

Chapter VII

Building a Knowledge Base for Parliament

PARLIAMENTS AND INFORMATION

Parliaments are information intensive and information demanding organizations. Acquiring, organizing, managing, distributing and preserving information is fundamental to their constitutional mandate. Legislatures create information themselves through their documents and their actions, and require information from many external sources, including the government, the judiciary, civil society, experts, the media, academicians, international organizations, other legislative bodies and citizens. To ensure that parliament is properly informed in today's fast evolving environment, it is increasingly important to have a comprehensive approach to identifying, managing and providing access to critical resources. Internal information resources, such as databases of proposed bills, committee and plenary documents, and other related sources materials, need to be organized in ways that make them easily accessible to members, officers and staff. These must be integrated with the most relevant sources from outside the parliament. Access to a coherent body of information is of great importance to legislatures. Making this information accessible to the public serves the goal of transparency and contributes to an informed legislature and an informed society.

Like all major institutions, parliaments are confronted by a vast array of information in many formats, including print, numeric, graphical, audio and video. Members, their assistants and staff also need to handle information that comes to them through a variety of channels - on paper, via internal networks, by video and audio, and through the Internet. Despite the increased number of activities that are performed online, paper documents remain the prevalent format for distributing much material within legislatures. At the same time, the growth of local area networks (LANs) and e-mail systems within parliaments now facilitates the electronic exchange of information and digital document creation. Furthermore, the exponential growth of web resources vastly increases the amount of information available to anyone with an Internet connection. The net result can sometimes be overwhelming.

Locating the information that specifically responds to a member's request, identifying what is most useful, ensuring that someone has the correct version of a document, providing links to other relevant information, and organizing the accumulated material in a fashion that is easy for busy parliamentarians to use is a major challenge. Skilled staff making use of effective ICT tools and managing content are critical for productively handling internal parliamentary documents and information resources and the influx of information from outside.

As parliaments enhance their capacity for organizing and integrating information resources, legislators become better informed about the issues they confront, and can more effectively contribute to, and track the progress of, legislative proposals under consideration. This in turn results in more efficient parliamentary processes and more effective members. These capabilities not only provide substantial benefits to legislators, but also are critical for supporting the work of their assistants, committee staff, and of various offices within the parliament.

Box 7.1

“In our vision, the Parliamentary Information system becomes the Parliamentary Knowledge System, where each piece of information of interest to the Parliament becomes interrelated, interconnected and organized.”

Alessandro Palanza, Deputy Secretary General of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy
Statement at the World e-Parliament Conference 2007

BUILDING BLOCKS

Personal computers, databases, networks, and the Web have significantly improved access to timely and authoritative information, as well as to research and analyses relevant to policy issues. Within parliaments, Intranets are a major mechanism for sharing key information resources. Besides being the backbone of administrative services, an Intranet can be used for a variety of other important purposes, such as transmitting confidential requests for information, providing additional security for private e-mails, and managing working documents that are still being revised prior to release. Intranets can also be an important asset during periods of negotiation and political compromise.

Yet, while computer and communication technologies provide access to a growing world of information, creating “knowledge” from this vast store of information is a major challenge. Transforming these many information sources into something that is helpful to legislators requires librarians, information specialists, and policy and legal analysts who can present knowledge in an organized way that is useful in the legislative setting.

While the specific organizational arrangement varies among countries, most parliaments have access to some type of library services. For parliaments the library and information centre, combined with available in-house research services, are critical to effectively retrieving needed information and prepare the ground for policy discussions. Librarians have the expertise to access a broad array of digital resources, validate the reliability of the source, and identify those that are most useful to respond to questions posed by members and other staff. Skilled staff who are capable of performing research using a variety of sources, selecting the most relevant information, analyzing issues discussed in parliament, and preparing documents that summarize legislation and related issues play a key role in supporting the work of legislative institutions. These skills also enable them to work effectively with ICT staff in the design of online resources such as parliamentary websites. In addition, library and research staff can help ensure that online resources developed by the parliament are both comprehensive and easy to use by different audiences, inside and outside the institution.

Box 7.2

“The same technologies and protocols used in the parliamentary Internet can be employed in the parliament Extranet, which gives to citizens (as well as to their associations and to economic and social organizations) access to information and applications existing within parliament and ways of participating in the parliamentary activity.”

Legal Informatics and Management of Legislative Documents, edited by Giovanni Sartor (EUI, Florence), November 2007

