

The Urbana Free Library Technology Plan

FY2016 – FY2018

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A. Library Mission Statement

The Urbana Free Library is a welcoming place with space, collections, technology, and staff dedicated to fostering literacy and a strong community.

B. Technology Vision Statement

In keeping with this mission, The Urbana Free Library is committed to the use of technology to improve the quality, scope, and efficiency of Library services. The Library will continually review and adopt new technology to enhance the Library experience of its users to improve access to information, and to improve employees' ability to perform their duties.

C. History

The Urbana Free Library was an early adopter of community connectivity, offering in 1984 the first off-campus public access terminal to the University of Illinois LCS online catalog, in 1994 the first public access terminal to Champaign County's CCNet, and in 1994 public Internet access through Prairienet.

The Library was a participant in the Lincoln Trail Libraries System (LTLS) automation system and online public access catalog from its inception in 1981 with CLSI. The system migrated to Dynix in 1993, installed a major Dynix upgrade in 1998, and LTLS migrated to the Dynix's Horizon product in 2004. In 2011, Lincoln Trail Libraries System merged with three other systems to become Illinois Heartland Library System, with the eventual plan to merge their automation systems. In December 2011, The Urbana Free Library and the Champaign Public Library left the LINC automation system and migrated to a joint online CU Catalog utilizing the automation software of Polaris Library Systems.

The Library's Local History Online database went online in 2004, greatly expanding the Library's provision of its unique resources to any individual with internet access. In March 2012, Local History Online migrated to a new platform, the Fusion digital collection software by Polaris Library Systems.

In 2006 – 2008 the Library began to focus on telecommunications and infrastructure upgrades, including networking infrastructure and wireless hotspot. In September 2009, the Library upgraded from T1 internet access to high-speed fiber.

In 2013, the Library began planning for its RFID implementation. The Library's security gates were old, outdated, failing, and expensive to maintain. The devices used to sensitize the electromagnetic tape that secured the collection were no longer being made and replacements were extremely hard to find. We feared that soon the Library could be without any security system at all. RFID technology would provide the security needed to protect the Library's collections and was widely used by libraries around the world. As an added bonus, patrons would be able to use self-check kiosks to check out the print collection and part of the audiovisual collection, a service many patrons had come to expect from their experiences at other libraries and at retail stores. There also was the potential to increase efficiency because Circulation staff could check in or out multiple items at a time instead of proceeding one at a time with the laser scanners. In April 2014, the system went live featuring new gates at the Green Street and Race Street entrances, five workstations for Circulation Services, and four self-check kiosks. By June 2016, over 288,700 items had been checked out from the self-service kiosks, which are especially popular with patrons in Children's Services.

D. Timeline of Routine Responsibilities

Library Board:

- Review the Technology Plan. Consider technology needs to be included in budget planning. (January)

Tech Committee:

An appointed group of staff members, one from each department, who represent the viewpoints and ideas of all Library employees.

(each July, November, and March unless specified):

- Review unmet technology needs of staff and Library users.
- Review software / hardware configurations of all public computers.
- Review equipment requests for public checkout, in-house public use, and programming.
- Review technology needs in light of developments at partnering agencies.
- Review Technology Plan progress and emerging technologies.
- Review the Public Computer and Internet Access Policy. (July)
- Review and revise Technology Plan to forward to Administration and Board. (December)

IT Manager:

- Inventory of network equipment. (January)
- Inventory of end-user equipment. (January)
- Monitor bandwidth usage.
- Provide Bandwidth Report to Board. (March)

E. Identifying Community and Staff Needs

Goal: The Library will routinely solicit feedback in order to meet the technology needs of its community and staff.

Objectives:

- E1 The Library will complete a survey of its users and will integrate public feedback into the Technology Plan. FY2017. **Survey draft has been created and is currently being finalized. Current plans have survey going out to patrons in Spring 2018.**
- E2 The Library will request technology feedback when it conducts non-user focus groups. FY2017. **Due to competing priorities, this objective has not yet begun. Current plans have completion by end of CY2018.**
- E3 Staff will forward unmet technology needs of both staff and Library users to the staff technology committee. Ongoing.
- E4 The Library will maintain ongoing relationships with community leaders and will evaluate the Library's technology planning in light of developments at partnering agencies. Ongoing.

- E5 The Library will investigate a new ticketing system for reporting and tracking IT issues. FY2017. **Investigation has been completed. The IT department is making a final decision on which solution to implement. Current plans have a new system implemented by end of FY2018.**

F. Equipment and Software (end user)

Goal: The Library will provide easy-to-use hardware and software to meet the needs of Library users and staff.

