Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs):
A user-oriented perspective

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This dissertation was submitted in part fulfilment of requirements for the degree of MSc Information and Library Studies.

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MSc of the University of Strathclyde.

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Abstract

In order to address the gap in the literature concerning Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs), this research examines the user perspective of AUPs in order to assess their awareness and opinions about the policies in place for the public access computers in UK public libraries. This was done by conducting an online survey about Acceptable Use Policies with UK residents who were recruited through UK-based forums and social media. A representative sample of 22 AUPs from public library authorities in the UK was also studied in order to analyse how libraries are presenting their policies to the user.

The aim of the research is to assess how much the British public know about the policies which they agree to when they use a public access computer in the library, and to discover what they believe should be included in an AUP. This study will also consider what could be done to increase the likelihood of a user reading the AUP and assess how well the chosen sample of AUPs makes itself accessible and readable for the user. The discussion examines what the implications of the survey results and the AUP analysis means for both users and libraries.

It was discovered that terms and conditions such as an Acceptable Use policy were rarely read by the UK residents who were surveyed. In some cases this was due to a belief that they already know what was contained within the document, while in others it was related to the readability, presentation and length of the document. The analysis of the AUPs themselves confirmed that the AUPs have not been written in a way that allows a user of any level of literacy to read and understand them, and variations in length and formatting between the documents means that users are not presented with a consistent library policy which they can learn and apply.

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1.0 Introduction

With new developments in technology and the increasingly popularity of going online to access information, libraries are under increasing pressure to accommodate these new information seeking behaviours by providing public access computers in their institutions. However, with the sheer volume of data available online, it is difficult to act as information mediators as they were previously able to. Public access computers make it more difficult for a member of library staff to ensure that the user is accessing reliable information and can also lead to other issues, such as breaches of copyright and access to internet pornography. In order to maintain their commitment to their users to provide access to information while also ensuring that they are engaging with the internet in a safe and legal manner, policies need to be in place in order to protect the reputation of the institution (Pautz, 2013).

In order to inform users of the code of conduct related to the use of public access PCs, Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) have been adopted by many library services, presenting the user with a set of terms and conditions that they are required to accept before they may continue (Poulter et al., 2009). AUPs can include descriptions of what is considered to be acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, information about the laws related to the use of public access computers and information about any filtering or monitoring software which may be active in the library (Pautz, 2013, p. 312). They should be a clear summary of the key points of the policy, capable of being read by anyone (Sturges, 2002; Pautz, 2013). AUPs have been acknowledged as being a means of ensuring that the user is responsible for their own actions in the event that they engage in any illegal activities, therefore protecting the library staff and the organisation (Brown and McMenemy, 2013, p. 187) from being held accountable. However, AUPs have been criticised as being too easily ignored (Poulter et al., 2009; Spacey et al., 2015), meaning that libraries could still be contributing to a crime if they fail to properly enforce their policy (Hannabuss, 2000) and ensure that the user understands them.

Acceptable Use Policies have been widely discussed in academic literature; whether as part of an analysis of the management of internet access in libraries or as the focal point of a study which directly addresses AUPs. Analyses of what is contained within the policy and their role in managing access to public computers have been published, as well as assessments of staff awareness and enforcement, but there are comparatively few studies that consider the user perspective. As it is argued that AUPs are there to inform the user, it seems only logical that they are included in the

research surrounding them, but no studies to test public opinion surrounding AUPs currently appear to have been carried out.

This study will take a user-oriented viewpoint in its analysis of AUPs. A thorough literature review will be conducted, highlighting the gap in knowledge which this research will help to fill. Following this, the results of an online survey distributed to residents of the UK will be analysed in order to answer three research questions:

Q1: What do users currently know about AUPs?
Q2: What do users feel should be included in an AUP?
Q3: What would make users take greater notice of AUPs?

Alongside this, a representative sample of 22 AUPs from UK public library authorities (16 English, 4 Scottish, 2 Welsh) will also be analysed, scoring them on the Flesch-Kincaid and Gunning-Fog readability scales and performing qualitative analysis on their contents in order to ascertain whether they cover all the key policies and how easily they can be understood by the general public. This data will then be considered together with the survey results in order to develop recommendations for the best way to create and enforce an AUP in a UK public library.

The results of this study provide a new understanding of user perspectives on Acceptable Use Policies, including a detailed view of what they know about the contents, whether they agree with what is contained within them, and advice on ways to engage more with the users to make them aware of what they are signing. This information can then be considered in the future when designing or revising Acceptable Use Policies and elements of the research may also be extracted for application to terms and conditions in a broader context.

2.0 Literature review

Acceptable Use Policies have been addressed in much of the literature relating to the management of library services. In these studies, they can feature either as part of another study (e.g. into public access computers in general) or are the key topic of the study.

AUPs and managing internet access

In studies relating to the management of public access computers, AUPs feature alongside filtering as one of the main measures to prevent inappropriate or illegal use of the system and promote good practice. McMenemy et al. (2007) view them as a means to ensure that users are aware of the correct way to use and respect the resources available to them. Spacey et al. (2015) defined AUPs as documents which detail unacceptable behaviour and intend to make the user liable for their own actions, but McMenemy and Burton (2005, p. 21) argue that the library staff are still required to assist the user and make sure that they fully understand what they are signing. Unacceptable behaviour tends to receive more coverage than acceptable behaviour, but it has been suggested that this is because there are fewer unacceptable activities than acceptable ones (Gallagher, 2015, p. 579). Hannabuss (2000, p. 98) states that libraries need to include their policies concerning illegal activities in the documents in order to ensure that clients are aware of what laws are in place but is also acknowledged that illegal activity such as the breaching of intellectual property rights may be occurring on the premises without employees being aware of it (McMenemy et al., 2007, p. 68). In Brown and McMenemy's (2013) assessment of filtering in Scottish libraries AUPs are recognised as responsible for making the user aware of the laws rather than directly prohibiting access to the content in question. In this sense, AUPs are not preventing illegal activity themselves but acting as a clear statement of what the library expects from its users, making them liable if they proceed to break the law. However, merely having an AUP in place does not mean that users will understand what is contained within it or even read it at all (Chen et al., 2008, p. 92; Foltz et al., 2005, p. 138; Spacey et al., 2015, p. 73) and McMenemy and Burton (2005, p. 21) stress that the staff are still required to ensure that the user is not violating the AUP, which requires them to be aware of the content and able to enforce it.

The AUP is required to be clear and coherent, with a friendly tone that doesn't intimidate the user (Sturges, 2002, p. 110). The wide range of ways that an AUP can be presented to the user, whether on the log-in screen, on the library website or in the form of posters around the library, means that some users may never have the AUP fully explained to them (Spacey et al., 2015, p. 77). The results of Poulter et al.'s (2009) surveys of library staff in Scotland also confirms that many users

receive no explanation of the AUP, while the 'legalese' proved to be extremely difficult to understand, especially for those for whom English was not their native language. They recommend that there should be one AUP for all Scottish libraries, which could be centrally-maintained and updated as necessary.

Sturges (2002) has written an extremely comprehensive guide to AUPs, including the essential features needed to create a successful policy. He states that an AUP should be a short statement which clearly sets out the commitments and responsibilities of both the user and the institution. A clear policy means that there is no confusion over what is acceptable and allows for 'plausible denial' in the event that these rules are breached, protecting the institution and helping their case. If a policy has been well promoted and enforced, then the organisation is in a better position to respond if necessary. The essential features of an AUP according to Sturges are aims and objective, eligibility, scope, illegal use, unacceptable use and service commitments.

There have also been other recommendations for the creation and content of an AUP. Scott and Voss (1994) developed the 7 P's model as a statement of the most important things to remember when creating an AUP: participation, partitioning, philosophy, privacy, persnickety, phog phactor and publication. These seven points encompass the planning, creation and editing stages of the AUP. Holmes (2003, cited in Doherty et al., 2011) also created a list of seven recommended issues: monitoring, privacy, unacceptable use, acceptable use, protection of information, penalties and acknowledgement of the policy. Kelehear (2005, cited in Laughton, 2008) recommends that a statement of intended use, a list of responsibilities, a conduct of conduct, a definition of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and a disclaimer absolving the organisation of responsibility should be key points in every AUP. Laughton (2008) provides a thorough review of many of the other recommendations, before recommending a hierarchical approach to the creation of an AUP, whereby the organisation considers which elements are most important and makes sure to prioritise them when creating their policies. These recommendations for the best way to structure and decide content for an AUP show that there are different priorities depending on where the AUP is situated. For instance, those which address academic (Scott and Voss, 1994) and public (Sturges, 2002) libraries show a greater willingness to make sure that their policy aligns with the needs and rights of their users, whereas those in a business setting (Holmes, 2003, cited in Doherty et al., 2011) are more concerned with stating what is acceptable and what the consequences for misuse would be.

AUPs can raise ethical concerns with library staff, as there are key principles of the library service which could be compromised if AUPs are too restrictive, such as freedom of access, freedom of expression, confidentiality and equity of access (Pautz, 2013, p. 309-310). Brown and McMenemy (2013) echo this fear, observing that if a user refuses to accept the terms of the AUP then they could

be prevented from accessing information that they are rightfully entitled to, but they also state that it would be difficult for a user to dispute an AUP that restricts activity purely on legal grounds. However, Pautz (2013) acknowledges that facilities need to be protected from being held liable for illegal actions being carried out on site and that users and staff should be clearly informed about their rights and responsibilities concerning the use of public access computers. He asserts that AUPs should succinctly state how the laws relate to usage and should also contain information about any filtering and/or monitoring software that is being used in that location. He notes that some staff seem to be unwilling to unable to enforce AUPs, but states that preventing illegal activity on public access computers can be ethically justified if access is expected to be managed appropriately. Promoting the AUP as a protective measure that allows the library to safely deliver their services means that the staff do not need to betray their professional ethics (Sturges, 2002). The AUP should work alongside the staff in order to provide a high level of customer service (Willson and Oulton, 2000).

Younger users are also important in relation to AUPs. As the library staff are often considered to be acting *in loco parentis*, they could be considered responsible for making sure that children do not access any inappropriate materials whilst using the library computers (Brown and McMenemy, 2013, p. 186). However, parents are commonly still asked to sign the AUP on behalf of their children (Hannabuss, 2000, p. 100) and some libraries state that children must be accompanied while using the library computers (McMenemy and Burton, 2005, p. 21). Therefore even although libraries seek to provide the safest possible internet access for children, it is still the responsibility of their parent or guardian to make sure that their child is not accessing anything inappropriate.

The implementation and analysis of AUPs

There have also been studies conducted into the implementation and enforcement of AUPs. McMenemy (2008) conducted a study where fourteen public libraries in the UK were visited in order to use the public access computers. It was noted that only once did library staff try to explain the AUP to the visitor while signing them on, while in two other libraries staff members logged the visitor on themselves and bypassed the AUP entirely, meaning that the user was not even given the option of reading and understanding the policy. These findings raise the question of whether it is ethically viable for the library to expect the user to understand what constitutes acceptable behaviour if it is not properly explained to them. Flowers and Rakes (2000) looked at the implementation of AUPs in schools in the USA, establishing how these policies were implemented, what content they had, and what purpose they serves. After surveying 100 schools and analysing 24 AUPs, they found that schools were using AUPs in order to let their pupils know what material they

are not allowed to access and what the penalties would be if they were to view inappropriate content.

Gallagher et al. (2015) have investigated the language used in AUPs in Scottish public libraries. They discovered great inconsistencies across the 32 local authorities and were concerned with the goals of the AUPs and the essential characteristics which occurred within them. They noted that acceptable behaviour was heavily covered, giving many AUPs a negative feel. They also reviewed Focault's theory of panopticism, which is concerned with whether people moderate their behaviour when they believe they are being observed, regardless of whether they are actually being observed or not. Under this theory, the very presence of an AUP, along with the idea that activity on the public access PCs may be monitored, should make people more careful about what they are accessing online. However this cannot be the case if the policies are not properly implemented. Doherty et al. (2011) also conducted a study which examined the structure and composition of a sample of policies, this time taken from a higher education background. They also noted that AUPs appeared to be more focused on dealing with unacceptable behaviour than promoting the type of behaviour that they would like to see. They concluded that the lack of consistency in the policies was unlikely to encourage a uniform policy across the higher education sector.

AUP user studies

So far, studies dealing with how the users interact with an AUP have been limited to studies which focus on university students. Foltz et al. (2005) conducted a study with students from three Midwestern universities split into a test group and a control group. They were asked to complete two surveys, in between which the test group was exposed to a set of AUPs detailing acceptable use, unacceptable use and penalties. The results of this study showed that while few people said that they had read AUPs initially (24.2% of the test group and 22.2% of the control group), following exposure to the AUPs, 49.4% said that they had read them and 74.6% of that number had done do during the last month. Therefore, with increased awareness of AUPs, students were more inclined to read the documents, but there is clear still more that could be done, as half of the students still reported that they had not read the policies. Foltz et al. suggest that students could be maintaining their ignorance on purpose so that they could use it as a defence against any accusations they may face, whereas admitting to knowing the contents of an AUP means that they can be held accountable for your actions if they violate it.

Foltz et al. (2008) continued to study the reasons why a user may choose not to read an Acceptable Use Policy, using a web-based survey to gather data from students on the Masters of Business Administration course. The study found that attitude and apathy have the greatest impact

on a person's decision to read an AUP, as people who feel positively towards AUPs are more likely to read them, while those who have negative opinions or don't care about them will not read them. Social trust can also contribute towards the decision to read an AUP, if the individual has faith in the institution, but the overall results suggest that internal factors such as the user's own desire to read them are more likely to influence their decision than social norms are. Foltz et al. also suggest that users may be discouraged from reading the entire document due to the length and the language used, while they may feel that they already know what is included within them due to common exposure to the policies.

