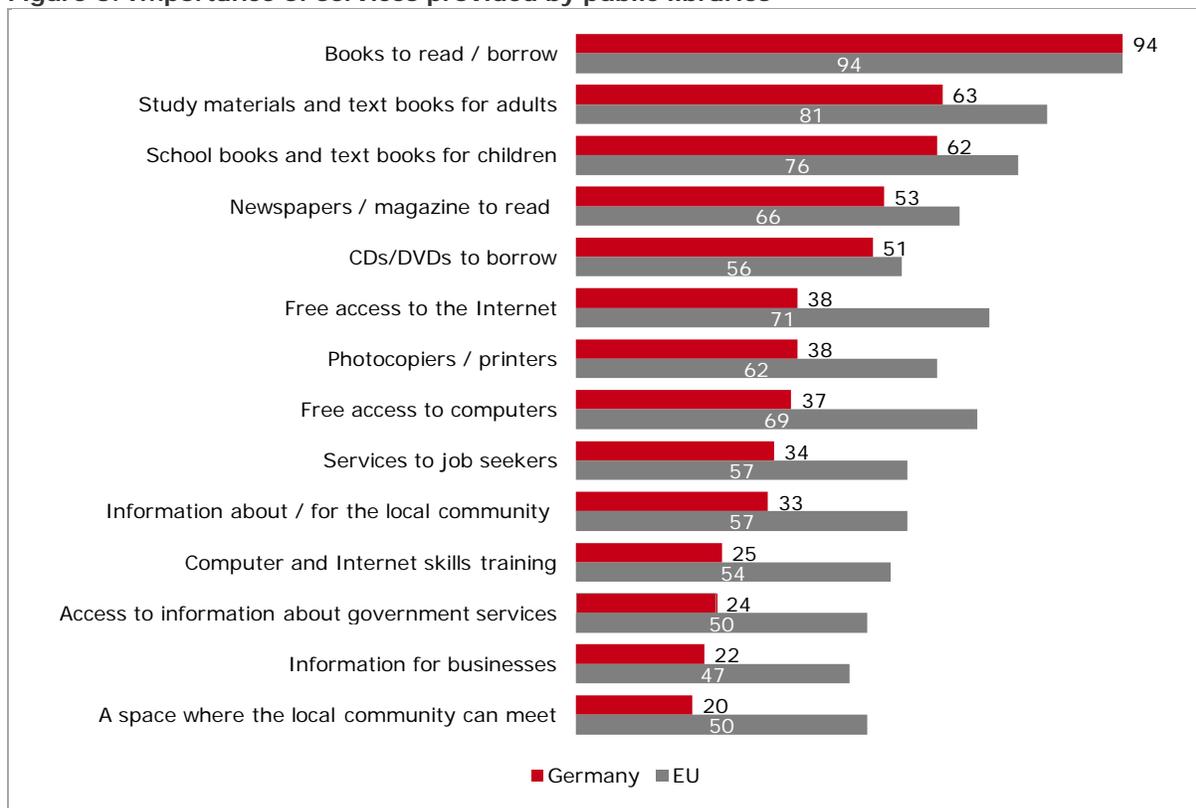
4.1 Importance of library services

Library users (both PAC users and non-PAC users) were asked to rate each of a list of services that could be offered by libraries, on a 5-point scale from 'extremely important' to 'not at all important'. Figure 6 shows the percentage in Germany, and across the EU, rating each service as 4 or 5 on the scale.

Not surprisingly, the core service of 'books to read/borrow' was considered the most important, rated as important by 94% of users in Germany and across the EU as a whole, followed by 'study materials/text books for adults' and 'school books'

'Newspapers/magazines to read' and 'CDs/DVDs to borrow' were considered the next important by library users in Germany with over a half (53% and 51% respectively) mentioning these. Free access to the internet' and 'free access to computers' were both rated as important by around two fifths of library users in Germany, which was lower than the equivalent figure of around seven out of ten users across Europe.