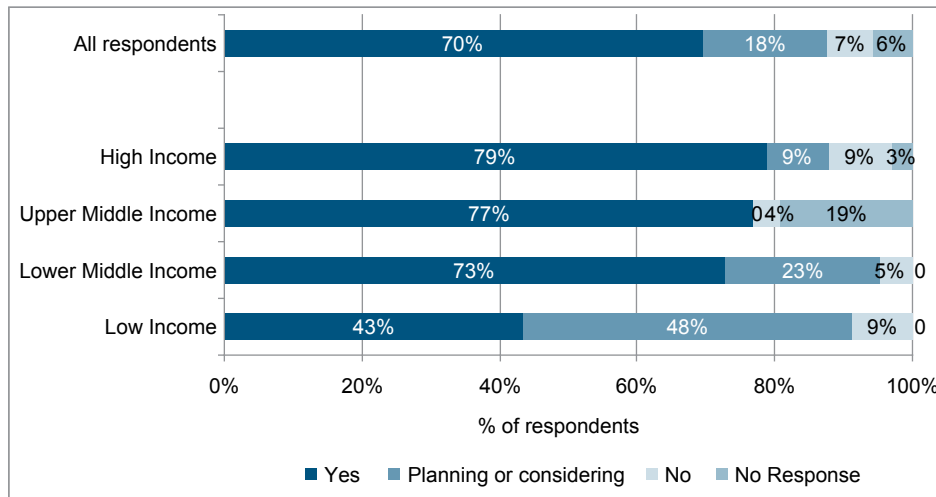
ICT tools can be deployed to help ensure that lawmakers are better informed about what has been done before and about some of the possible outcomes of their decisions. Through its capacity to support communication with experts, wherever they may be located, ICT can significantly expand the scope of information, knowledge, and experience brought to bear on an issue. Nevertheless, ICT-based decision support tools will never be able to replace either parliamentary staff who prepare background documents and identify key resources for members nor the role of the elected representative in making challenging and often difficult choices.

USE OF ICT BY LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES

As parliamentary libraries have transitioned to more extensive use of digital online resources, and research offices have come to rely on the Internet to access needed information, both have become strong advocates of the value of ICT in the parliamentary setting. Through the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and other regional and national groups, parliamentary libraries and research services have created a forum for exchanging good practices for applying ICT to their activities.

Results from several questions in the global survey concerning library and research services underscored the role that library and research staff have as early adopters of ICT and as important contributors to advancing its broader use in parliaments. Figure 7-1 shows that 70% of the chambers and parliaments responding to the survey have automated systems for managing library resources. This is the highest percentage of respondents who reported the adoption of a specific ICT application except for parliamentary websites themselves. Furthermore, 18% more are planning to introduce one. Although there is evidence that a higher number of parliaments in countries with more resources have currently automated systems, a significant number in countries with fewer resources indicated that they have plans for such library systems in the future.

Figure 7-1: Use of an automated system for managing library resources, by country's income group



(Source: Survey, Section 6, Question 1)

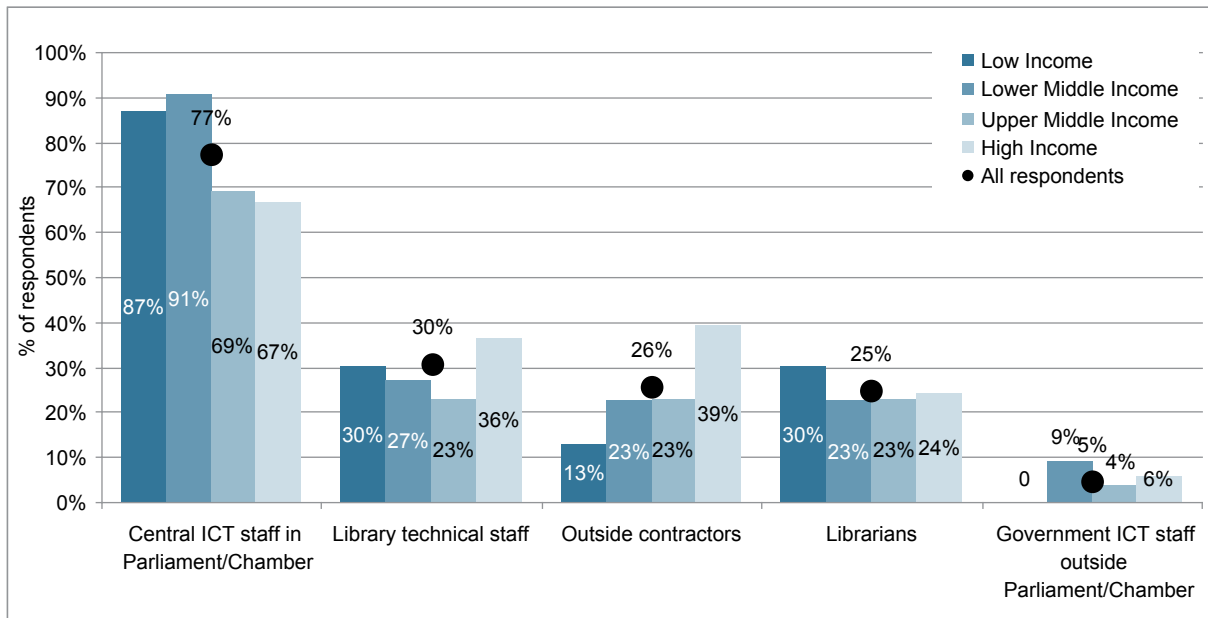
The survey also found that approximately 70% of those using automated systems are taking advantage of web platforms.¹ These systems provide the capability for cataloging acquisitions and for searching in over 90% of the cases. In addition, 66% use these systems for acquisitions of serials and 60% for

1 Source: Survey, Section 6, Question 2.

acquiring monographs. Approximately half indicated that the system has the capability for archiving digital resources and 34% said their system have e-resource management capabilities.² These results confirm that many libraries serving parliamentary bodies have a strong base of ICT infrastructure that enables them to organize and manage their materials and provide effective access to them.

