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THE PROJECT "LIBRARIES FOR INNOVATION"

**SURVEY OF THE MEMBERS OF PUBLIC
INTERNET ACCESS USERS' GROUPS
2011**

(Instruments 8,9 and 10)

**CONTRACTING
AUTHORITY:**

Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania

**CONTACT PERSON OF THE
CONTRACTING
AUTHORITY:**

Ugnė Rutkauskienė

CONTRACTOR:

RAIT, UAB

PROJECT MANAGER:

Dr. Gintaras Šumskas, Senior Project Manager

REPORT PREPARED BY:

Tatjana Konovalova

**THE TEAM CONDUCTING
THE SURVEY:**

Project Manager of Qualitative Research: Tatjana
Konovalova

Manager of Qualitative Research Department: Renata
Sadunišvili

Assistant in Qualitative Research Department Lina
Drungilienė

CONTACTS:

RAIT, UAB, Naugarduko g. 68B, LT-03203 Vilnius,
Lithuania

tel. (+370 5) 269 12 47 , fax. (+370 5) 269 12 48, e-
mail: tatjana@rait.lt

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1. Survey methods

Two main qualitative research methods were used in the survey:

- ✓ in-depth interview (ID) – a direct interview with a respondent according to pre-prepared scenario. During the ID, each respondent is given more time and the collected information on his/her experience, viewpoint, attitude, and motives is especially deep and detailed. In-depth interviews are conducted in natural environment (respondent's working place).
- ✓ focus group discussion (FGD) – each FGD involves 10 respondents, who are randomly selected according to specific selection criteria. Each discussion is held following a special scenario, which is agreed upon with the customer. Each discussion lasts around 2.5 hours. During the discussions, several projection techniques are used in order to completely reveal the respondents' opinion, assessment, viewpoint, changes in viewpoint, and the aspects that determine the opinion expressed by the respondents.

Target group sample and selection

Target groups of the qualitative research were the users of public internet access (PIA) in libraries:

- ✓ senior people;
- ✓ village residents;
- ✓ the unemployed;
- ✓ the handicapped;
- ✓ 12-14 year old children from families at social risk or whose parents are working abroad.

The survey involved interviews and discussions with PIA users in 4 counties of Lithuania (Kaunas, Šiauliai, Alytus, and Tauragė) with the town/village ratio of 60/40. In total, 91 PIA users participated in the interviews and discussions:

- ✓ 8 in-depth interviews with the handicapped users (1 or 2 respondents participated in each interview; in total, 11 handicapped PIA users were surveyed);
- ✓ 10 focus group discussions (FGD).

Survey instrument

Discussion scenarios (instruments No. 8, No. 9, and No. 10) provided by the Contracting Authority were used in group discussions and interviews.

In comparison to the instruments of the surveys conducted in 2009, when preparing for the survey of this year, the discussion scenarios were corrected very little. The corrections were agreed upon with the Contracting Authority and made with the view to assess the Project impact in one year.

The following impact areas were analysed during the qualitative research:

- ✓ Improved access to the users and opportunities to use the computers and internet;
- ✓ Improved access for specific and hard-to-reach social groups;
- ✓ Increased social benefit to the individuals and communities via IT;
- ✓ Increased skills and motivation of library employees to use information technology;
- ✓ Improved information technology skills of the visitors of public libraries;
- ✓ Improved representation of libraries;
- ✓ Increased supply and use of relevant contents;
- ✓ Innovations in the libraries network.

Key principles of information analysis

Several principles of information analysis that have to be taken into account when reading the report are provided below*:

- ✓ Comparison of **village and town**. The differentiation between village and town is presented in the report, when certain differences of assessment or situation exist. If there are none, the comparison is not given and the general assessment or situation are presented;
- ✓ Comparison of **target groups'** opinions. This comparison is presented based on the same principle as the comparison of town and village: if there are differences between the assessments of representatives of target groups, the comparison is presented. If the situation or assessment is described without distinguishing particular target groups, it means there was no essential difference between the assessment or opinion of these groups.
- ✓ Moreover, **the comparison of results** of the survey "Members of Public Internet Access Users' Groups" conducted in **year 2009** by TNS Gallup, UAB is presented. It is noteworthy that according to the opinion of TG representatives themselves, the period of 1 year is too short for radical changes to take place/be recorded.

* New index - 2E. [Improved] PIA users' knowledge and skills of safe use of internet.

2. Summary of survey results

Improved access to the users and opportunities to use the computers and internet

The survey participants unanimously agree that the conditions to use public internet access in libraries further improved during last year. All TG representatives noticed new computers or additional equipment, upgraded computer base or higher internet speed. More significant changes both in terms of quantity and quality are noticed in village libraries.

Naturally, town libraries are more attractive and customized for various visitors. However, the survey participants representing village community expressed a delight that the use of public internet access in their visited libraries has become much more convenient. According to the representatives of the TG, the libraries have got more/upgraded main computer equipment and provide various accessories.

Improved access for specific and hard-to-reach social groups

The expectations and needs for public internet access of the representatives of hard-to-reach groups participating in the survey are similar in comparison to the needs of other visitors of public libraries. Their use of internet is also determined by the need to communicate, enrich their leisure, and find necessary information. A tendency that the library serves as a centre of support for hard-to-reach groups in every way, where they can spend time, talk, unburden, etc. which was registered last year, has become even more noticeable. Therefore, the image of the library as a community centre, which reduces social exclusion strengthened last year, especially in rural areas.

More specific needs for the library as a public institution are of handicapped visitors, senior people, and children from families at social risk. Although the conditions for physically/visually handicapped people to visit the library and use its various services were improved in town libraries, using PIA services in village libraries would still be difficult for the people of this social group. The people with mental disabilities willingly attend the library and use its services. Communication with other visitors, help of library employees, and encouragement in the process of learning how to use the IT are especially important to them. All this helps them to socialize and accept/present themselves as a full-fledged personality.

Elderly visitors of the libraries need special attention and encouragement—precisely what they receive coming to a library. Senior people who participated in the discussion emphasized that they were very satisfied and genuinely grateful to the librarians that they found the ways to interest and motivate them to learn to use PIA. Senior people also expressed their delight that beside everything a library offers, they can satisfy their communication needs their and be heard.

The opportunity to use the internet in the library ensures the occupation of children from families at social risk, more purposeful leisure, and socialization as well as forms/strengthens self-esteem. Survey participants indicated that it is important for the children from families at social risk to know that they are welcome. Therefore, the role of the librarian is not only to help on the issues of IT use, but also to generally understand, support and guide these children in the appropriate direction.

Increased social benefit to the individuals and communities

Survey participants already spontaneously mention individual and community benefit of the PIA services. The perception of their importance and relevance is getting stronger and is spreading more intensely among internet users in comparison to 2009.

Regardless of their age and/or level of knowledge on IT use/application, increasingly more visitors understand and recognize the benefits of internet and use the vast possibilities of internet more intensely and confidently. Just like a year ago, TG representatives distinguished such individual social PIA benefits as communication and keeping in touch with close people and relatives living/staying abroad, obtaining various information/accumulation of knowledge, significantly higher quality leisure (especially in villages), being in the social environment, and communication with other visitors. The library is perceived as a social centre, which provides the opportunity for both elderly and young visitors to socialise and mingle with people. What concerns the community benefit, it is noticed that due to modern services, the quality of services is rising, the number of visitors has increased, and the versatility/suitability of libraries for various groups of users is improving.

Economical benefit has a lot of influence on the decision to use the PIA service. Its two constituent parts—saving time and money—are still emphasized. The major part of public internet access users would be forced to stop using PIA if the service was charged for. Comparing the social and economical benefit, one can state that social benefit of VIA is the main stimulus to use/be interested in the internet in libraries.

Increased skills and motivation of library employees to use information technology

Librarians' IT knowledge and skills are highly estimated. In the opinion of survey participants, the librarians have significantly improved during the year due to constantly organised training and practical application of knowledge when servicing/consulting the users of PIA service. The respondents are satisfied with received support and advice; many of them turn to the librarian quite often. It is recognised that the librarians' knowledge and skills are sufficient to service library visitors with different IT skills. Elder TG representatives stated that after the training, they especially need the librarian to be next to them and help to remember or explain the actions/functions once again.

The PIA users also emphasized that the librarians often indicate/suggest visiting interesting websites, which meet the users' expectations and needs in full. Without their advice, many respondents would not know about the existence of these useful websites.

Improved information technology skills of the visitors of public libraries

The majority of PIA users feel they have sufficient IT skills. It is noteworthy that even senior people feel more confident and many of them are able to use interesting websites, links, e-mail or Skype on their own. A positive change has taken place in the conscience of people: there are less fears and doubts about own capabilities, and the psychological boundaries are outweighed by the increasing perception of the service benefit. The experience of librarians as well as wider and improving opportunities and conditions to use the internet have a significant role in this process.