Figure 6: Importance of services provided by public libraries



Source: Library survey - C15 How important is this service that can be provided by public libraries.

Base: All library users - Germany (1418); EU (24253)

For all the services, users in Germany were less likely than the EU average to rate them as important. 25% of users in Germany rated the provision of computer and Internet skills training as an important service compared with 54% EU average).

Regarding the importance of libraries to community life, 'providing a space where the local community can meet' was seen as important by 20% of library users in Germany (compared with 50% EU average), and 'providing information about or for the local community' was seen as important by 33% of library users in Germany (compared with 57% EU average).

In the qualitative research users reported their library to be a pleasant, clean environment with a nice, calm atmosphere. There was a perception of libraries as retreat areas, described by one user as making her feel like she was at a "retreat but at the same time not alone".

4.2 Effectiveness and funding of public libraries

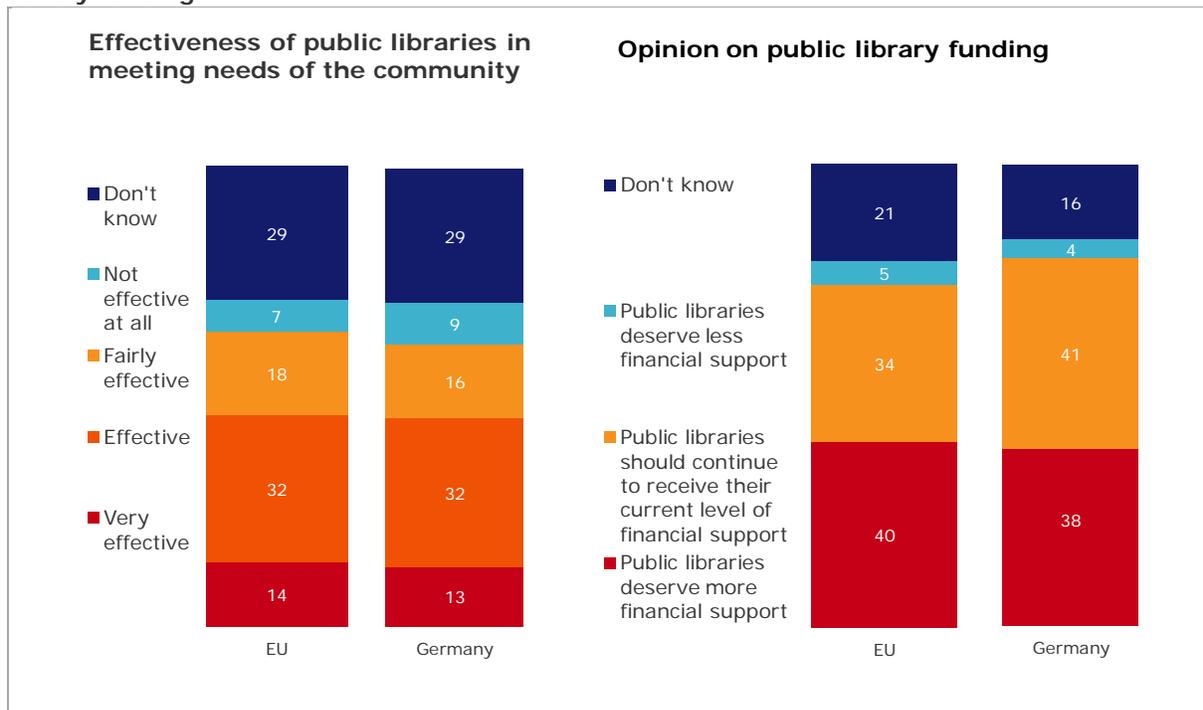
Over three-fifths (62%) of the general public in Germany (including both library users and non-users) felt libraries were either very effective, effective or fairly effective at meeting the needs of their local community. This was close to the average across the 17 EU survey countries of 64%. The proportion saying libraries were 'very effective' was 13%, on a par with the EU average of 14%.

Library and PAC users in Germany were almost unanimous in their opinion that libraries were effective in meeting the needs of their local community – 97% of all library users felt they were effective, and 96% of PAC users.