Because libraries are so essential to the management and sharing of information, providing adequate technical support to them is a high priority. The survey found that while libraries primarily received their ICT support from the central staff in parliament or in their chamber, a significant number also rely on their own technical staff and librarians, as presented in Figure 7-2. Over three quarters of respondents cited the central ICT staff as support providers, but, in addition, 30% indicated that library technical staff provide support and 25% that librarians provide support. Interestingly, the largest percentage of respondents that identified librarians as a source of ICT support (30%) was from Low Income countries. That may imply that in countries with fewer resources and less access to technical expertise, librarians often take on this responsibility as well.

Figure 7-2: Providers of ICT support to the library, by country's income group



Not applicable/No response is 0 for low income, 9% for high & lower middle income, 23% for upper middle income, 10% for all respondents.

(Source: Survey, Section 6, Question 22)

ACCESS TO INTERNET RESOURCES

70% of chambers and parliaments participating in the survey provide Internet access to electronic information resources.³ A significant number of those in low and lower middle income countries that do not currently provide access to electronic resources indicated that they plan to do so in the future. Again, providing such services may be related primarily to having the capacity to do so or to the country's level of Internet penetration. As one respondent commented: "Due to our means, the Internet connection is only available to the President of the Assembly and his Secretary General (on a shared basis)."

Those who responded that Internet access to electronic information resources is available, further indicated that it is primarily available to members (96%), staff (96%), and the library (88%). A smaller number (62%) provide Internet access to the public. Based on respondents' comments, it appears that in some

² Source: Survey, Section 6, Question 3.

³ Source: Survey, Section 6, Question 4.

parliaments public access is available only from inside the library rather than remotely. Generally speaking the library often acts as the primary venue for facilitating broad access to electronic information resources. A good example given by one respondent speaks to the role of the library in offering such services, and also highlights the issue of developing a long-term retention policy for electronic resources.

Box 7.3

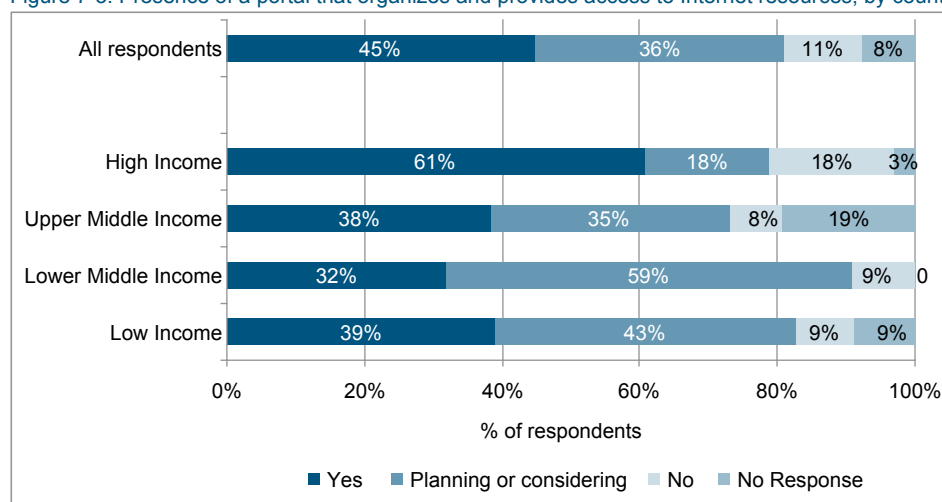
“The Library provides access to a range of Internet resources, some directly, others through the Library’s electronic repository. The Library will be working on a digital collection policy to set down what electronic resources should be held by the Library and what can be accessed as required from other trusted repositories.”

Respondent to Survey

According to survey results, the internet-based information resources provided most often are government websites and databases (82%), parliaments of other countries (77%), free news services (77%), and international organizations (72%). A significant number of chambers offering Internet access to electronic resources also make public policy journals (66%) and scientific journals (62%) available to their users. The number decreases substantially, to 38%, for fee-based news services.

In addition to offering Internet searching, Figure 7-3 shows that 45% of chambers and parliaments have a portal that organizes and provides access to Internet resources. 36% more stated that they are planning to do so in the future. This reflects a commitment on the part of parliaments to serve as a conduit for providing organized information resources available on the Internet. Portals facilitate searching for information online by systematically arranging access to information resources in ways that are more useful to end-users, such as by subject or type of information. While to produce such tools as Internet portals may require considerable efforts by skilled staff, portals can be extremely helpful for identifying information that is particularly relevant to parliaments and reducing the amount of “information overload” that often occurs when searching the Internet. The relatively high percentage (18%) of chambers in the high income group not planning to transition from their website to a portal is rather surprising.