2.0 Research Problem

There appears to be a gap in the literature concerning Acceptable Use Policies with regards to the perspective of the user. Explanations of what is contained within the policy and their role in managing access to public computers as well as assessments of staff enforcement of the policies have been published, but there is a lack of user involvement in the critical assessment of these policies. The only user studies which have been carried out have been focused on students who are using academic libraries. There have been no studies which address the users of public libraries, which are far more varied. As it is argued that AUPs are there to inform the user, it seems only logical that they are included in the research surrounding them, but no studies appear to have been carried out in order to test public opinion and awareness surrounding them.

3.0 Research methods

In order to assess the effectiveness of Acceptable Use Policies in the UK from a user perspective, two methods of research were adopted. Firstly, a survey was distributed and results were collected from UK residents. Secondly, a representative sample of 22 AUPs were analysed in order to assess whether they could be clearly understood by UK residents. These results will then be considered in the context of the wider literature review and analysed in order to assess how well AUPs really cater to their intended audience.

3.1 Survey

Using the Qualtrics Insight Platform, a survey was developed which comprised of 20 questions split across five sections (see Appendix 1 for full survey questions). The survey contained both multiple choice and free text questions and took no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Section One of the survey was 'Public Libraries', which assessed whether the respondent was a regular library user and whether they had ever used the library computers. This section used display logic, allowing the survey to ask relevant questions depending on whether the respondent stated that they were a member of the library or not.

Section Two of the survey was 'Acceptable Use Policies', which questioned how regularly the respondents read terms and conditions and whether they knew where to locate them in a public library. The respondents were then asked what they believed was included in an AUP, before being presented with a table of elements that are present in real-world AUPs from UK public libraries and being asked whether they knew this element was included within an AUP, and whether they believed that it should be. In order to develop this table, a representative sample of 22 AUPs were read and recurring elements were drawn from them. These AUPs would then go on to be analysed in more depth for the second stage of this research. These elements were presented as a single table with multiple choice options for two questions related to each element: 'Did you know this was included in an AUP?' and 'Do you think this should be included in an AUP?' and the elements were ordered under general themes within the table in order to make the experience smoother for the respondent. Figure 1 shows the layout of this table with some hypothetical answers selected.

Section Three addressed the idea of 'Children' in the library, an issue of importance to libraries as previously referenced in the literature review. Rules concerning children's use of the PCs is often covered within an Acceptable Use Policy, but very few libraries provide a separate AUP which can be read and understood by the children themselves. Section Three therefore sought to

	Did you know this was included in an AUP?		Do you think this should be included in an AUP?		
	Yes	No	Yes	Maybe	No
Who is allowed access	●	○	●	○	○
Time allowance information	●	○	●	○	○
Information on how to save data	○	●	○	●	○
Printing charges and rules	○	●	●	○	○
Conditions for children's access	●	○	●	○	○
Bandwidth restrictions	○	●	○	○	●
Do not disturb other users	●	○	●	○	○
Treat staff with respect	○	●	●	○	○

Figure 1: A section of S2 Q4, showing the layout of the table of AUP elements as shown by the Qualtrics Platform.

find out what elements the UK public believe should be covered in an AUP for children, who they believe should be responsible for making sure that a child understands these terms and whether the AUP should be written so that they child can understand it for themselves.

Section Four ('Raising Awareness') sought to ask the UK public what would make them pay more attention to the Acceptable Use Policy, using a free text box to allow them to answer in as much detail as possible.

Finally, Section Five was used to gather 'Demographic Information' about the respondents. The demographic data questions were all multiple choice. For age, respondents were asked to select the age bracket that best represented them. For gender, four choices were given ('Male', 'Female', 'Other' and 'Prefer not to say'), allowing for inclusivity. They were then asked to state which country of the UK they were resident in (England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland). Finally, they were asked what their native language was. For this question, the four options provided were based on the most common native languages in the UK according to the 2011 Census, with the additional option to select 'Other' and input your native language.

Participants were recruited through online promotion of the survey through UK-based forums which could be found through a search engine. The forums which were too specialised (e.g. those relating to medical issues) were excluded, along with those attached to dating sites and those which had not been active within the last month. There were also active UK-based forums which did not allow research surveys (e.g. Digital Spy and Vote UK Forum) Ultimately it was difficult to locate

many UK-based forums which dealt with societal and community issues and welcomed research surveys. The most active ones were based around childcare (e.g. Mumsnet and Netmums) and politics (e.g. UK Politics Forum). In order to post a link to a survey on Mumsnet, permission was required, so this was obtained and the survey was posted to these three websites. However after a period of two weeks during which the boards were regularly checked in case there were questions and boosted to promote appeal, only four responses had been yielded from these sources. During this time, no other general forums had been found. Alternate options were then investigated, with the survey being posted the Student Room, a forum specifically created for research surveys. This yielded six more responses. Finally, it was decided that more responses could be generated by promoting the survey on a personal online social network, sharing the link among friends and encouraging them to share it further still so that as many people could be reached as possible. This yielded the number of results necessary to have enough data to work from, but it did affect the demographic information attached to those results. The selected sample of participants for this research was comprised of those individuals who volunteered to answer the survey. Due to the issues faced with collecting responses, the need to have data to analyse outweighed the need to have a representative distribution of participants. Instead, every piece of data was used as long as the respondent was resident within the UK.

With more time, alternate means of gathering responses would have been considered, such as promoting the survey through the social media accounts of UK public libraries. However, too much responsibility was put on too few forums to produce a substantial amount of responses and it was realised too late that this method failed to provide the expected results. Another method of gathering results in the future could be to cross-post to a greater number of forums, but as so few relevant forums were located this would likely involve posting to forums where users may not be interested in the subject of the survey.

In total, 85 responses were gathered. Of these 85, 47 were fully completed. However, 32 other responses still had applicable data. Thus 79 responses are included in the data gathered for this study. This data was then organised by coding each individual response, checking the number against the Qualtrics result log and thematically organising the responses to the free text questions. The results of this research will be presented below.

3.2 AUP analysis

In addition to the survey results, 22 AUPs from public library authorities (PLAs) in the UK were also sampled in order to assess whether AUPs could be readable and understandable for the general public. In accordance with the idea that the Acceptable Use Policy for your local library should be

freely and easily accessible online, the selected AUPs were located using a Google search. From the results a representative sample of 22 was selected, which included 16 PLAs in England, 4 in Scotland and 2 in Wales. Of the 206 PLAs in the UK, 151 (73%) are English, 32 (16%) are Scottish, 22 (11%) are Welsh and 1 (0.005%) is Northern Irish. The 22 chosen AUPs match the distribution of PLAs within the UK as closely as possible, 73% of the AUP being English, 18% being Scottish and 9% being Welsh. An Acceptable Use Policy for the users of the public libraries of Northern Ireland is not included in the sample because the document could not be located online via a Google search.

In order to assess the readability of these documents, each one was assessed by Readability Score, an online tool which analyses a piece of text and returns scores and statistics about it. Each document was copied and pasted from the version available on website of the local authority, before being proof read to make sure that the formatting hadn't been corrupted. The piece of text was then submitted for scoring. The two readability tests which have been selected for this study are the Flesch Reading Ease Score and Gunning Fog Index. The Flesch Reading Ease Score looks at the number of words per sentence and the number of syllables per 100 words and calculates a score out of 100 based on those. The higher a piece of text scores, the more readable the text should be. A breakdown of what these scores mean is provided in Table 1. Flesch (1949) believed that you should write for your audience, in a simple and clear manner so that you can be understood by as many

Flesch Readability Ease Score	Level
100 – 90	Very Easy
90 – 80	Easy
80 – 70	Fairly Easy
70 – 60	Standard
60 – 50	Fairly Difficult
50 – 30	Difficult
30 – 0	Very Difficult

Table 1: Flesch Reading Ease Scores (adapted from Flesch, 1949)

people as possible. The Gunning Fog Index on the other hand looks at the average sentence length and the percentage of difficult words found within a sentence and calculates a score based on those (Gunning, 1968). The Gunning Fog Index is awarded a grade similar to that relating to the American school grades. 7 or 8 is considered to be the perfect score for being readable. The grades available for the Gunning Fog Index have been presented in Table 2, alongside their equivalent level of education according to the Scottish education system.

Gunning Fog Index Grade	Reading level
4	Primary 5 (P5)
5	Primary 6 (P6)
6	Primary 7 (P7)
7	Secondary 1 (S1)
8	Secondary 2 (S2)
9	Secondary 3 (S3)
10	Secondary 4 (S4)
11	Secondary 5 (S5)
12	Secondary 6 (S6)
13	University First Year (U1)
14	University Second Year (U2)
15	University Third Year (U3)
16	University Forth Year (U4)
17	University Graduate (UG)

Table 2: Gunning Fog Index grades with Scottish education correlations.

Qualitative analysis was then carried out on these documents in order to assess whether they were sufficiently well written and presented so as to be easily understood by the reader. As Gallagher et al. (2015) has already published a detailed report on how commonly different elements occur within AUPs, this analysis will specifically consider these three aspects: Clarity (whether everything is fully-explained or whether there is any confusion), Tone (whether the text has a positive, neutral or negative tone and how this affects the comprehension of the document) and Format (whether the document has clear subsections, a good order and is presented well).

4.0 Results

4.1 Survey

The results of the online survey provided many insights into the manner in which library users and residents of the UK in general know about Acceptable Use Policies. The results will be presented in the order of their sections and further analysis of these results will be provided later in this report.

Section One: Public libraries

79 people responded to the first survey question. Of that number, 47 were members of their local library while 32 were not. Those who were members were then asked to state how recently they had last visited the library. 17 of 45 respondents had visited within the last month, while 6 had visited within the last three months, 5 within the last six months and 7 within the last year. 10 people, the second most common answer, said that it had been over a year since their last visit. Many of those who were members of their local library said that they had used the computers available within them, with 28 of 45 reporting that they had used them, while 15 said they had not and 2 were unsure. Within the group that were not currently members of their local library, 27 of 32 had been members in the past, while 5 had not.
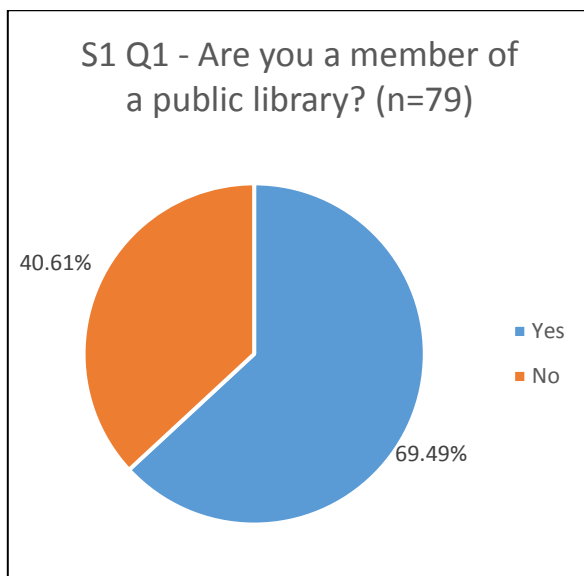
Figure 2 – S1 Q1

Figure 3 – S1 Q2

S1 Q2 - Have you ever been a member of a public library in the past? (n=32)

15.63%

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

84.38%

Figure 4 – Answers to S1 Q2

S1 Q3 - Have you ever used the computers available in your local library? (n=45)

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- My local library does not have computers

33.33%

4.44%
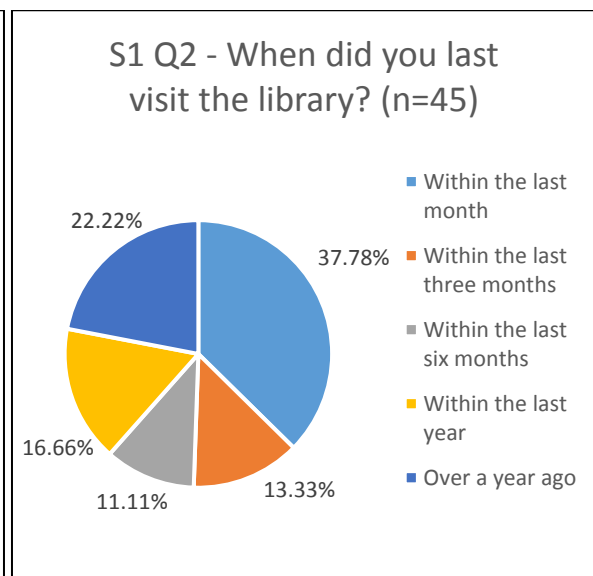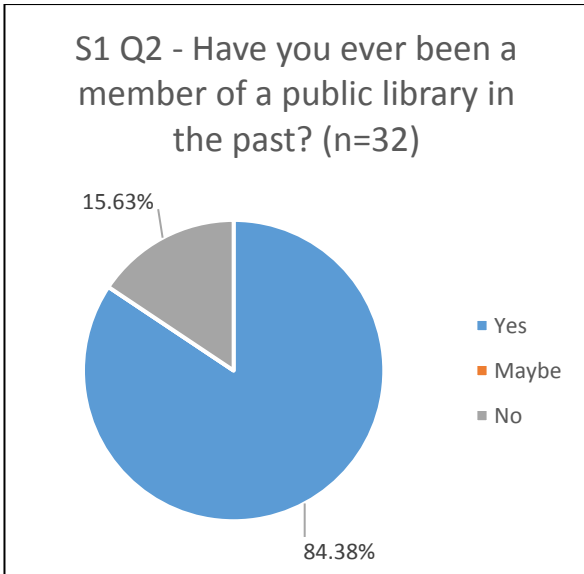
62.22%
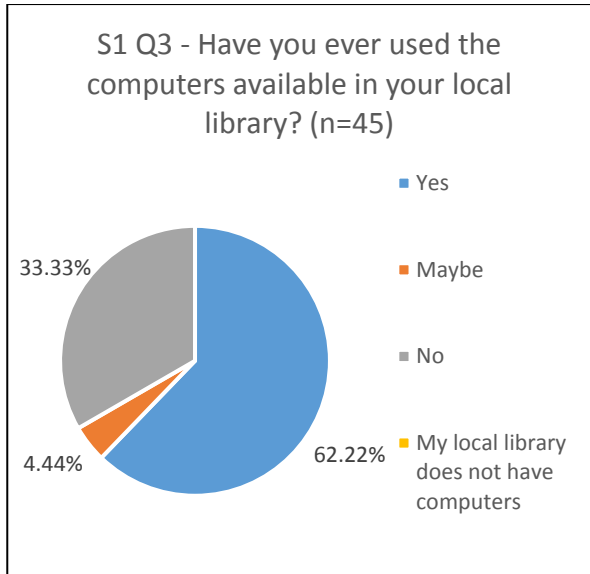
Figure 5 – Answers to S1 Q3

Section Two: Acceptable Use Policies

This section tested how likely people were to read terms and conditions and how much they know about AUPs. The results show that the majority of respondents never fully read terms and conditions when faced with them. Of the 78 people who responded, 44 said that they scanned the terms and conditions but never fully read them, while a further 22 people admitted that they never read them. Comparatively, those who admitted to always or sometimes reading them were few (4 and 8 respondents respectively).

