

School Libraries

Empowering the
Twenty-First
Century Learner



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IASL Conference, August 7-11, 2011
Kingston, Jamaica



Providing an Enabling Environment

Presented by

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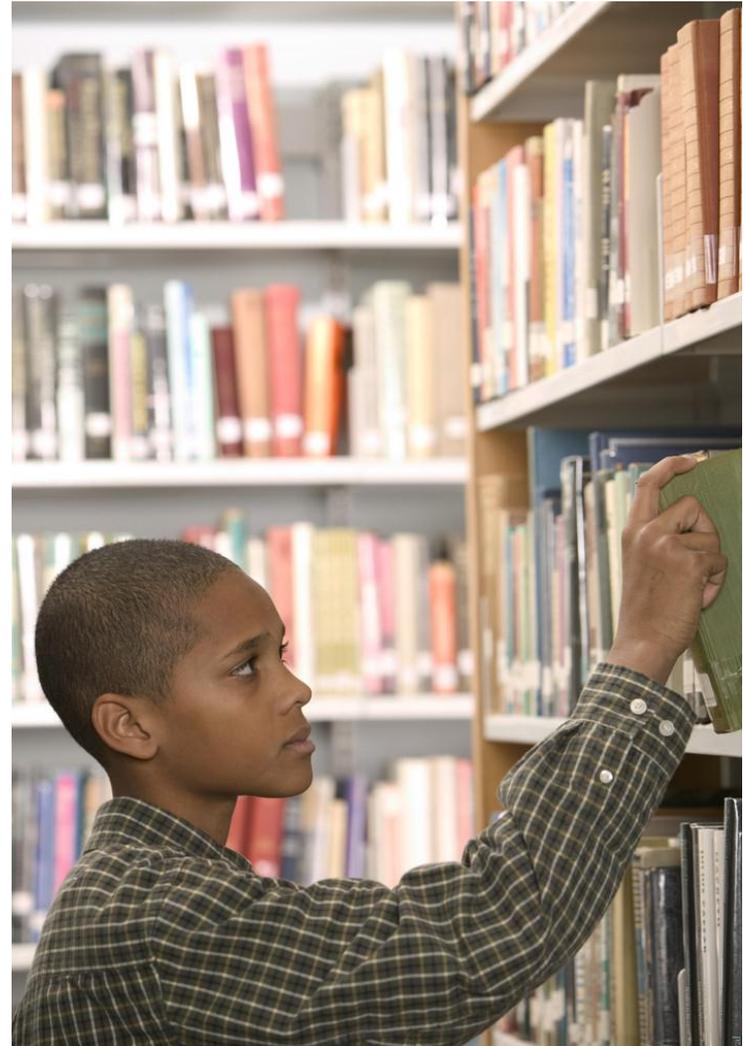
The University of the West Indies

Conference Theme: School Libraries - Empowering the 21st Century Learner

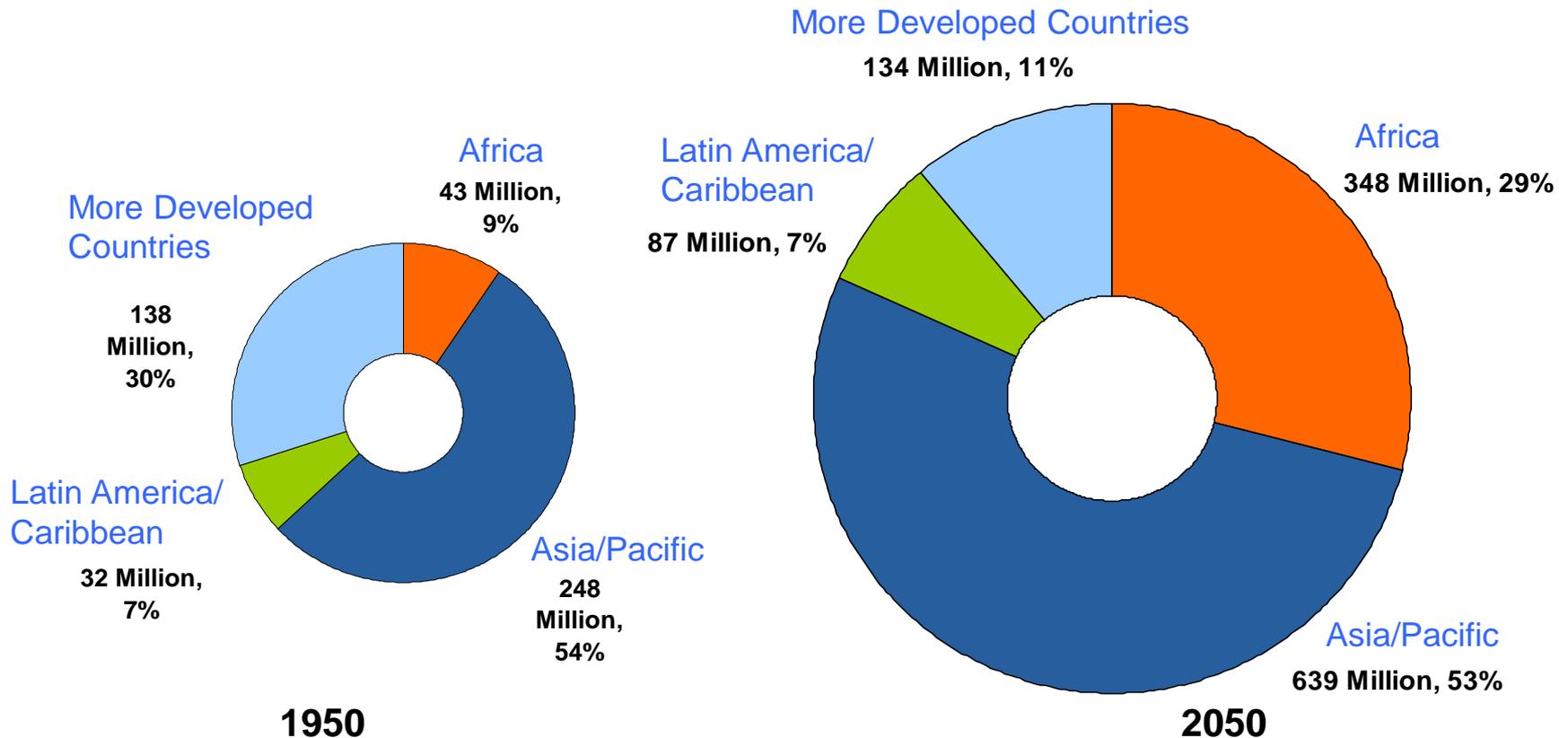
- A worthy mission in this context with the focus on our audience
- This new generation consists of “digital natives”
- Teachers and librarians are migrants into the present century and to the information age

UN Millennium Development Goals

- **Goal 2.** Achieve universal primary education
- **Target 3:** Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling

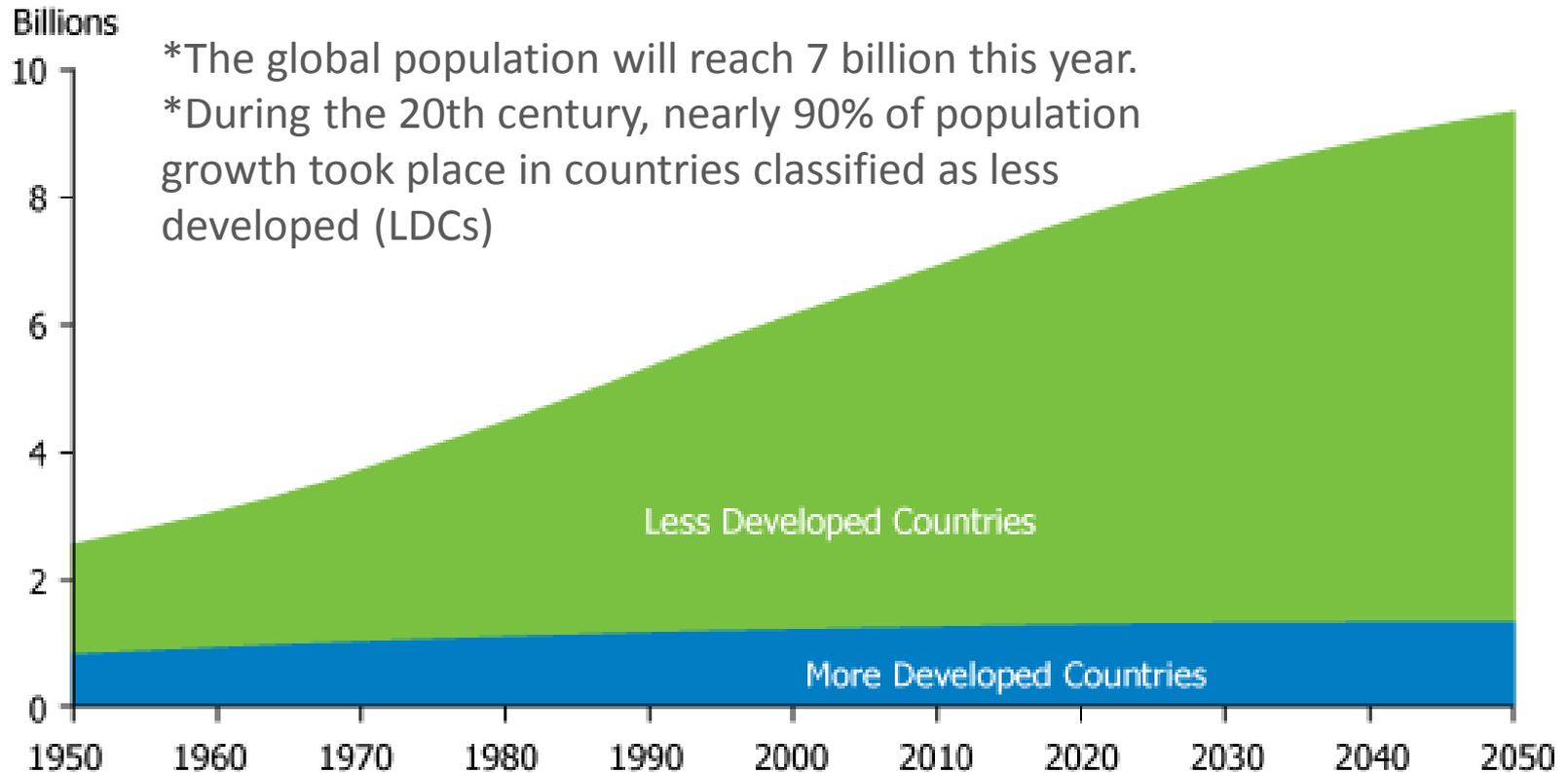


The World's Youth Population 1950 and 2050



The large number of young people in the LDCs, the "parents of tomorrow," ensures substantial population growth. Exactly the opposite is true in the MDCs.

World Population Growth



Source: Population Reference Bureau, 2011 World Population Data Sheet.

Global Population Trends

The great bulk of today's 1.2 billion youth—nearly 90 percent—are in developing countries ... During the next few decades, these young people will most likely continue the current trend of moving from rural areas to cities in search of education and training opportunities, gainful employment, and adequate health care.

Urban-Rural Migration

- 2011 marks the milestone when more people live in urban than in rural areas
- This is prevalent in Africa – with a population of about 1 billion
- Africa's population will double by 2050 with a projection of a fall in HIV infection rates

Age Distribution of the World's Population

Population Structures by Age and Sex, 2005

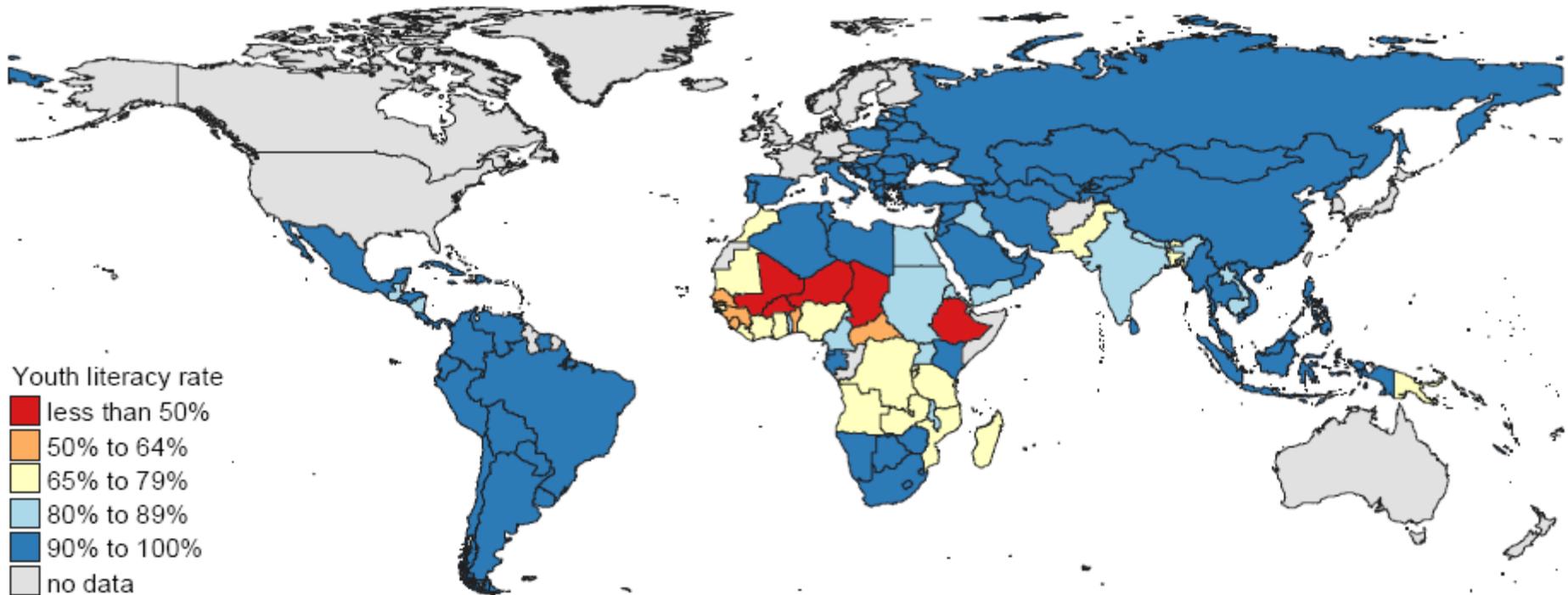
Millions



Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision*, 2005.