Objectives:

- F1 The Library will provide software to support adult learners and students. Ongoing.
- F2 The Library will provide software to facilitate access to online applications for employment and government programs. Ongoing.
- F3 All public computers of a given category will have identical software configuration. Ongoing.
- F4 The staff technology committee will review equipment requests for public checkout, for in-house public use, or for programming. Ongoing.
- F5 The Library will investigate options for public and staff to create audio and video productions. Investigated FY2016. The initial equipment cost (cameras and software) to offer audio and video production service for public and staff would be approximately \$5,000. Desired, but presently cost-prohibitive. Moved to “wish list” items in case additional funds become available at a later date. Currently, the Library offers access for audio and video production service during the Teen Open Lab.
- F6 The Library will accommodate staff and patrons with disabilities by ensuring computers are available that accommodate wheelchairs, computers are available with assistive software (e.g.: screen readers, screen magnification, etc.), and assistive hardware is available (e.g.: large print keyboards, trackballs, etc.). Ongoing.
- F7 The Library will maintain a five-year replacement cycle on hardware and software. Ongoing.
- F8 The Library will investigate installing an in-ceiling sound system for use in The Lewis Auditorium. Investigated FY2016. The initial cost for the sound system would be approximately \$4,000. Desired, but presently cost-prohibitive. Moved to “wish list” items in case additional funds become available at a later date. **Bids have been received and project is currently going through procurement process. Current plans have completion by end FY2018.**

- F9 The Library will investigate the use of hand-held scanners for the Archives for the purpose of scanning oversized bound volumes for remote patrons. Investigated and implemented FY 2016.
- F10 The Library will investigate archival content management systems for the Archives. Investigated and implemented the use of MS Access FY2017.
- F11 The Library will explore RFID automated inventory control. FY2017. **Explored. Library staff decided against implementing such a system because the benefits gained would be minimal when compared to the cost.**
- F12 The Library will explore options for creating electronic versions of pre-employment examinations. Explored FY2017. At this time, the current procedure for pre-employment examinations is meeting the Library's needs.
- F13 The Library will investigate the use of scanners and software to scan identification and automatically fill in patron information in Polaris. FY2018.
- F14 The Library will investigate an electronic statistics compiler for use at public service desks and elsewhere in the Library as needed. **FY2019. An interdepartmental committee has been formed to standardize all statistics kept throughout the Library; once standardization is complete, the Library will move forward with investigating electronic statistic compilers.**
- F15 The Library will develop a new online system for managing the Adult Services technology volunteer program. FY2017. **The Library has begun using a centralized system to track volunteer hours. Additionally, for other volunteer management (scheduling, tracking statistics, etc.), pre-existing tools have been implemented.**
- F16 The Library will investigate options for electronic timesheet solutions. Investigated and implemented electronic timesheets FY2016.
- F17 The IT manager will implement a replacement for the Library's current intranet. FY2017. **Needed hardware and licensing for the new Intranet have been procured. Current plans have implementation completed by the end of FY2018.**

G. Shared Automation Platform

Goal: The Library will participate in a shared automation platform and will advocate for enhanced features to improve staff efficiency and service to Library users.

Objectives:

- G1 The Library will implement online payment of charges in Polaris. Implemented FY2016.

- G2 Library will encourage staff to receive relevant training and attend regional events for consortia platforms (e.g. OCLC, MyMediaMall.). Ongoing.

H. Public Services

Goal: The Library staff will help Library users take advantage of technology to meet their informational, educational, cultural, and recreational goals.

Objectives:

- H1 The Library will implement the room reservation module on the public event calendar. FY2017. **Backend configuration has been completed. The current room booking policy is being updated and, once finalized, the room reservation module will be implemented. Current plans have implementation completed by the end of FY2018.**
- H2 The Library will investigate the feasibility of remote checkout and remote card registration for outreach events. Investigated FY2016. At this time there is no option to obtain secure portals to access Polaris to create and issue Library cards on demand at outreach events. The Library currently does have a manual process for card registration at outreach events.
- H3 Staff will explore opportunities to provide mobile, off-site technology instruction in order to provide convenience to Library users and to broaden the Library's technology reach to the non-user community. Implemented FY2017. The Library is providing off-site technology instruction through the Teen Open Lab at the Urbana schools and during monthly visits to Clark-Lindsey Village.
- H4 Staff will maintain a technology volunteer program in the lab. Ongoing.
- H5 Staff will continue to monitor the available options for eBook access in the Library marketplace. Ongoing.
- H6 The Library will support patrons pursuing educational opportunities by selecting and organizing online resources related to homework help, research, and information literacy. Ongoing.
- H7 The Library will provide access to information resources (e.g.: eBooks, audiobooks, how-to-guides, language learning tools, etc.) through its website. Ongoing
- H8 The Library will support the use of public access computers for eGovernment purposes. Ongoing.
- H9 The Library will investigate solutions to offer reference assistance through instant message and text message. Investigated FY2016. A system is currently in the test