It is noteworthy that in the libraries the visitors use the internet most often, meanwhile office applications (Word, Excel, etc.) are used very seldom. Younger library visitors have more skills to use the above mentioned applications, meanwhile other respondents assess their skills as minimal.

Naturally, survey respondents who have additional possibilities to use the computer/internet (gave own computers, have access at work/school) have significantly better IT skills; they do more by themselves and use librarian's help less often.

PIA users' level of knowledge of safe use is rather low. Among most often mentioned internet threats and dangers, survey participants indicated the threats to the computer (viruses) and disclosing personal data and identity, which threatens personal security.

Improved representation of libraries

The social mission of the library has become even more noticeable and relevant in one year, especially among the residents of smaller towns and villages. Meanwhile, the perception of informative and educative missions has significantly expanded, and many survey participants emphasized that due to modern technologies, obtaining necessary information has become considerably faster, simpler, and more convenient.

Rationally, public library is positively assessed as a modern and advanced social centre, which can offer a lot of services and pursuits for the visitors of different age and needs. It is an excellent place for obtaining knowledge/information and spending quality time.

Appearance of information technologies in village libraries and its updating in town libraries strengthens the image of the library in society. The only drawback that can harm library reputation in the long run is fragmented and minimal renewal of books/periodicals. Appropriate combination of traditional and modern services and providing them along with high quality customer service is a guarantee of successful image and long functioning of public libraries.

Increased supply and use of relevant contents

The main changes of last year are related to the growth of the number of public libraries visitors and more intense and wide use of PIA, which was determined by computer and internet literacy training organised for library visitors, ensuring higher computer and internet quality in the libraries, and considerably higher level of libraries employees' competences and skills ensuring professional consultations on IT use to library visitors.

The issue of books and periodicals is becoming especially painful to library visitors; book corpora are very rarely updated and even less periodicals are received in comparison to the previous year. This problem is more often faced in village libraries. Occasionally received new books are morally outdated or not interesting to the visitors.

Innovations in the libraries network

Survey participants distinguished two major innovations that were introduced with the support of the Project "Libraries for Innovation": English courses for library employees and wireless internet. The latter

novelty is especially positively assessed, as it enables using own laptop, which is very convenient as necessary information can be downloaded directly to the computer.

The procedure of signing in has changed in the majority of libraries. Although personal sign-in/login using a password is not new, it is assessed by the respondents as a very convenient aspect of computer/internet use, which allows saving time and ensures smooth control of working environment in the computer.

3. Improved access to the users and opportunities to use the computers and internet

- The quality of computer equipment and internet has considerably improved. It ensured more convenient use of public internet access through performing daily activities with the computer/internet much faster and simpler. -

The survey participants unanimously agree that the **conditions to use public internet access in libraries improved during last year. More significant changes related to introduction/supply of modern services are noticed in village libraries.** Some village libraries started offering the service of public internet access quite recently and until a certain time (a year or several years ago), the visitors of such libraries had very limited possibilities: one or several cumbersome computers and very slow internet (*"it used to get on the nerves, you could have a cup of tea before a webpage loaded, and now the speed of internet is really high,"* said village residents, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties).

Therefore, in comparison to the survey results of 2009, **the following changes related to strengthening and expansion of information technology are noticed.** It is noteworthy, that **more intense penetration and attention is noticed in village libraries:**

- ✓ **More computers and other equipment in public libraries** – town libraries and many village libraries were provided with new, modern equipment and various accessories (upgraded computers, copiers/scanners/printers, multimedia, interactive boards, headphones, microphones, etc.): *"we have everything now: a printer, computers, cameras, everything is working,"* said the unemployed, village in Kaunas county; *"there are new monitors, so it is easier to read,"* said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties; *"it is very convenient, because we can make copies. The Town Hall also provides the services of copying, but here it is more convenient,"* said a handicapped person, village in Kaunas county);
- ✓ **Ensuring higher internet quality** – *"it is optic fibre internet" ("internet is much faster now, earlier it took very long to load, to open, and now everything is faster,"* said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties; *"even now it sometimes hangs up when all computers are occupied, but still the internet is faster,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties). Library visitors are also provided with the possibility to bring their own laptop and use wireless internet in the library.

Today, central town libraries are well prepared and customized to service PIA users with impaired vision. **Visually impaired PIA users expressed a delight that recently a special application JAWS for the blind/partially sighted was installed in the computer of the town library they visit, which allows using the internet freely:** *"it is an advantage to the library, they did not provide such possibility before, it is a progress. It is very good that the JAWS was installed, because I could not read before, it is very difficult for me, my vision is very weak,"* said a handicapped person, town in Kaunas county.

Although in general **the changes related to providing modern services that took place in one year are not very big, they still facilitate and speed up the process of internet use** for the users of public internet access **and creates the image of public library as an advanced institution keeping up with state-of-the-art technology.**

4. Improved access for specific and hard-to-reach social groups

Index 4B. Experience of hard-to-reach groups

- *Survey participants admitted that without the help of libraries they would not have achieved what they have now - IT knowledge and skills, which allow them to expand their horizons, improves their quality of life and self-esteem. -*

The expectations and needs of hard-to-reach groups distinguished in the framework of the project (the handicapped, senior people, children from families at social risk, children whose parents are abroad, village residents, and the unemployed) **for public internet access are similar in comparison to the needs of other** visitors of public libraries. Generally, their use of internet is also determined by the need to communicate, enrich their leisure, and find necessary information. However, deeper analysis allows distinguishing certain specific aspects related to the needs of hard-to-reach groups, which have to be emphasized. The groups of the handicapped, senior people and children from families at social risk as well as their experience of PIA use should be more widely discussed here.

One of the groups of PIA users participating in the survey were **handicapped respondents**. It is noteworthy that physically/visually handicapped people still constitute a small part of public library visitors. It is determined by the fact that some of them either have a computer at home or use a computer and internet in the handicapped centres. Thus, their need to visit public libraries with the intention to use the internet is not so strong. In the last few years, the conditions for the handicapped to use PIA services have improved: the computers with special software/application JAWS, which facilitates using the computer/internet for visually impaired visitors were introduced. Moreover, entrances to the libraries were repaired (ramps were made and entrances were widened) and the possibilities to move freely inside the libraries/access other floors (elevators were constructed) were provided, etc. All these changes were noticed and evaluated by all library visitors. However, the people who want to use the PIA in town branches and village libraries still face certain obstacles:

- ✓ The library is on the second floor and the entrance is not accessible to physically handicapped visitors: *it is not physically possible for a person in a wheelchair to get to our library,* said a handicapped person, village in Kaunas county;
- ✓ There is no computer customized for a visually impaired visitor, audio books, etc.: *in our library, there are no possibilities for such people to use the computer, so they do not come,* said a handicapped person, town branch library in Alytus county.

The situation is different for the mentally handicapped people. It is noteworthy that they willingly attend the library and use the internet. Coming to the library and trying to learn as much as possible in terms of internet use, they spend higher quality time, socialize by communicating with both library employees and familiar library visitors. This activity and encouragement of the librarians as well as support in using IT increase their self-confidence and self-reliance, which is extremely important for this group of users—they wish to feel full-fledged PIA users and society members.

Senior people remain the most vulnerable group in terms of modern technology use. The results of the survey of this year once again confirm that elderly library visitors need special attention and encouragement. As they have great fear, low self-reliance, and negative attitude towards their capabilities and technology in general, the patience of librarians and examples of their peers are especially important to them: *when I heard of the course, I thought I would not be able to learn, I would feel inconvenient, there would be young people, but then I thought that the people I know will be teaching and there are 60-year-old people who are learning, so I thought why should not I go and learn. The librarian also encouraged me, so today I am thankful to those who had the patience,* said senior people, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties. The senior people who participated in the discussion emphasized that they were very satisfied and genuinely grateful to the librarians that they found the ways to interest and motivate them to learn to use PIA: *I am very grateful that the librarian had the patience to persuade me, because now I can communicate with my children, who are far away. I thank them for that,* said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties. Senior people also expressed their delight that beside everything a library offers, they can communicate with other visitors and librarians, who not only offer what is interesting/relevant to a particular person, but also listen and comfort, which elderly library visitors especially need (*it is the best place for me: I go out, chat with people, it is better than closing up between the four walls,* said senior people, Tauragė county).