Proportion of Youths who are able to Read and Write

A global view of youth literacy rates, 2008



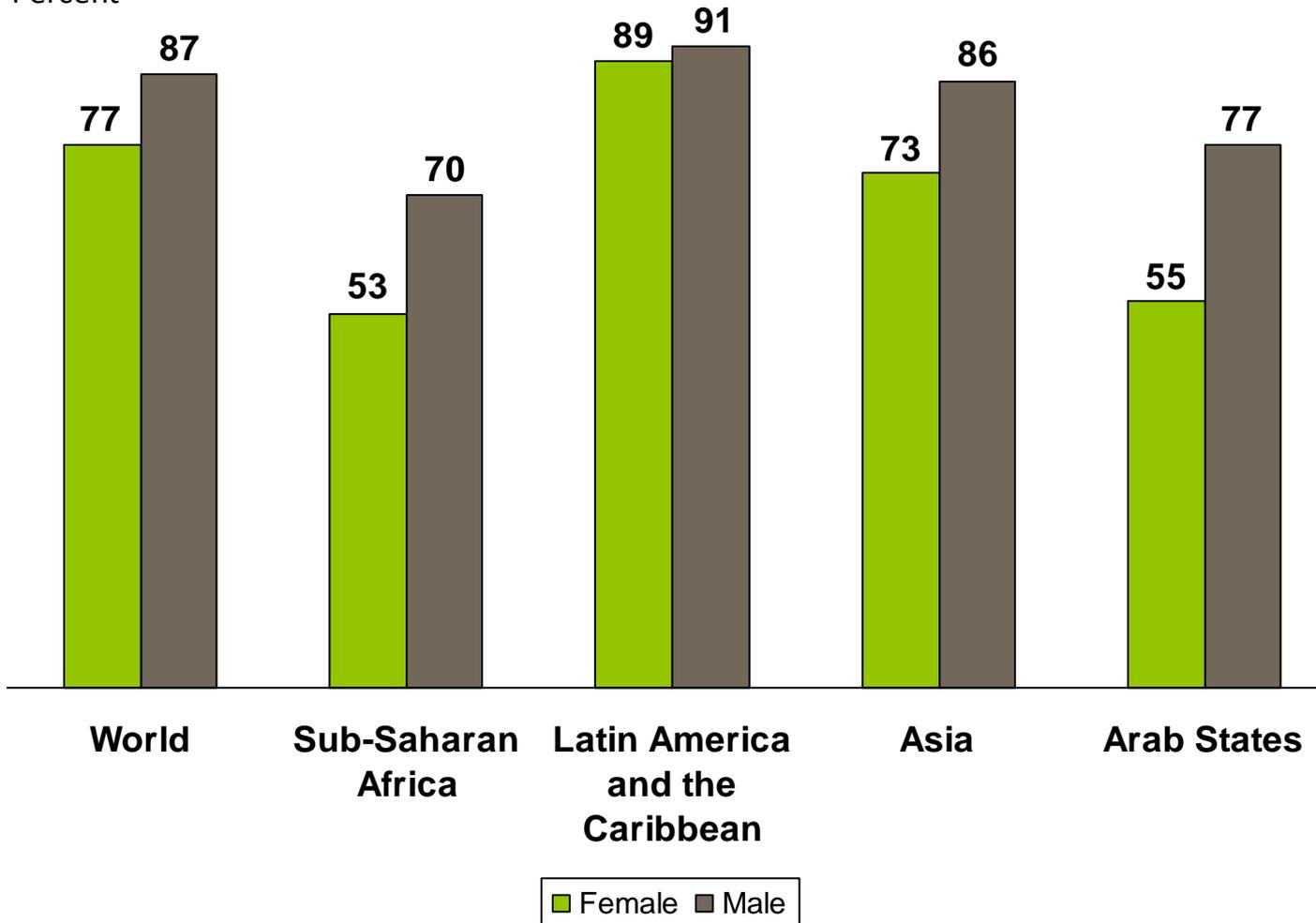
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Data Centre, stats.uis.unesco.org

* Youth – 15-24 years old

Adult Literacy, by Region

Literacy Rates, by Sex, 2000-2004

Percent



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics: accessed online at www.uis.unesco.org/TEMPLATE/html/Exceltables/education/Literacy_Regional_April2006.xls on May 21, 2006.

Literacy Gaps (Jamaica)

- “Deficient reading starts in the lower primary grades and continues to build, year-on-year.
- Poor reading abilities are concentrated among boys.
- By the time students reach grade 6, 30 percent of students read below their grade level.
- By grade 9 a huge divide has occurred--large numbers of students, especially boys, cannot read or write, some are functionally illiterate. ”

Source: Carlson & Quello, *Jamaica - Social Assessment*, 2002

Education Gaps (Jamaica)

- “Children of poor families in the rural areas and the inner cities receive a low quality education that the high enrollment rates mask.
- It is here that the problem of school dropout in the later years of secondary education begins, with poor quality teaching and poor attendance.
- This particularly affects young boys.”

(Carlson & Quello, *Jamaica - Social Assessment*, 2002)

Number Of Failing Schools Increasing

Published: Tuesday | August 9, 2011

 Comments 0

Erica Virtue, Senior Gleaner Writer

Despite remedial efforts to improve student performance, an increasing number of schools that are deemed to be failing have been referred to the National Education Inspectorate (NEI) for in-depth evaluation and assessment.

Information reaching **The Gleaner** is that there is a 50 per cent jump in the number of poorly performing schools whose future the ministry is grappling to decide.

According to the source, the schools, mostly primary and secondary schools, are proving a major headache for the minister and ministry, which are "anxious to identify them so necessary intervention can be made as quickly as possible".

Education Minister Andrew Holness told **The Gleaner** that a standards benchmark is being established. He did not provide a figure on the number of schools deemed to be failing.

"We are discovering more schools on an objective basis that are failing, and we are now setting the baseline data," Holness said.

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Gender Gaps (Jamaica)

- "...boys and girls enter grade 1 in equal numbers and with roughly the same kinds of experiences and skills, though we know nothing about their attitudes to school work at this age.
- By the time they reached Grade 5 and 6, major distinctions were detectable in their attitude to and interest in work, the quality of work which they produced and in the academic performance..."

