

# 2006 Building Better Communities Finalists

**Building Better Communities Awards Ceremony**  
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1. **Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System:** (Instructional Learning Center, using technology to help adults increase their skills)

**LOCATION:** Atlanta, Georgia 30303

**WEB SITE:** <http://www.afplweb.com/>

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

“The people here really care about you. They help in all kinds of ways,” was what an adult technology student told me on my first visit to the ILC. The Instructional Learning Center, a department of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System, (ILC) provides an enormous array of technology services for adults who want to increase their skills, find employment, or prepare for a standardized test. The technology and training are free, require no registration (with the exception of the GED exam), and are open to the public, regardless of their address or whether or not they hold a library card. There is also access to test preparation materials on line, as well as dozens of other learning tools. The Instructional Learning Center provides weekly GED preparation classes and is proud to be the only library in the United States that is an official GED testing center. The Center even provides a practice test that individuals take on-line.

The Center is comprised of two classrooms, a reading/audiovisual area and a training lab with 12 individual computer stations. Two additional computers are dedicated to the Mavis Beacon typing program for those learning or improving their keyboard skills. A third computer is dedicated for those learning English as a Second Language and/or those adults who are learning to read. The most popular technology services are the free computer classes that range from basic computer introduction to intermediate level courses on the Microsoft Office package. Classes in web design are also popular. Educational videos and DVDs also provide tutorials on topics such as English Composition, Job Interviewing, and Learning to Read. However, with a knowledgeable instructor on hand to answer questions, the tutorials are greatly enhanced.

One remarkable feature of the Instructional Learning Center is the number of career and educational test tools that are available through the library’s web site. From school teacher, to firefighter, the Instructional Learning Lab has it all. One can access test preparation on line for Law School Admission, Graduate Management Admission, Medical College Admission Test, Test of English as a Second Language, Graduate Record Examination, Cosmetology, Scholastic Aptitude Test, Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Test, Civil Service, Real Estate, and more. One can even prepare for U.S. Citizenship on line at the Center.

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## PROJECT TECHNOLOGY

Connecting people to basic computer skills and providing continuous, one-on-one assistance is what makes this program exceptional in the eyes of those who use it. Interactive diagnostic web sites help determine strengths and weaknesses of adult learners. Those who come to the Instructional Learning Center do so primarily for their personal knowledge or to increase their employment marketability. This program has established a community of new-learners of technology. While technology is the focus, the most impressive aspect of the program is the human connection, especially between staff and those who use the service. Staff members, volunteers and the learners themselves bring technology alive and shepherd users through difficulties.

Unlike many tutorial or classroom-based training programs, the ILC delivers instruction specific to the needs of each user. One of the most repeated phrases heard in feedback from program users, is, “They care about whether I got it.” Many of the program users establish personal relationships with the Instructional Learning Center staff members and AmeriCorps workers who teach, coach, and serve them, forming a sense of community. Because several people come regularly, they are missed when they are absent. “They worry about me when I don’t come in,” said a regular user. “They really care about you

here,” a first time author remarked. They helped me so much, that I dedicated my book to them. Moreover, technology is used to ensure that barriers are removed for those who face challenges, such as a Video Magnification System on Closed Circuit TV for those with visual impairments. Televisions, VCRs, and DVD players are available for viewing the educational videos, an important detail for someone who does not have access to these items.

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## **COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

The benefits to the community are obvious. Having access to computers and multi-media learning tools, along with classes and personal instruction create a more educated workforce and populace. This is the place people come to complete resumes, online job applications, conduct employment searches and set up email accounts for potential employers to find them. Hundreds of survivors from hurricane Katrina used the Instructional Learning Center to access FEMA, Red Cross, and search engines set up to reunite families. There is no other place in Georgia with such a comprehensive list of services, technology, materials, and personal instruction in one place all with no fee or pre-registration requirement (excepting GED testing.)

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## **EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS**

More than 3,000 people completed the computer classes in 2005. A low cost vendor would charge a minimum of \$100 per class. Using this conservative estimate, the Instructional Learning Center has provided well over \$300,000 worth of computer training to the public at no charge. Nearly 5,000 (4,951) total users were documented in 2005. Some of them return to keep their skills fresh. More than 140 people obtained their GED certificate in 2005. An additional 1,650 people used the ILC for a job search in 2005, saving money on copies of resumes and Internet access. Universities and job recruiters partner with the Instructional Learning Center, using ILC staff members to serve as Proctors for tests, such as mid-term and final exams, certification exams, and specific technology exams. (The average cost of professional proctoring is about \$40 per hour.) In 2005, at least 24 students were supervised in the ILC during their on-line exams. But the personal relationships and personal stories are the most impressive outcomes of this program.

Consider the stories of:

- One woman has been coming to the Instructional Learning Center for about one year. She was researching her genealogy when she saw a sign advertising the free training. Having recently lost her job in a large corporation, she saw this as a way to employment. She took PowerPoint and a graphics course. In her words, “The teacher was so nice and professional. She took the time to give me individual help. It was her patience that had an impact on me in that graphics class. I learned so much.”

During her genealogy research, she learned that her great, great, great grandmother baked sweet potato pies and operated a tea room. Her grandmother taught her to bake sweet potato pie, always reminding her that it was a family recipe. She now suspects it dates back to that tea room, generations ago. The recipe later won first prize in a contest. Losing her job, seeing her pies were appreciated, stumbling on her new learning experiences, suddenly all came together and her new small business was formed. She used her new tools to build two small businesses: selling her pies and doing free-lance public relations work. She was able to land some work with Ebenezer Baptist Church and the NAACP. She is now negotiating to have her pies sold in stores and restaurants.

She has taken 10 courses in the past year, some she repeats to keep her skills fresh. She comes at least one day per week. Again, in her words, “The Learning Center has helped me so much in growing my businesses. It’s a very professional place. They are patient and take time. They really

care that you know the material. These are the classes you can pay lots of money for in the private market and not get much out of it. But you won't leave here until you know it. And it's all free."

- One gentleman thought he had a story to tell, but he did not have the tools to do it. He did not have a computer or the skill to use one. But he heard about the Instructional Learning Center at the Central Library. He took several classes and soon began to use the computer there every day. His story started to come out. Today, this man is a published author. His book, *Too White to be Black and Too Black to be White, Living with Albinism*, was written entirely in the Instructional Learning Center. It was published in May 2001. His second book, *R & B Soul Music, A Fans View* was published in May of 2005. The author had this to say about the Center, "The support they gave me has been incredible. I've mentioned them in my second book. They are like family." He still comes to the ILC weekly to serve as a math tutor for the GED classes.

