How to Make the Most of the Statistical Profile of Connecticut Public Libraries

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1. All the library statistical resources available from the State Library (including the Statistical Profile) are available on the Statistics web-page. But before we begin work with the Profile, let’s discuss where most of the Profile’s statistics come from, the Annual Report and Application for State Aid.

2. The Annual Report and Application for State Aid is the source for all the data on public libraries compiled by the federal government, IMLS. It is the source for all the state-wide public library statistics you might see in State reports. It is the source for all the data in the Statistical Profile. And (via the Profile) it can be the source for you and your neighboring libraries when you are gathering together statistical reports for your library trustees and town officials. Therefore accuracy and consistency are important. The analyses made using this data are only as good as the data behind them.

3. The full Profile is available as an Excel document from the Statistics webpage. Most of the other links on this page are for publications we generated from sections of the complete Profile. For example, the statewide statistics, chart & report creators, advocacy flyers, and a directory of foreign language collections are available here.
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4. This is what appears when you open the Statistical Profile. So where is the data? It is hiding behind this Title Page. Use the Links (in blue) to move to each worksheet subject.

5. Click on “Introduction” for a general background on how the Profile, an explanation on how it is organized, and a Glossary that provides definitions on many of the terms used in worksheet tables.

6. Click on “Statewide Charts” if you are interested in visualizing current and trending statewide statistics on library services, finances, collections, etc. These statistics are also available in table format if you click on “Statewide Totals.”

7. Click on “Data Organized by Individual Library” to see all the data available for Connecticut’s individual public libraries in one large spreadsheet. You will see a “Table of Contents” at the top, which you can use to move through the spreadsheet to each of the main subject areas. All the libraries that provided data are listed on the left (you are only seeing a few of the libraries in the image below) and the data elements are listed along the top. Note that for most data elements, there are “Statewide Average” “Libraries Median”, “Statewide Totals”, and a count of the libraries that provided this data. There are also two columns that remain visible at all times, Population of Service Area, and AENGLC Rank. The AENGLC Rank is a wealth ranking with the wealthier towns having lower numbers. You should also note the line of down arrows that appears on this and all the worksheets. The red arrow below points to what they look like in the spreadsheet.
8. This tool allows sorting and filtering. For example, clicking on the Population down-arrow will allow you to sort by population (see red arrow in image above):

8. This same drop down arrow in the Population column allows you to filter the libraries so that you only see libraries that are in towns with a population “Between” two populations, like 5,000 and 10,000.

9. You can filter multiple times, so if you wanted to only see libraries that have a population and wealth similar to your library, you can use the filter tool for population and AENGLC rank to do this.
10. Once you get the hang of using the sorting and filtering tool, you can think about creating charts like the one below. After filtering for population (5 to 10 thousand) and for AENGLC wealth rank (50 to 80), I created a chart for Circulation Per Capita for the libraries that fit those criteria. And I added an average of the libraries as well.

11. Now that you’ve seen how the spreadsheet can be manipulated, I recommend browsing through each section of the spreadsheet to see what data elements are represented there. You can do this by using the links in the “Table of Contents” to move around the spreadsheet. Or you can move to the right using the tool pictured here (located lower right in Excel).

For a description of what you will find in the various sections of the Profile, see below.

12. Buildings and Administration
   - Square Feet per capita served
   - Integrated Library Systems used
   - Municipal versus Association libraries
13. Services
- Total Service Hours and Typical Hours per week
- Library Visits Per Capita and Library Visits Per Service Hour
- Internet Computers, Broadband type and speed, Sessions

14. Circulation
- Total Circulation, Circ. Per Capita, Circ. Per Service Hours
- Adult, Children’s, and YA Circulation breakdown and % of total circulation
- Visual Material and Audio Material Circulation % of total circulation
- Electronic content circulation

15. Programs
- Children’s Program Attendance Per Capita
- Overall Program Attendance Per Capita

16. Interlibrary Loan
- Filled Requests per 1000 Population

17. Collections
- Print, Visual, Audio Collection sizes and %s
- Print Collection Turnover
- Total Collection Turnover
- Shared and Non-Shared E-Content
- Foreign Language Collection Directory

18. Personnel and Benefits
- Full-time Equivalent Employees Per 1000 Population
- Numbers of Full-Time and Part-Time Staff
- Salary and Hourly Rate Information

19. Income, Fees & Charges
- Town Tax Appropriation - Per Capita and % of total income
- Library Appropriation as a % of Total Town Revenues
- Other Operating Income and % of Total Operating Income
- Operating Income Per Capita
- Typical DVD and Book Overdue Fines

20. Expenditures
- Materials Expenditure – Per Capita and % of Total Expenditures
- Salaries Expenditure – Per Capita and % of Total Expenditures
- Operating Income Per Capita
21. At any time during your tour of the Profile, you can click on the “Return to Title Page” link and choose one of the other sections of the Profile. As in previous years, we have a separate spreadsheet available for “Data Organized by Municipality” and you can access this spreadsheet via the link on the Title Page of the Profile. This spreadsheet looks and works just like the “Data Organized by Individual Library,” but this separate spreadsheet combines data for libraries within a municipality. This makes it easier to compare library services between towns when one or more of the towns involved have more than one independent library.

22. I hope this tutorial will help you put the Statistical Profile to good use. And I recommend the use of the Chart and Report Creators, made with the data from the Profile, which will create a multitude of charts in a matter of three or four clicks. No Excel knowledge required. And look at the other resources available on the State Library’s Public Library Statistics web page.

If you want to know more about Advocacy Flyers, Chart and Report Creators, the Statistical Profile, the data behind it, or the ways you can use it, contact me.

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