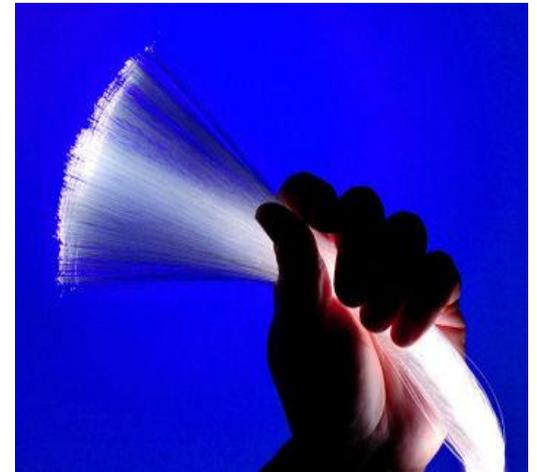
- Hyacinth Evans in Carlson & Quello, *Jamaica - Social Assessment*, 2002

Registration at UWI, Mona by Sex (2002-2008)



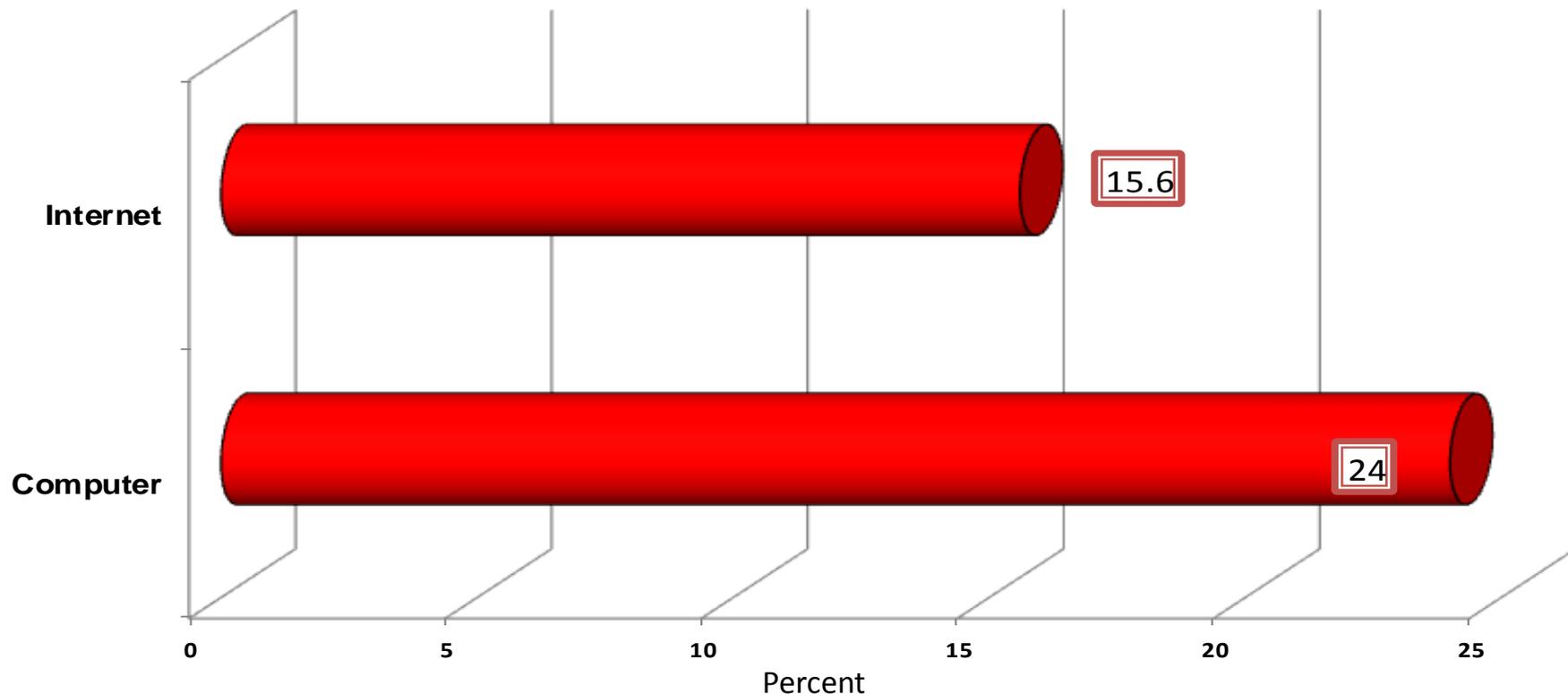
Technologies and the 21st Century

- In this age, ICTs drive almost every sphere of life
- Enables greater convenience has revolutionized the ways in which media can be accessed, created and used
- Among the core technologies of the current era are:
 - Satellites and Wireless Applications
 - Computing via the Microchip
 - Optical Fibre
 - Digitalization
 - Nanotechnology



Selected ICT Indicators

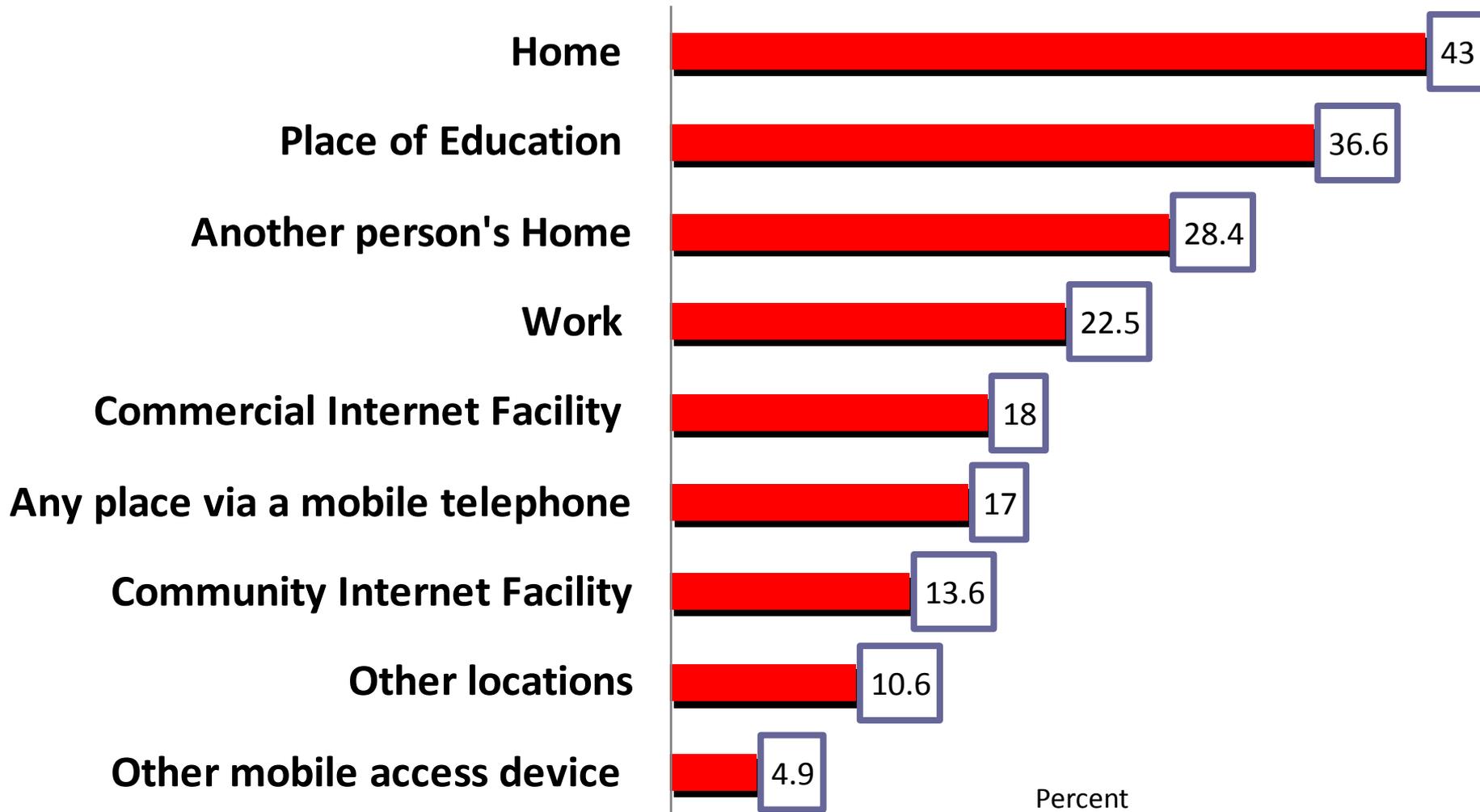
Distribution of Households with Selected ICTs