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#### **WHY IT DESERVES TO WIN (AS STATED BY THE NOMINATOR)**

The Instructional Learning Center evolves to meet the needs of the community. Decades ago, it was set up to help adults learn to read. As computers became a part of life, the Center included technology. The Instructional Learning Center has been at the forefront of meeting the adult educational needs of a diverse community. If you can't read, this is the place to learn. If you want to be a firefighter, a real estate agent, a lawyer, a physician, or a cosmetologist, this is the place that can help you get there, all through the use of technology. Empowering people with knowledge and skills is a powerful way to help people improve their lives. And in the case of one person, even write a book or two!

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#### **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

**2. Calgary Public Library:** (Explores computer technology with special needs and at-risk children, teens and adults)

**LOCATION:** Calgary Alberta T2G 2M2

**WEB SITE:** [www.calgarypubliclibrary.com](http://www.calgarypubliclibrary.com)

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Open for All has demonstrated how information and communications technology can enable individuals at risk, service providers, volunteers, and the public at large to access needed community services, interactively and expeditiously, through the Internet. Under the banner of Open for All, Calgary Public Library has provided an empowerment infrastructure consisting of public access computer technology terminals and technology training for service providers, their clients and volunteers. The library's participation has ensured:

- Frontline support for members of target groups, including assistance in using the Internet and computer skills training
- Volunteer-based customized training programs for individuals at risk and service providers
- Convenient access to a large number of public terminals throughout Calgary.
- Objectives Key elements of the project are:
  - Design and implementation of innovative library programs and services for Calgarians at risk, service providers, volunteers, and the general public
  - Development of web resources
  - Enhanced training for library customers in the use of the Internet
  - Extension of library's reach into the community
  - Raising of library's visibility and profile
  - Expansion of volunteer programs
  - Increased opportunities for collaboration with community partners.
  - Originality and Innovation
  - Youth Initiative
- The first major thrust in the library has been activities in support of the library's Youth Initiative, including the development of innovative programs for children who are at risk and their caregivers. Training programs for staff and volunteers, and web-based services and resources have been developed, in related areas. The Computer Buddies program helps children in grades 1 to 6 explore computer technology in a library environment. Junior and senior high school volunteers act as role models and help their buddies develop lifelong learning skills while helping them improve their reading, writing, and math skills using computers. Computer Buddies has experienced great success and continues to grow. The program is currently offered in six library locations throughout the community.

Other innovative programs to help empower high risk teens to make greater use of technology:

- Connect Teens has reached teens in local schools through information sessions designed to demonstrate and inform them about electronic resources and access available resources at the library and remotely. Youth Services staff have developed modules for teens around three themes: Shakespeare and Poetry, Social Studies and Current Events, and Careers. Web Services & Resources staff have been working on additional projects for teens. Building Your First Resume is an interactive tutorial on writing resumes and cover letters, job searching, and preparing for interviews, developed in collaboration with the City's Youth Employment Centre.
- Seniors Initiative: A second major thrust in the library has been activities in support of the library's Seniors Initiative, including CyberSeniors, an instructional program for older Calgarians who are

learning to use technology for the first time. The availability of programs on a wide variety of Microsoft Office products, as well as Internet searching, small class sizes, a flexible learning pace, and the ability to attend classes either at a library or another convenient community location, have proved to be appealing to Calgary's seniors. Email and Internet classes continue to be the most popular offerings with all classes filling up quickly. Because many seniors organizations and lodges have limited computer access, most of the classes are now held at Calgary Public Library locations. Each class is two hours long, offering additional time for explanation and practice. The model of four classes per session is very successful, as it provides continuity and provides a social element that the participants enjoy. CyberSeniors is a very popular program with Calgary's seniors, attracting capacity audiences wherever it is offered.

- Three volunteer-based programs are offered to increase access to technology for customers with special needs. The In-Home Computer Help program offers one-on-one coaching sessions to help homebound customers become comfortable using the Internet, web-based email and various Microsoft Office products such as Word. In addition, customers with special needs can now book a 90-minute orientation to ALEX (Accessible Library Experience) with an experienced volunteer, at any one of nine library locations. ALEX is a unique adaptive technology workstation equipped with special software and hardware to help customers with a wide range of disabilities access the world of technology and information.

Volunteers have been recruited and trained for both the In-Home Computer Help Program and orientation to ALEX. ALEX has been widely promoted in the community during the course of this project. A partnership was developed with the Learning Disability Association of Alberta resulting in an article promoting ALEX in the Associations newsletter, Perspectives, and in two Parent Workshops demonstrating the variety of software on the workstations to parents of learning disabled children. In addition to helping with the programs described above, volunteer coaches are available to provide customers with one-on-one help to learn and practice computer technology skills in weekly drop-in clinics at local branch libraries or during programs such as introduction to the Internet delivered by library staff.

- Other technology programs and support for persons at risk for Calgarians wanting to learn to use the Internet or open an email account, the library's Homepage now features several easy-to-follow computer tutorials which include a narrated soundtrack for learning by listening, as well as text balloons to read. Also available on the library's web site is a course and program search feature which enables users of the site to get information on all the computer technology training programs offered by the University of Calgary, SAIT, Mount Royal College, Bow Valley College, Chinook College, and the library. Partnerships with a wide range of community agencies and groups have led to the delivery of computer technology training to over 200 children, teens, and adults at risk, at offsite locations, including the Mustard Seed Ministry, Women in Need Society, Avenue 15, Beltline Youth Initiative, Berkana House, Calgary Association of Self Help, SCOPE Society of Calgary, Greater Forest Lawn Seniors, The Other Twelve Hours, and New Family Place.

Standardized modules for the technology programs offered to the public were developed for use by staff in all Calgary Public Library locations. This has allowed for consistent and high quality programs to be offered in a cost-effective manner.

- **Staff Training and Development:** For many reasons, it isn't always easy to deliver excellent customer service to the socially excluded. CPL continues to invest in staff learning programs to increase staff confidence and expertise in this important area and partnerships with local agencies such as the Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre of Calgary in the design of learning programs help ensure that staff know how to meet the library needs of special needs clients. Service to customers with low levels of literacy is a focus of staff training initiatives and plans are in place for a Trends Watch Newsletter to inform staff of developments affecting service to high needs communities.

Partnerships: Active partnerships with a wide range of social service agencies and groups have leveraged resources for program expansion and led to closer connections than ever before with children, teens, and adults at risk. Productive relationships with agencies like the Learning Disability Association of Alberta and Meals on Wheels facilitate the promotion of library services and programs to their clients. One of the best examples? The Online Job Search Success pilot program funded by Alberta Advanced Education through the Calgary Community Adult Learning Association and by CPL. This exciting new program's six-weekend session, 12-hour course, takes English as a Second Language learners beyond the basics of online career research by providing in-depth coverage of web sites, electronic databases, and subscription services available through the library, with weekly career related exercises and hands on practice. A bonus of the project is that the Online Job Search module developed will be available for future use by the originating partners.