The **children** from families at social risk **should be distinguished as another specific group of visitors**. According to the representatives of TG, these children are very attached to the library (especially in rural areas), because it is the place where they can spend time communicating with other children, do their homework, and just stay quietly: *"I believe it is an achievement that these children are in the library, because if they are not on the street, they find an occupation, they are supervised, they have what to do and a warm place to stay in,"* said village residents, Kaunas and Alytus counties. Thus, PIA users confirm the opinion of library employees and experts that the opportunity to use internet in a library ensures the occupation of children from families at social risk, more purposeful leisure, socialization, and forming/strengthening the perception of oneself as a full-fledged personality. Analysing the needs of children from families at social risk, survey participants indicated that it is very important for the children from families at social risk to know that they are welcome. Therefore, we can speak of the important role of the librarian: not only helping on the issues of IT use, but also generally understanding and supporting/guiding these children in the appropriate direction. Although the children of this group usually have no opportunities to use internet elsewhere apart from the libraries, they do not lag behind their peers, as they quickly learn from them. This way, in the process the librarians should also show other possibilities of internet to children (and not only games) so that they were able to use IT more comprehensively.

A tendency that the library serves as a centre of support for hard-to-reach groups in every way, where they can spend time, talk, unburden, etc. which was registered last year, has become even more noticeable. Therefore, **the image of the library as a community centre, which reduces social exclusion strengthened last year, especially in rural areas.**

Index 4C. Activities for which the public internet access in libraries is most often used by the users

Analysing the public internet access use of all surveyed hard-to-reach groups it was found that essentially, just like a year ago, they use the internet for similar activities. Different purposes of internet use can be discussed distinguishing two groups: children and adults. Although the children state that the use of internet technology is more related to studies, information and knowledge to them, the majority of them use the internet in libraries for the following purposes:

- ✓ **Communication with peers, less often with relatives.** Most popular means: social networks (Facebook, one.lt), Skype. E-mail is used less often in comparison to elder users (*"I use Facebook or one.lt to communicate with my friends, find new ones, and to talk to my father and brother, who are away,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties);
- ✓ **Internet/computer games** (*"I play various games online: Friva, 18,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties);
- ✓ Search/printing the information necessary to **do the homework** (*"when I need some information for my classes, I come here, ask a librarian, and print it right here,"* said the children from families at social risk, Kaunas and Alytus counties; *"they give a task at school and I have to find out something, read the history, so I look it up on Wikipedia, it has a lot of information about everything,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Kaunas and Alytus counties).

Even the children who have the possibility to use a computer at home, visit the library when they need librarian's help/advice looking for information for the homework or have to print the material. They also say that they come to the library to spend time at the computer with their friends, to play/communicate on the internet longer, as the parents usually limit the time of computer use at home (*"the parents do not allow using the computer for a long time or completely forbid it as a punishment for low grades, so I come to the library,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Kaunas and Alytus counties).

Meanwhile the **adults beside communication with relatives and friends**, which most often happens by e-mail or Skype (*"I talk to the children or send messages,"* said senior people, Šiauliai county; *"I exchange letters with friends, we share the music, pictures,"* said a handicapped person, Tauragė county), basically **relate the Internet with spending and occupying the free time**. They:

- ✓ **Visit information/news portals www.delfi.lt, www.alfa.lt, read the main daily papers and other periodicals** in e-format (*"agricultural information is relevant to me, I also read Delfi, weather forecast,"* said village residents, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties; *"the adults want to know what is going on in Lithuania, so they read it on the internet,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Kaunas and Alytus counties);
- ✓ **Take interest in information related to favourite occupations, daily life:** (*"I write down in a notebook everything that is interesting to me, then I open Google and read about it... I find congratulation texts there,"* *"in summer I read more about growing and protecting the plants, and in winter I am more interested in recipes, knitting or embroidery,"* said senior people, Kaunas and

Alytus counties); *"first of all I read Lietuvos Rytas, see what is happening in Lithuania, and then – what is going on the world,"* said village residents, Kaunas county; *"I am learning English online and look up the handicrafts. I download what I find,"* said the unemployed, village in Šiauliai county.

- ✓ **Perform their work/look for a job:** *"...I look up job advertisements, papers, visit specialised webpages, Lithuanian Labour Exchange, etc., send out my CV,"* said the unemployed, village in Šiauliai county.

It is noteworthy that in comparison to the survey results of 2009, **a tendency is noticed that PIA users more often use and evaluate the advantages of e-trade/placing orders online**, e.g., they book flight tickets online, buy tickets to various events and buy goods online (*"I have bought online several times. It is very convenient: you do not have to go to the city, it is delivered to your home. I have recently bought a watch and I am very satisfied with it,"* said the handicapped, village in Kaunas county); *"I make jewellery so I often order beads online as well as books. It is very convenient, I save time and travelling expenses,"* said the unemployed, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties.

Index 4D. Existence of programmes or other mechanisms to engage hard-to-reach groups

– According to the assessment of survey participants, public libraries do everything that is possible and even more to keep their visitors satisfied and willing to come again. –

Just like last year, assessing the programmes implemented or the mechanisms applied by the libraries to engage hard-to-reach groups, TG representatives essentially spoke of the library in general as a centre that holds various events and projects for all visitors, without distinguishing hard-to-reach groups. The amount of such activities is assessed as sufficient and very varied/customized for various age groups (*"exhibitions and events are organised, which are visited by people of different age and interests,"* said the unemployed, Šiauliai county; *"they have plans, know what will be happening today and tomorrow, hold the events for the students and adults,"* said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties).

TG representatives unanimously emphasized that **most activities/events/competitions are organised for children:** *"there are various programmes for the children, book presentations, drawing competitions, various awards. The children find it fun and they tend to visit the library and read more themselves,"* said village residents, Šiauliai county.

Senior people being the group of visitors who have most free time, spend a lot of time in the library, often attend the events organised by the library: *"poetry evenings are organised for senior people,"* said the unemployed, Kaunas and Alytus counties. Just like a year ago, the respondents believe that special efforts to attract them to the library are not necessary. However, as it was mentioned above, more time should be given to actualize the PIA service benefit for them and provide especially patient consulting on the issues of IT use. Moreover, the group of senior people is distinguished as the main group the public library should focus on/provide most help in terms of IT. When talking to senior people, the assumption that only the librarian's patience and flexibility determined that senior people dare to use the internet and further "master the internet" after the training was confirmed. What concerns the training organised for senior people, it is noteworthy that senior people themselves evaluated it highly positively and as very beneficial and relevant: *"I never thought I could do it, but now I know a lot, a lot was demonstrated during the training, and I cannot imagine my life without the internet,"* said senior people, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties.

Just like a year ago, special events for the **handicapped** are not organised. According to the respondents, the librarians deliver the books/periodicals to physically handicapped people to their homes: *"they agree and deliver what that person needs,"* said the unemployed, Kaunas and Alytus counties. Survey participants indicated that central libraries are fitted to service physically and visually handicapped visitors, meanwhile village libraries are not. An occasional opinion was that there is no considerable need to use the PIA service in village libraries, as such people are few and the majority of them have own computers. Visually handicapped users positively assessed and occasionally mentioned a special campaign organised specially for visually handicapped library visitors "Prakalbink Internetą bibliotekoje" ("Make the Internet Speak in the Library"), where they learnt about new possibilities to use a computer and internet in the library and communicated with the specialists, who explained and answered the questions about the procedure of provision of technical means, consulted on relevant issues of employment, education, leisure, and health. Other TG representatives have heard that something similar was organised in their library, but could not say anything specific about this campaign.

Analysing such campaigns/competitions organised by the libraries as "Internetas Jūsų sodui" ("Internet for Your Garden"), "Pirmas kartas internete? Drašiau! Pirmyn!" ("First Time Online? Go for it!") and "Atvirukai iš gimtinės" ("Postcards from the Homeland"), it was found that survey participants have most heard of the first campaign—"Internetas Jūsų sodui". Although it was attended by a small part of respondents, generally, the campaign was evaluated highly positively as interesting and useful ("*we gained knowledge, learnt about cucumbers, strawberries, and fighting various pests,*" said village residents, Šiauliai county). The only indicated drawback of the campaign was the time of broadcast—in the middle of a working day ("*only the time was inconvenient, I believe it was 11 o'clock. The people cannot leave work, can they?*" said the unemployed, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties). The campaign "Pirmas kartas internete? Drašiau! Pirmyn!" was evaluated as unknown or not very relevant: "*I heard about it in the library, but I already know more than is necessary for the first time, so it did not interest me much,*" said the unemployed, Kaunas and Alytus counties. Meanwhile the competition "Atvirukai iš gimtinės" was more noticed and occasionally mentioned by children.