- 24 % of Households have computers at home
- 84 % of households do not have Internet access at home

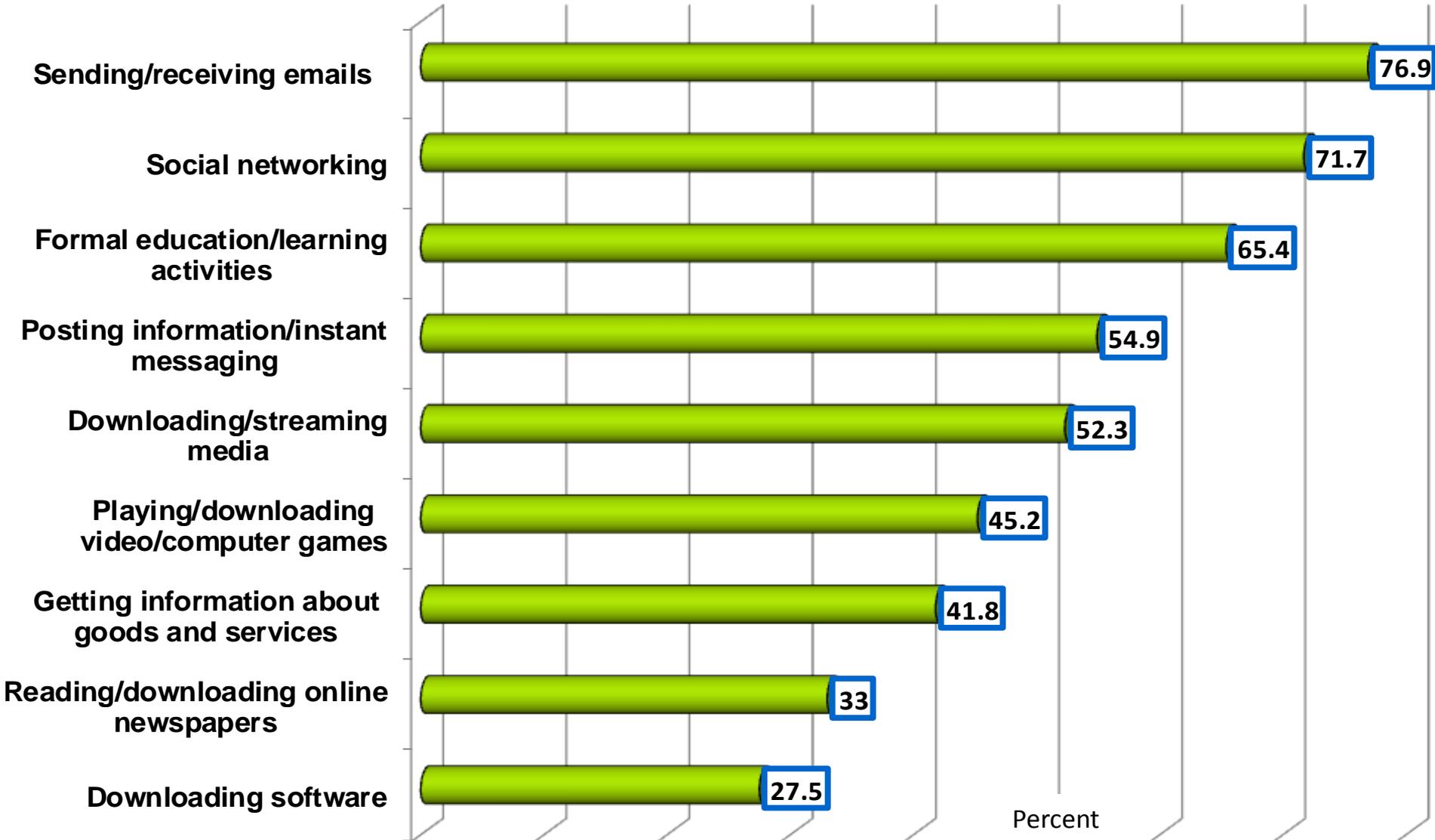
Source: Caribbean ICT and Broadband Indicators Survey: Jamaica Report, 2011