S2 Q1 - Do you read terms and conditions when you see them? (n=78)

5.13%

10.26%

28.21%

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- I scan them quickly
- No, never

56.41%

Figure 6 – S2 Q1

14
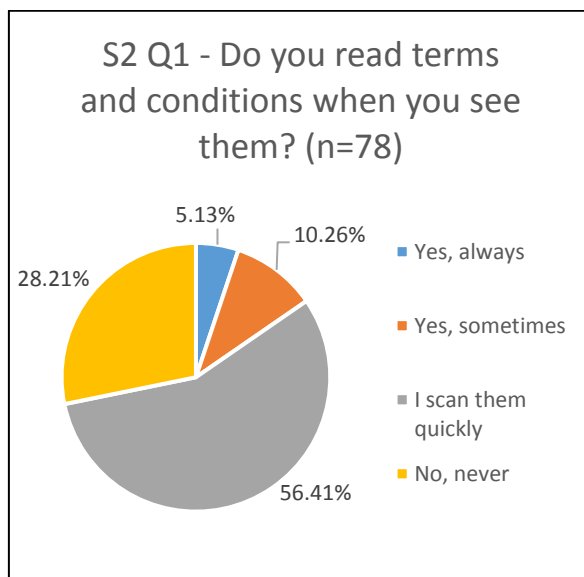
When asked whether they knew where the AUP could be found in the public library, 60 of 78 said they did not, while 18 said that they did. Of those who said that they knew, 13 answered a follow up questions which asked where they thought these were located. 7 said that they appeared on the login screen when signing into a PC, a common method of displaying the policies as mentioned by Poulter et al (2009, p. 2). A further 3 said they were on a poster in the library and 1 said that they could be found on the membership application, both of which methods are also mentioned by Sturges (2002). The final 2 respondents selected 'Other', but only 1 gave details, stating that they would ask a member of staff.
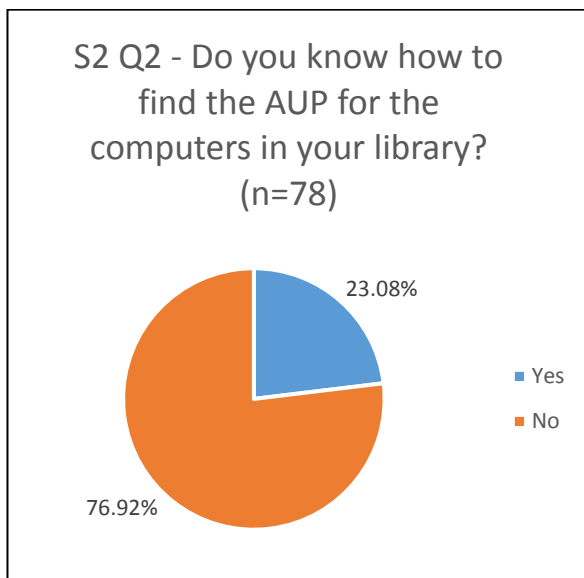
Figure 7 – S2 Q2
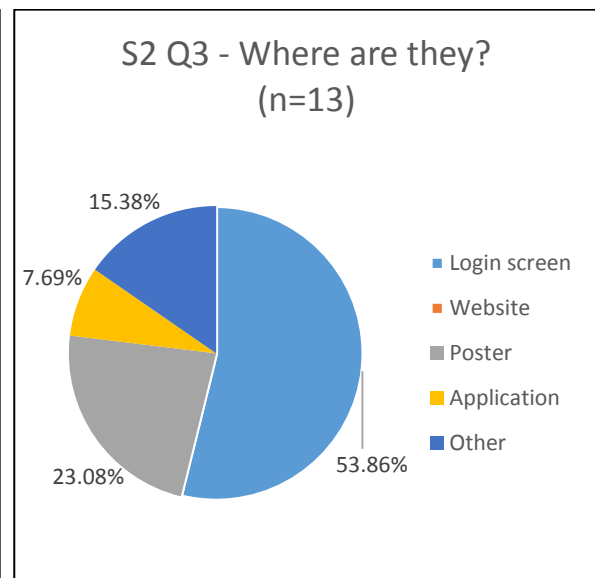
Figure 8 – S2 Q3

Respondents were then asked what they thought would be included in an Acceptable Use Policy for a UK public library. This free text question was answered by 38 respondents with varying amounts of detail. The results have been thematically sorted into three categories: general information, rules and confidentiality.

The *General information* category has four subdivisions. Information on who can use the computers, including age restrictions and entitlements, was a common theme. Information on who may use your account was also considered, including how many people can sit at a computer at once. Additionally, 1 respondent believed that it should be stated that login details must not be shared. Information related to the use of the computers was also considered important. 5 responses referred to time allowance while the limits of the internet access provided and the availability of computers were also mentioned. 1 respondent also stated that he believed that the AUP should state that "kids playing games must allow those with more serious work on the computer", prioritising use for work purposes over leisure. Other devices which could be used with the

computers were also considered important enough to be mentioned within the AUP. 3 respondents stated that fees and charges such as those for printing should be included, and information regarding scanners and DVD drives was also requested. 3 respondents also stated that information on the appropriate use of and risks associated with peripherals such as USB drives were important. Finally, information about the library was also included. Basic protocol and the rights of the library were mentioned, while restrictions related to filtering and the blocking of websites were mentioned by 4 respondents. 1 respondent also stated that disclaimers to protect the library from liability concerning the content of websites, loss or damage to files, and risks of personal security and data should also be included.

For the *Rules* category, rules of membership were considered important, including both general and legal rules. Lists of acceptable websites were mentioned by 6 respondents, while 11 requested a list of the websites and activities which were unacceptable, including gambling, pornography, games and torrents. Information on what is considered to be acceptable in a public setting and what is criminal activity online was also listed. Copyright restrictions along with criminal activity (e.g. fraud) or civil infringement (e.g. unauthorised distribution) were also included. 3 respondents also felt that the consequences of breaking the rules should be included in an AUP.

From the responses, a list of do's and don'ts emerged. The full list is provided in the table in Figure 11. The Do's included elements such as respect for other users, the staff and the equipment, as well as recommending care when inputting personal information into websites, or when using public computers in general. Being aware of those around you in terms of the images on your screen and using headphones when listening to audio/music was also included. The longer list of Don'ts included the accessing of inappropriate content, which was variously defined as adult (9 respondents), illegal (7 respondents) and/or offensive/distressing (4). Illegal online activity such as breaching copyright (listed by 4 respondents) and committing fraud was also mentioned. Alongside this was requests not to inhibit the ability of other users to use the computers (e.g. through excessive downloads which may slow the whole system down) and rules which prohibited the consumption of food and drink while using the PCs.

The final category which emerged following a thematic analysis of the results was *Confidentiality*. Details about privacy and issues surrounding privacy were mentioned. 2 respondents believed that information concerning the collection and protection of personal data by the library should be included, while 2 also wished to know what information the library is permitted to monitor once a library card is used to sign in. Respondents also stated that the AUP should say if your access is likely to be monitored and 2 respondents said that the Data Protection Act should be referenced within the AUP.

For the final question in Section Two, the respondent was presented with a list of elements which were included in AUPs currently in use by UK public libraries and asked whether they were aware of its inclusion in the document and whether they believed that it *should* be included. The full results for this question are provided in Appendix 2, but a summary of the key findings will be given here. For the elements that they knew were included in an Acceptable Use Policy, the rule which was most commonly known was 'Do not access obscene, offensive or abusive material', with 37 out of 46 respondents stating that they knew it was included. 'Do not violate intellectual property law, including downloading or copying copyrighted material' was also known to be included, with 33 of 46 respondents being aware of it. 'No food or drink at the PCs' had the third highest awareness, with 30 of 46 respondents selecting 'Yes'. The element that the fewest respondents were aware of was 'Do not stream live television, which 36 of 45 respondents stating that they were not aware that it could be included within the document. 'Warnings that some information available online may not be reliable or accurate' was also mostly unknown with 36 of 46 claiming ignorance. For many questions there was a generally equal balance between those who were aware of the element and those who were not. For instance, 'Who is allowed access' was perfectly balanced, with 23 of the 46 selecting 'Yes', while the other half selected 'No'. The elements 'Warnings about the risks of some online activities' and 'Do not attempt to alter the set-up of the library computers' also yielded relatively balanced results, with 24 of 46 for each stating they were aware while 22 were not. Overall, the inclusion of more conventional library-related elements such as 'Printing charges and rules' (27 of 46 aware) and 'Information on the laws associated with computer use' (26 of 44 aware) was more likely to be known, whereas the inclusion of factors such as 'Do not distribute unsolicited advertising' (31 of 46 unaware) and 'Do not record or photograph other library users and/or staff' (32 of 46 unaware) were less so.

When asked which of the elements they believed *should* be involved in an Acceptable Use Policy, there were many elements that users believed were important enough to be included. For this question, the respondent was given the choice of 'Yes', 'Maybe' or 'No' for each element, but 'Yes' received the majority vote for every single element. The element which received the highest consensus on whether it should be included was 'Conditions for children's access', with 47 of 48 respondents stating that it should be included, while 1 respondent selected 'Maybe'. 'Do not violate intellectual property law' also scored high, with 45 of 48 believing that it should be included. Elements which did not receive as much support included 'Do not connect devices to the PCs', where, of 48 respondents, 23 voted 'Yes', 13 voted 'Maybe' and 12 voted 'No' and 'Warnings that some information available online may not be reliable or accurate', where 25 of 48 said 'Yes', 8 said 'Maybe' and 14 said 'No'. Overall those which related to respecting staff or other users (e.g. 'Treat

staff with respect', 43 of 48 voted 'Yes') and legal matters (e.g. 'Do not access obscene, offensive or abusive material', 42 of 48 voted 'Yes') had high approval for inclusion in an AUP, while elements that may not be deemed as important ('Do not stream live television', 27 of 46 'Yes', 14 'Maybe') or were not rules which could be broken ('Information on how to save data', 33 of 47 'Yes', 11 'Maybe) did not have as strong an approval rate.

Section Three: Children

This section asked whether Acceptable Use Policies ought to be any different for children using the library computers. Firstly, the respondents were asked whether they had children. 42 of 47 answered 'No', while the 7 who answered 'Yes' had children of various ages. However 33 respondents still shared their opinions on which elements they believed should *not* be included in an AUP for children and which elements they believed should *definitely* be included.
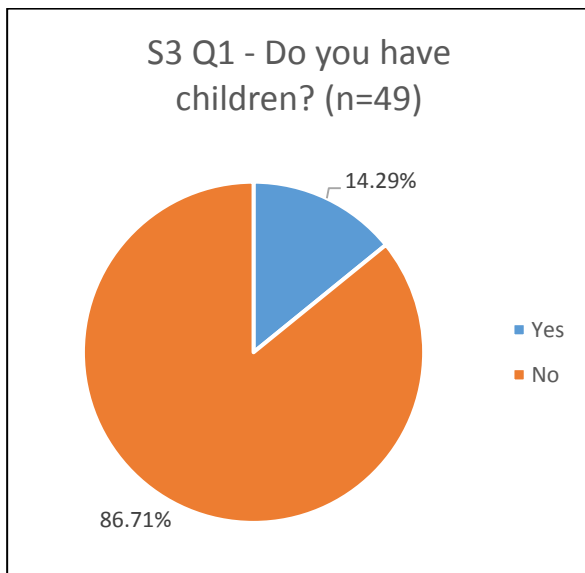
Figure 9 – S3 Q1
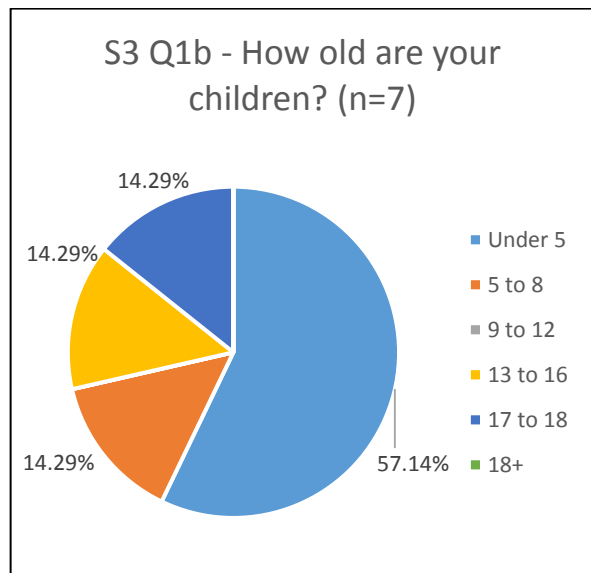
Figure 10 – S3 Q1b

When asked whether there were any rules from the adult AUP that they thought should *not* be included in an AUP for children, 28 respondents said "No" in the free-text box available. Some responses expanded on this, stating that children "should be educated on the dangers of using the internet [because] on reaching your teenage years you need to be completely aware of this". One respondent believed that the AUP should be the same "because children should be supervised by an adult and the same rules should apply", while another claimed that "all [rules] should apply to everyone". Another respondent said: "If anything I would have thought children's access would be more tightly regulated". There were however some people that felt that some elements were not appropriate to include in a child's AUP. 1 respondent believed that the rules about advertising and

accessing dangerous content "don't seem appropriate for children's behaviour", while another suggested that forbidding them from accessing obscene websites could "raise their curiosity", especially if the word 'obscene' was used, which they might not fully understand. 1 respondent suggested that the rules, while kept the same, should be reworded for children's use. For instance, "Food can be eaten away from the PCs" was seen to have a better semantic interpretation than "No food at the PCs".