Figure 7-3: Presence of a portal that organizes and provides access to Internet resources, by country's income group



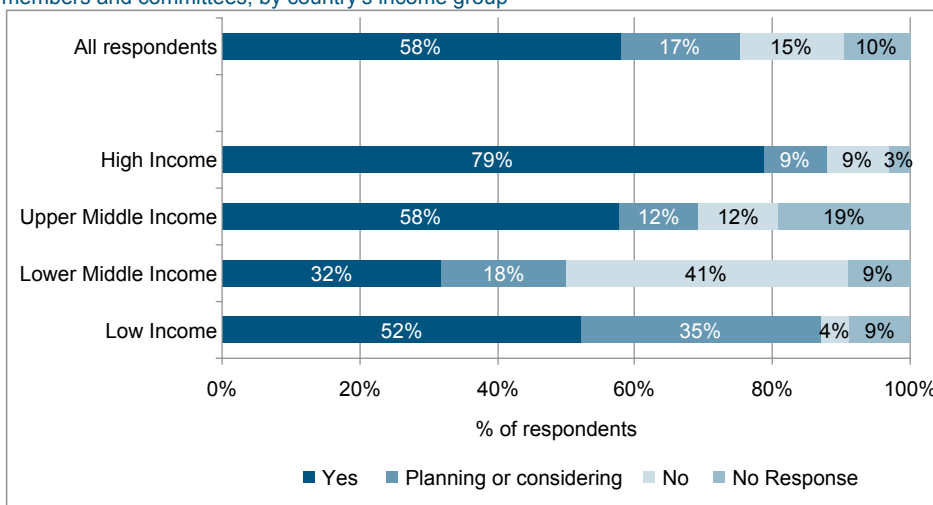
(Source: Survey, Section 6, Question 7)

ACCESS TO POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE ANALYSIS

In addition to library and information centre staff, many parliaments retain subject matter experts, either on staff or through contract, who can provide research and analysis for members and committees on public policy issues.

As Figure 7-4 shows, 52% of respondents in Low Income countries have policy analysis expertise available to them, while in Higher Income countries the percentage rises to 79%. Since such expertise is expensive, using ICT tools to gain access to knowledge at other parliaments may provide an important benefit to parliaments with fewer resources.

Figure 7-4: Use of subject matter experts on public policy issues to provide research and analysis for members and committees, by country's income group

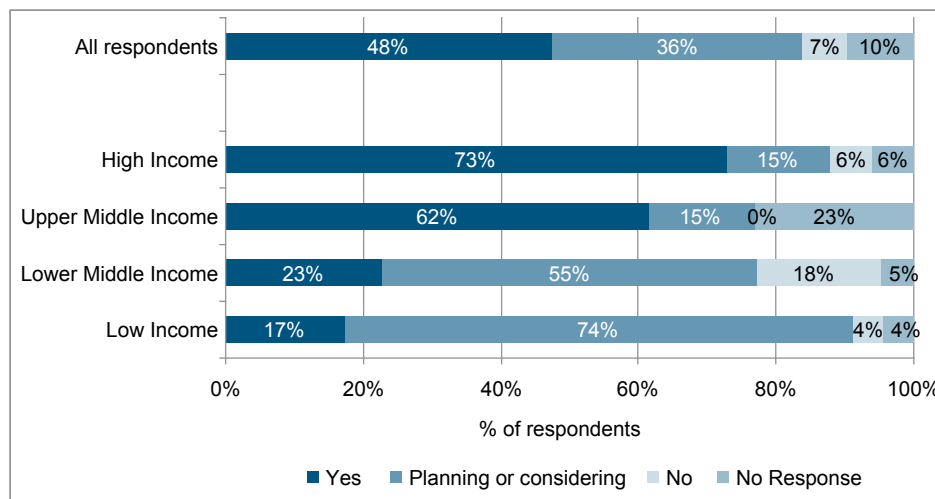


Three quarters of those indicating that they have experts also reported that the analyses produced by them were available in digital form. In 54% of the cases these analyses are made available on the parliament's website. Fewer (36%) also put these analyses on a website for the benefit of the public.⁴

(Source: Survey, Section 6, Question 16)

ICT can prove highly beneficial for capitalizing on the expertise available to parliaments and managing this knowledge most effectively. Using the parliament's Intranet for access to and distribution of library and research services can improve member access to staff expertise. However, as presented in Figure 7-5, less than half of all chambers stated that they have an Intranet and made use of it for this purpose. This may be an area deserving priority attention as parliaments could better leverage their investment in human resources to effectively transform into knowledge organizations.

Figure 7-5: Use of a parliamentary Intranet to enable library and research staff make their services available to members, by country's income group



(Source: Survey, Section 6, Question 10)

4 Source: Survey, Section 6, Questions 17-19.

One respondent offered the following description of a library Intranet and its services, providing a good example of what can be done in this area.