Location of Individual Internet Access

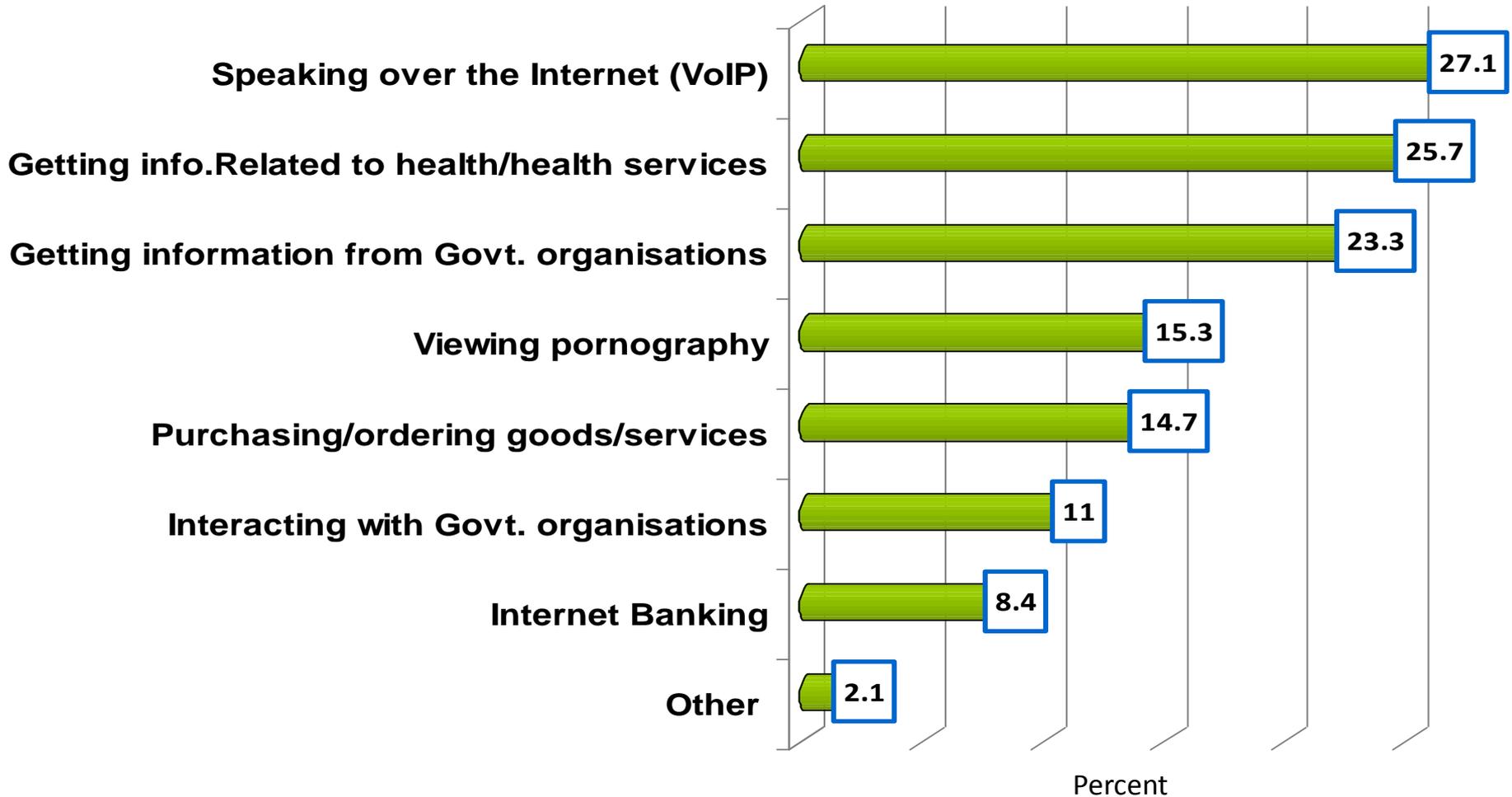


Source: Caribbean ICT and Broadband Indicators Survey: Jamaica Report, 2011

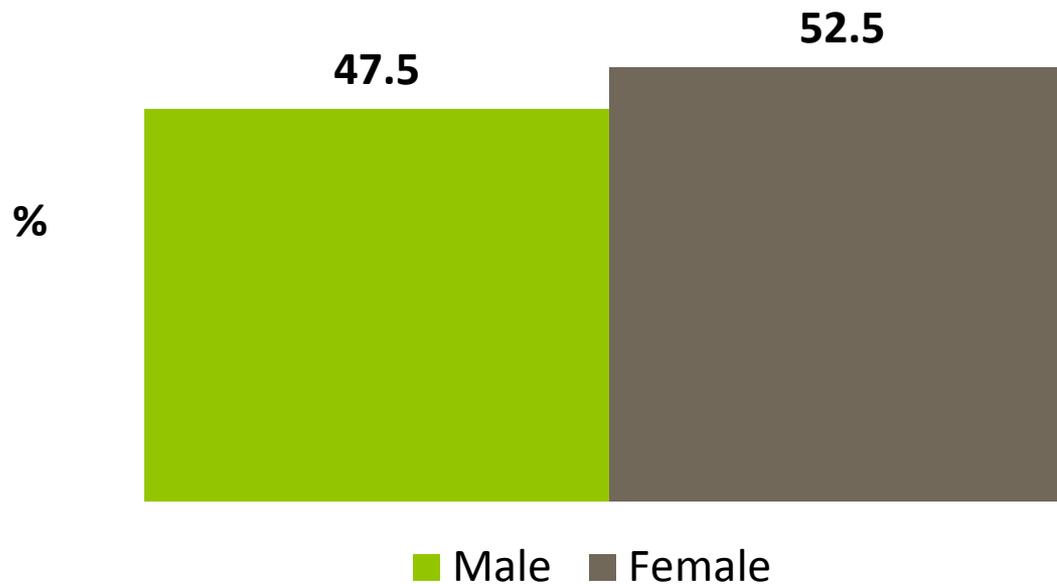
Individual Internet Activities (1)



Individual Internet Activities (2)



Individual Internet Usage by Gender



Source: Caribbean ICT and Broadband Indicators Survey: Jamaica Report, 2011

Who is the 21st Century Learner?



Photo source: L-R: Microsoft Clip Art and Flickr (Terry O'Sullivan)

Skills of the 21st Century Learner

- The learner can be more selective in storing information.
- Priority would instead be placed on knowing how to access credible and valid information, how to understand it and use it to his or her benefit.
- The future will more likely demand a learner who can critically assess online information in an efficient manner and select the most useful content.

Other 21st Century Learners: Global Realities

- 131 million youth worldwide lacked basic reading and writing skills or **10%** of youth globally.
- Some 61% of the illiterate youth were female.
- The majority of youth illiteracy existed in sub Saharan Africa (72%), with some 10 countries in Africa having illiteracy rates of between 37% and 50%.
- These included Mali (39%), Burkina Faso (39%), Chad (45%) and Ethiopia (50%) among the youth.

Source: UNESCO's Institute of Statistics, 2008

Texting and Literacy

- Illiteracy impedes active use of ICTs according to TPM Research done in 2007
- Text messaging among some poor youth in inner-city communities is not as widespread due to illiteracy of the sender and/or the receiver
- Illiteracy rate in Jamaica (15 and older) at 20.1%. May be higher among some rural or inner city youth
- Among middle class and literate youth, texting is popular
- SMS and digital lingo language challenges formal communication and enhances youth communication and speed messaging

Information Overload or TMI?

- The worldwide web contained 16.28 billion pages as at July 26, 2011.
- Wikipedia alone consists of about 3.7 million articles of user-created information
- One of the major challenges being cited by students is in the filtering of online information to finding usable and relevant resources.
- A regular research-oriented Google search will return over a million results. For example, “school libraries in Jamaica” returned about 1,860,000.



Technology and Education

- Enhancing library services through technology – a new way of acquiring knowledge by the learner, the teacher and the librarian
- Technology as not an end in itself but it is only a tool to assist in the ultimate goal of improving society and individual lives through education
- There is a need to better integrate information technology in the curriculum at all levels.
- They can allow students to understand concepts more clearly in a more exciting and varied manner.
- The rise in new media platforms has opened alternative avenues through which learning happens, sometimes informally.