When asked if there were any rules which should *definitely* be involved in an AUP for children, 7 out of 33 respondents said "No". Again, the idea that children should learn to abide by the same rules as adults was prevalent as "most of the rules are to keep the user and other users safe". One respondent was unsure, stating that they would "prefer it if there was a study done on the most common mistakes and assumptions children make with library computers and have those rules included". However, there were factors which some felt should be emphasised in an AUP for children. 2 respondents listed the dangers of talking to strangers over the internet, with guidance to staying safe online and restrictions on chat rooms also being mentioned. 7 respondents said that restricted access to websites should be included, as well as the fact that they may be monitored. Additionally, warnings about the quality of information found online and harmful websites was also listed. Elements which should *definitely* be included in terms of acceptable behaviour included respecting the staff, other users and the equipment being used. 1 respondent suggested that "some children may not have access to a computer at home, so may not be aware of the social code of conduct". Wearing headphones when listening to audio was also recommended, as well as vacating the computer "if playing games and someone else needs it more urgently for work purposes". Unacceptable behaviour on the other hand included activities such as downloading, streaming, using inappropriate websites and tampering with the hardware and software of the machine. Additionally, rules on eating food at computers and disturbing others were also suggested.

1 respondent recommended that the AUP be "scripted in a more child friendly method" so that the child could understand it for themselves. Another respondent also suggested that a simplified version of the relevant laws could be shown, teaching the child that certain things are illegal. It was also suggested that an AUP for children could be used to explain that the computer is a shared resource for many rather than a personal facility. However, there was also a strong inclination towards emphasising the importance of adult supervision. 5 respondents mentioned this, with one stating: "Please pay attention to your children's activities. You are responsible." It was also suggested that, for older children, parents must have an account that the child's account can be tied to, and by signing the AUP they are therefore taking responsibility for the child and their actions.

The responsibilities of the parent/guardian were also seen to be important when respondents were asked who they felt should be responsible for making sure that a child understands and follows the AUP. 38 of 47 said that the parent or guardian should be responsible, while the child and the AUP received 1 and 2 votes respectively. 6 stated 'Other', with 3 people saying that the library staff should be responsible (though 1 respondent added the qualifier "assuming no parent is present"), 1 stating that all three were simultaneously responsible and 1 stating that the parents were responsible up to a certain point before the child became liable. However, while it was believed that the parents should be making sure that their child understands the AUP, 40 out of 47 respondents also believed that the AUP should be written so that the child can read and understand it for themselves. Of the remaining 7, 2 did not believe this was necessary and 5 were unsure.
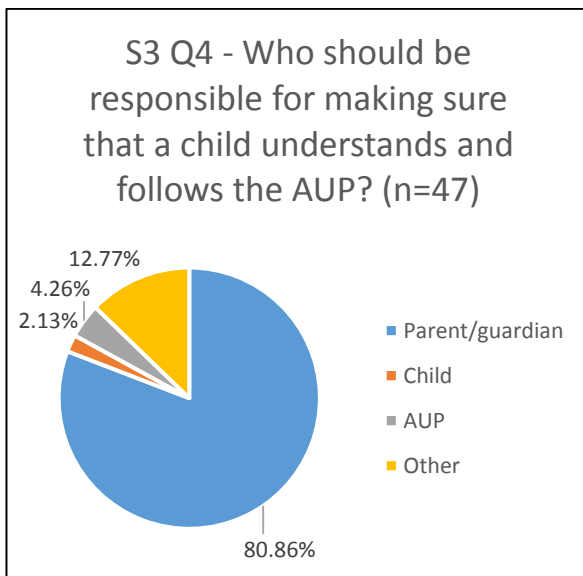
Figure 11 – S3 Q4
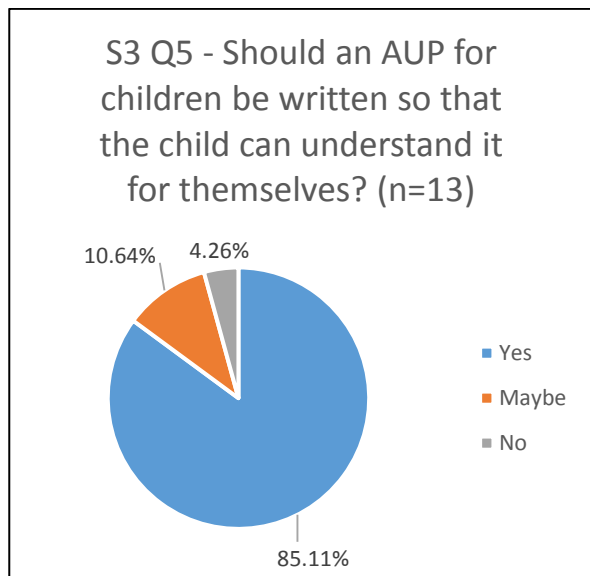
Figure 12 – S3 Q5

Section Four: Raising awareness

In this section, respondents were asked to consider what might make them more inclined to pay attention to an AUP. 39 responses were given and these were thematically analysed in order to create five main categories: Simplicity, Formatting, Availability, Coercion and Punishment.

For *Simplicity*, length and making the document easy to understand were key issues. 7 respondents said that they would be more likely to read a "short" AUP. 3 also said that if an AUP were easy to read and understand then it would be preferable. 1 respondent stated: "If I have to scroll too far or it's too densely worded, then I'm probably just going to click 'agree' and move on without finishing." Respondents said that the document should be "firm" and "concise", as opposed

to "long winded" or "waffling". Additionally, "Plain English" was recommended, with less jargon and more accessible language.

Formatting was also considered to be important, as 1 respondent stated: "People do not tend to read big walls of text." Therefore the AUP needs to be presented in a more interesting or engaging design in order to encourage the user to read it. 3 respondents recommended that a list or summary of the most important points would be useful, with the more detailed policy being offered if the user wishes to access it. Another respondent suggested that breaking down the information into smaller chunks may be useful, while 2 suggested that the use of bullet points may help to draw the reader's eye to the key points. The AUP should also be clearly laid out, with subsections which help to signpost the key issues of the policy. The typeface should be easy to read, but variations in size and the use of highlighting, colour and bold text could help to draw the reader's eye to keywords and phrases. Additionally, multiple respondents suggested that visual aids such as infographs, logos, diagrams and illustrations could prevent the AUP from becoming too "dull and content heavy". 1 respondent expanded on the idea of having a visual aid by suggesting: "For example, suppose the main page was an illustration split into different sections, with a short sentence and image representing each of the main rules, and the option to click through for more detail."

Availability deals with how easy it is to find (or alternatively to ignore) the Acceptable Use Policy. 1 respondent said that the way to make more users pay attention to the AUP was to make sure that they had "more knowledge about it". 7 respondents said that the AUP needed to be clearly visible for everyone. 2 people suggested that they be posted on the door or entrance to the computer area, 3 said that they should be next to or in front of each computer and 2 said that they should be on the login screen.

However, since the mere presence of the AUP is often not enough, for many respondents *Coercion* was a more realistic method of making them read the policy. 2 respondents said that they would pay more attention if they were forced to read the AUP before they were allowed to access the PCs. 3 respondents suggested that having to read and sign it on paper like a contract would make them take greater notice. 1 respondent said: "I feel like signing a form is more binding than ticking an online box, so being given a physical copy to read through would be more attention-grabbing". Methods for forcing the user to read a copy on-screen were also suggested. One suggestion was keeping the policy up for longer, creating a certain length of time that it would be displayed so that users couldn't immediately 'accept' and click through. Other recommendations involved making the user complete an action before they were granted access. For example, suggestions included having to scroll down through the whole document before you were able to

click 'accept', having to tick boxes after various statements or having to answer questions on the policy in order to agree to the terms. 1 respondent also suggested breaking down the information onto several pages, forcing people to have to click through the document before they can use the computers, therefore making it "harder to mindlessly click without reading the information".

Finally, *Punishment* suggests that a greater focus on the penalties which could be incurred if the AUP is breached may make users more concerned about their contents. 4 respondents said that a clear statement that failing to abide by the rules will result in punishment, with descriptions of those punishments, would make them more inclined to pay attention. 1 respondent believes that the threat of punishment will encourage people to learn the rules, which are currently "unknown because people do not read them". Another respondent recommended registering on library cards whether the AUP had been accepted, making it easier for them to be "held to account and possible banned from the library" if the agreement was breached.

Among other comments which were left in regards to this question, one respondent admitted that "nothing, really" would incite them to read an AUP, stating: "I don't even bother since I rarely use public computers." 2 respondents believed that did not need to read them because they were aware of the contents already. 1 said: "It's common sense. I wouldn't necessarily read them because I know what would be in them", while the other said: "I doubt there's a way to get me to read the whole thing, but most of it seems in no need of explanation." Finally, one respondent said that their willingness to read an AUP hinges on whether they are "correct on the matters of copyright", stating that the coverage of this topic "works as a test of whether the AUP was put together with care or slapped together haphazardly".

Section Five: Demographic information

Demographic information was requested for four categories: age, gender, UK country of residency and native language. The most popular age bracket was 25 - 34, with 22 of 46 respondents selecting it. The oldest respondent fell within the 65 - 74 age bracket and 15 respondents were included in the youngest age bracket of 18 - 24. More than twice as many females than males completed the survey, with 30 of the 46 respondents identifying as female while only 14 were male. The 2 remaining respondents selected 'Other' and 'Prefer not to say'.

S5 Q1 - What age are you? (n=46)

- Under 18
- 18 - 24 — 32.61%
- 25 - 34 — 47.83%
- 35 - 44 — 10.87%
- 45 - 54 — 4.36%
- 55 - 64 — 2.18%
- 65 - 74 — 2.18%
- 75 - 84 — 2.18%
- Over 85

Figure 13 – S5 Q1

S5 Q2 - What gender are you? (n=46)

- Male — 30.43%
- Female — 65.22%
- Other — 2.18%
- Prefer not to say — 2.18%
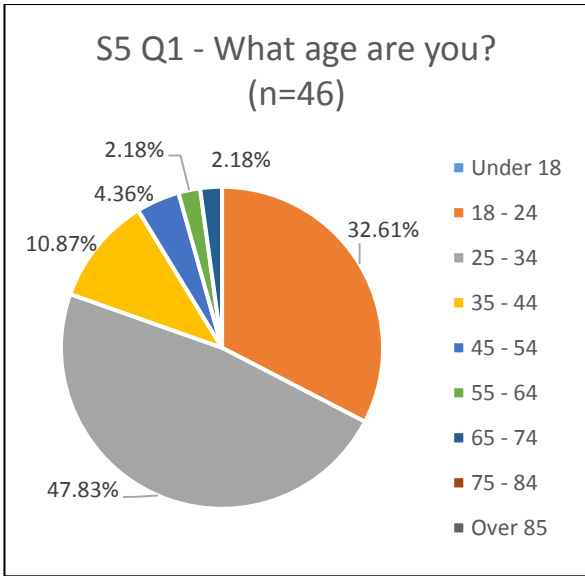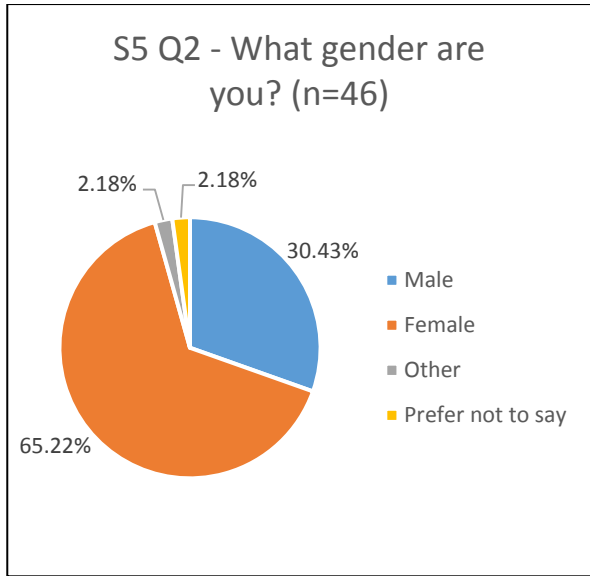
Figure 14 – S5 Q2

People who answered the survey were most likely to live in Scotland with 23 of 45 respondents stating that they lived there as opposed to 20 who said that they lived in England. Wales and Northern Ireland were selected as the country of residency by 1 respondent apiece. Finally, English was the most commonly spoken native language, with 40 of 46 respondents claiming it as their mother tongue. Other languages included Chinese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and 2 French speakers.