5. Increased social benefit to the individuals and communities

Index 7A. Benefit to the users and its perception

- Survey participants already spontaneously mention social benefit of the PIA service. The perception of its importance and relevance is getting stronger and is spreading more intensely among public internet access users. -

In comparison to the survey results of 2009, it can be noticed that the limits of perception of the social benefit of the individuals and community is expanding and its importance is increasing among various categories of users. Increasingly more elderly users or those who have no previous knowledge of computer literacy understand and recognize the benefits of internet and use the vast possibilities of internet more intensely and confidently.

Just like last year, perceived **social PIA benefits have not changed:**

- ✓ **Communication**, keeping in touch **with close people** and relatives living/staying abroad is still one of the main benefits, especially to senior people, whose children are abroad (via Skype, e-mail): "*all communication possibilities are expanded. I talk via Skype with my friends in Poland and Ireland and the distance disappears,*" said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties. The use of social networks for daily communication, search for old acquaintances and friends, or making new friends is as relevant and irreplaceable to survey participants like a year ago: "*you can accidentally find people you know, who you have not seen for 30 years,*" said village residents, Šiauliai county. According to the respondents, today more people use social networks not only for keeping in touch with friends, but also for other purposes, e.g. advertising, sales, etc.;
- ✓ **Obtaining various information/accumulating knowledge** (search for material for work/studies through various search engines, reading e-papers: "*the probability to find the job is higher,*" said the unemployed, Šiauliai county);
- ✓ Purposeful, higher quality **leisure** (especially in villages): search for recipes, medicines, plant care, ordering books, etc. ("*I retrieve many recipes from the internet so I do not have to buy new books,*" said village residents, Šiauliai county; "*I always dreamed to have a fish tank, but I knew nothing about it, so I read about it in the internet, found out everything and now I keep fish,*" said senior people, Šiauliai county; "*I place orders online. I joined "Knygų klubas" ("Book Club") and I order books online,*" "*I make jewellery, so I order the materials online,*" "*you can learn a lot of handicrafts, you only have to want it and take interest in it. You can even make postcards at home,*" said the unemployed, Kaunas and Alytus counties.
- ✓ **Being in social environment and communicating with the peers and people with common interests:** the library is perceived as a social centre, which provides the opportunity for both elderly and young visitors to socialise and mingle with people: "*when you are old, you feel unnecessary, and this makes the life more interesting, especially to lonely people,*" said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties; "*I come with my friends so we talk among ourselves and play together,*" said the children whose parents are working abroad, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties; "*I get out of home, mingle with people, spend time among people,*" said village residents, Šiauliai county; "*you save money and do not sit at home, talk to other people,*" said a handicapped person, town in Tauragė county).

It is noteworthy that the impact of PIA service on the quality of life in rural areas and smaller towns is getting stronger. Modern services ensure the occupation of village residents, timely and smooth process of socialization and self-education, and more purposeful way of spending free time: "we do not live in a city, there is no so much entertainment here, so we come to the library, communicate, use the computer, and you already feel better," said the unemployed, village in Kaunas county.

Saving financial resources and/or cutting down on expenses make the PIA service especially attractive to the users. Two constituent parts of economic benefit—saving time and money—are still emphasized today ("you save money, because you can read all major periodicals here online," "you do not have to go anywhere, you can print everything here," said the unemployed, Kaunas and Alytus counties; "it is very good for me as an unemployed person, because at home the viruses can damage the computer at home, and I save money, because I do not have to pay the bills for the internet, electricity, or computer repair," said the unemployed, Šiauliai county; "we save money for the parents, for food," said the children whose parents are working abroad, Kaunas and Alytus counties; "you can save time. In the village, if you want to pay for the services, you have to drive somewhere, and here you can just sit down and pay," said village residents, Šiauliai county.

The majority of survey participants agree that they could not use PIA so often or would be forced not to use PIA at all, if the libraries introduced even a minimal charge for internet use. It is noteworthy that all survey groups are sensitive to the fee issue, especially the people who have no income today or very limited/unstable income (e.g. the unemployed, senior people): "if I had to pay for the internet from my small pension, I would not have any money left for anything else," said senior people, Šiauliai county.

Although both social and economic benefit are equally emphasized and assessed by TG representatives as very important, it can be concluded that the importance of social benefit is growing and strengthening; namely the aspect of social benefit often is the main factor of the interest in PIA service.

The information obtained during the survey allows assuming that the **main community benefit of PIA service** is that increasingly more people of Lithuanian society are becoming socially active and more or less engaged in community life. This tendency is more noticeable in village community. Moreover, the public library becomes a social centre, and the people who have not attended the library come only for public internet and later on engage in other activities offered by the library and use its possibilities more widely ("even those who had not attended before and only used the internet at the beginning, later on started participating in various events organised by the community," said the unemployed, Kaunas and Alytus counties).

6. Increased skills and motivation of library employees to use information technology

Index 2A. Improved librarians' knowledge and skills of information technology use

- *Librarians' IT knowledge and skills are highly estimated. Theirs skills to apply the knowledge practically are improved when servicing/consulting the users of public internet access service. -*

The survey of this year revealed a positive attitude of the users towards IT knowledge and skills of library employees. In general, survey participants believe that **librarians have considerably improved their skills in one year**, and the skills are assessed as "higher than the average". In comparison to the information of the survey conducted last year, **the tendency of improvement of librarians' IT skills is growing.**

Distinct differences of assessment between the users in villages and towns were not noticed: **the skills of both town and village libraries employees are estimated equally high:** "they are constantly improving, they attend the courses, learn a lot and always help," said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties' "the librarians became better educated, they became like the teachers, I often turn to them and they help me," said village residents, Šiauliai county; "the librarians should be like pharmacist: if they service you well, you will come back. Out librarian always helps and is kind," said the children whose parents are working abroad, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties.

During the discussions, several factors were revealed, which in respondents' opinion, determine **positive changes: better IT use skills and higher level qualification** (in respect to IT use) **of the librarians:**

- ✓ **Both the librarians and society accept and increasingly stronger link modern technology/services and public libraries**, they are becoming an integral part of the libraries. PIA service ensures the existence of the majority of libraries and dispersion/accessibility of information in e-format to the visitors (e.g. reading periodicals online, search for advertisements, etc.), which is becoming more relevant as the funding for traditional services is reduced: *"it would be weird if there was no internet in the library. Only the people who have not been in a library for ten years would be surprised, it would look strange to them,"* said the unemployed, Kaunas and Alytus counties;
- ✓ Regular **training organised specifically for library employees**, where the librarians gained/improved computer literacy knowledge/skills and familiarised with other information relevant to their consulting work (*"the librarians are trained to work with state-of-the-art software, they are more educated,"* said village residents, Šiauliai county);
- ✓ **Practical application of theoretical knowledge:** daily practice allows the librarians not only consolidating the knowledge and performing certain actions faster, but also increases their self-confidence: *"they service so many visitors every day and help on various issues, so how can they not improve,"* said the unemployed, Kaunas and Alytus counties;
- ✓ Occasionally the respondents mentioned that the creation of higher level IT skills is also influenced by personality qualities, receptivity to novelties: *"a lot depends on the person, on the ability to communicate, on organisational skills, and not only being a technical employee, who can only arrange the corpus,"* said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties.

It is noteworthy that **the users representing village libraries were especially positive about the skills and abilities of village libraries' employees**. They said that despite of the fact that usually there is only one employee who services the visitors in village libraries and their workload is enormous, their level of knowledge of information technology use is high. Sometimes the librarian cannot help everyone due to a simple reason—lack of time, and therefore, the visitors understand the situation and try not to ask for help excessively: *"sometimes they cannot help due to the lack of time, but usually they do answer the questions,"* said the unemployed, Šiauliai county. Occasionally the respondents mentioned that a librarian cannot help due to lack of knowledge of foreign languages: *"sometimes the knowledge is not sufficient to help the visitor, as they do not understand English or Russian text very well,"* said the children, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties.

It should be noted that **consulting work of the librarians and rendering their knowledge is especially positively assessed by senior people and the visitors who have recently gained the basics of computer literacy** (usually during training). TG representatives agree that they do not master all information at once during the courses and therefore, librarian's help is necessary to them: *"the contribution of the librarian is even bigger, as the courses come to an end, and you cannot do without a librarian, if you want to continue using the computer and to improve. They help us to gain experience, because we come as greenhorns,"* said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties; *"the librarians have attended many courses and I believe that they have sufficient knowledge, they can explain things to other people, and it requires a lot of patience, so I am very grateful for that,"* said senior people, Šiauliai county.

It is noteworthy that a part of the respondents noted that the librarians often spark the interest and encourage trying out the modern service. Moreover, they not only stir up the interest, but also engage the people: *"the librarian sparks the interest more, you feel more confident here that in the courses, the librarian is someone you know, you communicate differently, there is no time pressure that you must learn quickly, you feel calmer and safer with the librarian and do it for pleasure,"* said village residents, Šiauliai county.