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## **PROJECT TECHNOLOGY**

Technology is a key component of many of the programs and services designed to help CPL connect with the underserved and the socially excluded. First, the availability of public access terminals, Internet connections, and productivity software has proved to be very attractive to the significant proportion of Calgarians who do not yet have access to computers at home, work, or school, including the city's disturbingly large homeless population.

As important is the availability of approachable and knowledgeable library staff to help customers learn to navigate. These technologies include: Adaptive Technology including a variety of keyboards (touchboards, large print), adjustable workstation for wheelchairs and scooters, screen reader (JAWS), screen magnifier, scanner for digitizing text, voice-based word processing, word predicting software, head mouse for customers with quadriplegia. Public Access Workstations Technology including: Productivity Suites, online tutorial software, custom .Net based public workstation management software Services are delivered over a converged network with 16 branches connected with high speed fibre and utilizing the latest technology. These technologies include Voice over IP, QoS, packetshaping, real-time Unified Threat Management UTM (virus scanning, malware/greyware detection, and high availability.

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## **COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

Positive Change (Current and Potential): Melissa (not her real name) is a young woman who has a 21-month-old son and is homeless. She attends life skills training classes each week and receives support through the Other Twelve Hours program. Each night she and her son sleep in a different church through the Inn From the Cold Society program because she is unable to afford rent. Melissa learned new skills by attending computer training classes offered by Calgary Public Library staff at the Other Twelve Hours site. She was also given a free library membership and now visits the main library daily. She is thrilled to be able to access the computers there and has become an avid borrower of materials for herself and her young son.

Don (not his real name) is a homeless man who lives in a Calgary shelter and has become a vendor of Calgary's street paper, Street Talk. Published by CUPS, this paper is written by and sold by those on the margins of society, offering them an income and business-skills development. The vendors purchase each paper for \$.60 and sell it for donations. When the vendors wish-lists were published in the December 2003 issue of Street Talk, Don asked for a library card. Within days he had a waived library membership and is using library resources and technology to write his monthly contributions to the newspaper. Don is an example of someone proud of his accomplishments; someone who is trying to improve his circumstances.

The reaction library staff have received to Connect Teens presentations has been astounding, from participants of all ages and abilities. Students electronic literacy needs are fulfilled; schools benefit by

having students literacy and research needs addressed; instructors have been known to fight back tears at the excitement shown in Special Needs classes when children who are reluctant readers demonstrate unbridled enthusiasm at being able to find a site that allows them to understand their homework. In one instance, a junior high school student in a Special Needs setting experienced a joyful epiphany when he was shown that he could actually do a math worksheet through a web site, and he realized that he would be able to do homework on the computer at home! These are just a few examples of how Open for All provides tools to those at-risk, helping them improve their lives and move forward with success.

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## **EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS**

- **Measuring Success:** Non-traditional services and customers require new forms of measurement. As a result, in addition to counting the number of programs offered and program attendance, CPL also tests and tracks the progress of individual learners in literacy programs and calculates the estimated value of the hours contributed by volunteers. We collect feedback from parents and caregivers and encourage participants to tell their own success stories, often as part of the programs curriculum. At present, we are testing a mechanism for tracking the number of customer contacts, separate from traditional question counts, in support of CPLs developing social role.

Since the implementation of Open for All the library:

- Offered over 3,000 technology programs to over 20,000 customers at 16 library locations. Adult volunteers contributed over 2,300 hours to these computer technology programs.
  - Made 225 presentations to over 5,000 students in Calgary's public and separate schools.
  - Offered 400 CyberSeniors classes at 14 locations for 2,000 eager participants, including several in their nineties
  - Involved 600 children in Computer Buddies programs in 300 sessions. Youth volunteers contributed 4,000 hours to these programs.
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## **WHY IT DESERVES TO WIN (AS STATED BY THE NOMINATOR)**

The benefits of the Open for All project are innumerable, and there has been a positive impact on both individuals and a multitude of communities. Technology training has enabled seniors to communicate with friends and family around the world, and assisted them in being able to independently find information around areas of health, genealogy and travel. It has helped youth and homeless enter the job market and develop the skills to use technology in an informed manner. It has allowed children who are blind or have learning disabilities to access course material and information for school projects. It has provided meaningful volunteer opportunities for Calgaryans of all ages. It has enabled learning institutions and service providers to work together collaboratively with a common goal of opening up the world of technology to individuals at risk.

Most importantly, the Open for All project has integrated disenfranchised communities into the technological world and enhanced their confidence and ability to participate in society in an informed way. Simply put, the library programs offered as part of Open for All transform lives, in a profound and sustained manner, and help to strengthen community

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## **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

**3. Delaware County Community College Library:** (Provides library reference resources to nursing students in a clinical setting)

**LOCATION:** Media, PA 19063

**WEB SITE:** [www.dccc.edu/library](http://www.dccc.edu/library)

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### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

In fall 2005, Delaware County Community Colleges Library and department of Allied Health and Nursing began an innovative pilot project to expand the availability of library reference resources to the nursing students in a clinical setting. The goal of the project is to eliminate the barriers of time and place that limit access to library materials by bringing the library to the clinical setting where students are obtaining valuable hands-on learning. During the clinical instruction portion of the nursing curriculum, students who are away from a traditional campus setting can access library-related nursing information resources that are available in software format on Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs).

By having this reference information right at the point of patient contact, the number of potential medication errors have been reduced and the speed of access to information has increased, thereby enhancing teaching and learning. In addition, by strengthening their familiarity with information literacy, nursing students better understand the impact of the use of information technology in a clinical setting and how to access the most current treatment information. This latter experience is extremely important, not only because of the frequent changes in medication and procedures in the medical field, but also because many of DCCC's nursing students are placed in teaching hospitals where cutting-edge procedures and medications are used.

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### **PROJECT TECHNOLOGY**

Through a grant funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Commonwealth Libraries, DCCC was able to purchase 50 Dell Axim PDAs and subscriptions to six e-books, including a drug guide, a medical dictionary, a lab handbook, a nursing procedures handbook, a diagnostic handbook, and a disease handbook. Each of these e-books is updated quarterly.

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### **COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

Like many states with an aging population, Pennsylvania is experiencing a severe shortage of nurses. This project has significant potential impact for two-year nursing programs offering an Associate degree for graduates. Like many other students at two-year institutions, especially community colleges, time demands on DCCC nursing students result in their having too little access to the latest clinical data at the patient bedside. Access to the most current information in the rapidly changing medical field is not only critical for quality patient care, but is also necessary for nursing students training for real world applications and stimulation of self-inquiry as students seek information concerning diagnoses, tests, medication, and patient education.