38% of the public in Germany felt that public libraries merited more financial support than at present, close to the average of all 17 EU countries (40%). Almost all the remainder either felt that the funding should continue as at present (41%) or did not express an opinion (16%). Only 4% of the public in Germany felt that public libraries deserve *less* financial support. This is perhaps reflective of the pressure that the communities and churches in Germany feel and the tight financial situation they find themselves in to fund and operate public libraries in Germany.

Not surprisingly, library users and PAC users were even more likely than non-users to say that libraries deserve more financial support – 66% of all library users, and 73% of PAC users, were in favour of more financial support for libraries.

Figure 7: Effectiveness of public libraries in meeting community needs and opinion on public library funding



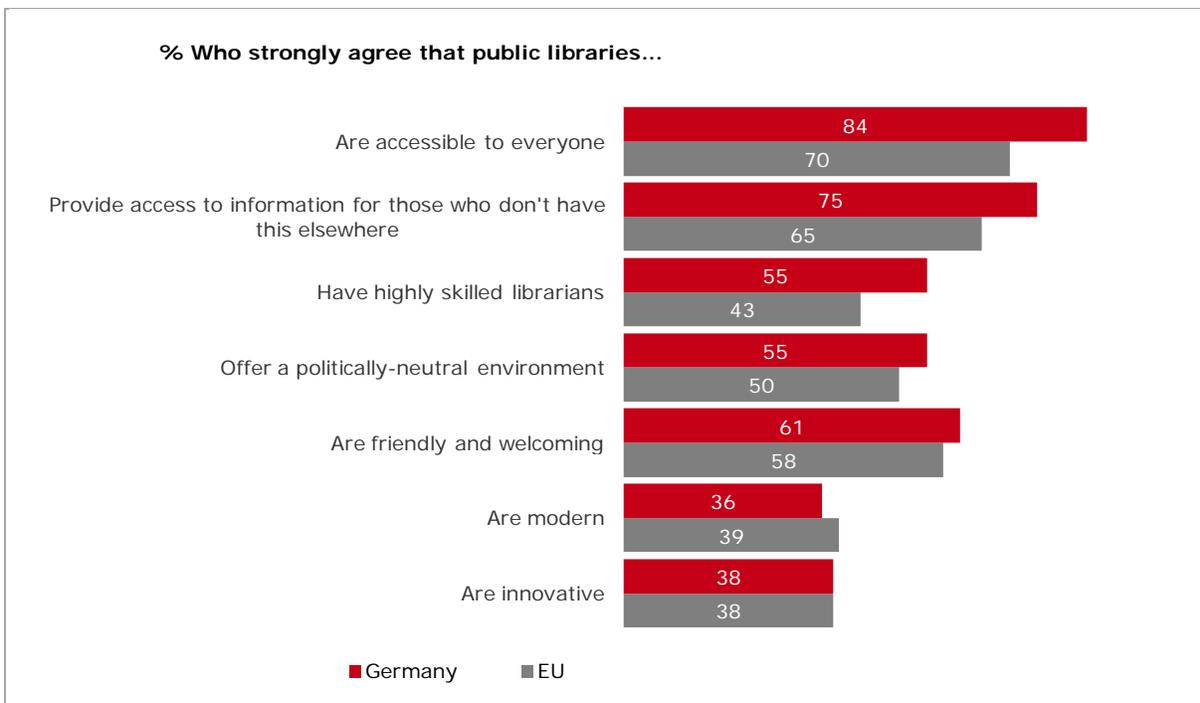
Source: Omnibus survey- Q6 How effective do you think your local public library is at meeting the needs of your community? & Q7 Which of the following statements represents most closely your opinion regarding the current funding for public libraries?.

Base: All adults - Germany (1026); EU (17816)

4.3 Perceptions of public libraries

All library users were asked their opinions of public libraries, through a series of agree/disagree statements. Figure 8 shows the proportions in Germany and EU who strongly agreed with each of these statements. Library users in Germany were more likely than the EU average to strongly agree with all of these statements, with the biggest differences from the EU average for 'Are accessible to everyone' (84% Germany compared with 70% EU) and 'Have highly skilled librarians' (55% Germany compared with 43% EU).