- phase and plan to implement FY2017. **AYS would like to continue investigating/gathering information. Current plans have investigation completed by end FY2018.**
- H10 The Library will investigate the possibility of streaming and/or recording Library programs (e.g.: reading, concerts, and book group discussions) so they can be viewed/listened to anywhere. Investigated FY2016. The initial equipment cost (cameras and software) to offer audio and video production service for public and staff would be approximately \$5,000 (see objective F5), with additional subscription cost of approximately \$99 per month. Desired, but presently cost-prohibitive. The Library will investigate using UPTV equipment FY2017. **Confirmed that UPTV equipment can be requested on a first-come, first-served basis for Library usage at no cost.**
- H11 The Library will investigate providing access to a 3D printer to the general public. Investigated FY2017 and plan to implement FY2017. **Completed.**
- H12 The Library will investigate new digital collections, including but not limited to, streaming audiovisual services. Ongoing.
- H13 The Library will investigate the feasibility of providing device/phone charging stations for public areas. Investigated FY2017 and plan to implement FY2017. **Completed.**
- H14 The Library will investigate the possibility of using the lockers in the Green Street entryway for its patrons to retrieve materials. FY2017. **It was found that a small portion of the lockers were inoperable. Library staff is discussing possible uses for the lockers before a decision is made on whether or not to repair them.**
- H15 The Library will develop online tools to assist in readers' advisory including a form for readers' advisory request. FY2017. **An online form has been developed, which will be implemented in coming months, and AYS will continue to research additional practical tools for reader's advisory.**
- H16 The Library will explore and evaluate options for expanding its circulating technology collection. Ongoing.

I. Public Communication

Goal: The Library will provide its public with information about the Library and its services through engaging and varied points of access including web, phone, and social media.

Objectives:

- I1 Staff will develop goals, guidelines, and assessment strategies for social media and digital services initiatives. Ongoing.
- I2 The Library will actively solicit and use email addresses (with an opt-out provision) in order to notify patrons of Library news and events. Ongoing.
- I3 Staff will review the adequacy of the Library phone system. Reviewed FY2016. System proves to be adequate for another 5 – 7 years.
- I4 Staff will create short video clips for promotional use on the Library website and social media sites and public television. Ongoing.
- I5 The Library will publish and promote bibliographies and finding aids in digital form on the Internet, as well as providing such content in PDF and print formats. Ongoing.
- I6 The Library's website development team will explore search engine optimization. Explored FY2016. No further optimizations are needed.
- I7 The Library's website will provide equal access for people with disabilities. Staff will test the Library's site for ADA-compliance. Changes to improve ADA-compliance implemented FY2016. Ongoing.
- I8 The Library will investigate options for improving the functionality and capability of the Library's website. Ongoing.

J. Training and Competency

Goal: The Library will enable its staff to grow professionally and to acquire technology skill sets that help them better serve Library users.

Objectives:

- J1 Each staff member will assess (with a supervisor) his/her own proficiencies in relation to the departmental tech competencies. Ongoing. The Technology Committee is creating a proposed list of staff competencies that will be used for annual staff evaluations FY2017. **The competencies were created and are currently being used as a part of the FY18 staff evaluation process.**
- J2 In annual employee evaluations, supervisors will create individualized technology training goals for staff with more marked deficiencies. Ongoing.

- J3 Administrative staff will review Library-wide technology training needs and will set priorities for meeting those needs. Ongoing.
- J4 The Library will identify particular technology knowledge and expertise available in-house. To optimize staff recognition and professional growth, the Library will utilize staff to teach co-workers whenever possible. Ongoing.
- J5 The Library will identify and train staff who could serve as back-up for some basic IT functions. Ongoing.
- J6 Staff members will be allowed work time to engage in relevant technology-related learning activities (e.g.: webinars, online tutorials, etc.) and for hands-on learning with new software and hardware technology items as approved by supervisors. Ongoing.

K. Budget

Goal: The Library will commit sufficient budget to acquire and maintain hardware, software, and professional development necessary for improved technology services to Library users.

Objectives:

- K1 The Library will ensure budget support for staff training to meet technology competencies, including time for staff attendance and time for in-house staff to develop staff training curriculum. Ongoing.
- K2 The Library will create an equipment replacement fund for long-term, large expenses that cannot be met by the annual budget allocation. Created FY2016.
- K3 Staff will review e-rate cost-benefit in time to apply during the December/January window, if desired. Ongoing.
- K4 The Library will monitor the need for IT support during evenings and weekends, as well as develop plans to enhance IT support long-term. Ongoing.
- K5 The Library will ensure budget support to provide adequate bandwidth for staff and public services. Ongoing.

L. Evaluation

Goal: The Library will regularly evaluate its technology goals and objectives in order to monitor progress and to respond to new developments.

Objectives:

- L1 Each January the technology committee will formulate technology recommendations and will forward them to administration for consideration. Ongoing.
- L2 The IT manager will annually review the potential need and cost for additional bandwidth or for bandwidth shaping software. Ongoing.
- L3 The Library will regularly evaluate logon sessions for public computers to ensure patrons continuously have adequate time to complete tasks. Ongoing.
- L4 The Library will solicit reports from its wireless provider on the average number of daily users and percentage of users who reach the Library's contracted hotspot ceiling with the goal of maintaining a capacity that meets the needs of majority of its users. Ongoing.