In the fall 2005 semester, 35 nursing students and 5 nursing faculty participated in the program. The project is designed to complement the clinical rotation course where students participate in a practicum in an actual medical setting that includes hospitals, nursing homes, patient residents, acute medical surgery units, long-term care units, intensive care units, and community settings. Half of the student participants are in their first year of study and half are in their second year. Students in nursing classes offered in both Delaware and Chester Counties are involved, and include sections that are offered during the day, as well as on evenings and weekends. Many of the students not involved in the pilot have expressed a

desire to participate. Those involved in the project have become very attached to the PDA, questioning how they will feel when they must return the device for use by another section of students. Since there are over 300 nursing students in the program and the PDAs have become popular, many students are asked to work in teams with the PDAs. Faculty noted that since teamwork is a common practice for nurses, this project provides good preparation for actual workplace activity.

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## **EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS**

Our assessment of the program through pre-and post-program surveys, as well as four focus groups, has revealed the benefits not only to the students, but to members of the community as well. Findings include:

(1) Assignments using the PDA vary by instructor. Some faculty expect the students to use the PDA as a reference tool to learn more about patients medical diagnoses, diagnostic study results, lab values, and medications on their own. Other faculty specifically request students to look up the particulars of diagnostic tests, to review places for injection sites using photographs to assist students with anatomical landmarks, to instruct patients by reviewing medication before hospital discharge, and, in the clinical conference area where students share information about lab values, to review definitions of terminology and complications a patient might experience. Faculty themselves also used the PDA to answer difficult questions they received from students.

(2) One of the most important findings relates to patient education. Both students and faculty noted that they were able to show the patient information on the PDA to assist them in understanding their condition and their medications. One anecdote from a faculty member described how a student was working with a patient from a lower socio-economic background. The attending physician had prescribed a brand name drug that was very expensive. The student looked the drug up on the PDA with the assistance of the faculty member. They learned the generic name and found out that there were other brands that cost less. The faculty member called the physician, who subsequently prescribed the less expensive drug to the patient.

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## **WHY IT DESERVES TO WIN (AS STATED BY THE NOMINATOR)**

Since the college's founding in 1967, the library has been an integral component in helping DCCC meet its mission to offer educational programs and services that are accessible, comprehensive, community centered and flexible in order to enhance the development of the communities and residents of its services area. The college's strategic long-range plan, contained in Vision 2010 Inspiring Excellence: our vision for the future, identifies goals and objectives that impact on the library. Technology is specifically addressed within Goal Two of the long-range plan by including the objective to maintain an advanced technological environment that prepares DCCC students for an information-based society. This objective has been the impetus for many of the recent activities within the library.

The library has received several grants to support its endeavors to offer educational uses of technology. As a result, the DCCC library is seen by its peer institutions as a leader in technology innovation. The DCCC library will continue to identify projects that not only serve the students and community, but provide a replicable model for other institutions. The DCCC library has been a proud client of the Dynix HORIZON software since 1997.

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## **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

**4. Hamilton Public Library:** (myhamilton.ca Web site offers city services electronically to residents and business people)

**LOCATION:** Hamilton, ON, L8N 4E4

**WEB SITE:** [www.hpl.ca](http://www.hpl.ca)

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On September 13, 2005, the Hamilton Public Library along with its community partners launched an innovative new web site called myhamilton.ca. The site, <http://www.myhamilton.ca/>, provides Hamilton residents with everything they need to know to live, learn, work and play in Hamilton! It is a super-site providing convenience, connections and services.

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## PROJECT TECHNOLOGY

The technology that supports the myhamilton.ca super-site is housed in the shared City of Hamilton, Hamilton Public Library Data Centre. Twelve production and six development servers support the following core infrastructure: Microsoft Content Management Server (CMS): This enterprise content management solution supports the creation and maintenance of web content on myhamilton. The content management system is shared by the City of Hamilton, the Hamilton Public Library and several community partners. Developed on top of the standard CMS, there are 12 generic templates that provide a wide range of options for authors creating content. The templates automatically take on branding features of the City and library when in those sections of the site, since both have integrated their web sites into the portal.

Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server: Supporting the portal search engine and the collaboration portal features: The collaboration tools of the portal are used in two ways: for interactive elements on the main portal and for closed spaces or extranets, used by groups to communicate and share ideas. Key to the sustainability of the collaboration spaces is the ability to distribute administration. A local administrator is able to add users and assign permissions to their spaces. About the Platform: CMS and SharePoint Portal Server have a Microsoft SQL Server back-end for storing data. The front-end consists of ASP.NET pages served via Internet Information Services (IIS) 6 on Windows Server 2003. ISAPI filter are used to map the web-based path to the database records. The portal integrates with Active Directory Groups.

E-Services/E-Commerce: Utilizing Microsoft Commerce Server, myhamilton offers residents several transaction services. In each case the services integrate directly with a back-end system at the City or library. Hamilton sees these as key to providing convenience to users and critical to our ability as a community to meet growing demand for services without increasing budgets. In addition to eStore functionality that enables the selling of goods or services through the portal, the following eServices have been developed: Restaurant & Personal Service License Renewals, Zoning Verification Application, New Building Permit Application Form, Dog License New & Renewal, Library Card Registration, Culture & Recreation Program Registration, and Property Tax Certificates.

Library Integration: The Hamilton Public Library integrated its Horizon Information Portal (HIP) and Horizon ILS with the portal. The electronic resources were consolidated into one search using Web Feat with remote access controlled using Remote Patron Authentication (RPA). A PHP application was developed to support online registration for library borrower cards.

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## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Bringing together in one place a wide range of critical information sources and services have increased their relevancy to the community and their ability to have an impact. Increased utilization has been one of the key hallmarks of the portal.

Here are some key demonstrations of increased usage:

- Community Information Hamilton (CIH) and its not-for-profit partners manage Inform Hamilton, a well used database of services. Prior to launch, Inform averaged over 230,000 record views a month. Since myhamilton was launched Inform has seen over a 65% increase in usage.
- Hamilton Public Library, through user placed holds, brings community members the materials they want to the location of their choice. In 2005, prior to the portal, on average 63,000 items were placed on hold per month. Since the launch of myhamilton the number of requests placed monthly increased to more than 90,000, a 43% increase. This dramatic increase can be attributed to the increased traffic flow to the library site, and is even more impressive given the healthy state of circulation prior to the myhamilton.ca launch. The library's 1.3 million items are widely available to a broader audience. The convenience of online card registration makes the borrowing experience easy and convenient.
- The virtual library (the library's web site) offered many of the same services that are found in the bricks and mortar establishments. In fact, it ranked third in user visits among the 24 branch libraries. The library has seen a 25% increase in usage on its web pages since the launch of myhamilton.
- Cross-over traffic and search engine hits have benefited all partners. Tourism Hamilton and the City of Hamilton have both seen 25% increases in usage on their sites since the portal was launched. The City has seen a 15% increase in online job searches. Other partners like Mohawk College and McMaster University which are not fully integrated into the portal have still seen a 15% increase in visits.

## EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS

- The super-site [www.myhamilton.ca](http://www.myhamilton.ca) with its many components realizes the vision of one place to look for all things Hamilton. The implementation of the portal has brought many new resources to the community. These include:
- The portal search engine ([www.myhamilton.ca/myHamilton/Common/Search%20Results?txt0=0%7cmyhamilton%7c0&s=All](http://www.myhamilton.ca/myHamilton/Common/Search%20Results?txt0=0%7cmyhamilton%7c0&s=All)) which provides seamless access to content throughout the portal. It prominently links to the library's consolidated search engine ( [search3.webfeat.org/wf3\\_hamilto.html](http://search3.webfeat.org/wf3_hamilto.html)).
- The City of Hamilton ([www.hamilton.ca](http://www.hamilton.ca)) and Hamilton Public Library ([www.hpl.ca](http://www.hpl.ca)) have integrated their sites into the portal while maintaining their unique domains and branding without requiring users to leave the site.
- A comprehensive Community Events Calendar ([www.myhamilton.ca/myHamilton/Events](http://www.myhamilton.ca/myHamilton/Events)) that has replaced several incomplete calendars. It enables partners like the library to highlight their own events ([www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/Events/eventslisting.htm?EventStartDate=&EventEndDate=&Location=All&Audience=All&Category=Library&Cost=all](http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/Events/eventslisting.htm?EventStartDate=&EventEndDate=&Location=All&Audience=All&Category=Library&Cost=all)) while ensuring these are listed on the broader calendar without requiring duplication.
- Residents can register for swimming lessons and other City Culture & Recreation programs ([www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/CityandGovernment/CultureandRecreation/](http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/CityandGovernment/CultureandRecreation/)) using RecConnect.
- Doing business with the City and other levels of government have never been easier with one place to look for Permits and Licenses

- ([www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/CityandGovernment/CityServices/PermitsAndLicences/](http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/CityandGovernment/CityServices/PermitsAndLicences/) ). Several are available online for the first time because of myhamilton.
- Ecommerce ([www.myhamilton.ca/ncf/shopping/home.aspx?catalogName=Hamilton&lang=en](http://www.myhamilton.ca/ncf/shopping/home.aspx?catalogName=Hamilton&lang=en) ) through myhamilton has created new opportunities for the municipality and its partners to sell products efficiently and to markets unreachable in the past. The technology is in place to roll this out to community partners.
  - An expanding list of library developed Find-it-Guides ([www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/LibraryServices/HelpMeFindIt/FindItGuides/Find\\_It\\_Guide\\_Alpha\\_Listing.htm](http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/LibraryServices/HelpMeFindIt/FindItGuides/Find_It_Guide_Alpha_Listing.htm) ) that integrate library holdings with web content (example - [www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/LibraryServices/HelpMeFindIt/FindItGuides/Buying+and+Selling+a+Home.htm](http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/LibraryServices/HelpMeFindIt/FindItGuides/Buying+and+Selling+a+Home.htm) ) makes it easier than ever to see all relevant resources in one place.
  - Online web casts ([www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/ArtsSportsAndRecreation/outdoor/HamiltonWaterfallsVideo.htm](http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/ArtsSportsAndRecreation/outdoor/HamiltonWaterfallsVideo.htm) ) enables Hamilton to showcase key events and community assets using video technology.
  - Other groups in Hamilton that have unique perspectives have used the portal to further community dialogue. For example, the Environment Channel ([www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/ArtsSportsAndRecreation/outdoor/HamiltonWaterfallsVideo.htm](http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/ArtsSportsAndRecreation/outdoor/HamiltonWaterfallsVideo.htm) ) is managed by a group of citizen-based environmental groups.
  - Using the Collaboration Tools online book clubs (<http://communities.myhamilton.ca/sites/186/default.aspx?sel=CHCCPROD%5Cpublic%20users%2Cuser> ) have been established. Several groups are using collaboration tools to have semi-private extranets; others are using the tools to conduct online surveys (<http://communities.myhamilton.ca/sites/189/default.aspx> ) to improve service.
  - Inform Hamilton ([www.inform.hamilton.ca/start.asp?UseCICVw=47](http://www.inform.hamilton.ca/start.asp?UseCICVw=47) ) and the Hamilton Business Directory ([www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/CityandGovernment/CityDepartments/PlanningEcDev/EconomicDevelopment/hbd.htm](http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/CityandGovernment/CityDepartments/PlanningEcDev/EconomicDevelopment/hbd.htm) ) both integrated through the search engine provide residents with comprehensive sources to find services or to look information on employers.
  - The entire portal is supported by a secure authoring site (requires login- <https://authoring.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/> ) that enables authorized authors to securely create content regardless of their location. It does not require knowledge of HTML and enables delegation of content ownership so groups can maintain content on specific directories. This foundation will enable the library and its partners to create new partnerships and provide new opportunities for community engagement.

Exploring myhamilton will reveal many more resources available to the entire community. We have successfully taken our library Beyond the Walls to reach members of our community who were not traditional bricks and mortar library users. It is not surprising that when put together [www.myhamilton.ca](http://www.myhamilton.ca) is averaging over 400,000 unique user sessions a month with over 1.7 million page views. These numbers do not include usage of the library catalogue or other external sources that are effectively integrated through the portal.

#### **WHY IT DESERVES TO WIN (AS STATED BY THE NOMINATOR)**

We believe the Hamilton Public Library deserves this award because we have developed a compelling model that could be successfully employed by other libraries. While many libraries effectively collaborate, the level of collaboration with other community partners undertaken in the myhamilton project is worthy of celebration.

The Hamilton Public Library took a calculated risk leveraging staff expertise, a strong customer base, existing partnerships, a solid reputation and scarce internal resources to build something great for the community. The portal is a testament to the power of collaboration, and indicates what relevancy public libraries will take in the future. As stated in Walt Crawford's and Michael Gormans book *Future Libraries*:

*Dreams, Madness and Reality*, “There will only be successful libraries in the future because, if libraries are not successful, they will cease to exist.” Hamilton Public Library is thriving in its expanded role as offering a virtual third space for society to flourish. The Hamilton Public Library has demonstrated in our intention, our actions, and our commitments that we are an essential building block of society. We are community catalysts, successfully integrating software, hardware, education, information and empowerment to citizens. We epitomize the capacity for a public library to go beyond its traditional role as an information warehouse and become an agent of change. Hamilton Public Library is changing the landscape in which the community operates and breaking down traditional barriers between the public, private and non-profit sectors.