Figure 8: Perceptions of public libraries



Source: Library survey- C29 How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements..
 Base: All library users. Germany (1418); EU (24253)

5. Informal and non-formal learning

Public libraries are key players in the delivery of the non-formal/informal component of the European Commission's lifelong learning policy, particularly with regard to *inclusive* delivery. The role of libraries in providing education to users was explored through asking all library users whether or not they had taken part in any educational activities in a public library within the last 12 months.

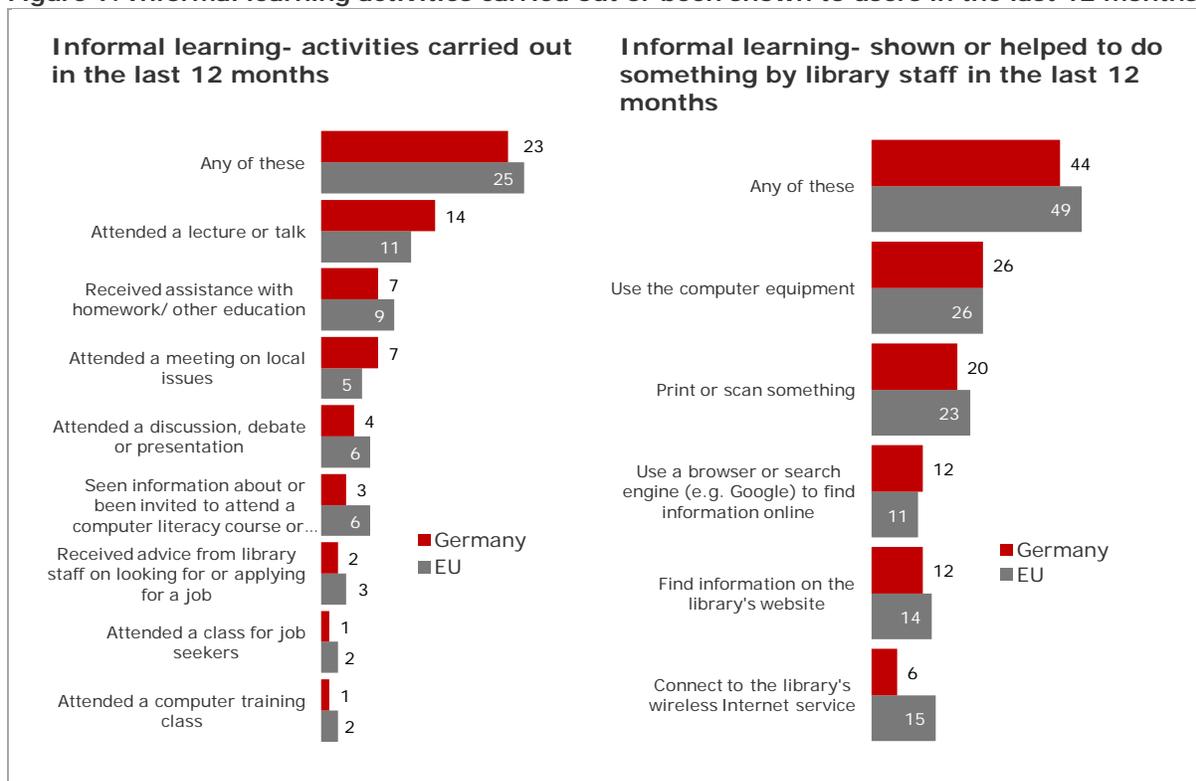
Overall, in Germany 23% had taken part in one of the educational activities in libraries asked about in the last 12 months, which was on a par with the EU average of 25%.