S5 Q3 - What part of the UK are you resident in? (n=45)

- England — 44.44%
- Scotland — 51.11%
- Wales — 2.22%
- Northern Ireland — 2.22%

Figure 15 – S5 Q3

S5 Q4 - What is your native language? (n=46)

- English — 86.96%
- Polish
- Punjabi
- Urdu
- Other — 13.04%

Figure 16 – S5 Q4

4.2 AUP analysis

A representative sample of 22 AUPs currently in use in UK public libraries were analysed in order to assess how easy to read they were and whether they met certain Clarity, Tone and Formatting standards as had emerged through the completion of the online survey. This section will contain some analysis where it is necessary to explain the significance of something, but the main analysis of these results will be completed in the next section.

Readability

Each of the 22 AUPs was run through an online readability score checker to see how well they passed the Flesch Reading Ease Score and the Gunning Fog Index. The full table of these scores is provided in Table 3 over the page.

AUP 15 had the best score for Flesch Reading Ease with 64.6, which places it at the 'Standard' level. However, none of the other AUPs reached this level. Of the remaining 21, 8 AUPs were graded as 'Fairly Difficult' while 13 were considered 'Difficult'. The 2 lowest scorers, AUP 1 with 30.6 and AUP 22 with 30.8 are also close to being classified as 'Very Difficult'. The scores on the Gunning Fog Index reflect this advanced level. AUP 15 also has the best score for this test and is joined by AUP 11 with a score of 10, with AUP 13 also scoring at this level with 10.3. This score places these 3 AUPs at the level of Secondary 4 (Fourth year of high school in Scotland, also known as Year 11 in England and Wales). Of the remaining 19 AUPs, 2 were at the leve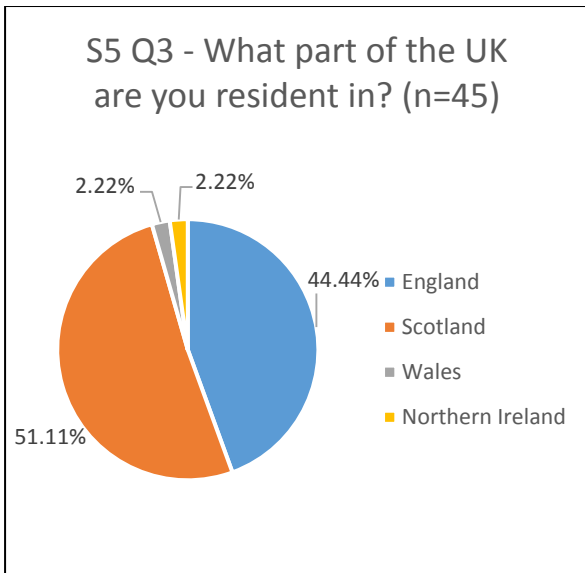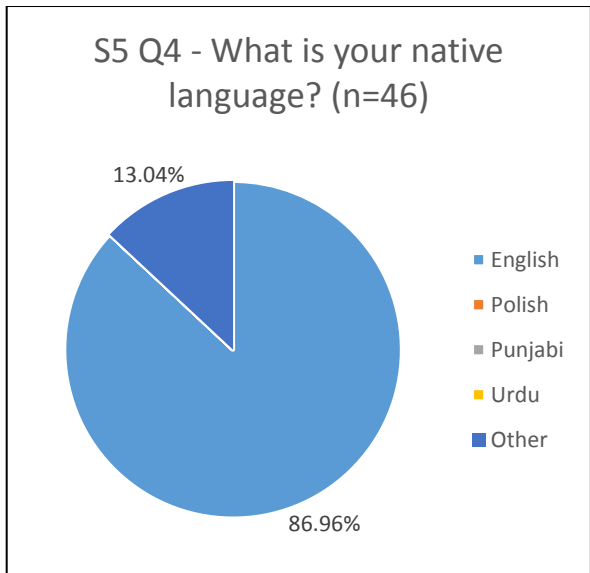l of Secondary 5 (Year 12/Lower Sixth), 7 were at the level of Secondary 6 (Year 13/Upper Sixth) and 10 were at university level (with 3 First Year level documents, 3 Second Year level documents, 1 Third Year level document and 3 fourth year level documents).

Qualitative analysis of these documents revealed some of the language which contributed towards these low scores. In AUP 1, the statement "no liability is accepted for any inaccuracies in the information provided through this medium" is overly complicated. This kind of dense statement is criticised by Flesch (1949), who believes that while people can understand more advanced words individually, it can be hard to understand them when they are presented together in a complicated sentence. AUP 17 also uses complicated, legal sounding language, saying: "Failure to comply with these standards will result in library staff terminating your session." While the use of language such as "the breach of the above conditions may render you liable" (AUP 7) may serve to make the document sound more official, it also decreases the chances of the user reading and understanding the agreement, especially since people of various reading levels will be accessing the library computers.

	Flesch Reading Ease	Level	Gunning Fog Index	Level
AUP 1	30.6	Difficult	16.4	U4
AUP 2	52.3	Fairly Difficult	12.2	S6
AUP 3	42.5	Difficult	13.6	U1
AUP 4	55.1	Fairly Difficult	12	S6
AUP 5	41.2	Difficult	13.8	U1
AUP 6	51.1	Fairly Difficult	11.1	S5
AUP 7	42.8	Difficult	13.9	U1
AUP 8	52.7	Fairly Difficult	12.9	S6
AUP 9	50.9	Fairly Difficult	12.3	S6
AUP 10	46.7	Difficult	15	U3
AUP 11	58.4	Fairly Difficult	10	S4
AUP 12	34.1	Difficult	16.2	U4
AUP 13	52	Fairly Difficult	10.3	S4
AUP 14	36.3	Difficult	16.3	U4
AUP 15	64.6	Standard	10	S4
AUP 16	44.5	Difficult	12.4	S6
AUP 17	46	Difficult	14.7	U2
AUP 18	42.7	Difficult	14.3	U2
AUP 19	38.8	Difficult	14.4	U2
AUP 20	52.5	Fairly Difficult	11.5	S5
AUP 21	39.1	Difficult	12.8	S6
AUP 22	30.8	Difficult	15.8	U3

Table 3: Scores of AUPs as returned by Readability Score.

AUP 4 attempts to mediate some of the more complicated language within the document by having a separate version available for children. This children's policy does appear to be easier to read at a glance, with larger headings and shorter statements, but testing the readability shows that it is still not of the necessary level to be understood by children. Although the children's document has a higher Flesch Reading Ease Score (59.7 as opposed to 55.1), it still remains at a 'Fairly Difficult' level, while its Gunning Fog Index only decreases by one level from Secondary 6 to Secondary 5. AUP 3 is also available as an 'Under 16s Leaflet', but the language was consistently too advanced for most people of that age. For instance, one of the disclaimers is worded:

"All users of the Council's internet/e-mail facilities implicitly indemnify the Council against any claims, demands, losses or damages that the Council may incur or suffer as a result of any breach of these protocols by users."

This sentence alone scores 24.1 for Flesch Reading Ease ('Very Difficult') and 21.8 for the Gunning Fog Index (beyond the level of a university graduate). The document as a whole also scores above the level that it aims to reach, with an overall level of 'Difficult' (Flesch Reading Ease 47.5) and a school grade equivalent of S5 (Gunning Fog Index 11.7).

Alongside complicated language, bad grammar can also make AUPs harder to understand. AUP 21 fails to add full stops to the end of sentences on multiple occasions, which affects the readability score of a document. Many instances of bad grammar were also observed in AUP 9. The exclusion of a comma in sentences such as "To allow as many people as possible the chance to use our facilities computer time is limited to two hours a day" makes the text harder to break down and understand. There are also multiple articles which are excluded from the document. For instance, "sites available on [the] internet can be accessed" and "computer will have a keyboard, [and a] trackball". Leaving out these articles affects the flow of the sentence, making it harder to read.

Clarity

Clarity deals with how easy the Acceptable Use Policy is to understand, looking at how accessible it is and whether the language used is clear or vague. For this section, it is not the complexity of the words that is being assessed but rather how well they are being used to convey information to the reader. It will also address whether there are any contradictions or issues with the way that the information is presented in the document.

Before an Acceptable Use Policy can be understood by a user, it must first be found. While it was possible to locate all of these AUPs through Google, some of them were not as clearly marked as they should have been. For AUP 5, multiple policies appeared when the acceptable use policy for the library authority was searched for. One was for employees and one was for the public, but it was not clear from the title of the documents which was which. The employee policy was returned first, so some members of the public may not realise that it is the wrong policy or not be willing to make the extra effort to locate the correct one. AUP 3 had a similar issue, as the 'Under 16s leaflet' was displayed above the adult AUP on the results page and it was not clear which was which until the links were selected. AUP 16 also displayed multiple results, neither of which was the most recent version that was linked to the library authority's website.

AUPs should be easily understood by the reader, but many of the documents feature vague wording and statements which could confuse the general reader. When discussing unacceptable behaviour, many libraries are not completely clear about what constitutes misuse. Instead, they use phrases such as which is "deemed to" (AUP 7, AUP 8, AUP 10, AUP 12, AUP 21), "have the potential to" (AUP 10) and which could be "considered" (AUP 7, AUP 9, AUP 19, AUP 22) when discussing illegal or offensive behaviour. While this covers a broader range of potential offenses, it also creates confusion for the user, as they may not be aware of what is 'considered' appropriate in a public place. For many of the AUPs, it is also not stated who will be making this decision, while others state that it is the responsibility of the library authority (AUP 12) or the library staff (AUP 21, AUP 22) to decide. Library authorities can also be seen to cover all their bases by stating that users must not breach "any other local, regional, national and international law, order or regulation" (AUP 10, AUP 20), but they do not provide any indication of where this information can be found should the user wish to know. Vague references to "material which contravenes the law" (AUP 8) and "adhering to copyright and all other relevant legislation" (AUP 9) means that the users are expected to already know what the relevant legislation is and may need to go away and research it for themselves. Alternatively, AUP 6 and AUP 10 specifically name the relevant laws but do not explain what these mean in relation to the use of library computers. This also means that the user would need to find out this information for themselves if they wanted to make sure that they were adhering to the law. This is particularly important in relation to AUP 14, which states that the user is "responsible for observing the condition of copyright on each site you visit" without ensuring that the user fully understands what copyright is. AUP 20 also names the specific laws and does not explain them, but they do provide links to more information on copyright and provide general rules that the user can understand without being required to go and do extra reading.

Additionally, many of the AUPs also reference other policies, often without signposting to them. AUP 17 states that the PCs must be used in accordance with the policies of the organisation, but gives no information on where these policies can be found. AUP 20 also makes reference to the 'Library's Codes of Practice' with no indication of where they are, while AUP 5 similar cites a 'Dignity for All' policy without giving any further information about what this is or where it can be found. AUP 10 makes more attempt to inform the user, asking them to ask a member of staff if they wish to see the Byelaws laid down by the council which seek to regulate the behaviour of visitors to the library. Similarly, AUP 9 explains that their Byelaws can be found displayed in the libraries, but this is not stated until the second time that Byelaws are mentioned.

In some cases, AUPs reused the same sentence structure multiple times, making it hard to parse each individual sentence. AUP 14 creates a confusing list by having these three points one after another:

- "Reserve the right for library staff to deny user access to the internet service and to terminate any connection to subject matter which they deem unsuitable for a public library environment"
- "Reserve the right for library staff to deny user access to the internet service and to terminate any connection of anyone carrying out any activity they deem unacceptable for a public library environment"
- "Reserve the right for library staff to deny user access to the public computers and to terminate any session of anyone carrying out any activity they deem unacceptable for a public library environment"

Because these sentences are so alike, it becomes very difficult to see what is *different*. Below, the distinctions in each sentence are highlighted in bold and underlined:

- "Reserve the right for library staff to deny user access to the **internet service** and to terminate any **connection to subject matter which they deem unsuitable** for a public library environment"
- "Reserve the right for library staff to deny user access to the **internet service** and to terminate any **connection of anyone carrying out any activity they deem unacceptable** for a public library environment"
- "Reserve the right for library staff to deny user access to the **public computers** and to terminate any **session of anyone carrying out any activity they deem unacceptable** for a public library environment"

This AUP therefore uses unnecessary padding to say something which could be easily be simplified. This decreases their readability score and makes it far harder to ensure that the user understands the policy which they are agreeing to.

However, it is not just individual phrases and statements which can cause confusion for the reader. In many AUPs, there is no clear order which can help the user to process and follow what they are reading. Elements can find themselves in the wrong subsection of the AUP (such as a warning about the dangers of broadcasting personal and private details appearing under the

'Prohibited uses' heading in AUP 9) or just be found floating in the middle of a document with no context around it (e.g. the statement "The Library provides access to the Internet and its information and services for the use of library members and guests" being located between prohibited uses and the risks of online activities rather than in the general introduction to the service in AUP 19). The placement of the rules for unacceptable behaviour seems to vary greatly from policy to policy. In AUP 13, the rules are divided between 'general' rules and 'internet' rules, but some of the rules included within the 'internet' category appear to be more general rules (e.g. conditions for children's access). Two subheadings in AUP 19, "The internet and your responsibility" and "Responsible use of the internet", have very similar names, yet the former deals with disclaimers to do with library liability while the latter covers the responsibilities of the user. With clearer titles, this would be easier to tell at a glance. Unacceptable use can be included within subsections for filtering (AUP 4) or penalties (AUP 2) if it is not given its own section. In AUP 9, unacceptable use is covered both within its own section and within the penalties section, with more detail being provided in the latter. Meanwhile, AUP 22 separates unacceptable uses from the penalties, with risks and disclaimers discussed in between. Overall, a lack of logical and consistent order was observed in the AUPs.