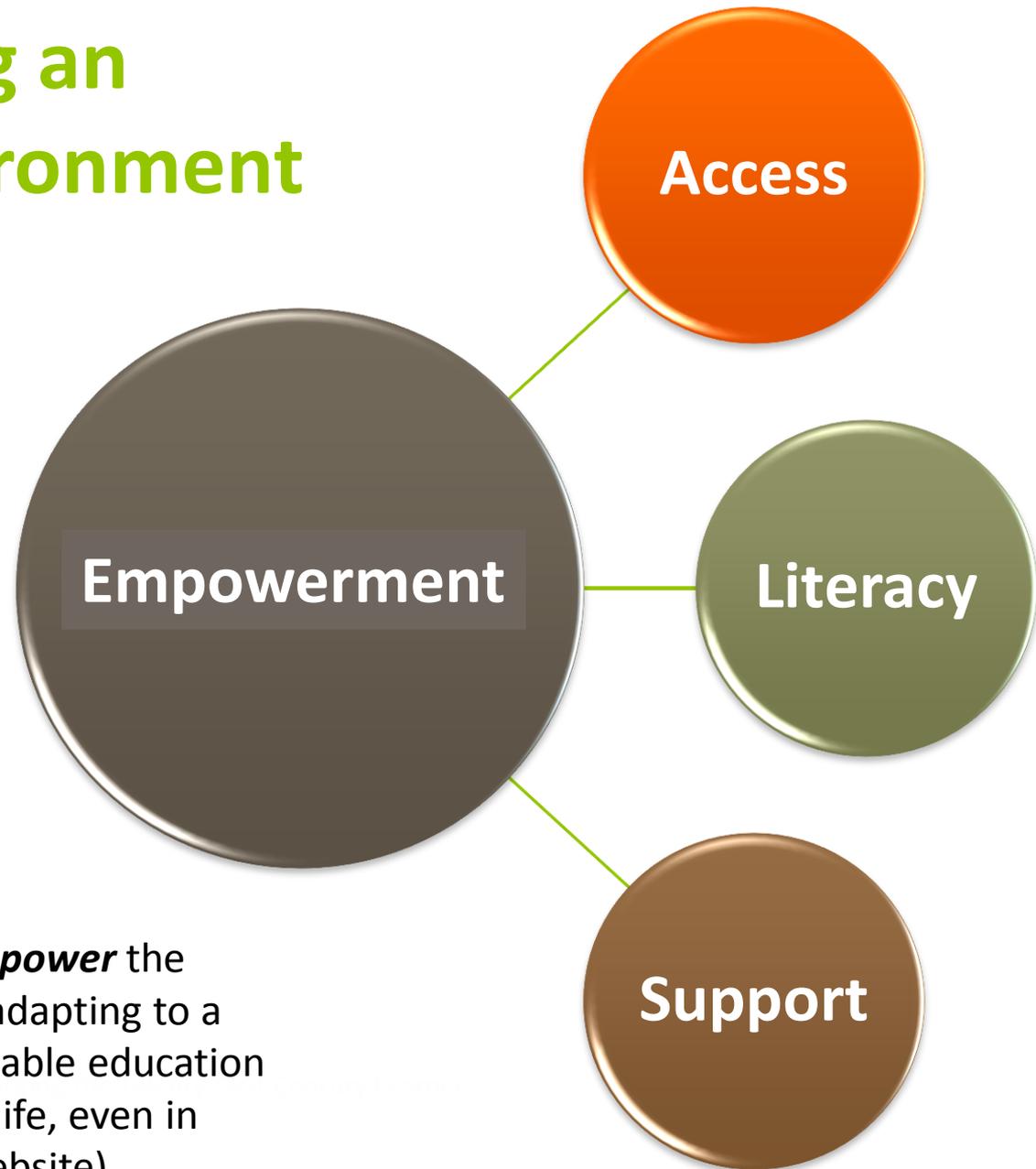
The Conventional “Modern” Library

- A multitude of resources in different formats suitable for different areas of the curriculum.
- Learning aids in the form of CD-ROMs, DVDs and other electronic resources.
- Online and hard copy resources which are age-appropriate.
- Credible resources (books, e-books, databases and AV materials) should be available.
- Printing and access to the internet are required, and quite possibly mission critical.

Online Resources

- The learner not only wants to receive information but also wants to share it and to collaborate with others.
- An internal information commons, blogs and wikis would be useful to encourage this.
- User-friendly library websites and databases which are remotely available should be a part of the bank of resources.

Providing an Enabling Environment



The school library should **empower** the student “with the means of adapting to a wide variety of situations, enable education to be continued throughout life, even in adverse conditions.” (IASL website)

Access

- This means access to the tools at school and also, ideally, remote access from home
- For example, household internet access in Jamaica is only 16% so more policy efforts are needed to get the internet inside people's homes
- At school, a sustained internet connection would be ideal and an easy-to use age-appropriate system
- Environment must be accommodating and facilities should be adequate

Amazon Alters Rules for Kindles in School Libraries

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By Lauren Barack August 1, 2011



Amazon has apparently created new rules governing the use of its Kindle ereader in school libraries. The website of the ecommerce giant states that content cannot be loaded across multiple devices at one time, and an Amazon rep told at least one school librarian, Buffy Hamilton, that ebooks cannot be ported to more than one device. Amazon also requires that each Kindle be tethered to its own account.

If permanent, the new rules could hamper the use of Kindles in school libraries, where ebooks, up until now, have typically been shared among up to six devices, and having to manage content on each single device would be impractical.

Although Amazon would not confirm the new rules despite several emails and phone calls from *School Library Journal*, a "[School FAQ](#)" on Amazon's site reads: "At present, it is not possible to load content across multiple independent devices at one time; this must be done on each device separately."

Formal vs Effective Access

- Access needs to go further than simply making the tools available.
- We understand a distinction between ‘formal’ and ‘effective’ access to ICTs purported by Wilson in 2006.
- In making the technology available we only provide ‘formal access’, using it to improve the situations of students, inspiring learning and satisfying specific curriculum oriented needs, is where ‘effective access’ takes place.
- Cases where ICTs are acquired or donated and not made available to students and teachers would not be effective access.

Access for Persons with Disabilities

- Access to persons with disabilities with the assistance of ICTs
- The use of large print books and talking books for students with visual impairments.
- Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act provides recommendations for making online content accessible to persons with print disability, including those with visual impairments and learning disabilities.
- Such standards include alternative text and options to skip sections of web pages for optimal usage by persons with such disabilities.

Culture of Uploading

- Access would empower our students by encouraging a culture of uploading rather than downloading.
- Students should be taught from a very young age that we must not be a society of downloaders of other people's content.
- Students must be taught ethical use of online and library resources and that the same technology can effectively detect abuse

Literacy

- Literacy continues to be an outstanding shortcoming in relation to the understanding and access to ICTs.
- Jamaica's youth literacy rate stands at 92%.
- While the government is driving towards 100% literacy by 2015, nothing is yet really in place for other types of literacy needed which includes financial literacy, visual literacy and information literacy.

Information Literacy

- “to be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and to have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information”. (ALA Information Literacy Competency Standards)
- Information literacy must be a part of the school curriculum
- Policies must be developed on at what age it would be taught and by whom.
- Teachers should also be taught information literacy
- Librarians are key to the proliferation of information literacy towards the empowerment of students and teachers.