Engagement levels in all educational activities in libraries tended to be similar in Germany to the EU as a whole (Figure 9), including, among others:

- Attending a lecture or talk (14% vs. EU average of 11%)
- Receiving assistance with homework or other education (7% vs. EU average of 9%)
- Attending a meeting on local issues (7% vs. EU average of 5%)

One per cent of German library users reported that they had attended a computer training class in the last 12 months – just below the EU average of 2%. This means that an estimated 0.1 million adults in Germany attended a computer training class in a library in the last 12 months.

Figure 9: Informal learning activities carried out or been shown to users in the last 12 months



Source: Library survey-C16 In the last 12 months, have you done any of the following things in a public library & C17 In the last 12 months, have you been shown how or helped to do any of the following things by staff at a public library...

Base: C16- All library users - Germany (1418); EU (24253). C17- All PAC users – Germany (708); EU (11716).

As Figure 9 shows, public library staff play an important role in assisting library users in informal learning. Overall, just over two in five (44%) library users in Germany had been shown or helped to do something by a member of library staff within the last 12 months, which was slightly lower than the EU average of 49%.

The most common ways in which library staff assisted library users were helping with using the computer, printing or scanning, and finding information on the library's website.

In the qualitative research, users perceived staff members as being largely friendly and helpful, although some staff members were described as not as accessible; appearing as if they did not want to be interrupted. Staff members were generally called on to help with basic technical issues, such as the printer not working or the internet connection breaking down, but were not found to be capable of solving more specific software problems or advanced technical issues.

“They cannot always help, but they always stay friendly.” (User, male, 40-64 years, Germany)

In all libraries staff provided informal help, that is, they were available to answer questions or to give advice. However this varied according to the different level of competence of the staff as well as the time they had at their disposal.

Not every library offered structured learning opportunities or training courses and it tended to be the libraries in large cities that had this offering as they had more resources. Furthermore in Germany the adult education centers (VHS) play an important role for offering training courses for adults as this is their key competence, and they are sometimes even in the same building as libraries. The libraries coordinated their work with the adult education centre and did not intend to compete with them.

"We may not compete with the VHS. We cannot offer training for free, while the VHS offers the same with costs. This would affect the core competence of the VHS." (Senior Library Manager, Germany)

Therefore, especially in smaller cities, the libraries concentrated on offering training in using their ICT for research and using the catalogue, while basic training for using PCs or the internet were more likely to be in the responsibility of the adult education centres.

On the whole there was a low awareness of ICT services among users in the qualitative research, and only a few respondents were aware of structured training for ICT offered by the 2 libraries who provided this on a regular basis. E-learning was something that users were more likely to have experience of, namely for learning languages, and experiences of this service tended to be positive.

6. Use of PACs for employment and business

Public libraries have a role to play not only in providing a community gateway to higher level skills – but also to employment, and therefore the role of the public library in helping Europeans access employment opportunities was a key theme within the research.

Almost a quarter (23%) of PAC users in Germany had used library computers in the last 12 months to support some employment related activity, below the EU average of 30%. This represents an estimated 0.3 million PAC users in Germany who had used PAC for employment related activity.

Overall, 5% of PAC users in Germany had used a PAC to apply for a job (either in Germany or in another EU country) in the last 12 months - this represents approximately 66,000 adults in Germany. Of those respondents who applied for a job through PAC, 22% said that they were successful. This means that in all 1% of PAC users in Germany – or an estimated 14,000 adults– applied for and got a job via a PAC in the last 12 months.

Public library staff have a role to play in supporting employment related PAC activities, as is shown in Figure 10; almost one in ten (9%) of PAC users in Germany indicated that they had been shown or helped to do some employment-related PAC activity (the same proportion as the EU average).

