

The Internet Public Library



Membership Information

The Internet Public Library (IPL) is a collaboration that brings together the expertise of interested individuals and organizations to create the most comprehensive online facility for supporting library and information science education, research, and service relating to digital reference and digital information management.

The IPL is managed by a consortium of membership organizations.

Levels of membership relate to levels of privilege, as follows:

Managing Partners - The managing partner institutions are responsible for the management of the IPL, including maintaining a list of current IPL projects and their IRB approvals, establishing the operating budget for the IPL, determining the cost of IPL services, and directing the available IPL resources towards the goals of the IPL collaboration. Managing partner institutions will purchase at least 10 shares each year.

Partners - partner institutions are responsible for following the research requirements for all of their IPL projects, participating in the IPL consortium activities, promoting the IPL where appropriate, and identifying and recommending research, teaching and service policies for the IPL. All partners will be invited to attend the IPL Partner meetings (held twice a year). Partner institutions will purchase more than one share (more than \$5,000), but less than 10 shares, and gain valuable voting strength through each share.

Associate Partners - Associate partners are responsible for following the research requirements outlined below for all of their IPL projects, participating in the IPL consortium activities, promoting the IPL where appropriate, and identifying and recommending research, teaching and service policies for the IPL. All partners will be invited to attend the IPL Partner meetings which are to be held twice a year.

A partner organization must submit a signed Memorandum of Understanding between the organization and the IPL consortium. Levels of membership regulate types of privileges approved by and with the discretion of the IPL managing partners.

IPL Fellows: Each partner organization is invited to designate one member as an IPL Fellow per share owned. The IPL Fellow will participate in discussions related to IPL operations, teaching and research.

IPL Consortium Members: In addition to partners, the IPL welcomes consortium members. These members may utilize the IPL for teaching and pay an administrative fee of \$100 per class plus a per student rate of \$35. Consortium members will not be given access to the data.

Benefits of Membership in the IPL Consortium

Membership runs from July 1 through June 30 of each year, and this entitles your institution to essential opportunities and benefits.

Benefits of Membership include:

- o Bi-Annual newsletter
- o IPL meetings and policy decisions (depending upon membership level)
- o IPL digital reference training and hands on experience
- o Data research opportunities (depending upon membership level)
- o Networking and collaborative environment with other IST/LIS professionals

Educational Benefits for Members

Digital Reference:

Quality education is enhanced when given the opportunity to learn digital reference first-hand. The IPL guides students through a training process that brings them to real questions sent by patrons from all over the world. In this way, graduate students are learning first-hand the process of the online reference interview, how to evaluate websites, how to discern reliability of sources, and quality customer service skills. Many students enjoy the experience so much that they continue to volunteer for the IPL after their class is completed.

Technological and content-driven student projects:

Graduate students have assisted the IPL with the daily operation and maintenance of the content, from link-checking to the organization of new collections, pathfinders, and other special collection projects. The IPL has many opportunities for future work with both its technological and content needs, from the implementation of enhanced technological tools to the further development and maintenance of its content.

Research Opportunities

The IPL members are committed to promoting research based upon the IPL by making IPL data as available as possible and as inexpensive as possible. The IPL members are committed to sharing the results of their research, maintaining a descriptive list of routinely available data sets accessible “as is” to IPL members.

After an IPL member institution has successfully completed an IRB approval process, access is granted to the following data:

- o Cleansed question-answer data archives and updates. The data includes more than 60,000 questions and their answers. Data is searchable using QRC with each article cleansed to a 90-95% accuracy level (as of April 2007).
- o Rejected questions (also cleansed in the same manner)
- o Demographic and usage data beginning January 2007 available through Google Analytics.
- o Interactive Wiki contributions
- o Other data requests from member institutions are to be submitted to the IPL Coordinating Committee for consideration.

Participation in a unique, collaborative project

The Internet Public Library is unique. It offers the quality, free *Ask an IPL Librarian* reference service to a world-wide community who has come to rely on the IPL for its high standard of customer service. It provides tremendous teaching/learning programs for LIS students and faculty. It has vast research opportunities and potential future projects. But more than this, the Internet Public Library extends its virtual doors wide open to offer a virtual place for ALA-accredited LIS graduate schools to collaborate, without detracting from their own projects and educational focus.

For more information about becoming an IPL Member, please contact:

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