

The Northern Ireland Libraries are threatening to curtail services due to the inadequate budget for the coming year.

Many people require access to public computers for looking up facts relating to public services, benefits etc. If there is any likelihood that such access will have to be restricted to stay within budget then I suggest that the service be restricted to essential users.

At present it is often impossible to get on to a computer in libraries because of the number of children playing silly games or listening to pop music. I suspect that most of the children have home computers but no doubt parents do not wish to pay phone charges for connection to the internet.

One solution would be to impose a charge for the use of library computers or alternatively impose a charge for internet access (say 50 pence per hour). This would probably be quite acceptable to serious users but might deter children who merely wish to play with the computers.