Box 7.4

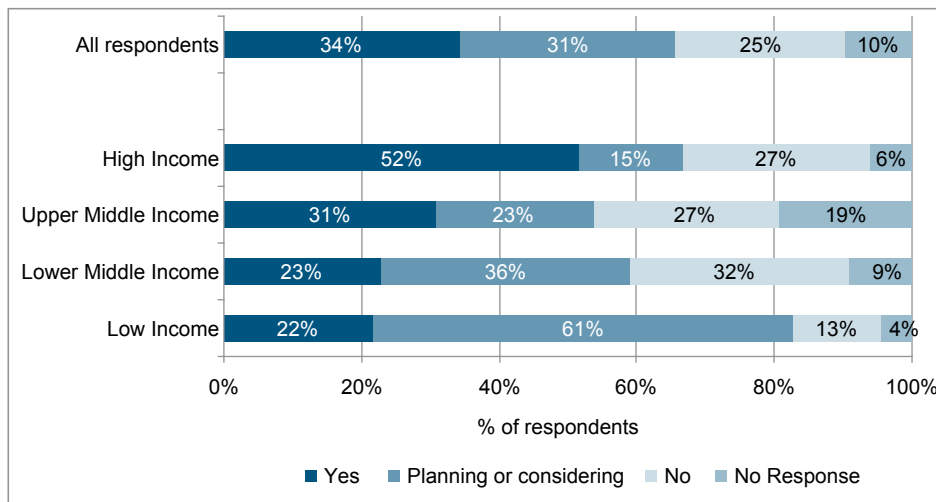
“The library’s Intranet is part of the PARLANET developed especially for MPs, their staff, and for the office of the National Assembly. The library’s Intranet provides the following services:

1. Access to background materials (research papers, info-packs for hearings and of speeches, media/press reviews, etc.)
2. Access to the Statistical Database of Constituencies
3. Access to a suggested and selected collection of useful links
4. Access to an anniversary calendar.”

Respondent to Survey

ICT can also be used effectively for providing information services linked specifically to policy issues and legislation being considered by parliaments. Although only 34% of chambers and parliaments indicated that they provide such policy or legislation-oriented services, as shown in Figure 7-6, those that did, indicated that they make heavy use of ICT for research and information gathering, as well as preparation and distribution of the product or service.⁵ It is interesting to note that in this area the percentage of those in the High Income group saying that they have no plans for it is significant.

Figure 7.6: Provision of information services linked to policy issues and legislation before the Parliament, by country's income group

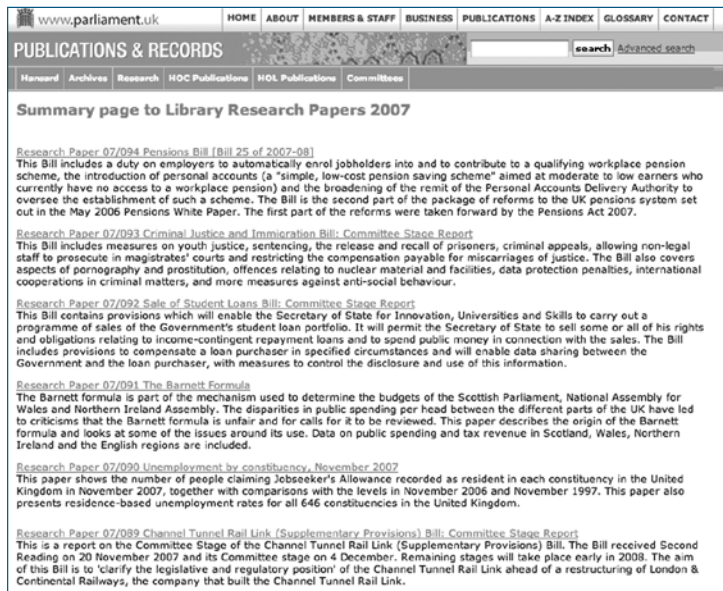


(Source: Survey, Section 6, Question 11)

5 Source: Survey, Section 6, Question 13.

One of the analytical staff services provided in some parliaments is the preparation of a summary or “comment” on each bill that is considered. For example, the Library research staff of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom prepares bill analyses and makes them available on their website.

Figure 7-7: UK House of Commons Library example of research papers on pending legislation



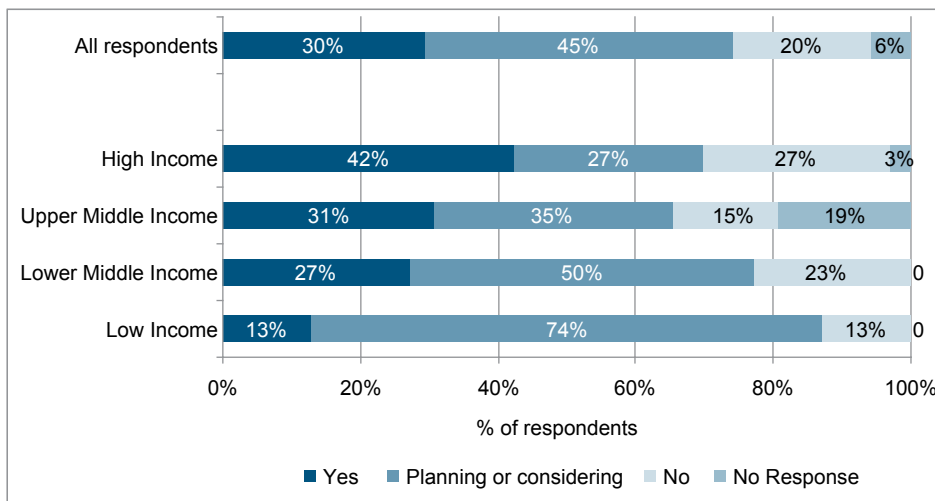
(Source: <http://www.parliament.uk/publications/research.cfm>)

More effective deployment of ICT can further enhance the utility of these useful documents in which parliaments already have made major investments. For example, linking all relevant summaries and research analyses on pending bills to the official version of the legislation and to related documents and actions provides a much more comprehensive understanding of the legislation under consideration. The ability to provide these kinds of links will be greatly facilitated if open document standards are implemented.

