

American Library Association

Washington Office Newslines

ALAWON
Volume 16, Number 058
May 23, 2007

Your Comments Needed for FCC Notice of Inquiry

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is conducting one of its periodic inquiries into the state of high-speed Internet access in the United States. As we know, most libraries are seriously stretched to obtain or simply unable to gain access to the bandwidth they need to serve their users. Our research clearly shows that currently-available levels of broadband are insufficient to meet the needs of most public libraries providing public access to the Internet.

ALA made this point when it filed a response last week to an [FCC Notice of Inquiry \(NOI\) on deployment of broadband](#). The FCC is currently seeking "reply comments" from interested parties to what was filed by groups like ALA. What we need is for ALA members to submit replies to the FCC in support of our comments.

Your examples and illustrations from the field will help convey to the Commission the urgency of the situation and the important role libraries play in providing public Internet access. We encourage everyone -- from the smallest rural branch library to state library agencies -- to file on this notice and keep policy makers aware of this important issue.

ALA's original comments may be found on the [FCC's website](#).

ALA has crafted a model to tailor your response after (included below and available as a [Microsoft Word document](#)). Feel free to use it as a guide, including appropriate information about your particular situation and tweaking it to your own style.

Additional data for your letter can be found in the [2006 Public Libraries and the Internet Report](#) (PDF).

Though it may sound intimidating, filing comments with the FCC is not as difficult as you might think. To help you with your filing, the ALA Washington Office has prepared [step-by-step instructions](#) (PDF) on how to submit your comments to the FCC via the Electronic Comments Filing System (ECFS) website, located at: <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs>.

If you have any additional questions after reading the instruction document, please feel free to contact [Carrie Lowe](#) or [Mark Bard](#).

Reply comments are due to the FCC by May 31.

Other News:

[ALA offers tools to assist libraries assessing privacy practices](#)

[Annual Conference attendees will be the stars at premiere of "The Hollywood Librarian"](#)

ALAWON Editor:
Andy Bridges

To subscribe or unsubscribe, please click [here](#).

All materials subject to copyright by the American Library Association may be reprinted or redistributed for noncommercial purposes with appropriate credits.

May 30, 2007

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Portals II, Room TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Reply Comments
Inquiry Concerning the Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications
Capability
GN Docket No. 07-45

Dear Ms. Dortch:

I am writing to submit these reply comments in support of the Comments of the American Library Association (ALA) in this proceeding. I am [name, title]. [Describe your organization and its responsibilities].

The ALA raised some important issues in its comments in this proceeding. I am writing to augment some of those concerns. First, we support the ALA's request that the Commission explore the impact of broadband technologies on public libraries. As the ALA noted, about 98% of public libraries provide some form of Internet access. In our state [our public libraries offer ___ computers to our patrons and ___ of them offer Internet connectivity]. The Internet connectivity provided by our public libraries is increasingly important. We find that our public libraries are used by [students, elderly, government workers, farmers, low-income people, independent contractors, teachers, etc. . . .]. Some of the most popular uses are [unemployment applications, e-government services, instructional videos, networking and collaboration, etc.].

The ALA also noted, however, that only 45% of public libraries nationwide are satisfied with their level of broadband connectivity. We are concerned that the current marketplace is not working adequately to meet the needs of our public libraries. [In our state, the primary providers of broadband services are We have found that the prices for broadband connectivity are excessive. . . . we have had difficulty finding a provider to suit our needs The complexity of finding adequate broadband connectivity is often overwhelming and beyond the expertise of our librarian staff . . .]

As a result of these difficulties, we are not able to meet the needs of our patrons as we would like and as they expect. For instance, [insert examples of the problems faced by patrons – long lines waiting for terminals, inability to get on-line, slow-downs after school lets out, inability to use wireless because of congestion, etc.]

ALA Washington Office
Emily Sheketoff, Executive
Director
1615 New Hampshire Ave
NW, First Floor
Washington, D.C. 20009
202.628.8410 (V)
202.628.8419 (F)

**Office of Government
Relations**
Lynne Bradley, Director;
Melanie Anderson, Don
Essex, Erin Haggerty, Miriam
Nisbet, Tara Olivero,
Rosalind Reynolds

**Office for Information
Technology Policy**
Rick Weingarten, Director;
Mark Bard, Carrie Lowe,
Kathy Mitchell, Carrie Russell

For these reasons, we support ALA's suggestion that the FCC should encourage the public providers of broadband connectivity to work more closely with public libraries. Our public libraries need more bandwidth, preferably at lower rates than the general "market-based rates" that are currently being offered to us. But most important, we would like to find a way for the broadband providers in our state to work with us to find solutions to our broadband issues. [insert more information on proposals to increase the responsiveness of the broadband industry to the needs of public libraries].

Given the important role that public libraries play in our society and economy, we encourage the FCC to increase its focus on the need to provide public libraries with enhanced broadband connectivity in this proceeding.

Sincerely,