In contrast, there are some AUPs which manage to present clear and detailed sections of information to the user. AUP 3 provides a detailed list of inappropriate material, broken down into clear categories. It also provides definitions of the words 'obscene' and 'pornographic' so that users can be certain of what is meant by these terms. AUP 5 also provides a detailed list of which actions are unacceptable and ensures that the users know the consequences of breaching the policy. AUP 9, AUP 10 and AUP 13 also have well defined penalties for misuse. AUP 2 and AUP 13 even provide appendixes in order to clarify terms and laws. AUP 2 provides detail on what the laws mean in relation to computer use in the library, while AUP 13 provides a detailed breakdown of what behaviour is considered appropriate and what is not. Other AUPs provide clear explanations of conditions of use for children. AUP 2, AUP 5 and AUP 8 all have clear statements of what children are allowed to do at which age. AUP 5 even includes warnings of computer use for children, presented in bold text and addressing the child. This section scores 70.4 on the Flesch Reading Ease Scale (Fairly Easy) and 6.9 on the Gunning Fogg Index (Primary 7), making it much more accessible than the rest of the document.

In order to make sure that the Acceptable Use Policy is as relevant and up to date as possible, it must be upgraded regularly. Of the 22 AUPs, 18 could be dated, either through a date stamp on the document itself or by looking at the source code for the website and seeing whether there was a log of when the page was last updated. Of those 18, only AUP 1 and AUP 18 have updated within the last year. This contradicts the claim that the policies will be reviewed and

updated regularly, which is made by multiple documents including AUP 3 (last updated March 2011) and AUP 17 (last updated May 2010). The full list of review dates is provided below in Table 4, where it can be seen that there is great inconsistency in how often these policies are updated.

AUP 1	June 2016
AUP 2	April 2010
AUP 3	March 2011
AUP 4	Date not given
AUP 5	December 2013
AUP 6	October 2012
AUP 7	January 2014
AUP 8	November 2013
AUP 9	November 2015
AUP 10	Date not given
AUP 11	November 2010
AUP 12	Date not given
AUP 13	April 2013
AUP 14	April 2011
AUP 15	April 2015
AUP 16	July 2014
AUP 17	May 2010
AUP 18	July 2016
AUP 19	November 2015
AUP 20	August 2013
AUP 21	2012
AUP 22	Date not given

Table 4: Dates AUPs were last reviewed (as of August 2016)

Tone

When creating a document which is supposed to be read by the general public, the tone should be friendly and positive (Sturges, 2002, p. 110). Along with the Flesch Reading Ease and Gunning Fogg scores, the Readability Score also provides a 'sentiment' assessment. 18 of the 22 AUPs were judged to have a 'Neutral' tone, while 3 were 'Positive' (AUP 3, AUP 7 and AUP 12) and 1 was 'Negative' (AUP 1). Additionally, when the children's versions of AUP 3 and AUP 4 were tested, it was discovered that the children's policies (while remaining neutral) were more negative in tone than their adult equivalent.

The Acceptable Use Policies were then analysed in order to see how positive tone was used within the documents. Beginning the policy in a positive manner was common, with a clear statement of what the internet services were providing. Many AUPs said that the purpose of IT services was to 'support' the educational (7 AUPs), information (3 AUPs), recreational (6 AUPs), cultural (5 AUPs) and communication (1 AUP) needs of the community. Positive statements about the access to information that is being provided also feature in some of the AUPs. AUP 13 states that

it is "pleased to provide access", while other AUPs emphasise that the access is free (AUP 18, AUP 21), unbiased (AUP 21) and offers a wide variety of information (AUP 7). AUP 13 also establishes a local link, stating that they are a "community-based access to information".

The use of tone when justifying the presence of the Acceptable Use Policy is also key. Many AUPs seek to find a balance that show the AUP as a positive thing while still recognising that "misuse and abuse" (AUP 7, AUP 13) can occur. AUP 21 states that the purpose of the AUP is "to facilitate effective management" of PC access, while AUP 13 functions "to ensure that standards of acceptable use are maintained". While these policies take a more matter-of-fact tone, other AUPs seek to balance the positives with the negative, stating that they are "allow[ing] legitimate access" (AUP 7) and "ensur[ing] that customers enjoy a safe and productive experience" (AUP 13) while also acknowledging that misuse may occur. This is contrasted by AUPs which use more negative wording in their introductions. AUP 20 and 21 both state that they will "not deny legitimate access", which does not have the same positive connotations of 'allow' even though their meanings are the same.

This idea of balancing rules with a positive statement of purpose also occurs elsewhere in AUPs. AUP 9 states that they "encourage" the user to access legitimate information, before emphasising that it is the user's responsibility to do so. This therefore places responsibility onto the user, but it has been done in a more positive way. Other rules which are balanced with positive statements include the limitations on computer time "to allow as many people as possible the chance to use our facilities" (AUP 9), restrictions on bandwidth so that "access to the service is fair and the optimum number of customers can use the service" (AUP 12). AUP 21 visibly uses this technique throughout the AUP. For instance, it is used to warn the users that despite "our best endeavours to ensure that such filtering is effective" and the fact that they use virus detection "for the protection of the library systems and users", neither is 100% effective. This places their best efforts and good intentions before the negative aspect in order to soften the blow.

An Acceptable Use Policy is in place to inform the user of their rights and responsibilities and protect the library from liability. Some libraries chose to put themselves ahead of their users within the policy. For instance, an aim which was commonly stated was to protect or safeguard "the interests of the Library Service and the community it serves" (AUP 3, AUP 7, AUP 9, AUP 20). Putting themselves first could cause the document to be interpreted as being for the library's benefit rather than the users'. AUP 12 reverses this order when it states that filtering "protect[s] both customers and the … Libraries ICT network", therefore prioritising the user. AUP 9 and AUP 17 both choose to begin with the disclaimers regarding the library's responsibilities, whereas AUP 5, AUP 7, AUP 8 and AUP 11 discuss user responsibilities and acceptable use first, before moving onto the disclaimers. By

emphasising the user's responsibilities rather than absolving the library of liability, these AUPs appear to be more user-focused.

Format

The formatting and presentation is very important for engaging a reader and keeping them engaged. Length can impact the likeliness of an AUP being read, as well as whether it is ordered and formatted in a way that facilitates the easy reading of the document. This section will assess how the chosen AUPs compared for these elements.

There was great variation in the length of the AUPs. Readability Score calculated an estimated reading time based on the length of the documents. AUP 1 was the shortest, with a length of 446 and an estimated reading time of 1:58. The longest was AUP 20, with 2,304 and a calculated reading time of 10:14. Of the remaining 20, 7 AUPs had an estimated reading time of 2-3 minutes long, 4 were 3-4 minutes long, 4 were 5-6 minutes long, 4 were 6-7 minutes long and 1 was 8-9 minutes long. The word counts and estimated reading times for each AUP are provided in Table 5.

	Word count	Reading time
AUP 1	446	1:58
AUP 2	1,866	8:17
AUP 3	1,176	5:13
AUP 4	794	3:31
AUP 5	1,181	5:14
AUP 6	798	3:32
AUP 7	1,492	6:37
AUP 8	563	2:30
AUP 9	1,429	6:21
AUP 10	1,442	6:24
AUP 11	648	2:52
AUP 12	638	2:50
AUP 13	1,289	5:43
AUP 14	462	2:03
AUP 15	759	3:22
AUP 16	674	2:59
AUP 17	521	2:18
AUP 18	760	3:22
AUP 19	1,440	6:24
AUP 20	2,304	10:14
AUP 21	1,318	5:51
AUP 22	646	2:52

Table 5: Word counts and estimated reading times of the AUPs as returned by Readability Score.

The majority of the AUPS used subsections in order to break up the information for the reader. 16 AUPs had a clear attempt at subsections, while 6 did not. Headings were used to break up

the different sections, with some AUPs using coloured text (AUP 2), bold text (AUP 2, AUP 4, AUP 8, AUP 21, AUP 22) or a larger font (AUP 10, AUP 22) in order to draw the eye of the reader. The subsection headings in AUP 7 and AUP 8 were also numbered. However, not every AUP uses them so successfully. The subsection headings are also not consistent, with a different number and variety of headings. For instance, while AUP 5 has 9 headings ('Introduction', 'Your responsibilities', 'Filtering', 'Security', 'Children', 'Unacceptable Use', 'Disclaimer', 'Service Availability' and 'Support'), AUP 17 only has 4 ('Introduction/Information', 'Disclaimer', 'Legal/Serious' and 'Housekeeping').

While it has previously been mentioned that bold and/or coloured text could be used to emphasise subsection headings, they can also be used to emphasise certain words or sentences within the Acceptable Use Policy. However, while some AUPs use bold text in order to draw attention to the important points of the acceptable use policy, such as security risks, warnings for children and acceptable behaviour (AUP 5, AUP 8, AUP 22), its use is not so clear in others. For AUP 4, the only sentence in bold in the whole document is "You must not impersonate another person, provide false information or share your library card or pin number with other people", but it is unclear why this rule gets emphasised so much more than the others. Similarly, AUP 9 uses bold text only on a warning to check pages before printing, while AUP 21 uses it to encourage child supervision and inform the reader that the policy will be updated regularly. AUP 6 uses bold text in the introduction of the document, in order to draw attention to the fact that the document must be signed and accepted. Meanwhile, AUP 13 uses it at the end in order to emphasise its final points. 2 AUPs used coloured text within the main body of their acceptable use policy in order to bring attention to a certain point. AUP 9 uses red text for their disclaimer, emphasising that the they assume no liability for anything which occurs as a result of using the PCs, while AUP 6 chooses to highlight that "you must not watch **live** streamed TV programmes" with blue text. For both AUPs, this is the only time that this differently coloured text appears.

The use of numbering or bullet points can help to draw the eye to specific points and break up the text of a document. In AUP 3, each point is numbered and separate. Bullet points are effective for listing the prohibited uses of the PCs, which can be seen in AUP 2. However, bullet points are used inconsistently or incorrectly in many of the AUPs. For instance, while AUP 1 utilises bullet points well when listing the prohibited uses of the facilities, it is used elsewhere to create a list of random statements which gain no benefit from being bullet pointed. Other AUPs incorrectly include or fail to include certain elements. AUP 12 only uses bullet points once in the document, to state two prohibited uses. However, more prohibited uses are mentioned in the paragraphs below and it is not explained why they are not included in the list where they would be better emphasised. AUP 9 also has a list within its 'Prohibited Uses' subsection, but this list is introduced as risks of

certain online activities and contains mostly warnings with only two prohibited uses listed (both of which are related to excessive use of bandwidth). Additionally, more prohibited uses are listed directly below in a separate paragraph.

4.3 Summary of results

There was a lot of interesting data which emerged from the user survey and the analysis of the AUPs from UK public libraries. The survey revealed that users were unlikely to read an Acceptable Use Policy in full for various reasons, including readability issues and the belief that they already knew what the rules were. However, it also revealed that they do have opinions on what should be included within these policies, with many of the elements listed receiving a high number of votes to support their inclusion within these policies. It would appear then that users, while apathetic in regards to reading the policy for themselves, do see the value of having these terms and conditions in place as a guide for other users to refer to. The analysis of the AUPs revealed exactly where the UK public libraries are causing difficulty for their users in terms of providing a document which the user can understand and refer to as a guide. Excessively difficult language and unclear formatting all contributed towards idea of an AUP being off-putting for the reader.

The next section will discuss common themes which have emerged in both the survey results and the AUP analysis, returning to the research questions established in the introduction and assessing whether these have been answered.

5.0 Discussion

This section will assess the literature, the results of the survey and the results of the AUP analysis in order to answer the three research questions presented at the start of this paper. By assessing all of the elements together, it is possible to get the best perspective on the perspective of the user, how this can be helped or hindered by the AUPs themselves and whether the results link up with the existing literature.

5.1 Q1: What do users currently know about AUPs?

With only 5.13% of 78 respondents stating that they read terms and conditions faced with them, it is clear from the survey results that there is much which needs to be done in order to make sure that the user is fully informed in regards to the Acceptable Use Policy in place on public access computers in UK public libraries. Of the 28 members of the library who said that they had used the library computers in the past, only 8 (28.57%) of them said that they also knew where the AUP was located. This means that 71.43% of these people have likely accessed the public computers without being fully aware of the rules and regulations in place on them. Looking at whether these 28 computer users were likely to read the terms and conditions even if they could find them, it was noted that 3 of them said that they always read the terms and conditions, 2 said they sometimes did, 13 said that they scanned them without fully reading then and 10 said that they never read them. This means that the majority of these people are in fact using the computers without being aware of the policy that they are supposed to be following. Additionally, 2 of the 3 computer users who claimed to always read the terms and conditions also admitted that they did not know how to find the Acceptable Use Policy in their local library. This means that even although they might read the terms and conditions in other situations, they have been unable to do so here. It therefore appears that even those who are willing and able to read terms and conditions will only do so if explicitly faced with them and will not seek to find these policies by themselves. Policies therefore need to be available and accessible by the user and well promoted by the staff, in order to make sure that the user understands their responsibilities and is able to act accordingly.