The community portal created a new reality for Hamiltonians in which to live, work, and enjoy leisure pursuits. As evidenced by the functionality and the technical complexity of this project, every stage required sustained effort, dedication and vision to deliver.

The delivery of a community portal with so many diverse stakeholders, so many public expectations, and a modest price tag serves as an inspiration to other cash-strapped municipalities. Hamilton is facing high rates of illiteracy, poverty, an inflow of immigration, a growing sector of the working poor, and an affordable housing shortage that has reached crisis proportions. The solution to these, and other social ills, is not necessary tied to additional funding. Through enlightened social interest, intelligent debate, effective partnering, and innovative projects societies can find their own unique solutions for community health. “Effective citizen action is possible when citizens develop the skills to gain access to information of all kinds and to put such information to effective use...Beyond the individual, libraries also provide the real and virtual spaces for members of the community to exchange ideas fundamental to democratic participation and civil society,” suggests Nancy Kranich in *Libraries & Democracy: The Cornerstones of Liberty*. In our view, no other library system has worked harder in the past year to enable the free expression of ideas and the capacity for community change.

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## COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

**5. Hancock County Library System:** (Restoring Internet connections and phone service for the post-Katrina community)

**LOCATION:** Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, 39520

**WEB SITE:** [www.hancock.lib.ms.us](http://www.hancock.lib.ms.us)

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### HANCOCK COUNTY (MS) LIBRARY SYSTEM: RESTORING CONNECTIVITY TO THE COMMUNITY AFTER KATRINA

Imagine having no phone lines, no Internet connection, and no cell service to communicate with the outside world.

This is the dire situation residents of Hancock County, Mississippi, faced in the aftermath of Katrina's eye making landfall in Hancock County on August 29, 2005. Located in the southwest corner of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Hancock County residents were desperate to communicate. They needed to contact family and friends to assure them they were alive. They needed to contact insurance companies. They needed to contact FEMA and the Small Business Administration for assistance. They needed news and information. They needed access to the Hancock County Library Systems (HCLS) SirsiDynix Horizon catalog and vital links on the library's web page. They needed a place to find hope and a haven from the horrors of the devastation outside. They needed their libraries for essential services to connect them to the world.

There is no written plan for starting from ground zero to restore basic library communication services to a community devastated by 140+ mph hurricane winds and 30+ feet of storm surge with waves on top that spread over one third of the county's area.

The first step was to save the headquarters library building in Bay St. Louis to house basic technology and library services for the community. In return for providing shelter to the National Guard, Guard members pulled wet carpeting out of the 18,000-square-foot facility. Naval Construction Battalion members (Seabees) took down wall shelving and cut out wet wallboard. Staff members mopped, cleaned, and shifted books and shelving. A private company then began round-the-clock efforts to dry the building and arrest mold and mildew proliferation. These heroic efforts saved the building and its collection of more than 80,000 items.

Critical to providing basic services was reliable Internet connections and phones for public use. The Hancock County Library System Director sent an urgent e-mail to several agencies and vendors from a temporary office inland requesting help in restoring communications for the community's devastated residents.

We are not trying to get phone and Internet for ourselves, she stated. The public in Bay St. Louis, Waveland, and surrounding communities are desperate. It is absolutely pitiful to have tax-paying men and women who owned small businesses coming to the library needing basic communications. There are people who have had no communication with their families. Not everyone in the world has a cell phone, and for those who did, they may not have worked. Many people have no transportation, have lost their cars. Library staff have not only lost their homes and possessions, they have lost their ability to provide customer service, even on a basic level.

Within two hours Harris Communications officials ([www.harris.com](http://www.harris.com)) notified library officials they would provide satellite communications for library users. Technicians arrived at the Bay St. Louis Library within two hours and worked through the night to set up a commercial C-band satellite communications system

for Internet access through Internet Protocol channels and Voice over Internet Protocol capable telephones. Harris loaned the library four laptop computers, a bank of satellite phones for public use and provided technical support for the system - - all at no cost to the library.

The Mississippi Library Commission (MLC) ([www.mlc.lib.ms.us](http://www.mlc.lib.ms.us)) provided a mobile computer lab consisting of 10 laptops, a server, inkjet printer, and office supplies. SirsiDynix ([www.SirsiDynix.com](http://www.SirsiDynix.com)) donated four laptops and two HP 1320 network printers.

Library staff set up the laptops, the bank of satellite phones and an information and referral center in the lobby of the Bay St. Louis Library. Near a foyer, they made a lounge area where the public could sit and read newspapers and magazines. Displays of books and media were put in the foyer and lobby areas, because the main reading room and stack areas of the library were not safe for public use. Coffee and bottled water were provided for the public through donations. Air conditioning, clean rest rooms, as an alternative to portolets, and helpful, knowledgeable staff rounded out the basic services.

On Monday, October 10, 2005, six weeks after the storm, the headquarters library of the Hancock County Library System opened its doors to the public. Hundreds of people came through those doors to use the wireless Internet service, laptops, satellite phones and recovery resources. When leaving at night, the glow of computer monitors could be seen through windows of vehicles using the drive-up Internet connection. Copy and fax services were provided free of charge. Donated office supplies were put out on tables for the public to use. Staff used SirsiDynix Horizons PC Reliance software to record check-out and check-in transactions until they were able to bring up the Horizon integrated system. Although a large portion of the library was deemed not safe for the public use, staff members retrieved requested items from closed areas.

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## PROJECT TECHNOLOGY

Connectivity for the community was restored by installation of a commercial C-Band satellite communications system for Internet access through Internet Protocol channels and Voice over Internet Protocol capable telephones provided by Harris Communications. The Sat Com included a 256k antenna with a rack system consisting of a power amplifier, converters, diplexer, modem and the switch to convert to VOIP. The laptops and peripherals provided by SirsiDynix, Mississippi Library Commission, and Harris linked the public to the Internet, the library's webpage, and online catalog. Satellite phones provided telephone service to the public.

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## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Hurricane Katrina made a deep impact on all Hancock County residents. Even now, seven months later, many people in Hancock County have not received insurance settlements or still wait for a FEMA trailer. Some still live in tents. The only full-service grocery store is a 30 mile round trip. Few people have had the opportunity or the resources to begin the rebuilding process. In order to continue the quest for resolution of their situation, people desperately need the Internet and the copy and fax services. They need access to the HCLS Horizon catalog of books and information and referral services. The Hancock County Library System staff is able to meet the needs of the community, thanks to technology and the technological support provided by HCLS partners in this project.