Figure 10: Employment related PAC activities carried out in last 12 months

Employment related activities - Used computers in last 12 months to...			Employment related activities - Been shown/helped to... by library staff in the last 12 months		
	%		%	Germany	EU
Any listed below		23		9	11
Find information about searching and/or applying for jobs	9	14	Improve skills needed in your current job	4	4
Search for jobs	8	13	How to write a CV	2	5
Write a CV or covering letter	7	12	How to develop skills needed to obtain a job	1	2
Improve skills needed in your current job	11	11	How to look for a job online (such as finding a recruitment company, searching for information about an employer)	2	3
Apply for jobs in this country	5	10	How to apply for a job online	3	2
Search for information about an employer	6	8	How to look for and apply for jobs in other EU countries	-	1
Find a recruitment company	1	5			
Use spread sheet/data	2	3			
Search for jobs in other EU countries	1	2			
Apply for jobs in other EU countries	1	1			

Source: Library survey-C18 In the last 12 months, have you used the computers available in public libraries to...& C20 In the last 12 months, have you been shown how / helped to do any of the following things by staff at a public library....

Base: All PAC users. Germany (708); EU (11716).

PAC users were asked whether they had used PACs for a range of business-related activities in the last 3 months. Around one in ten users in Germany (12%) had used a PAC for finding information related to a business they worked in, which was below the EU average of 20%. Seven per cent of PAC users in Germany had used a PAC for participating in professional networks, similar to the EU average (6%). Four per cent in Germany, the same as the EU average, had used a PAC to find ways or places to sell their own products or goods.

The qualitative research found that users wrote job applications in libraries and staff members offered informal help, while some libraries worked together with job centres to support unemployed users. However no support for business or e-procurement was offered in libraries apart from in the form of literature. This type of support was instead seen as a role for VHS (adult education centre) or IHK (Chamber of Industry and Commerce).

7. E-government and active citizenship

As part of the 'Connecting Europe' agenda, public libraries represent a network of public digital access points which can assist in the effective delivery of access to e-government. Computer users were asked about their interaction with public authorities using PACs, including obtaining information from public authorities' websites, downloading official forms, sending filled in forms, providing feedback/sharing

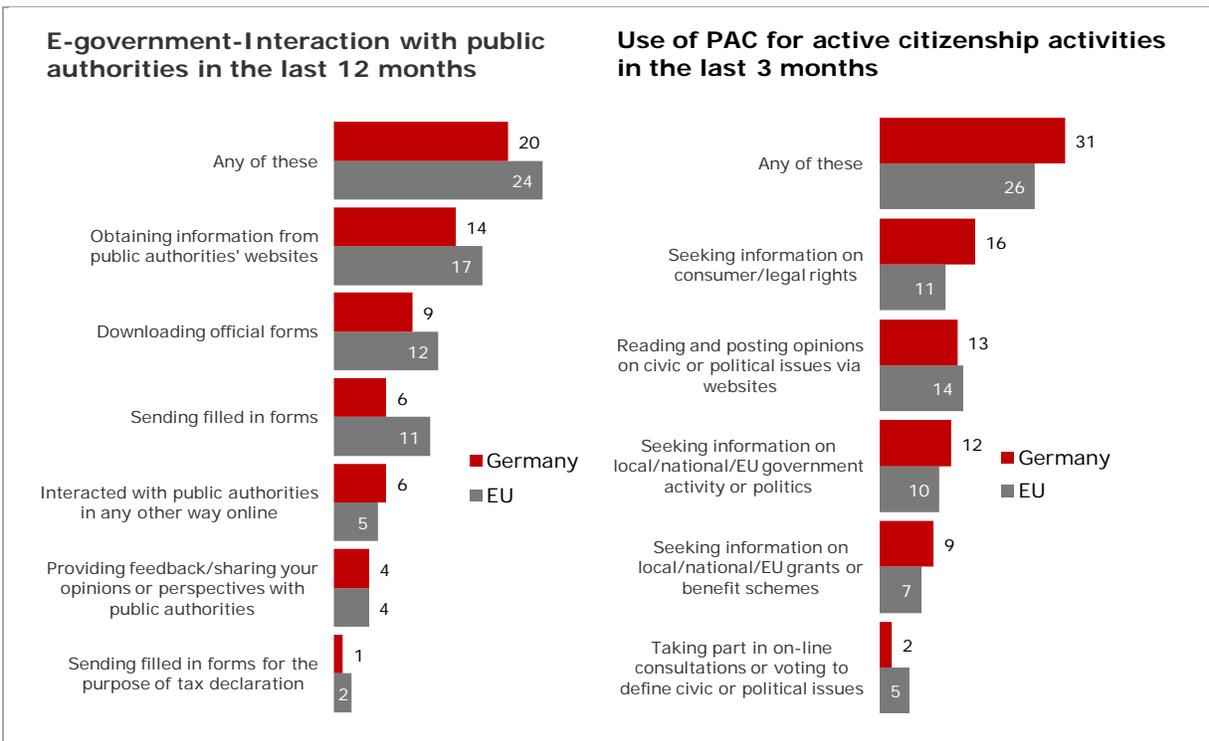
opinions or perspectives with public authorities, and any other way they had interacted with public authorities online.