However while users are unlikely to read the AUP itself, many of them are likely to have their own idea of what is included within the document that they are agreeing to. This can be seen in the results of the survey, where respondents claimed that they already knew what was contained within the AUP and that most of the elements included were self-explanatory. Foltz et al.

(2008, p. 710) also address this issue, stating that common contact with policies such as AUPs can lead users to believe that they know and understand what is within them even if they have never actually read them. This belief in their own knowledge concerning the document means that they are less likely to read the AUP in the future, therefore being unaware of any new rules that may have been implemented in the library or not realising that differences in policy may exist if they use the public access computers within another library authority. As the AUP analysis shows, there is a lot of variation between the policies of the different authorities, with different rules being emphasised at each location. It is therefore dangerous for the user to assume that the rules are exactly the same wherever they are, but implies that they are unlikely to read the AUP even if it is highly visible. This is dangerous for the library as, should any issues arise, the institution would be in a far stronger position if they were able to demonstrate that the policy was well-promoted and known by the users, as opposed to being easily ignored (Sturges, 2002, p.107).

Generally, the elements stated by users when asked if they were aware of what was contained within an AUP were correct. However, there was a noticeable emphasis on the negative aspects of the AUP. Prohibitions, warnings and restrictions were more likely to be mentioned and positive elements such as explaining the purpose of the service was not mentioned. Therefore, it can be seen that people view an AUP as a document which states matter-of-fact information and the rules of the library. The AUPs which were analysed were also more likely to address unacceptable behaviour than acceptable behaviour. It has been argued that this is because unacceptable behaviour ought to form a far shorter list (Gallagher et al., 2015, p. 579), but it still sets a negative tone for the entire document. Sturges (2002, p. 110) observes that a long list of prohibitions could antagonise the user, whereas it is better to make sure that the user understands that the library's main intention is to provide access to information and that any restrictions are few and justified. For this, AUPs that balance negative aspects of the AUP by giving a positive reason for why they are necessary serve as far better representations of the library's commitment to the user.

There are additional issues with the scope of the users' demonstrated knowledge about AUPs. While there were users who recognised certain elements of an AUP, either on their own or when prompted, there were significantly few people who stated that they were aware of every AUP element listed within. Once more this raises the question of whether the user can be bound by rules if they are not aware of them. Sturges argues that AUPs should "create the basis of an agreement with users based on mutual commitments and responsibilities" (2002, p. 106), but arguably this must be fully understood by both parties before any agreement can be reached. Foltz et al. (2005, p. 141) suggest that the students in his study could be able to defend themselves against any allegations of breaching the AUP if they maintain their ignorance, and it is possible that users within

a public library setting could be doing the same, whether purposefully or due to complacency concerning Acceptable Use Policies. While accepting the AUP means they are technically bound by the document whether they've read it or not, this lack of clarity and enforcement could result in an elongated and complicated procedure should anything happen.

Staff liability is also a key issue that can be seen within the literature, the survey results and the analysis of the AUPs. Most of the AUPs contain a disclaimer wherein the library states that they have taken as many precautions as they can to protect the users (e.g. filtering, monitoring) but the user themselves should make sure that they are using the internet in a responsible and lawful manner. However, McMenemy and Burton (2005, p. 22) believe that the signing of the AUP does not mean that the staff are no longer responsible for their users, as they need to ensure that they are using the computers appropriately and are able to locate the resources that they need. This is especially important after 1 survey respondent said that they expect to be able to find the Acceptable Use Policy by talking to a member of staff. Staff therefore need to be aware of the contents of the AUP and make sure that they are able to promote and enforce it, but this can be difficult if they are not trained properly. Spacey et al. (2015, p. 82) discovered that only 20% of the 80 services which responded to their survey provided regular internet training for their staff. For the staff to be able to enforce the policy correctly whilst helping the customers, as many AUPs claim that their staff will do, then the staff need to be confident that they understand the AUP.

For this research question, the results indicate that users do know some things about Acceptable Use Policies, but this knowledge has come from their own experience of using computers and accumulated knowledge from different situations, as opposed to being the clear and complete knowledge that would come from reading a well-structured and presented AUP. As a result, the knowledge which the users have is patchy and does not allow them to use the public access computers in the most informed manner. Additionally, the results reveal that the staff need to be adequately trained and able to enforce the policy and support the users, as both the users and the AUPs seem to suggest that the library staff have more knowledge on this subject than they actually do in most cases.

5.2 Q2: What do users feel should be included in an AUP?

On the list of elements that could be found within an AUP in UK public libraries, every element had the majority of voters stating that it should be included within the document. Children's rules were especially popular, with 97.92% of 48 respondents voting that it should be included. The specifics of

rules for children were also addressed in the questions concerning whether the AUP for children should be the same as that for adults. While some respondents believed that it should be the same, others believed that they should be edited for children. However there was a conflict between the perceived need for tighter restrictions and the desire to not inform children of the exact nature of what they were being protected from. If an element which addresses the accessing of inappropriate content is left out of an AUP so that the child cannot become curious about it, can they then be held accountable if they accidentally access such material? By not warning the child and their guardians that they may encounter inappropriate material, it would then be the library that was held accountable if the inevitable happened. However, by warning children about the dangers of the internet and the content that can be found on it, the library protects themselves while also helping to educate the child on the safe use of the internet, whereas neglecting to inform them would open the library up to criticism.

Child supervision was also mentioned often with the survey results. Many AUPs also state that adults are responsible for their children up to a certain age. Therefore this would require the adult to be aware of the contents of the Acceptable Use Policy and make sure that their child is aware of the rules and abides by them. However, with only 5.13% of the 78 adults surveyed stating that they would definitely read an AUP, it is not certain that the child would get the support that they required from their guardian. Therefore actions must be taken in order to make sure that both the child and the adult who is supervising them understand the policy and are able to follow it.

1 respondent felt that users who need the computers in order to do work should be prioritised over those who are using them for leisure purposes. However, only one of the AUPs analysed mentioned this as one of their aims in the provision of computers within the library. AUP 12 states that the computers are intended "primarily to support educational community information resources" and these users may be given priority. Educational and recreational use are both covered in the introduction of many of the AUPs, with educational use only being mentioned once more than recreational use (7 times as opposed to 6). Prioritising those using the computers for work purposes could cause problems as it would fall to the library staff to decide who had the greater need. People may be using games for educational purposes, while others may appear to be doing more serious work while they are not. There is also the danger of informing a customer that they need to vacate the computers because another user's need is greater than theirs. Sturges (2002, p. 109) asserts that every user has individual needs and the library staff cannot always act as an accurate judge of who is most deserving of a computer based on their current activities.

As previously mentioned, many users suggested that users should be made to agree to the AUP in a way which will make them take more notice of the contents, whether by requiring them to tick boxes for multiple statements or answer questions on the policy before they are allowed to log in. However this suggestion is problematic for several reasons. If someone is forced to answer questions and go through a laborious process before they can access the internet, then they will remember this negative experience the next time that they need to use the computer facilities. This could then result in them choosing not to use the library computers, possibly by going to another venue such as an internet cafe. As public libraries are being required to justify their existence more and more, driving users away can only serve to harm their position further. Additionally, the introduction of more complex tasks which need to be done before a computer can be accessed could compromise one of the core values of librarianship, that of equity of access. Gorman (2015, p. 36) defines this as "ensuring that all library resources and programs are accessible to all", in stark contrast to these kinds of measures which would exclude anyone who was unable or unwilling to complete these tasks in order to gain access to the resources available to them on the computers.

This research question was answered through the survey, where users voted on whether they believed that certain elements should be included within Acceptable Use Policies in UK public libraries. The full results for this are available in Appendix 2. These results revealed that, even although people are unlikely to fully read an Acceptable Use Policy for themselves, they believe that it is important for the majority of the elements listed to be included within the policy. This suggests that, even although they may choose not to read it, they understand the necessity of having such a policy in place. This conclusion is both reassuring and concerning, as it implies that the user understands the importance of an Acceptable Use Policy, but that they are happy to be bound by a contract without reading it and ensuring that they agree with and will be able to abide by it.

5.3 Q3: What would make users take greater notice of AUPs?

When asked what would make them take greater notice of AUPs, many users stated that they would be more inclined to read a document which was shorter in length. However, there are both positive and negative aspects to this. A short policy is more likely to be remembered but may also exclude things which are later required when an issue arises (Sturges, 2002, p.106). One workaround for this is to provide a shorter version for the user to read, with the option of reading the full version also provided. However, there is little chance that many readers will choose to view the longer version when so few are willing to read the shorter version provided on their screens. Providing a shorter AUP also means that elements may be excluded, which is difficult to do when all of the elements

have been noted as essential by the majority of the survey takers. Additionally, a shorter document does not always mean that it is easier to read. For instance, AUP 1 has a word count of only 446 but also has the lowest score for Flesch Reading Ease (30.6) and the reading level of a fourth year university student according to the Gunning Fog Index. However, with the average attention span of an adult being 8 seconds (Hooton, 2015), it is also unlikely that they are going to read an AUP which is 2,304 words long (AUP 20), even if it were written in the plainest language possible. Therefore it is essential that a balance is struck between length and readability.

The way in which a document is presented is important (Sturges, 2002, p. 110). The way in which a library authority can choose to format their AUP can make the difference between engaging the reader and making them shut off. As the survey results implied, use of headings to highlight important themes and having key points in bold and colour in order to draw the eye can be extremely useful for catching someone's eye and holding their attention. Flesch (1949, p.35) advises that you should consider your users and tailor your presentation so that it will appeal to them. Additionally, the tone needs to be positive and friendly in order to encourage the user to carry on reading. Two of the AUPs adopted a conversational, question-and-answer format for some of its sections. Flesch (1949, p. 85) does not agree with this tactic as he believes that "you can tell from miles away that its conversational tone is faked", but this is an effective way of bringing the language of the AUP down to the level of their users and allowing them to read the policy as if their own questions are being answered. AUP 10 has a clear question and answer format throughout, with questions answered in a positive manner. However, the language and sentence structure used within this format is still too advanced to cater to all users.

The length and the presentation of a document means nothing if the content of the AUP is not readable. Readability has been a recurring theme during this study, and for good reason. In a document which is intended for user consumption, it is crucial that the user is able to understand it. The user survey conducted for this study attempted to educate users about Acceptable Use Policies and discover what could help to make them more engaged in regards to the policies. Taking a user-centric design approach when creating an AUP could be extremely beneficial, as it would help to ensure that the users were getting the most out of the policy. Flesch (1949, p. 141) believed that talking to and understanding the users was a crucial element of being able to learn what they know, need to know and would like to know. Getting to know your users also allows you to learn what the lowest common denominator is in terms of reading level and make sure that the AUP caters to those users in order to be as accessible as possible to a greater range of potential users. For instance, the simpler headings which AUP 4 chose to include within its children's policy could easily be used within the adult policy rather than the more linguistically advanced headings. Hamilton (1990, p. 42)

observes that long words can be selected because they can make a document sound more important, but the most important thing is really "to get your message across concisely and clearly". The desire to make a piece of writing sound 'official' can result in the piece of the work being dry and difficult for another reader. Therefore, Flesch states, in order for the message to reach as many users as possible, the writing style needs to be simplified (1949, p. 160). Similarly, Sturges (2002) believes that a piece of text such as an AUP ought to be written in clear and simple language suitable for the general public. He observes that a reader is more likely to accept a set of rules if they are able to understand them, even if they do not necessarily agree with them. An AUP should therefore seek to state its terms and conditions in a clear and assertive manner which does not invite any disagreement from the users. Many of the AUPs were also found to have run-on sentences, which decrease the readability level and require more effort on the part of the reader to parse and understand it (Hamilton, 1990, p. 24).

For the third research question, this study revealed that much can be done in order to make a user more inclined to read an Acceptable Use Policy. While motivating and encouraging the user plays a part in this effort, it was also revealed that the AUPs themselves are not doing enough to make sure that they are being understood by the users. AUPs which are too long can be dissuade the user from reading the whole policy, whereas a shorter one can appear more manageable. However, if the formatting in that AUP is not engaging enough or the subsections do not make sense to the user, then they can also be discouraged. Finally, if the language and sentence structure used within the document is not easy to read and understand, then the user will likely accept the policy without reading it. It is therefore the responsibility of the user to read the Acceptable Use Policy provided, while it is the responsibility of the library authority to provide a copy of the policy that the user will be able and willing to read.

Overall, there was great inconsistency noted between the 22 AUPs of UK public libraries. For the most part, they all covered the same issues, yet many of them did so in such different and varying styles that it was hard to be sure exactly where to look within the document to locate a certain aspect. If users are apt to believe that they understand what's within a policy after experiencing one policy (Foltz et al., 2008, p. 710), then surely it would be beneficial to have a more uniform policy across different library authorities. Doherty et al. (2011) believe that a more uniform policy would promote staff knowledge of the policies and allow users to become more familiar with the certain terms within the context of an Acceptable Use Policy. While it is important to personalise an AUP so that it reflects the policies and goals of the parent organisation, have a template which all libraries could use and adapt would lead to great consistency and understanding.

6.0 Recommendations

After conducting this research, the following suggestions can be made to any public library which would like its users to engage more with the Acceptable Use Policy in place:

- **Use language that your user can understand.** While using language which sounds legal and official can appear to make your policy sound more professional, it also means that it will not be understood by all of your users. If a user is supposed to understand and adhere to a policy, then it should be presented in a way that caters even to users with a lower level of literacy.

- **Format your AUP so that it is easy for the user to read.** Subsections with clear headings can help the user to see exactly what points are covered within the AUP and using bold and coloured text effectively can help to draw the reader's eye to the key issues. Bullet pointed lists can also help to break up the text and provide information in more digestible chunks.

