2013 Program Report Card: iCONN – Connecticut's Re-search Engine (CT State Library)

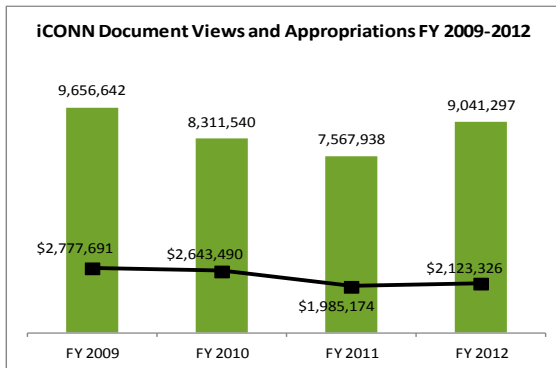*Quality of Life Result:* All Connecticut residents are lifelong learners.

Contribution to the Result: iCONN provides equitable access to a core level of information resources to all Connecticut residents through their schools, colleges and public libraries or online from any location regardless of financial status or community wealth.

Program Expenditures	State Funding	Federal Funding	Other Funding	Total Funding
Actual SFY 12	2,123,326	10,000		2,133,326
Estimated SFY 13	1,989,860	10,000		1,999,860

Partners: Board of Regents, Dept. of Education, 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. Other partners include the Gates Foundation for Libraries; CT Association of School Libraries, CT Educators Computer Association; CT Library Association; CT Education Association; CT Library Consortium; and the CT Department of Labor (CTWorks). A potential partner is the CT Parent Teacher Student Association.

How Much Did We Do?

Connecticut Uses iCONN

iCONN Document Views and Appropriations FY 2009-2012

9,656,642 — 8,311,540 — 7,567,938 — 9,041,297

$2,777,691 — $2,643,490 — $1,985,174 — $2,123,326

FY 2009 — FY 2010 — FY 2011 — FY 2012
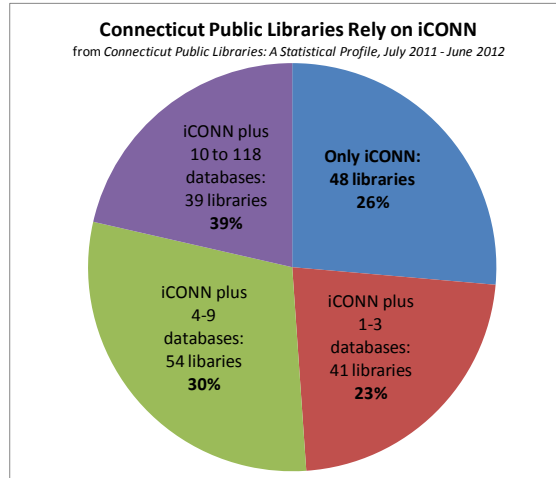
Story behind the usage baseline:

Document views show the level of demand for iCONN by residents by measuring the number of times users actually open documents that are relevant to their searches. **Usage increased substantially (by nearly 20%) between FY2011 and FY2012 because local library funding has declined and libraries are forced to rely more on iCONN**. The user population includes high school students (24%), college students (18%), librarians (15%), middle school students (8%), teachers (6%), professors (5%), elementary school students (1%) and other professionals (12%).

To address past budget cuts, we have already trimmed resources. Any further cuts will severely compromise our ability to offer core iCONN databases.

Use Trend: ▲

How Well Did We Do It?

iCONN provides equitable access to quality information to all public libraries

Connecticut Public Libraries Rely on iCONN
from *Connecticut Public Libraries: A Statistical Profile, July 2011 - June 2012*

iCONN plus 10 to 118 databases: 39 libraries **39%**

Only iCONN: 48 libraries **26%**

iCONN plus 4-9 databases: 54 libraries **30%**
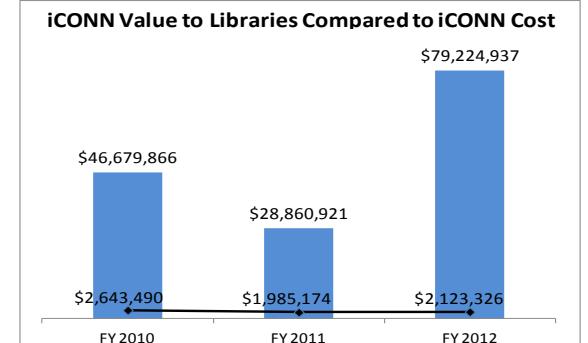
iCONN plus 1-3 databases: 41 libraries **23%**

Story behind the baseline:

26% of public libraries rely exclusively on iCONN to provide licensed databases to their communities. 23% of public libraries provide only 1-3 licensed databases in addition to iCONN. 49% of libraries rely either exclusively or heavily on iCONN to provide licensed databases to their communities.