7. Improved information technology skills of the visitors of public libraries

Index 3A. Improved information technology knowledge and skills of public internet access users/Index 3B. Change in practice of public internet access use

- *The majority of survey participants not only strengthened their skills of IT use, but also started applying them in new areas. The significant role here is played not only by the willingness of the users to improve and learn more, but also by the*

invaluable input of librarians in the process of learning of the visitors. -

In general, a positive change can be noticed: **the skills of PIA users are improving and the fear of new, unknown things is overcome by the wish to keep up with the time and not to lag behind the requirements of contemporary life.** Meanwhile, **the decision of library visitors to learn using modern technology/further improve the knowledge and skills is increasingly more dictated by the conditions of contemporary life and the knowledge that internet possibilities are very vast.**

Thus, **the awareness of visitors is growing, the users know what possibilities are opened up by knowing how to use the computer/internet, and they use the internet purposefully, knowing exactly what they want.** During the survey of users, the tendencies related to the changes of information technology skills of the users revealed during the survey of libraries' employees and experts were confirmed. In conclusion, the **following main tendencies were distinguished** in one year:

- ✓ **The level of both theoretical and practical knowledge is increasing, the users perform more actions/tasks independently;**
- ✓ **Self-confidence is increasing,** more elderly people come to the training and perform at least one action with the internet;
- ✓ **The visitors use the possibilities of internet more intensely and diversely.**

The statements of survey participants allow presuming that as modern services are expanding and establishing in the libraries, the age limits of the users are less felt, and the practice of PIA use is more influenced by personal qualities of people, such as the willingness to learn, curiosity, and openness to novelties. Moreover, the perception that IT makes our life simpler and more convenient is changing.

Naturally, computer literacy skills of **children and young people** are good and assessed as higher in comparison to the remaining audience of PIA users. According to TG representatives, it is understandable, as they learn the basics of information technology at school and the majority of them have the opportunity to use the computer/internet at home/at friends', etc. Another important aspect is that this category of users are faster to master the information and to remember the main functions by sharing the knowledge/imitating the peers (*"I learnt it from my friends, I used to sit down with them at the computer and so I learnt,"* said the children from families at social risk, Kaunas and Alytus counties).

According to survey participants, the children can be attributed to a separate group of library visitors, who apart from looking for information for homework/studies, use the computer/internet for playing games most often. They do not seek to use the possibilities of internet more widely. Therefore, in the opinion of the respondents, limiting online games for children is not sufficient; it is necessary for the librarians to help the children orient in the internet and guide in the appropriate direction: *"internet is a problem for children, as they most often play the games, where they are carrying guns, so attention should be given to that and the situation should be changed somehow,"* said the unemployed, Kaunas and Alytus counties.

Meanwhile IT skills of **middle-aged and elderly** visitors of libraries are not equal, and several essential aspects influence the formation of different practical skills:

- ✓ **Existing store of knowledge/skills:** attending computer literacy courses or knowing how to use the computer in performing work functions determine the existence of minimal knowledge and eliminate the sense of uncertainty/fear when using the PIA service in libraries. The more the people know, the more diversely they apply their knowledge in practice, and sometimes need help from the librarian. In the knowledge is minimal/non-existing, but the person is brave, he/she constantly turns to the librarian for help and asks questions;
- ✓ **The place of the computer/internet in life:** the more areas of user's life are related to information technology (work, studies, leisure, etc.), the more widely internet possibilities are used and the more confident the person feels being able to manage by himself/herself and use the computer and internet;
- ✓ **Additional opportunities to use the computer/internet (not in a library):** survey participants who have a computer/internet at home or can use these technologies elsewhere (at work, at friends'/relatives') assess their IT use skills as good and agree that they seldom need librarian's help, and if such need occurs, most often specific issues are solved (e.g. printer settings to print something).

Analysing the skills of IT use of **senior people**, it should be noted that although their computer literacy skills are assessed as the poorest in comparison to other user groups, they have considerably improved during the year. It is noteworthy, that during discussions with PIA users of retirement age, we were pleasantly surprised by their self-confidence and willingness to improve, even though with the help of a librarian (which was not the case before). Today they are diligent users, who have more or less mastered

the computer/internet, and who need librarian's help, attention and patience more than other users, and which they receive coming to a library.

Although TG representatives unanimously agree that there are not many senior people willing to learn using the PIA in libraries and the majority are hard to get out of home, if the benefits of PIA services are properly communicated (which is being done via advertising or direct contact of the librarian), it is possible to attract a part of elderly people who would like to gain at least minimum knowledge/skills of IT use.

The above mentioned decision to learn to use the internet is most often influenced by the wish:

- ✓ **To communicate** via social networks, to keep in touch with close people abroad via Skype and e-mail. Research results indicate that communication through internet is more emphasized by TG users than several years ago: *"I waited for the internet to be introduced very much, because I wanted to communicate with my son who is away. Here you can communicate without any disturbances, it is as if you are talking to the person live,"* said senior people, village in Šiauliai county;
- ✓ **To ensure/increase the occupation** (more common for the people of retirement age): *"I have a lot of free time and here I am occupied. If I cannot sleep at night, I sit at the computer at home and search for something, repeat what the librarian explained in the library,"* said senior people, town in Tauragė county;
- ✓ **To find a job or perform additional work** online, e.g. placing orders for cosmetics distributors, posting advertisements for car traders: *"my first and foremost goal was to find a job. The librarian showed the webpages where to search in," "I order the goods online twice per week. It is not only a hobby, but also income," "as part of my job is trading cars, I follow and review the advertisements most often,"* said the unemployed, Kaunas and Alytus counties;
- ✓ **To spend free time more purposefully** (more common to village residents/the unemployed/the handicapped): *"I download movies and music, watch videos on YouTube, it is a way of spending free time for me,"* said a handicapped person, Tauragė county;
- ✓ **To keep up with life, to be modern:** *"you keep up with life, you know what is going on in the world and your town," "the children think that we are old and cannot do it, but now they see that mom can use the telephone and the computer,"* said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties; *"a certain value has increased, you are not completely dodderly, you are capable of something. I am useful to myself and can even give advice to others, it is great, we are moving forward,"* said village residents, Kaunas and Alytus counties.

The way TG representatives started using PIA service in libraries should also be noted here. In comparison to the data of the survey conducted last year, this year, the majority of survey participants indicated that they learnt about the opportunity to use PIA free of charge from library employees or from their closest environment: friends/relatives/neighbours. In the majority of cases, the encouragement of librarians was determinant in making the decision to start using/try the service, and constant timely help ensured the continuous process of learning and use of free internet. It is noteworthy that the librarian plays a significant role not only in attracting, encouraging new PIA users, but also in the process of teaching and keeping the users (both new and old). The research revealed that a part of PIA users even after computer literacy courses address the librarian with various questions of IT use and asking to remind them the actions/steps that they already know/have learnt during the training. Librarian's help is especially relevant to senior people and village residents, who have limited opportunities to apply IT knowledge in practice—they have no computer at home, find it difficult to remember the information, have to repeat the same action many times to master it, etc.

Index 3E. Public internet access users' knowledge and skills of safe internet use

- *Although the knowledge and skills of safe internet use of public internet access users are minimal, they are sufficient for daily tasks/actions in the internet. –*

PIA users' level of knowledge of safe use is rather low. Among most often mentioned internet threats and dangers, survey participants indicated the **threats to the computer** (viruses) and **disclosing personal data and identity, which threatens personal security**.

Speaking of **personal data safety**, the respondents emphasized that it is often accentuated and reminded by the librarians (*"the librarians warn not to send any telephone numbers, personal codes or bank accounts,"* said village residents, Šiauliai; *"the librarian explained how to logout of the system and*

that I should not leave the login password," said a handicapped person, Šiauliai county). Moreover, there are more discussions on personal data safety and non-disclosure to third persons in the press and on the radio/TV ("you have to keep your login information safe, especially in e-banking," said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties). Survey participants also said that they were very careful and never forgot about such things and therefore, they had not faced the threats of personal safety ensued by disclosure of personal data: "Thank God, no, we do not do what should not be done, we know what to say and to write," said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties. It can be assumed, that due to this threat, the major part of the users (especially of older age) are still afraid to pay for the utilities via e-banking in libraries, as it lacks privacy due to small areas and many visitors ("there is little space in our library, so there is a lack of personalism, because we sit next to each other and the children are nearby," said the unemployed, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties).