Enhancing collaboration among parliamentary staff is another area where ICT can be helpful. In many parliaments the

work of library staff and research staff is not always closely integrated organizationally or in terms of the information products they develop. Based on the survey results it is clear that parliaments are not yet fully utilizing technologies that might improve this situation. Only 30% of chambers and parliaments surveyed have a system that supports collaboration among library and research staff, as seen in Figure 7-8. The use of collaboration software is only beginning to be used within parliaments, but a growth in its use would be anticipated based on the large number indicating plans to do so. Interestingly, the largest percentage of respondents that stated that they planned to have systems to support collaboration in the future were from low income countries (74%), while high income countries show the highest percentage of respondents that said they had no plans to have such systems (27%).

Figure 7-8: Use of a system that supports collaboration among library and research staff, by country's income group



(Source: Survey, Section 6, Question 8)

INTEGRATING AND ORGANIZING INFORMATION

The growth of information in digital formats, coupled with new technological developments, are enhancing opportunities for incorporating information from diverse sources and for customizing it to serve specific users. One example can be illustrated in *Thomas*, the legislative system created by the Congress of the United States of America for the public. Through the integrated approach used in this system users can search on a particular bill and can receive not only all the versions of a legislative proposal to date, but also find links to committee reports, introductory statements and debate on the legislation that might have occurred in either chamber, amendments to the bill, any related actions taken by either the House or the Senate, and summaries of the bill prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) of the Library of Congress. Additional links, such as to analytical reports prepared by CRS, are available to members and staff on the congressional Intranet version of the system.

Many of the links in *Thomas* are currently created manually or through complex programming. However, the increasing use of the open document standard XML will make it much easier in the future to generate these links automatically using simpler algorithms. Both the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States have undertaken projects to prepare bills and other legislative documents using XML.

Figure 7-9: Example from the U.S. Congress *Thomas* system

The screenshot shows the search results for H.R. 2272. The title is "To invest in innovation through research and development, and to improve the competitiveness of the United States." The sponsor is Rep. Gordon, Bart (TN-6). The page includes a table with the following structure:

All Information (except text)	Text of Legislation	CRS Summary	Major Congressional Actions
Titles	Cosponsors (21)	Committees	All Congressional Actions
Related Bills	Amendments	Related Committee Documents	All Congressional Actions with Amendments With links to Congressional Record pages, votes, reports
CBO Cost Estimates	Subjects		

(Source: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:HR02272;|TOM:/bss/d110query.html>)

In addition to passing legislation, a major area of parliamentary responsibility is the approval and oversight of the government's operating budget.

Figure 7-10: Senate of Brazil webpage for tracking federal budget

The screenshot shows the "Orçamento da União" (Federal Budget) page. It includes a search bar and a main content area with a timeline of budget years (2003-2008) and a flowchart of the budget process. The flowchart shows the following steps: Projeto de Lei → Relatório da Receita → Parecer Finalizar → Emendas → Ciclo Setorial → Ciclo Geral → Autógrafos e Leis.

(Source: http://www9.senado.gov.br/portal/page/portal/orcamento_senado)

The Senate of Brazil offers another example of using linking to extend the access to critical information used in parliament through its website, which tracks the federal budget process from the proposal stage through expenditures. This site is a valuable resource for supporting the work of parliament and for enhancing government accountability and transparency by making this information publicly available. The website provides links to numerous documents and information resources related to the budget.

Box 7.5

THE SIGA BRASIL PROJECT

“The SIGA BRASIL project was developed about seven years ago, initially for internal use of the Advisory Office of Budget, Oversight, and Control of the Brazilian Senate. It is now open to public access at http://www9.senado.gov.br/portal/page/portal/orcamento_senado. SIGA BRASIL has proven to be an important tool to promote transparency in public spending.

The key to the success of the project was a result of two primary factors: a correct process of negotiation with information producers within the executive to feed the data bases; and the close partnership with the Advisory Office of Budget, Oversight, and Control of the Senate to create reports and pre-programmed consultations, along with training for budget specialists of the Senate. Such reports and consultations are also available to Internet users, and especially to those with little experience in budgetary matters.

The Senate budget portal – where SIGA BRASIL can be accessed - brings additional budgetary information, such as technical reports, important news, description of the budget process, the entire legislation on budget matters (in a timeline, since the Brazilian constitution of 1824), a glossary of technical terms and other important documents. SIGA BRASIL is able to release detailed information that allows for the accurate identification of bank transfers of federal funds to municipalities, including information about the recipient’s account, the amount, date, etc. With this, more efficient control of transferred funds will be achieved and data consolidations at several levels will be accomplished.

