

ALA welcomes White House's ConnectED: Library Challenge

In late April, the White House announced the launch of ConnectED: Library Challenge, a new initiative to ensure that all school students receive public library cards through their schools.

ALA President Courtney Young responded to the launch of the initiative by calling on school and public library leaders to work collaboratively with school administrators and civic leaders to ensure that each and every student has a public library card. The Institute of Museum and Library Services will convene a meeting of the national library, government, and school leaders to discuss best practices for developing and implementing school-public library card programs in their local districts.

Library broadband speed test shows increased capacity; room still for improvement

Broadband speeds in U.S. public libraries have improved significantly in recent years yet continue to lag behind national broadband connectivity standards, according to "Broadband Quality in Public Libraries," a new supplementary report released jointly in April by ALA and the Information Policy and Access Center at the University of Maryland-College Park as part of the Digital Inclusion Survey.

Libraries reported progress in their public Internet speeds—nearly half of all libraries report subscribed Internet download speeds as being greater than 10 Mbps in 2013, compared with only 18 percent of libraries four years earlier. Despite the growth in increased

broadband capacity, two-thirds of all libraries indicate that they would like to improve their broadband speeds.

Library Copyright Alliance applauds introduction of the Barriers to Innovation Act

In April, the Library Copyright Alliance applauded the introduction of the Barriers to Innovation Act of 2015 in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives. The bill would address serious problems with the rulemaking process under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. It also would correct deficiencies in several of the existing exceptions to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA). Under current law, the DMCA could be understood as prohibiting the circumvention of technological protection measures or "digital locks" for noninfringing purposes.

Congress introduces USA FREEDOM Act

In April, Congress introduced the USA FREEDOM Act, a bill that will improve the balance between terrorism prevention and personal privacy protection in the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate.

ALA President Courtney Young responded to the USA FREEDOM Act of 2015, saying that "the latest USA FREEDOM Act is a long way from perfect, but ALA believes that—if enacted as introduced or improved—it will make important changes in the USA PATRIOT Act critical to making progress on what will be a long road to restoring library users' and all Americans' civil liberties."

ALA opposed Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's (R-KY) bill (S. 103) to reauthorize the "library provision," Section 215, of the USA PATRIOT Act until 2020. *JW*

Jazzy Wright is press officer of the ALA Washington Office, email: jwright@alawash.org