Program Report Card: iCONN: Connecticut's Research Engine (Connecticut State Library)
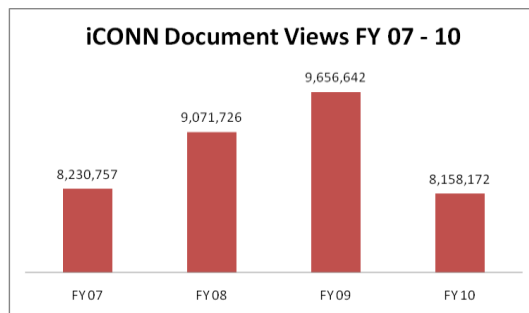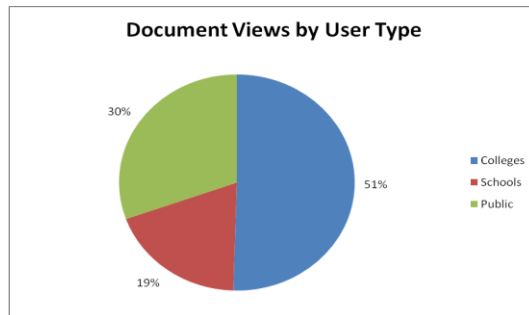
Quality of Life Result: All Connecticut residents will have access to information needed for lifelong learning.

Contribution to the Result: iCONN provides equitable access to a core level of information resources to every resident of Connecticut through their public libraries, school, colleges, or online from any location.

Total Program Funding: $1,836,264   State Funding: $1,524,632 (allocation) $1,968,794 (appropriation)   Federal Funding: $ 311,632
Other Funding:$0

Partners: The Department of Higher Education, the State Department of Education, the Commission for Educational Technology, schools, public libraries, academic institutions, parents, and students. A representative of each partner holds a position on the Connecticut Digital Library Advisory Board.

Performance Measure 1:   The number of times citizens download documents from iCONN for a specific information need.

Document Views by User Type

- Colleges 51%
- Schools 19%
- Public 30%

iCONN Document Views FY 07 - 10

- FY 07: 8,230,757
- FY 08: 9,071,726
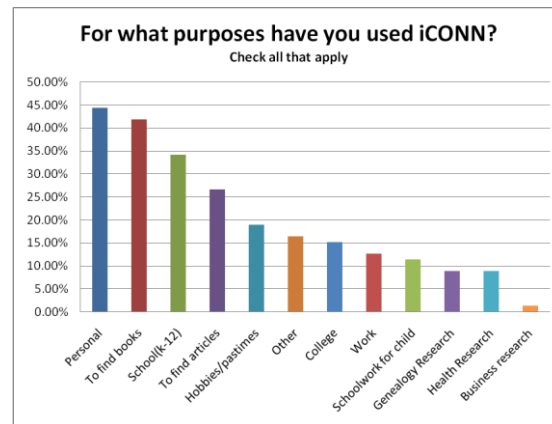- FY 09: 9,656,642
- FY 10: 8,158,172

Story behind the baseline: This measure provides an indication of the usefulness of the resource for students and the general public. It does not measure searches but rather the times a user opens a document that matches their search.

Use had been increasing every year until several resources were eliminated due to budget holdbacks in FY 10.

Proposed actions to turn the curve: Databases are continually evaluated by this indication of usefulness to researchers.

Performance Measure 2:   Stated need being met by iCONN

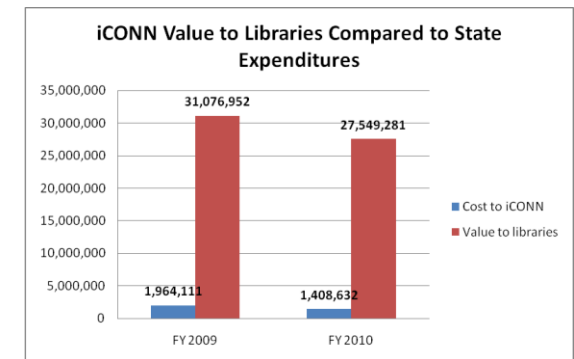For what purposes have you used iCONN?
Check all that apply

Story behind the baseline: Results are from a user survey on main search screen during FY 10. Responses were very low (only 99) but this gives some indication of how resources are being used.

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

The response rate for our on-line survey continues to be very low. iCONN is working with the vendor of the core databases to implement a pop-up user survey that should result in more responses.

Performance Measure 3: Cost Savings for public libraries, schools and colleges.

iCONN Value to Libraries Compared to State Expenditures

- FY 2009: Cost to iCONN 1,964,111; Value to libraries 31,076,952
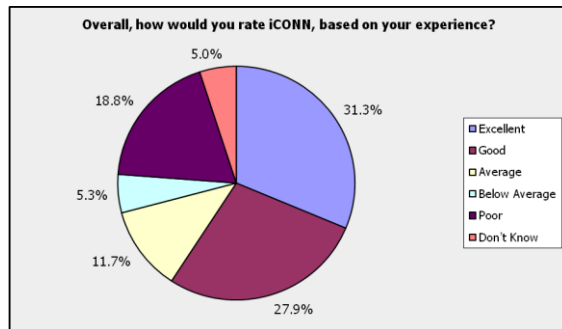- FY 2010: Cost to iCONN 1,408,632; Value to libraries 27,549,281

Story behind the baseline: This demonstrates the almost 1 to 20 cost benefit to local communities of purchasing database access at the state level. The decrease in value to local public libraries, schools and colleges from FY 2009 to FY 2010 reflects the cancellation of several databases due to budget reductions in the current year. When an academic database was cancelled it was picked up by individual colleges (including state community colleges) but at a higher cost to meet accreditation requirements.

Quality of Life Result: All Connecticut residents will have access to information needed for lifelong learning.

Proposed actions to turn the curve: This economy of scale analysis is hypothetical as it assumes that each of the libraries and educational institutions that currently have access to iCONN could afford to provide comparable service for their own patrons if the state service were to be further reduced. A substantial percentage could not afford this access even at the state reduced cost. The state also coordinates the technology that provides online access to these resources, an ability that many local institutions do not have on staff. Increased investment in database licensing will result in increased value to communities.

Performance Measure 4: Satisfaction of search experience.

Overall, how would you rate iCONN, based on your experience?

5.0%

18.8%

31.3%

5.3%

11.7%

27.9%

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Below Average
- Poor
- Don't Know

Story behind the baseline: These results were from the user survey on the main iCONN search screen in FY 09. The survey for FY 10 did not generate enough responses to be statistically significant.   Only 99 responses to this question were received out of 8 million document views! In FY 09 the responses demonstrated an Average to Excellent rating of 71%. In FY 10 the iCONN site was redesigned based on feedback in the 09 survey as well as usability studies conducted with searches. The lack of response to the new survey was disappointing.

Proposed actions to turn the curve: iCONN is partnering with the vendor of the core databases on a new pop-up user satisfaction survey that appears when users are searching in the individual databases. There will be enough responses for meaningful analysis by January of 2011.