The Hancock County Library System is essential to the recovery and rebuilding process it is the place to go for information, to sit down and enjoy a newspaper or magazine, to meet friends not seen since the storm, to meet an architect or contractor to review new house plans, to check out a book or movie for entertainment. Now, more than ever, local groups and organizations need the library's meeting room, since there are no buildings in the area that can host meetings. The library has become the hub of the

community. It is the place to be, the place to meet, the place that citizens can count on to provide a myriad of recovery and rebuilding services.

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## **EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS**

Katrina changed forever the library's community. Residential areas are now lined with small FEMA travel-size trailers. They are placed where homes once stood or in the front yards of gutted homes. One half of Hancock County's population (23,500) now live in 8,698 small, cramped trailers. Entire families live in only 280 square feet. Many will live this way for at least another year.

Katrina changed forever our community's information needs. Prior to Katrina, 3,000 questions a month on average were answered by the Information Services staff using traditional print resources. Post-Katrina, 1,000 questions per month on average are answered using the print collections. However, 3,000 customers per month now obtain information via 20 public access computers. This is a complete reversal of previous usage patterns.

More than 150 people per day log onto the public access computers and many more than that use the library. Tables and chairs have become make-shift offices for small business owners. Families sit together to work on storm related forms. Parents sit at one computer using recovery resource sites, writing resumes or applying for jobs. Their children sit next to them using another computer for homework assignments or just for recreation. The meeting room hosts recovery workshops. Income tax forms are available online and in print. Income Tax Assistance from AARP members is provided throughout the week. In short, the library in Bay St. Louis/Waveland, Mississippi, has become a one stop shop for information and communication.

At HCLS, customers get Internet service, copy service, fax service, income tax forms, meeting room space, disaster recovery information, and traditional library services. The HCLS web page, [www.hancocklibraries.info](http://www.hancocklibraries.info), averages 15,000 hits per month. A congressman and his wife are two residents of Bay St. Louis who lost their home and everything they owned to Katrina. A long-time user of the library, said on a recent visit, "This library has become an oasis in the midst of devastation. Thank you for what you are doing for the community." To the staff and administration of the library, it is just part of their job and their mission of providing the right information, at the right time, in the right format while acting as a conduit to and from other information sources and services.

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## **WHY IT DESERVES TO WIN (AS STATED BY THE NOMINATOR)**

The Hancock County Library System, in the words of one Chamber board member, is a cult. Everyone knows the library and the wonderful services it provides to Hancock County and its residents. The staff and administration work hard to provide the services the public needs, and is always there to give a helping hand when needed. They deserve to be recognized for the work they do and the reputation they hold in the community.

Even seven months after the hurricane, Hancock County is still devastated and attempting to recover. HCLS is a beacon in its community... an institution that stepped up to the plate immediately to serve the community with what it needed most --- free and easy access to information. HCLS literally has been providing information that is a matter of life and death. Of the library systems devastated by Katrina, HCLS and its commitment to online access epitomize the "library as community servant" model that is so important to the future of libraries.

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## COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

**6. INFOhio** (Connecting educational resources with the power of information technology and SchoolRooms™ content management)

**LOCATION:** Columbus, OH 43201

**WEB SITE:** <http://www.infohio.org>

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

INFOhio, a statewide cooperative school library and information network, uses technology to ensure curriculum and instruction of information literacy by providing greater access for Ohio's learners and educators. INFOhio's components include electronic resources for schools, instructional development for teachers, library automation, media booking, and a statewide union catalog. INFOhio is working with SirsiDynix to jointly develop SchoolRooms, a new multimedia portal designed for K-12 schools. Based on the SirsiDynix Rooms™ content management platform, SchoolRooms links to both state and national curricular standards and features databases, selected Web sites, the library's catalog and e-content from publishers. Its federated searching capability allows users to simultaneously search multiple resources, displaying result sets in a clear, student-friendly format.

It began as a dream of a few educators in Northeast Ohio in the late 80s who wanted to make it easier to share resources within their district. It evolved into a grassroots effort to provide all Ohio students with equal access to online resources and to promote statewide information sharing through a single library automation system and union catalog. Now more than a decade later, INFOhio is transforming teaching and learning in Ohio by connecting educational resources with the power of information technology. And, it is doing so by helping school libraries and librarians do their job. INFOhio is a tool for librarians to help students learn and teachers teach. Today, INFOhio is the virtual Pre K-12 library for all Ohio public and non-public schools. It offers a wide range of electronic databases, instructional resources, standardized software, and technical support. It is available anytime, anywhere from any Internet-accessible computer at school or at home. Its educational services can be linked to student achievement and performance, standards-based instruction, teacher effectiveness and technological competence.

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## PROJECT TECHNOLOGY

### SchoolRooms

The technology backbone of INFOhio is the existing infrastructure and technical support of the Ohio Education Computer Network (OECN). Indeed, INFOhio capitalizes on the fact that nearly every school has connectivity to a statewide backbone network via regional Information Technology Centers (ITCs). By utilizing this infrastructure, INFOhio is able to provide library automation services to Ohio's schools at a much lower cost making library automation a reality for schools despite the difficult school budget situation in Ohio. Upcoming network improvements made possible by Ohio's Third Frontier Project (<http://www.thirdfrontier.com/>) also will positively impact school libraries.

In addition, INFOhio:

- Selects and recommends standardized software purchases to promote interoperability and statewide sharing of age-appropriate, curriculum-related, relevant and easy-to-use resources. (See specifics in Benefits section.)
- Researches, tests, and recommends new technologies for implementation such as federated search capabilities, data warehousing, etc.

- Has a specialized technical team that provides statewide support for implementation, sharing knowledge, updating skill sets, and ensuring that school libraries have the tools they need to assist students and school staff in the educational process.
  - Provides, maintains, and regularly upgrades a web site that acts as a portal for all its resources, which is available 24x7 to all Ohio students, educators, and parents from any Internet-accessible computer.
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## **COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

By providing student-friendly, information-rich collections online (which also support the curriculum), INFOhio is delivering a powerful research and learning tool. It supports student discovery, as well as offers educators high-quality resources and gives parents an accessible way to help their children learn.