To have an idea of the evolution of the system, in 2001 - a year after its release -, SIGA BRASIL had 1.92 million records in its database. In 2007, the database exceeds 231 million records, distributed in approximately 101 universes, countless facts, dimensions and classes. SIGA BRASIL receives more than 8,000 queries monthly and has about 1,800 registered users at the specialist level. These users are entitled to access special functions, and able to generate and register new reports into the system.

SIGA BRASIL greatly facilitates the oversight of federal funds’ transfers to all 26 Brazilian states and more than 5,500 Brazilian municipalities, in addition to allowing benchmarks. Users are provided with ready-made reports on areas that are vital to the municipal administration, such as education and health. Users also have access to interactive features that allow for changes in existing reports, data comparison and other data analyses. The implementation of the approved budget amendments can also be monitored. SIGA BRASIL also provides structured information to members of parliament, to the agencies of the executive responsible for implementing the budget, and to the civil society as a whole. It also provides detailed information to the general public about how tax payers’ money is spent.

Due to its widespread use by specialists, such as professionals from the Auditor General’s Office (Tribunal de Contas da União-TCU), the Controller-General’s Office (Controladoria-Geral da União-CGU), the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management (Ministério do Planejamento, Orçamento e Gestão - MPO), and the Central Bank of Brazil (Banco Central do Brasil), among others, the development of this project awarded the Brazilian Senate national recognition with the 2007 Brazilian Information and Communication Technology Prize.

From the perspective of the legislative body, SIGA BRASIL represents a basic and essential tool for both analyzing and voting on the budget laws. It provides extensive resources for analyses and consultations from members of the Congress and parliamentary committees, which include the works of inquiry committees to track the misuse of public funds. SIGA BRASIL also allows for a fast cross-check of information on the transactions carried out by municipal city halls, identifying the recipients of bank transfers and money orders utilizing public funds. All data and the resulting reports are provided in real time, thus ensuring that information is always up-to-date.

SIGA BRASIL, along with all application systems that give support to the budget process, was developed in-house by the Subsecretariat of IT Solutions of the Senate Data Processing Center (Prodasen).”

Carlos Magno Santoro, Director, Subsecretariat of IT Solutions – Prodasen
Contribution to the World e-Parliament Report 2008

This same approach could be used to establish links to information at other government entities, state and local public authorities, civil society organizations, and other outside information resources useful in the context of developing and debating legislation. Similarly, there could be great value in creating links to related information in other parliaments.

Chapter 5 has already discussed the use of open standards for documenting the legislative process, but it is useful to highlight their value in the context of building an integrated parliamentary knowledge base. As more legislative documents, such as bills, committee reports, plenary minutes and votes are put into digital form and tagged using open document standards, the opportunities for creating automated linkages among related materials on a specific piece of legislation are greatly enhanced. Rather than retrieving separate pieces of information or documents from different websites, users will be able to go to a single website that integrates all the relevant information. Tagging using the open standard will also make it possible to identify particular sections within a document or bill so that specific provisions can be tracked, incorporated in other documents, or linked to them directly. These capabilities will be exceedingly beneficial to parliaments and legislators because they will have much easier access to the diverse range of documents, studies, and other important information sources related to their legislative and oversight functions. As more legislative bodies begin to apply open standard tags to their documents, the potential for sharing information across institutions, as well as within them, will grow considerably.

ARCHIVING INFORMATION

Effectively managing the entire life cycle of documents is fundamental to building a robust parliamentary knowledge base. One aspect of this that often fails to receive adequate attention is the archival preservation of digital information for the future. Parliaments face a significant challenge in establishing digital archives of their documents and actions. Maintaining a permanent, authoritative record of parliamentary activities in a digital form that can be accessed despite changes in technology requires a major commitment of resources and expertise. Moreover, this commitment is essential if parliaments are to fulfill their obligation to the public to provide a full record and an accounting of their work. Just as the written record of parliaments has been accessible over time, efforts need to be made to ensure the permanence of digital records.

For example, as parliaments update the content of their websites, move from one legislative session to the next, or change leadership, it is critical that information that has been publicly available online is not lost and can be accessed in some fashion in the future. This is another area where establishing policies and fostering use of open document standards should greatly improve the ability to archive digital parliamentary records and maintain them over time.