Trend: ▲

Is Anyone Better Off?

iCONN Saved Libraries and Municipalities a Substantial Amount of Money

iCONN Value to Libraries Compared to iCONN Cost

$79,224,937

$46,679,866

$28,860,921

$2,643,490 — $1,985,174 — $2,123,326

FY 2010 — FY 2011 — FY 2012

Story behind the baseline:

$150 million is the cost savings to local communities of providing heavily discounted, essential licensed databases at the state level over three years. Further, iCONN saves considerable library staff time that would otherwise be spent negotiating license fees, issuing purchase orders, setting up public access to the resources on library websites, troubleshooting access issues as they arise, training both staff and the public on using the resources, and promoting the resources. 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. Lastly, for the many libraries that rely exclusively on iCONN for these resources, it ensures that their communities will have equitable access to information resources that they would otherwise be forced to do without.

Cost Benefit Trend: ▲

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Is Anyone Better Off?

Most users find iCONN's content to be more trustworthy than web search engines

Do you trust the content on this website more than the content you find through web search engines?

Gale-Cengage Browse Survey

August 27, 2009 – September 24, 2012

No
10%

Haven't thought about it
22%

Yes
68%
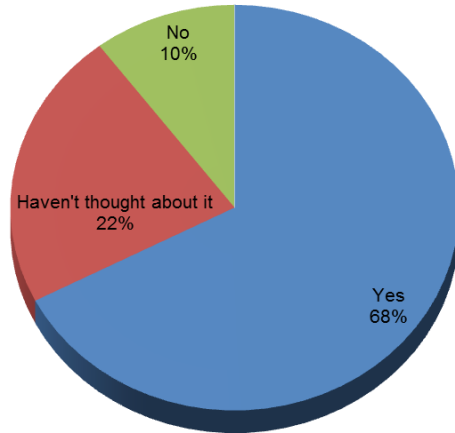
Story behind the baseline:

iCONN is fulfilling its intent to provide users with higher quality, more trustworthy information than would be possible using web search engines. Users want relevant, easily accessible information they can trust, not millions of search results from the open Web. iCONN provides access to thousands of magazines and journals whose paid content is not available on the open (free) Web. iCONN searches are also *free of advertising* and *confidential* (not retained) to ensure patron privacy. iCONN users can contact us easily using a feedback form; we respond promptly and, when applicable, use that information to improve system usability.

55% of users indicated they found what they were looking for and many "better off" user testimonials are linked from iCONN.org.

Trend: ◄►

Proposed Actions to Turn the Curve:

The economy of scale analysis above is hypothetical as it posits that each of the libraries and municipalities that currently have access to iCONN could afford to provide a comparable service for their own patrons if the state service were to go away. In fact, a substantial number of libraries could not afford an added cost of this magnitude. As a result, if iCONN as it exists today were to disappear, libraries would experience either significantly higher costs, or vastly diminished service, or a combination of both. In turn, because we know that this result would not manifest uniformly across all municipalities, the "equity of information access" that iCONN currently provides all students and residents would end.

1. We will upgrade the current statewide library catalog to an improved version (subject to availability) by July 2013. This will improve usability, search relevance and support for mobile devices.
2. We will implement the results of a bid for licensed databases to *improve* services and *lower* costs by July 2013.
3. We will issue an RFP for the statewide library catalog to *improve* services and *lower* costs by April 2013.
4. We will investigate funding support from the State Dept. of Education and the Department of Economic and Community Development to acquire needed additional resources in five categories: business directory; pro-con issues; *The Hartford Courant*, 1923-1984; streaming video; and children's encyclopedia. This request has been strongly endorsed by iCONN's Advisory Board. Currently, 85% of use is coming from academic and K-12 students.

Data Development Agenda:

1. We will ask the State Dept. of Education to (a) begin collecting data from public school libraries relevant to our ongoing evaluation of iCONN, including libraries that rely exclusively on iCONN for licensed databases; and (b) fill a longstanding vacancy on iCONN's Advisory Board.
2. We will review the annual public library survey to identify opportunities for improvement relevant to iCONN.
3. We will request the funding needed to perform a professional survey of iCONN users to gauge satisfaction, awareness, who the users are and how they are using iCONN.