- **Keep it short yet informative.** Do not make your policy so lengthy that it will discourage people from reading it. However it is also important ensure that all of your key points are covered within the document. Find the balance between a document which is brief and a document which is lacking.

- **Choose your tone carefully.** Maintain a positive and engaging tone throughout the AUP in order to make sure that the user does not get intimidated. When discussing prohibitions other potentially negative elements, use positive language to justify the necessity so that the user understands that any restrictions are there in order to protect and support them.

- **Promote increased information literacy within your library.** Signing an AUP does not mean that the library staff are no longer responsible for a user. Library staff should be vigilant for users who may require extra assistance with learning how to navigate the internet successfully and disseminate a reliable source from an unreliable sources. Help them within branch or direct them towards an appropriate IT class within the library authority in order to expand their knowledge base.

- **Create a separate AUP for children.** Make sure that this policy is written at a reading level which children of school age and above can read and understand, either individually or with help from their parent or guardian. Encourage parents to use the AUP as a means to teach their children how to use the internet safely and successfully.

- **Update your policy regularly.** The laws concerned with computer use change regularly and your policy should be responsive to any new developments. Additionally, your policy should reflect the needs of your own institution and be updated as any new issues arise. The policy should be checked every year to make sure that it is current.

- **Train your staff to enforce the AUP.** Staff who are fully trained and understand the AUP will be more able and willing to promote and enforce it. All incoming staff should be trained as they arrive and booster training should be given every year following the policy update in order to make sure that the staff is fully up-to-date with the current policy.

- **Liaise with other library authorities in order to create a policy template.** As libraries tend to adhere to the same standards across the board, developing a centralised AUP template which could be adjusted for individual library authorities where necessary would create consistency and set a standard which all libraries could follow.

7.0 Conclusion

As more and more people turn to the internet as their primary source of information, libraries are under increasing pressure to adapt to this new information seeking behaviour and provide reliable internet services for their users. While the use of public access computers allows libraries to offer a far greater range of information resources, there are also some issues that come along with these new developments. As a result of the sheer volume of information which is available on the internet, it is not possible for the library to guarantee that everything that the user will find on the internet will be safe and reliable. In order to inform users of their responsibilities and about safe practices when it comes to using the public access computers, many libraries have developed an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). This policy lays out the terms and conditions which the user must abide by when using the public access computers, so as to support the position of the user and of the library.

A literature review was conducted in order to see how AUPs were addressed within the academic literature. This review found that AUPs were well covered in terms of their relation to other aspects of library IT management, particularly within studies which focused on filtering. It also found that there were studies which addressed the content of AUPs and how they were enforced within the public library environment. However, the only studies which could be found which addressed AUPs from a user perspective dealt only with students, whereas no existing literature could be found which approached AUPs from the perspective of the general public.

An online survey was therefore conducted in order to gather data about user awareness of AUPs, as well as assessing what elements they believed should be included within an AUP and what might make them take greater notice of the AUP within their public library. This survey returned a lot of very interesting data. It showed that people generally do not fully read terms and conditions when they are faced with them, but it also revealed that people had opinions about what should be involved in these policies and believed that most of the elements found within current Acceptable Use Policies in UK public libraries ought to remain included. There was, however, a strong belief that children should be able to read the Acceptable Use Policies for themselves in order to learn about the dangers of the internet and how to protect themselves online. Finally, the respondents suggested ideas of how to make AUPs more appealing to users, suggesting that length, formatting and emphasis of key issues would help to draw the reader's eye and read until the end.

Alongside this survey, 22 AUPs from UK public libraries were also analysed in order to see whether they could be easily found and understood by the general public. An online tool was used to assign readability scores to each of the policies and it was discovered that all of them had a high reading level that would not be accessible to every member of the public who wished to access the

public access computers within the library. Additionally, a thematic analysis of the documents revealed specific examples within the documents where they succeeded or failed in meeting the accessibility criteria established by the literature and the user survey. Overall, it was clear that inconsistency between different AUPs means that it can more difficult for users to fully understand the rules that they need to abide by, as they are likely to assume that all policies are the same or that they already know the rules because they are common sense. Users are also discouraged from reading the AUP due to advanced language, difficult sentence structures and irregular formatting.

Ultimately, this study discovered that users are unlikely to read a set of terms and conditions in full for a variety of reasons, including apathy and the belief that they already know what is contained within them. However, it was also noted that the Acceptable Use Policies in UK public libraries are not successful in being presented to users in such a way that facilitates understanding and increased information literacy. Therefore the liability for the lack of awareness around AUPs does not fall only on the shoulders of the users but also on those of the policy writers and the library staff. The policy writers should be presenting the information to the user in a manner that they can understand and process, so that they can apply it to their online behaviour and benefit from an enhanced experience of using the computers. Additionally, the library staff should be fully trained in the points covered within the AUP so that they can promote and enforce it within their branch libraries and make sure that the users are fully aware of what their responsibilities are.

This study revealed valuable information about user awareness when it comes to Acceptable Use Policies and how the policies themselves can help or hinder this process. In the future, more in depth studies of either of the two elements would allow libraries to better structure their AUPs so that they are of the utmost benefit to both the user and the library service.

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Section One: Public Libraries
In this section, you will be asked questions about your own use of public libraries.

Q1. Are you a member of a public library?
- o   Yes
- o   No

Q2. When did you last visit the library?
> (Displayed if 'Yes' is selected for Q1)
- o   Within the last month
- o   Within the last three months
- o   Within the last six months
- o   Within the last year
- o   Over a year ago

Q2. Have you ever been a member of a public library in the past?
> (Displayed if 'No' is selected for Q1)
- o   Yes
- o   Maybe
- o   No

Q3. Have you ever used the computers available in your local public library?
> (Displayed if 'Yes' is selected for Q1)
- o   Yes
- o   Maybe
- o   No
- o   My local library does not have computers

Section Two: Acceptable Use Policies
These are the terms and conditions that a user needs to accept whenever they are using a public access computer. These documents give information about what services are provided and state the responsibilities of the user and the staff.
In this section, you will be asked questions about these terms and conditions. The aim of these questions is to assess how much people know about Acceptable Use Policies.

Q1. Do you read terms and conditions when you see them?
- o   Yes, always
- o   Yes, sometimes
- o   I scan them quickly but do not fully read them
- o   No, never

Q2. Do you know how to find the acceptable use policy for the computers in the library?
- o   Yes
- o   No

Q2b. Where are they?
    (Displayed if 'Yes' is selected for Q2)
- o   On the login screen
- o   On the library website
- o   On a poster in the library
- o   On the membership application
- o   Other (please specify) _____
- o   Can't remember

Q3. What information do you think might be in an Acceptable Use Policy for UK public libraries? Please be as descriptive as you can.

Q4. All of the elements listed below have been taken from Acceptable Use Policies currently in place in UK public libraries. Did you know that these elements were included and do you think they should be?

	Did you know this was included in an AUP?		Do you think this should be included in an AUP?		
	Yes	**No**	**Yes**	**Maybe**	**No**
Who is allowed access	o	o	o	o	o
Time allowance information	o	o	o	o	o
Information on how to save data	o	o	o	o	o
Printing charges and rules	o	o	o	o	o
Conditions for children's access	o	o	o	o	o
Bandwidth restrictions	o	o	o	o	o
Do not disturb other users	o	o	o	o	o
Treat staff with respect	o	o	o	o	o
Wear headphones when listening to audio	o	o	o	o	o
No food or drinks at the PCs	o	o	o	o	o
Warnings about the risks of some online activities	o	o	o	o	o
Warnings that some information available online may not be reliable or accurate	o	o	o	o	o

Statement that the library is not responsible for any loss (monetary or otherwise) due to computer use	o	o	o	o	o
Do not access obscene, offensive or abusive material	o	o	o	o	o
Do not violate intellectual property law, including downloading or copying copyrighted material	o	o	o	o	o
Do not attempt to alter the set-up of the library computers	o	o	o	o	o
Do not access unauthorised servers and websites via the library PCs	o	o	o	o	o
Do not distribute unsolicited advertising	o	o	o	o	o
Do not record or photograph other library users and/or staff	o	o	o	o	o
Do not connect devices to the PCs (e.g. mobile phones)	o	o	o	o	o
Do not stream live television	o	o	o	o	o
Information on the laws associated with computer use	o	o	o	o	o
Your access may be filtered	o	o	o	o	o
Your access may be monitored	o	o	o	o	o

Section Three: Children
In this section, you will be asked about children's access to AUPs.

Q1. Do you have children?
- o   Yes
- o   No

Q1b. How old are your children?
>   (Displayed if 'Yes' is selected for Q1)
- o   Under 5
- o   5 – 8
- o   9 – 12
- o   13 – 16
- o   17 – 18
- o   18+

Q2. Are there any rules from the adult AUP that you think should NOT be included in the AUP for children?

Q3. Are there any rules that you think should DEFINITELY be involved in an AUP for children?

Q4. Who should be responsible for making sure that a child understands and follows the AUP?
- o   The parent/guardian
- o   The child
- o   The Acceptable Use Policy
- o   Other _____

Q5. Should an AUP for children be written so that the child can understand it for themselves?
- o   Yes
- o   Maybe
- o   No

Section Four: Raising awareness

Q1. What would make you pay more attention to the Acceptable Use Policy? Please be as detailed as possible.

Section Five: Demographic information
In this section, you will be asked to give us some general information about yourself. This information is entirely anonymous and will only be used to create statistics for the final report.

Q1. What age are you?
- o   Under 18
- o   18 – 24
- o   25 – 34
- o   35 – 44
- o   45 – 54
- o   55 – 64
- o   65 – 74
- o   75 – 84
- o   85 or older

Q2. What gender are you?
- o Male
- o Female
- o Other
- o Prefer not to say

Q3. What part of the UK are you resident in?
- o England
- o Scotland
- o Wales
- o Northern Ireland

Q3. What is your native language?
- o English
- o Polish
- o Punjabi
- o Urdu
- o Other (please specify) _____

Appendix 2: Section Two Question 4 answers

S2 Q4b - Do you think this should be included in an AUP?								
Question	Yes		Maybe		No			Total
Who is allowed access	74.47%	35	21.28%	10	4.26%	2		47
Time allowance information	93.48%	43	2.17%	1	4.35%	2		46
Information on how to save data	70.21%	33	23.40%	11	6.38%	3		47
Printing charges and rules	85.42%	41	12.50%	6	2.08%	1		48
Conditions for children's access	97.92%	47	2.08%	1	0.00%	0		48
Bandwidth restrictions	70.83%	34	18.75%	9	10.42%	5		48
Do not disturb other users	79.17%	38	14.58%	7	6.25%	3		48
Treat staff with respect	89.58%	43	8.33%	4	2.08%	1		48
Wear headphones when listening to audio	91.67%	44	8.33%	4	0.00%	0		48
No food or drinks at the PCs	72.92%	35	22.92%	11	4.17%	2		48
Warnings about the risks of some online activities	80.43%	37	13.04%	6	6.52%	3		46
Warnings that some information available online may not be reliable or accurate	53.19%	25	17.02%	8	29.79%	14		47
Statement that the library is not responsible for any loss (monetary or otherwise) due to computer use	79.59%	39	12.24%	6	8.16%	4		49
Do not access obscene, offensive or abusive material	87.50%	42	12.50%	6	0.00%	0		48
Do not violate intellectual property law, including downloading or copying copyrighted material	93.75%	45	4.17%	2	2.08%	1		48
Do not attempt to alter the set-up of the library computers	85.42%	41	8.33%	4	6.25%	3		48
Do not access unauthorised servers and websites via the library PCs	89.13%	41	6.52%	3	4.35%	2		46
Do not distribute unsolicited advertising	78.26%	36	13.04%	6	8.70%	4		46
Do not record or photograph other library users and/or staff	85.42%	41	8.33%	4	6.25%	3		48
Do not connect devices to the PCs (e.g. mobile phones)	47.92%	23	27.08%	13	25.00%	12		48
Do not stream live television	58.70%	27	30.43%	14	10.87%	5		46
Information on the laws associated with computer use	78.72%	37	12.77%	6	8.51%	4		47
Your access may be filtered	87.23%	41	10.64%	5	2.13%	1		47
Your access may be monitored	89.58%	43	8.33%	4	2.08%	1		48

S2 Q4b - Do you think this should be included in an AUP?								
Question	Yes		Maybe		No			Total
Who is allowed access	74.47%	35	21.28%	10	4.26%	2		47
Time allowance information	93.48%	43	2.17%	1	4.35%	2		46
Information on how to save data	70.21%	33	23.40%	11	6.38%	3		47
Printing charges and rules	85.42%	41	12.50%	6	2.08%	1		48
Conditions for children's access	97.92%	47	2.08%	1	0.00%	0		48
Bandwidth restrictions	70.83%	34	18.75%	9	10.42%	5		48
Do not disturb other users	79.17%	38	14.58%	7	6.25%	3		48
Treat staff with respect	89.58%	43	8.33%	4	2.08%	1		48
Wear headphones when listening to audio	91.67%	44	8.33%	4	0.00%	0		48
No food or drinks at the PCs	72.92%	35	22.92%	11	4.17%	2		48
Warnings about the risks of some online activities	80.43%	37	13.04%	6	6.52%	3		46
Warnings that some information available online may not be reliable or accurate	53.19%	25	17.02%	8	29.79%	14		47
Statement that the library is not responsible for any loss (monetary or otherwise) due to computer use	79.59%	39	12.24%	6	8.16%	4		49
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Do not distribute unsolicited advertising	78.26%	36	13.04%	6	8.70%	4		46
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