When discussing about the **viruses**, it appeared that the majority of TG representatives know about them from general knowledge or have heard from relatives/friends/acquaintances, read in the press, or seen on TV. The respondents indicated antivirus programmes as the main means of protection against viruses: "all computers have antivirus programmes installed, so you do not have to rack your brain, they take care of it," said village residents, Kaunas county. Moreover, most often the use of webpages is restricted in libraries, i.e. "you cannot access all webpages, some of them are restricted," said the children from families at social risk, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties. According to respondents, this is the attempt to protect the computers from potential failures/"hang-ups". Survey participants said that they followed elementary, general rules, which help to protect against/avoid the threats efficiently:

- ✓ Do not open e-mails from unknown senders and delete them immediately;
- ✓ If they do not understand the contents/question of the pop-up window, they usually click "no";
- ✓ Do not open "suspicious" links or webpages.

Occasionally the respondents mentioned that in the long run, a certain psychological addiction to internet is formed, which is especially dangerous for children. According to respondents, in order to protect children's health and avoid certain consequences (in this case, addiction), the librarians should respectively limit the time the children spend at the computer.

It should be noted that when discussing safe use of internet, a part of respondents mentioned that soon a special programme of "**Gustavo enciklopedija**" ("Gustavas' Encyclopaedia") about safe behaviour on the internet will be broadcasted in libraries. The majority of respondents agreed that it would be interesting and useful for them to participate and learn more on this issue ("I saw an commercial, they demonstrated what should not be done, for example, not to give your address, not to tell the names of close people and so on, that is all I know for now," said the children whose parents are working abroad, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties).

8. Improved representation of libraries

Index 5A. Library's reputation, public perception and profile

- *Due to public internet access, the image of public libraries is assessed very positively, the library becomes marketable among various groups of users, regardless of their age/occupation/social status, etc. -*

RATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF LIBRARY IMAGE

In the last year, considerable changes in the rational assessment of the image of public libraries were not noticed; public libraries are assessed positively: "for example, we, who attend the libraries, can only assess it positively. We know how it is improving, how they work we people, we see what the work is like now and what it used to be. They only used to give you a book, and now you find the computers here, and they work with people," said senior people, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties. **Although a year ago village library was also positively assessed as social and cultural centre—often the only place of community gathering, it should be noted that the evaluation of village libraries is getting stronger and even more positive** ("the library has grown in our eyes, it became a beacon of light, the library became necessary," said village residents, Kaunas and Alytus counties; "take away the library and sad times will come to the village. The village is not so closed up, because the libraries expand the horizons of people, and alcohol is no longer the only thing the people think about," said the handicapped, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties). It is natural having in mind that the expansion of PIA was very intense in rural branches during the year.

Just like a year ago, survey participants emphasize that **a significant role in the assessment of the library is played by the person who works there** (*"if it is warm and cosy in the library, if the librarian helps, if she talks to you, tells you where to go and what to visit, you feel comfortable,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Kaunas and Alytus counties). Librarian's **ability to communicate, help, find an approach to the visitors of different age, status, and needs determine successful activity of libraries and positive assessment of the services** (*"they told me in the Society for the Blind that I could use the internet in the library. I came once, I was not very confident, but I saw that the librarians are very nice, you can go there just for the employees,"* said the handicapped, town in Tauragė county). The personality of the librarian is especially closely linked to the library image in village libraries. **Although in town libraries the relationship between the employee and the visitor are more depersonalized, the importance of high-quality servicing is also discussed here, especially by the people who do not feel confident and have various fears, but still would like to learn to use the computer.**

Speaking of negative assessment of the library, survey participants considered that only society members, who do not need the services of the library completely, could assess the library negatively. They most often mentioned asocial people, who are indifferent to everything and self-education is of least concern to them.

When analysing the relevance of the library and its offered services, it can be noticed that **today the library is assessed as equally significant and open to all visiting people, i.e. the services of the library are relevant not only to studying youth and senior people (which was the opinion last year), but to the rest of society as well.** Such change of assessment could have been determined by the prolonged difficult situation of Lithuanian people due to the economic crisis, which forces to seek alternative ways of spending free time and improvement/obtaining knowledge, offered by public libraries in the form of modern services. Moreover, in all respects renewed (changed equipment, new premises, redecoration, improved quality of services, etc.) **libraries** became even more attractive to the visitors and they **serve as modern centres of information.**

The dissatisfaction was expressed, though rarely, by some survey participants regarding the lack of new books and periodicals. A part of village libraries have not received new literature for a long time, and it causes the resentment of people, because few village residents can afford to buy a new book (*"at least our library receives the worst books, which will hardly ever be read by anyone. The corpus is not being updated completely; literature is also necessary, there are no serious books,"* said the unemployed, village in Kaunas county).

IMPROVED LIBRARIES' REPRESENTATION BY THE LIBRARIANS

- Public internet access users believe that the librarians represent the libraries very well, and attracting new visitors would not be possible not due to the lack of public relations of the librarians, but due to the passiveness/laziness of the potential visitors themselves and irrelevance of the service (have personal computer) -

It is recognized that modern technology that **supplemented traditional services of public libraries** not only maximally contributed to more favourable assessment of libraries, but also increased the number of the visitors of **public libraries. Due to PIA, public library was rediscovered even by the people who have not been there for a long time/at all.**

Survey participants noted that both existing and new visitors were familiarised with the technology available in the libraries, expanded/upgraded computer base in the public area: **via advertisements in public places of each settlement (advertisements in the boards of town halls, clinics, stores, etc.)** as well as in private areas **via verbal communication (interpersonal contact of the librarian and visitor, spreading the information by word of mouth) (more common to village libraries).** **In the opinion of survey participants, libraries' employees have honestly performed the function of library representation during the year by widely introducing the services and the benefit of the library and the internet.**

According to the respondents, the advertising campaign that has lately been **actively implemented via mass media (commercials on the radio, TV, in the press)** has also significantly contributed to **both** the presentation of the service to **society** and more attractive image of public libraries: *"I would like to compliment TV commercials, which are very educative and give a lot of information to the people,"* said village residents, Kaunas and Alytus counties. The majority of **survey** participants said that

they had seen and positively assessed the **series** of "Bratkos" ("Brothers") commercials. **According to the respondents, these commercials** served as one of the determinant factors for the elderly people/village residents/people with no computer literacy basics to make up their mind and try the modern service, as in the **commercial**:

- ✓ The **main** message is rendered clearly and understandably **and** the benefit is emphasized: *"the commercial is accessible and understandable for everyone,"* said senior people, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties;
- ✓ **Recognizable and** favoured by everyone characters show an example **how to behave** (*"Šerėnas is very interesting to elderly people, they selected a very appropriate person,"* said the unemployed, village in Kaunas county);
- ✓ Positive emotional background prevails, **the information is presented** humorously.

Occasionally the commercials/videos broadcasted in the programme "Labas rytas" ("Good Morning") were mentioned and assessed as an excellent educative aid: *"they simply show a commercial of "Libraries for innovation" and show the extracts, videos, where it is demonstrated how to use the internet, banking,"* said village residents, Kaunas and Alytus counties.

With regard to the above information, it can be assumed that better presentation of the benefit of the library and internet to society is not necessary: *"who find the library interesting and useful, they come, and there is no use inviting the rest anymore,"* said village residents, Kaunas and Alytus counties; *"new people do not come, because those who would come are already coming, and there are no more people who would visit,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties.

EMOTIONAL ASSESSMENT OF LIBRARY IMAGE – projection task

- Just like a year ago, the emotional image of the library is related to especially positive qualities, high level of knowledge, tolerance, and better appearance. -

During group discussions and interviews, the survey participants were asked to imagine that the existing public library turned into a person/car and to describe them. They were also asked to think what this person/car looked like a year ago. This projection technique task helped to reveal the emotional image of the library and the change of image perception in one year.

It is noteworthy that in general, the emotional image of public library and its perception have not changed. The survey participants themselves said that one year is too short a time for considerable changes to take place (*"a year is too short, it is difficult to notice considerable changes, though it surely developed and improved, maybe completed the studies during the year, defended the Master's thesis, maybe graduated from Master's studies,"* said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties; *"of course, the intelligence changed during a year,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad; *"I do not see a special difference, but the person is more experienced, having more knowledge, able to answer the questions faster,"* said the unemployed, village in Kaunas county). Thus, in comparison to 2009-2010, the results of the conducted survey of users are virtually the same.