According to Eurostat data, E-government usage by individuals in Germany is above the EU average - 50% of adults in Germany used the internet in the last 12 months to interact with public authorities, compared with 41% across the EU. Citizens in Germany were also more likely than the EU average to use the Internet to obtain information from public authorities' web sites (49% compared with 35%).

The library survey found that one in five (20%) PAC users in Germany had used PACs to interact with public authorities in the last 12 months, similar to the EU average of one in four (24%) PAC users having engaged in E-government interaction, but considerably below the Eurostat finding for all adults in Germany. PAC users in Germany were less likely than the EU average to have used PACs to obtain information from public authorities' websites (14% Germany compared with 17% EU) or to have used PACs to download official forms (9% in Germany compared with 12% EU).

Computer users were also asked about their use of PACs for activities related to civic engagement and active citizenship (Figure 11). This covered areas such as civic participation (reading/posting opinions, taking part in on-line consultations, petitions etc) and seeking information on consumer or legal rights, and on government activity or politics, or grants/benefit schemes. Overall, 31% of PAC users in Germany had used PAC for engagement activities in the past 3 months, higher than the average for users across the EU (26%). The two most common community engagement activities were seeking information on consumer/legal rights (16% Germany compared with 11% EU) and reading and posting opinions on civic or political issues via websites (13% Germany compared with 14% EU).

Figure 11: E-government-Interaction with public authorities in the last 12 months



Source: Library survey-C23 Did you interact with public authorities over the Internet using a computer at a public library for private purposes in the last 12 months for the following activities & C10 For which of the following activities have you used the Internet on computers in public libraries in the last 3 months...
 Base: All PAC users. Germany (708); EU (11716)

The qualitative research found no e-government support offered by libraries apart from literature or informal help and this was not necessarily seen as a role for public libraries.