Box 7.6

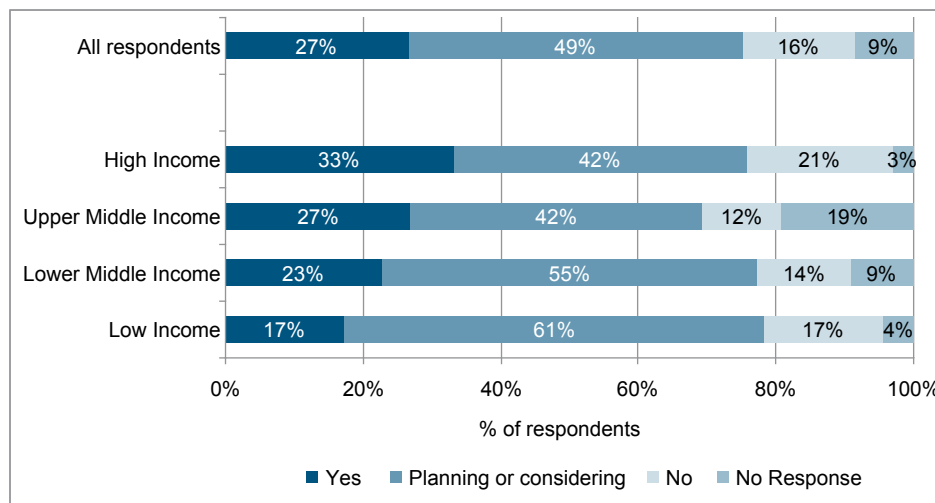
“The archiving of documents is also a fundamental responsibility of democratic governments, as access to such records is important for holding governments accountable and for deliberation over the effectiveness of government institutions and policies. Standards can raise serious problems of backward incompatibility, non-interoperable proprietary formats, and rapid software and media obsolescence. Any of these could prevent government agencies from guaranteeing that electronically archived public records will remain accessible in the future.”

Laura DeNardis and Tam Eric, *Open Documents and Democracy – a Political Basis for Open Documents Standards*, Yale Information Society Project White Paper, 2007

Unfortunately, as Figure 7-11 shows, less than 30% of respondents reported having a policy for retaining digital resources permanently, although an additional 49% indicated that they are planning or considering one.

Providing permanent access to digital resources is essential for a parliament if it is to ensure the authenticity of digital documents and a permanent institutional record. This relatively small number of parliaments that have a policy for permanent access is a concern, although the larger number of those planning it for the future offers some positive indication that there is growing awareness of the importance of instituting a system for addressing this problem. As in other areas, there is a correlation between the higher income level of the country and the existence of a policy. However, when one adds the number of chambers with plans to establish a policy in the future, the gap disappears. In fact, fewer chambers in Low Income countries stated that they have no plans for developing a policy for retaining digital resources permanently than in high income countries (17% versus 21%). The willingness of chambers and parliaments with fewer resources to consider policies of this nature is a positive sign, particularly in those cases where the institution is starting to embark along the e-parliament path.

Figure 7-11: Presence of a policy for retaining digital resources permanently, by country's income group



(Source: Survey, Section 6, Question 14)

Of those few chambers that have a digital archiving policy, 82% have practices in place to ensure permanent access to digital resources.⁶ This is a positive finding and suggests that once parliaments focus on the issue of preservation of digital resources and establish a policy, they are likely to move forward with creating practices and developing a system to support a digital archive. Political will and management foresight need to be combined with ICT to make this a priority.

FINDINGS

Acquiring, organizing and integrating parliamentary and external information sources in a way that enables the creation of a parliamentary knowledge base has major value for legislative institutions. A solid ICT infrastructure combined with skilled library and research staff can greatly enhance member access to key information resources whether they are from inside the legislature, from other parts of the government or from a variety of outside sources. In addition, as more legislative documents, along

6 Source: Survey, Section 6, Question 15.

with external public policy sources, are created using open document standards, the opportunities for establishing automated linkages among related materials on a specific piece of legislation are greatly enhanced. These capabilities in turn contribute to more informed deliberations on proposed legislation.

Developing a robust knowledge base also enables parliaments to increase transparency by providing public access to their core documents and to the workings of the parliament. The more comprehensive and better organized such information resources are, the more the media and the public are able to monitor parliament's activities and to understand the content and implications of measures under consideration.

The survey results indicate that library and research staff are at the forefront of using ICT to perform their jobs, whether acquiring documents and other information, conducting research, preparing reports, or disseminating information. Additionally, parliaments use the Internet as a major source of information for internal purposes and to provide information to the citizens. Specifically, the responses received show that:

- 70% of the chambers have automated systems for managing library resources and a majority of these systems are web-based.
- 70% of chambers offer Internet access to electronic resources.
- The resources most often provided by these chambers are government websites and databases (82%), parliaments of other countries (77%), free news services (77%), and international organizations (72%). A significant number of chambers also make available public policy journals (66%) and scientific journals (62%).
- 45% of chambers have a portal that organizes and provides access to Internet resources and another 36% plan to provide portals in the future. However, close to 20% of respondents in high income countries stated that they had no plans to provide portals.
- While only 34% of chambers provide information services linked specifically to policy issues and legislation, they make heavy use of ICT for research and information gathering as well as preparation and distribution of products and services.
- Three quarter of those who have subject experts reported that the analyses they produced were available in digital form and in over half of those chambers they made these analyses available on the parliament's own website. However, fewer had them publicly available.

The results also highlight the need for additional efforts to be made in several areas. These include archiving of digital materials created by parliaments, Intranet access to library and research services, and collaboration among staff serving the parliament. Specific findings include:

- Less than 30% of chambers reported having a policy for retaining digital resources permanently, although almost 50% more said they are planning to develop one.
- Less than half of chambers stated that they have an Intranet that provides access to library and research services.
- Only 30% of chambers have a system that supports collaboration among library and research staff.

Finally, the findings show that in addition to the central ICT staff, library technical staff (30%) and librarians (25%) can also be a source of ICT support to the library.