The **personality** of contemporary **library** is seen as:

- ✓ **A woman;**
- ✓ **30-40 years old:** *"not a junior but not old yet,"* said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties. The library person has got younger (last year, the age was indicated as 40-60 years old). The perception of the age could have been influenced by the fact that many libraries were renovated, old premises were replaced by new ones, etc. All this is directly linked to the improved appearance of the discussed person;
- ✓ **Of pleasant, attractive and neat appearance** (*"intelligent, brushed up, tidy,"* said the unemployed, Šiauliai county; *"he has improved and became even more handsome. He wears a suit and a tie, and a year ago he used to wear a sweatsuit,"* said the children from families at social risk, Kaunas and Alytus counties; *"A year ago it was a shrunken and worried woman, because she was cold, and now she is thinking about the future,"* said senior people, Šiauliai county
- ✓ **Smart, knowledgeable, educated:** *"Einstein and genius in one person, a lot of experience and knowledge, educated,"* said village residents, Šiauliai county; *"a walking encyclopaedia,"* said the handicapped, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties; *"smart and funny, has a sense of humour,"* said the unemployed, village in Kaunas county;

- ✓ **Tolerant, friendly, communicative and creative:** *"resourceful, creative and generous, does not ask for anything in return,"* said the children from families at social risk, Kaunas and Alytus counties; *"persuasive. For example, our librarian used to be so silent, quiet and humble at first, and now she is a different person, educated, proactive and more vivid,"* said the handicapped, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties; *"alternative variant, a spiritual variant—a priest. Able to listen and to give advice,"* said senior people, Tauragė county.

It is noteworthy that the children associate the personality of current library with exceptionally positive qualities. In comparison to the data of the previous year, this year it was not mentioned at all that this person may be boring, on the contrary, the personality was assessed as *"interesting, maybe more sullen and strict a year ago,"* said the children from families at social risk, Kaunas and Alytus counties.

Library-car is seen as a fast, safe, economic, safer and more modern, even more computerised vehicle and more attention-catching than a year ago (*"comfortable, with leather seats and devices that show the way, and earlier it was rusty and old,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties; *"should be running on petrol and gas and electricity, with air conditioners, full of computer systems; a year ago it was not so computerised,"* said the handicapped, Kaunas county; *"I imagine it as a bus, from IKARUS to a better bus, more spacious, larger, carrying more people,"* said senior people, Šiauliai county; *"Air conditioner, navigation, modern, with all accessories, more economic, not rusty, not overdriven; a year ago it had a leaking roof,"* said the unemployed, Šiauliai county; *"a year ago it was a Zaporozhets and now it is an Audi. The appearance has improved, the car is more powerful, modern, faster, has more functions, maybe a player, navigation, some pimping,"* said the unemployed, village in Kaunas county; *"It has the Anti-Blocking System, it is safer, four and a half litre engine—it would be an economic car,"* said village residents, Šiauliai county' *"the comfort is different,"* said the handicapped, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties).

It is noteworthy that this year speaking of the car, the respondents emphasized the speed, safety, and economy more. Occasionally the topic of ecology was touched upon: *"it does not pollute the nature,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Kaunas and Alytus counties. It can be explained by the need for the library to take into account current trends and to be progressive. It can be assumed that the visitors are satisfied not only with high-quality internet and servicing in the libraries, but also with better noticed benefits of the free service.

EMOTIONAL ASSESSMENT OF LIBRARY IMAGE – creating the collage "Perfect Library"

Just like during the discussions with children last year, they were given the task to create the collage "Perfect Library".

In terms of information, many new aspects were not distinguished. The main observations that should be noted are that the children unanimously emphasized that there should be as many books as possible (*"they could bring new books more often. For example, there are books, which have a list of other new books at the end, but they are not in the library,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties) **and even more modern technologies that facilitate the use of library services. Moreover,** though rarely, the children expressed an idea about **longer opening hours of the library:** *"our library is open until four. It could be at least until seven, it would be very comfortable,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties. Just like a year ago, the Perfect Library is perceived as open to everyone, but the areas for children and adults are separated: *"the children want to frolic, to make some noise, and the adults do not like it, they want peace,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Utena county.

The main expectations for a perfect library that the children expressed presenting their created collages are the following:

- ✓ **Variety of high-quality technologies and useful devices:** LCD monitors, powerful computers, laptops for visitors' use, printers, flash drives, telephones, etc. (*"a lot could be downloaded from the phones through Bluetooth,"* said the children from families at social risk, Kaunas and Alytus counties; *"a flash drive would be necessary to copy the information, because my brother told me that maybe we should not put the discs in,"* *"an innovative printer so that you could bring a camera and print out the pictures,"* *"beside up to ten desktop computers there should be laptops, so that if you do not like something or want to be alone, you can carry it to another place,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Kaunas and Alytus counties;
- ✓ **Wide selection of services and additional activities, starting with the variety of books/magazines, the possibility to watch TV or DVDs, toy library, wide selection of board games:** *"it would be good if there were larger screens on the walls, where you could read the papers comfortably, and definitely a TV and lot of CDs, so that you could watch something while you are waiting,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Utena county;

- ✓ **Cosy, comfortable environment, convenient layout of the spaces/rooms, which ensures convenient and pleasant use of the services** ("a sofa is necessary to make it cosier, so that you can sit down and wait for your turn, it would be more convenient," said the children from families at social risk, Kaunas and Alytus counties; "I would like to see more pictures drawn by children, which would make it cosier," said the children whose parents are working abroad, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties). The children would also like a supply of drinks/snacks in the libraries ("I would like there to be candy vending machines with chewing gum," said the children whose parents are working abroad, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties; "it would be convenient if there were coffee or tea machines. You pay some money and drink some hot chocolate after you come from outside," said the children whose parents are working abroad, Kaunas and Alytus counties).

Index 5B. Expanded mission and competence areas of the libraries

- Perceived informative and social mission of the libraries are becoming more obvious and equal. -

The discussion of the perception of the mission of public libraries revealed that **during the year, the social/public/community mission has considerably expanded**. It is **especially** noticed and emphasized by the PIA users representing village libraries, because namely in the **villages/small towns, public library is the only place of gaining knowledge as well as a hearth of culture**-the place for the community to gather and communicate.

Social benefit of free internet service is **better noticed and emphasized** by survey participants: social exclusion between the members of vulnerable social groups (e.g. senior people) and other society members is reduced and communication becomes more intensive due to Skype ("most important is to ensure communication," said a handicapped person, village in Šiauliai county).

In comparison to the data of the survey conducted last year, it can be noticed that **contemporary library more often is seen as a multifunctional institution, which provides proper conditions for socialization, communication, occupation, vocational learning/improvement, spending free time, and forming/strengthening certain skills related to favourite activity**: "they have not only the educative mission; it is also the means of spiritual development, parallel to Church, school, spiritual hospital," said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties; "it is also educative, it does not allow the children loosening up too much," said the unemployed, village in Kaunas county; "to facilitate and brighten the life of people, help to adapt to the 21st c., the people socialize more," said village residents, Šiauliai county.

Certainly, the importance and relevance of informative and educative mission remain, but the expansion/upgrading information technology allows the libraries to fulfil these missions engaging not only via traditional (books, periodicals), but also via modern services. The internet facilitates the process of searching for/obtaining the information and ensures access to various resources ("there are more purposes, the possibilities are wider, there are not only books, but also other means to obtain information now, and training is organised how to access that information," said village residents, Šiauliai county).

9. Increased supply and use of relevant contents

Index 8B. New contents and services in the library

- One of the new services offered by our library is regular training, which attracts new visitors and is positively assessed. It forms a positive attitude that everyone can learn to use a computer, regardless of their age and education. -

When assessing the changes in Lithuanian public libraries that took place in one year, TG representatives indicated several essential changes apart from the increased number of computers and additional equipment and improvement of internet quality (which was discussed above):

- ✓ **Increased number of visitors**, which was essentially determined by the strengthening and expansion of modern services: "it is becoming more popular and attracts more people, who use the internet, are interested in books, and attend the libraries," said the children from families at social risk, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties;
- ✓ **More intense and wider use of PIA service**, which was positively influenced by:

- Computer and internet literacy **training** constantly organised for library **visitors**. According to the respondents, previously the courses were more oriented towards senior people, and now the members of other groups of visitors can also sign up for them. The training is perceived as very beneficial to elderly people and/or the people who have no basics of computer literacy or for those, who have forgotten what they knew about the computer (*"they teach how to operate a computer, explain about e-banking,"* said village residents, Šiauliai county; *"they teach to use the computer, issue a certificate and you can take it to the Labour Exchange,"* said the unemployed, Šiauliai county); *"they organise the training in the library, teach the village people, teach to use e-banking, Skype; it is relevant to me, so it is interesting and useful,"* said village residents, Šiauliai county; *"we signed up for a course once again—those, who want to improve,"* said the handicapped, Šiauliai county; *"last year we attended the course and received the certificates. Where else can you get so much information? Without a course I would not have learnt it, we knew nothing about the computer,"* said senior people, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties; *"computer courses started in our library. The course is for adults, the children know how to use the computer,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties;
- Ensuring even **higher computer and internet quality** in the libraries: *"earlier the computers were very old and slow, and now they are new,"* said village residents, Šiauliai;
- Notably **higher level of competence and skills of libraries' employees**, which ensures professional consulting on the issues of IT use provided to library visitors: *"thanks to the librarian I learnt to create a serious e-mail, to clip the documents, to bring them forward; I learnt a lot after the course I had, the librarian helped to master that knowledge,"* said the unemployed, Šiauliai county. The changed perception/recognition of their role of the librarians and the attempts to consult and help a visitor should be noted here. According to survey participants, library employees *"are trained to help, they give much more time and attention to the people who know less about the computer,"* said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties).
- ✓ The limitations related to providing **traditional services** are more noticeable: the libraries especially **lack** new books and periodicals: *"we have very few new books, I have read them all already,"* said the children whose parents are working abroad, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties. This causes higher dissatisfaction of visitors, which is perceived as potentially harmful to library image in the long run.
- ✓ In respect to modernisation, **more attention is given to village libraries**. It was confirmed by the representatives of village community participating in the survey. They notice, that due to PIA, spending free time became much more purposeful for village residents, and the opportunities to raise the level of knowledge and to search for a job became much wider;
- ✓ **Renovation of the exterior and interior** of the libraries, more convenient division/layout of the spaces beside cosmetic repairs and appearance of cosy elements (comfortable sofas, pictures, carpets, etc.). TG representatives indicated that recently the areas/rooms for children and adults were separated in the libraries they visit. It ensures more convenient use of the services (*better chances to find a free computer*) said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties) and eliminated the dissatisfaction of elder visitors with the noise of children (*"it was a sort of renovation, the furniture is new, the tables are new, the windows were replaced,"* said village residents, Šiauliai county). Occasionally the respondents mentioned that in some village libraries still exists the problem of saving heat, and it causes certain inconveniences in winter: *"they limit the heating in our library, tells to turn it off. We have electric heating, they are saving,"* said the unemployed, village in Kaunas county;
- ✓ **Increasing servicing quality** (mentioned occasionally): though just a few participants spontaneously mentioned improving servicing. However, with regard to all information received during the survey, it can be concluded that the quality of service in public libraries has only improved in one year. According to the respondents, despite of increasing load of work/responsibility, the librarians have changed a lot: they not only pleasantly service the visitors, but are also brushed up and always ready to help. Moreover, the library itself offers a lot of various services for the groups of different needs and age, and it also contributes to the assessment of improved servicing: *"the quality of libraries is constantly growing, the servicing is improving, the employees became closer to the people, the needs of people are changing, and they manage to adapt,"* said senior people, Šiauliai county; *"the librarians are very kind, they suggest a book and advise which webpage to go to, they are smiling all the time,"* said the children from families at social risk, Kaunas and Alytus counties.

Spontaneously assessing their needs for the services and computer base, just like a year ago, **TG representatives** indicated that they were **completely satisfied** with what is offered in public libraries:

"we have enough of everything". **However**, during the discussions, the majority of them agreed that they **miss new books and a variety of periodicals now** (it was **especially** emphasized by the visitors of **village** libraries), some libraries lack microphones, and according to respondents, the headphones and mouse pads have to be replaced more often due to fast wear.

Index 8C. Internet websites of public libraries

- Although it is stated that the websites of libraries became more attractive, convenient and informative, they are still not popular among PIA users. -

Discussions and interviews with PIA users revealed that **although they know about the existence of the websites of their visited libraries**, the **majority** of them **do not visit the websites** (the situation was the same a year ago). **The visitors of town libraries have "dropped by"** the library website **at least once**, meanwhile **PIA users in village libraries often even do not know which link they should use** to get to the website: *"no, I have never seen it,"* said senior people, Kaunas and Alytus counties.

In general, **the purpose of library websites** is perceived as a means of **self-advertising: presenting the services to existing and potential visitors and increasing the number of visitors and library attendance**: *"maybe it attracts the people,"* said a handicapped person, Kaunas and Alytus counties.

Although TG representatives hardly ever use the websites of visited libraries in reality, **creating a webpage and adjustment to the users is assessed as an important task of each library in order to create the image of a serious and reliable institution that takes care of its customers**: *"it is a big advantage, everyone will know, all the information is there, you learn more about provided services,"* said the unemployed, town in Tauragė county. Thus, it can be assumed that in general, a **website is perceived as one of the hygiene factors that influence the image of libraries**.

10. Innovations in the libraries network

Index 9A. Examples of innovation in the libraries that occurred due to the Project

Survey results revealed that **English courses for library employees** are assessed as one of the recent innovations. More often they were mentioned by the visitors of village libraries, who have closer relationships with the librarians and naturally, are well informed of what is going on in the life of librarians: *"very often there is something going on for them, now they are learning English,"* said senior people, Tauragė county.

In addition, a part of survey participants emphasized, that recently in their libraries there are more visitors who use their own laptops. Such convenient conditions for use are ensured by the **introduction/providing wireless internet** in public libraries: *"I like that there is wireless internet. I have my own computer and if I need to download something, I can download it directly to my computer—it is very practical, no flash drives, no printing, very convenient,"* said village residents, Šiauliai county.

Just like last year, TG representatives noted that **they appreciate the conveniences of personal user's signup more**. Although changed procedure of signup is not perceived as innovation, the respondents assess that it allows saving time and ensures smooth control of working environment in the computer: *"it is good now, you have your information, you come, turn on the computer, and do not have to wait for the librarian to come,"* said the children from families at social risk, Kaunas and Alytus counties; *"the procedure of signing up has changed, each user has his own code and can sign in freely,"* said village residents, Šiauliai county.

11. Conclusions and generalisation (formulated based on both the information of the research conducted in 2010-2011 and the comparison to the data presented in the survey report of 2009)

The users of public internet access participating in the survey **have not noticed radical changes** in public libraries in one year, **but they agreed that a considerable qualitative change has taken place**. TG representatives indicated that in this period, various measures intended to **strengthen/introduce the PIA service and to ensure its high quality were further applied according to the plan in the majority of public libraries** (especially in village libraries):

- ✓ **Increased/upgraded modern IT equipment** (computers, internet, various devices);
- ✓ **Computer literacy courses not only for town residents, but also for village residents**. An opportunity to attend the training organised by central libraries or with visiting specialists;
- ✓ **Professional consulting and timely help on the issues of IT use provided to the visitors**. The librarian's competence level and authority have significantly increased;
- ✓ **Regularly organised training of various levels/complexity/topics for libraries' employees** (computer literacy, English, psychological knowledge, etc.);
- ✓ **Intensive advertising campaign of PIA service in various means of media**. In the opinion of TG representatives, most remembered and efficient in terms of attracting visitors was the series of "Bratkos" commercials.

The above mentioned changes have not only **increased the number** of public libraries **visitors and expanded the perception of social benefit of PIA**, but also **strengthened the positive image of the library as a modern cultural-social-community centre that is open for everyone** not only in the eyes of the visitors, but also of society.

In one year, **especially distinguished was the modernisation process of village libraries, which manifested through intensive expansion of PIA service and improvement of general conditions for the visitors** in the libraries (not only new computers and faster internet, but also cosy, warm and tidy environment).

In order to maintain the relevance of modern services to existing customers and to present the benefit of PIA to wider audience of potential visitors, it is important to continue started programmes/approved mechanisms:

- ✓ **Take long-term, continuous actions of presenting PIA benefit/possibilities by organising topical training/campaigns/events for library visitors of various age and various level of IT knowledge;**
- ✓ **Continue presenting the PIA service and its social benefit by creating and publicising the advertising oriented towards various groups of users** (not only to senior people or village residents, but also to the unemployed, young mothers, and children);
- ✓ **Increase the competence of library employees and their motivation to provide maximally high-quality services and to ensure high-level servicing**. This year survey results once again confirmed that a lot depends on the personality of the librarian and his/her ability to satisfy the needs of various visitors: from engaging/interest of the user in modern services to the assessment of library image, which is shared in the nearest environment of library visitor, i.e., among potential users of PIA service.

In order to maintain the positive image of progressive library, it is very important to maintain harmonious balance between providing traditional and modern services. Beside high-quality modern services, appropriate attention should be given to traditional ways of obtaining information, which are as much relevant to the visitors: **it is necessary to ensure the sufficient level of supply of new books and periodicals** (to update/supplement the shelves of libraries with interesting books that meet the contemporary times, to provide more various magazines and papers). If respective measures are not taken, **the failure to observe the quality of traditional services can strengthen the dissatisfaction of visitors, and in the long run, result in negative assessment of libraries as not satisfying all expectations/needs of the users**.