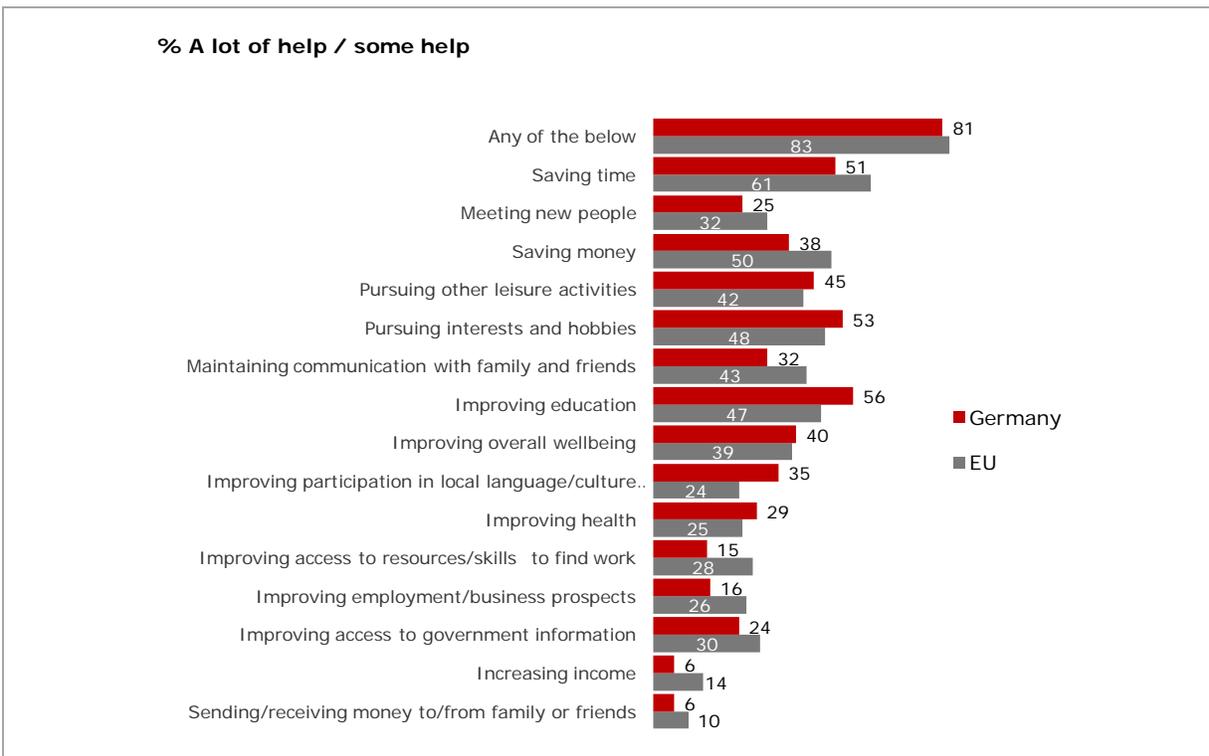
8. Impacts

A key aim of this research was to evaluate the impact of increased digital engagement through PAC use for users. This was assessed by asking PAC users how helpful using computers at public libraries had been for them in the last 12 months, across a wide range of areas including saving time and money, and increasing access to information and resources.

Overall 81% of PAC users in Germany said their PAC use had been helpful to them in at least one of the areas asked about, similar to the average across the EU (83%) and this represents approximately 1.0 million people in Germany.

Figure 12 shows the proportions saying PAC use had been helpful in each area, in Germany and across the EU.

Figure 12: Impact of PAC for users



Source: Library survey- C28 In the last 12 months, has using computers at public libraries been helpful to you in the following areas?

Base: C28- PAC users- Germany (708); EU (11716).

Over a half of PAC users in Germany (56%) rated PAC use as helpful for improving education (47% EU) which represents an estimated 0.7 million PAC users in Germany. As well as this, PAC use was rated as helpful for saving time (51% Germany, 61% EU) and as helpful across a range of leisure and social areas such as pursuing interests and hobbies (53% Germany, 48% EU) and pursuing other leisure activities

(45% Germany, 42% EU). 38% of PAC users in Germany (50% EU) said PAC was helpful in saving money, which represents an estimated 0.5 million PAC users in Germany.

Overall it is estimated that in Germany, PAC usage in the last 12 months helped:

- 0.7 million people to improve their education
- 0.3 million people to improve their access to government information services
- 0.2 million people to improve their employment or business prospects
- 0.2 million people to improve their access to resources necessary to find work
- 75,000 people to increase their income.

The qualitative research found that for most users the library did not play a decisive role in helping them to learn to use ICT, and young people in particular had learnt it by themselves, with friends or in school. However for some people libraries had made a difference as it had been the place where they first set up an email account or had progressed from having only very basic ICT competence to learning to scan and print at the library. Users had also found libraries to offer personal support and answers to the many questions they had when learning about ICT.

"Someone of my acquaintances, a nun, has only very basic competence regarding ICT. I sent her to the library, as she had to print out and scan something. Everything was explained very well to her. She would of course come back here again the next time due to this positive experience." (User, female, 40-64 years, Germany)

"I was supported by the library. Without this service here, I don't know if I ever had got an internet access at home [note: still does not have one]. Especially in the beginning I had many questions, and I always received help." (User, male, 40-64 years, Germany)