



### **Internet access and use: concepts, measures and analytic model**

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Understanding, describing and explaining internet access and use, as well as the use of other information and communication technologies, as mobile phones, are subjects that nowadays attract the attention of many different researchers and professionals, including social scientists and librarians. From the perspective of social scientists, the multidimensional and complex characteristics of the internet seem to point out to the importance of understanding the multiple aspects of internet use and how these uses relate to the social and cultural characteristics of users. Unveiling these processes will hopefully help to diminish internet use differences between individuals and also contribute to find out how internet use can have an effect in people's or communities' lives. The role of libraries and librarians in bridging these digital divides is also being emphasized in many studies. A recent major public library survey shows that the internet is being used as the first information source for the solution of everyday life problems, and also that the access to the internet in libraries is relevant for those that do not have internet in their homes as well as for those that only have dial up access to the net. From several perspectives, therefore, studies try to focus on the interplay between socio-cultural and technical aspects of internet access and use, besides trying to find out how internet uses can contribute to people's life chances or to community development. However, there are differences in internet access and many aspects involved in the measurement of internet use. How social and technical characteristics of users intervene in internet access and use is another complex analytical problem requiring careful attention. Aiming to contribute to studies about internet use and internet use effect, and to studies about internet use in libraries, we try to point out here the multiple aspects involved in the measurement of key concepts, as that of Internet uses. We also try to discuss the analytic modeling of the concepts that might be considered in these studies, having in mind both qualitative and quantitative approaches. How different aspects of internet use might present different relationship with the social characteristics of users as well as with the technological aspects of internet access is also considered with examples taken from the 2005 survey of the Brazilian Bureau of Census involving more than 408 thousand interviews.

**Key Words:** Internet use, User behavior, Use measures