Support

- “The school librarian, to fulfill the demands of the 21st century library, must be proactive, forward thinking and capable of promoting creative thinking and global collaboration throughout the school community... Information technology must be an integral part of what school librarians do.” (Keisa Williams, School Library Monthly, 2011)
- The librarian should support students equipping them with the confidence to discover information on their own and allowing them to take control
- Fast and reliable technical support as well as maintenance and security are also necessary although not the remit of the librarian

Librarian Support and School Performance

- Trained school librarians and adequately resourced libraries have been associated with high academic performance in the US
- Schools with such libraries are reported to have 10 to 18 percent better test scores When libraries were understaffed, librarians were unable to provide more than simple day to day services such as shelving and circulation.

Source: Menefee, *The Changing Library*, 2009.

Key Skills of the Cyber-Librarian

- Ability to embrace change
- Comfort in the online medium
- Ability to troubleshoot new technologies
- Ability to easily learn new technologies
- Ability to keep up with new ideas in technology and librarianship
- Project Management skills

*Continuing education is vital

Source: Meredith Farkas,

<http://meredith.wolfwater.com/wordpress/2006/07/17/skills-for-the-21st-century-librarian/>

The Challenge of Funding

- Libraries are funded from national or school budgets which are normally limited
- Libraries are not often prioritized within school or governmental budgets.
- Incremental attempts to improve the collection with a few additions each year would provide a solution.
- Book and financial donations from parents and alumni can be considered another source for development
- Governments should prioritize the stocking and technological improvement of school libraries

Other Challenges

- We need to address the aversion of some mature administrators to use of emerging technologies.
- Teachers or librarians need to stop being intimidated by technology and use it to our advantage.
- We also need to stop seeing (and having our children see) computers, cell phones and other technological tools as items only for leisure.
- There is need to look at environmental factors such as limiting the printing of e-resources as well as e-waste

Improving Access – the Government's Role

- ICTs need to have a larger scope and stronger leadership within the public sector.
- We must re-evaluate and audit the Universal Access Policies globally.
- We have to move beyond basic voice access towards innovative applications and usage in the public and private sectors.
- Government-imposed obstacles to ICT access should be removed.

Conclusions (1)

- The gender gap remains an ongoing concern
- Many boys are unwilling to sit and read a book because reading is regarded as a nerdy behaviour.
- The chance exists with emerging Web 2.0 technologies to erase such a stigma by making reading fun and hip to do.
- Reading can be more effectively linked to vocational interests of the youth such through music, sports and dating that will engage the attention of the male and female learners.
- Newly emergent reading devices such as e-readers can add prestige to knowledge-building.

Conclusions (2)

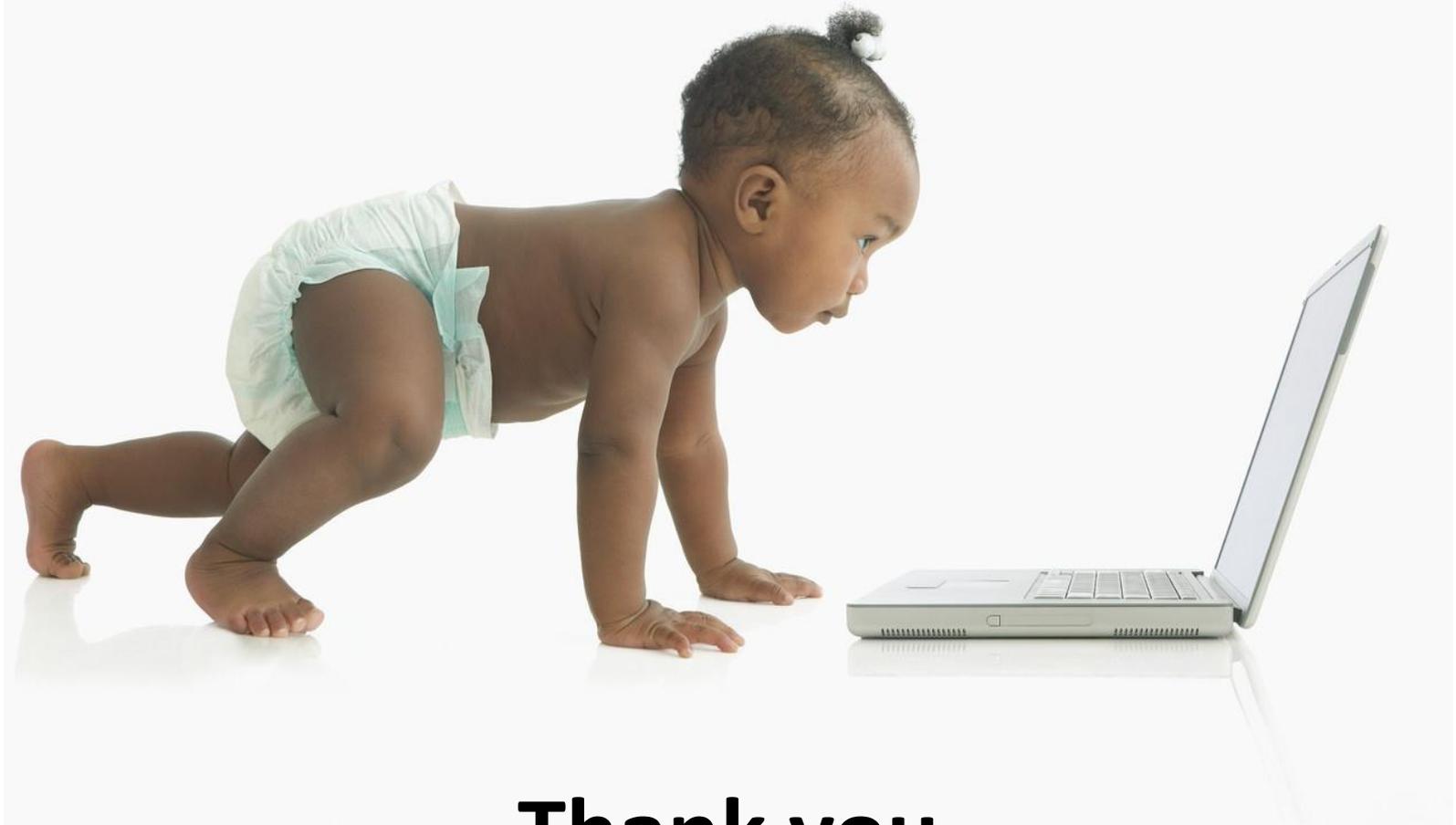
- There are still large pockets of illiteracy, including among young people globally.
- Poverty is still a big deterrent to learning and to reading.
- But there are opportunities than can be obtained by thoughtful and evidence-based policies in education and in technology use.

Conclusions (3)

- Children need to understand the digital environment and how it can be used as a tool of learning.
- The 21st century librarian has to be able to understand the technology and how to find the right information.
- The issues of access, literacy and support will persist and will be integral to the development of school libraries.
- School librarians must prioritize educating themselves in this framework.

We must not limit the 21st century learner to the once fantastic invention of the walled library of the 20th century and before.

Nowadays, the school library may well exist in the pocket of a youth carrying a mobile learning device!



Thank you

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