INFOhios communities include students, educators and parents across the state. INFOhio's efforts encompass five key areas:

1. Building a school library infrastructure network through standardized automation software. Currently, INFOhio has 2,424 Ohio school library collections online serving more than 1.1 million students. Out of 616 districts, 480 are directly benefiting from INFOhios library automation project. INFOhio is in the midst of what has to be the largest migration in the world --upgrading from the original MultiLIS software installed in 1994 to the SirsiDynix K-12 (Unicorn) product. So far, more than 1880 libraries have moved to the new system.
  2. Automating regional media centers so teachers from anywhere in the state can simply point and click to locate the multi-media resources they need, when they need them. Today, the collections of 45 agencies are online via Medianet, the media booking software package from Dymaxion. INFOhio recently added several hundred digital titles to the collection, which are licensed at the state level.
  3. Transforming the INFOhio Union Catalog into a web-based Curriculum Resource Catalog that will one day link users all around the state to resources aligned to state standards. This Union Catalog currently holds more than 1.3 million resources from Ohio's automated libraries and educational media centers. It is updated daily and serves schools statewide as a primary source for copy cataloging. Approximately 6,000 records are downloaded weekly.
  4. Providing all schools -- regardless of size, location or fiscal resources -- with equitable access to a core collection of electronic resources. The collection currently consists of 15 databases including the full text of 6,000 magazines and newspapers (EBSCO), The Encyclopedia Britannica, ProQuest/SIRS elementary reference resource Discoverer, the American National Biography and more. Since 2001, usage of these resources has increased by 334%. In fact, more than 6 million articles were retrieved and printed last year. These resources are purchased cooperatively through Libraries Connect Ohio - a consortium that includes INFOhio, OhioLINK and OPLIN, the academic and public library networks in Ohio, and the State Library of Ohio. As a result of this arrangement, K-12 achieves substantial savings: the resources cost \$.45 per student compared to \$45.00 per student, if individual schools purchased only a fraction of these resources.
  5. Offering a full-range of in-service training for library media specialists, educators, and even parents to help them understand the importance of information literacy, how to harness the power of technology to transform ordinary classrooms into multi-dimensional learning experiences, and the value of life-long learning. INFOhios efforts are directed at making sure they don't just provide resources, but that they help the teachers and communities understand how to use them as well.
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## **EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS**

The project is currently being piloted in the Shaker Heights City School District. An initial survey showed that 85 percent of students would use the Web portal again. Shaker Heights has eight schools with 5,600 students. Feedback from the pilot will be used for establishing the project statewide.

Here are a few of the benefits of INFOhio as described by its community of users:

- “INFOhio is our lifeline to the world and our advocate to the state government. Without INFOhio we would still be individual libraries trying to do the impossible task of providing for the information needs of our students.”
- “Working together through INFOhio my students in Appalachia now have many of the same library electronic tools that are available in high-wealth districts and many public libraries.”
- “I need to prepare my students to live and work in an information-based economy. My students need access to the high quality subscription databases provided by INFOhio.”

Clearly, INFOhio helps school libraries provide an environment for the entire breadth of student abilities to grow and develop. In addition, another of the benefits of INFOhio is its forward-looking work. Here are three new initiatives INFOhio has undertaken in the past two years that embody the spirit of INFOhio and expand the services it offers to its communities.

1. The INFOhio Parent Project. Thanks to a grant from the Reinberger Foundation, INFOhio recently initiated a program to reach K-12 parents so they, in turn, can help their children. Based on input from a series of focus groups with parents, INFOhio developed new Parent Resources pages for its web site, created a 4-minute informational video, and put together a Toolkit to help librarians work with parents to show them how to access and use the powerful resources available from INFOhio.

For more information about The INFOhio Parent Project go to [www.infohio.org](http://www.infohio.org) and click on the Parent button or go directly to <http://www.infohio.org/Parent/>. Resources include a 4-minute informational video What is INFOhio?; public service announcements; and the Toolkit for Promoting INFOhio Resources to Parents available at <http://www.infohio.org/Parent/Toolkit.html>, which is designed for school librarians and other educators and includes sample articles for school newsletters, bookmark, and poster templates, activities for students, and suggestions for keeping parents informed about INFOhio resources.

2. Data Driven Decisions for Academic Achievement (D3A2). Teachers don't need access to tons of information – they need the right information in the right format at the right time to ensure the academic success of their students. That's the goal of D3A2. This collaborative project of K-12 agencies across Ohio will make it easier for teachers and administrators to access timely data--such as test results and student information--which can be linked to lesson plans, resources, assessments, etc., and aligned to Ohio's academic content standards. This system will be built on the national School Interoperability Framework (SIF). INFOhio will help develop the content aggregator and coordinate the efforts of the K-12 content providers across the state. For more information, go to <http://www.d3a2.org/> to get a comprehensive view of the project goals, organization, and progress. The ultimate evidence of benefits from the project will be when all students in the state of Ohio demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter as outlined in Ohio's Academic Content Standards.

3. SchoolRooms. About a year ago, INFOhio began collaborating with SirsiDynix on the next generation of information delivery for PreK-12 schools. Recently, they launched SchoolRooms, a new multimedia online portal. Teams of Ohio school librarians, teachers and parents worked on the development with the SirsiDynix staff to select, design, and test SchoolRooms content, which features the school library's catalog, other public library catalogs, online databases, selected web sites, e-content from publishers, and Google/Yahoo results. SchoolRooms also includes federated searching capability that allows users to simultaneously search multiple sources and display results in a clear, user-friendly format.

Initially, virtual rooms within School Rooms were created for Earth Science, U.S. History, and parents at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. INFOhio and SirsiDynix partnered with Kent State University's School of Library and Information Science to conduct a pilot study and usability testing with

students, educators, and parents of the Shaker Heights, Ohio, school district this spring. As a result of the successful pilot, INFOhio and SirsiDynix agreed to continue the collaboration and to develop virtual rooms for all subject areas of the K-12 curriculum. Further joint product development and enhancements are planned, which will help make this a winning product for Ohio's schools and will help INFOhio reach its goal to provide resources to students, educators, and parents through a state-of-the-art electronic environment. For more information about SchoolRooms, including a demo, go to <http://www.schoolrooms.net>.

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#### **WHY IT DESERVES TO WIN (AS STATED BY THE NOMINATOR)**

Here's what Brian Kenney, editor-in-chief, of *School Library Journal* says of INFOhio project: "There are other public libraries and school consortia that are well supported. But only a few, including ... INFOhio, realize that to survive libraries must evolve and choose to initiate change. As librarians we are better at charting 'best practices' than 'best risks.' When projects as daring .. or as ambitious as SchoolRooms come along, we need to take notice, shine a spotlight on them, and, we hope, jump-start a national discussion about the important new ways in which libraries are enriching children's lives." That sums it up pretty well.

INFOhio is a grassroots initiative. People from every level -- local, regional, state -- are involved in annual planning conferences, retreats and evaluation of the network. But most important, the school librarian still provides the basic, critical, single voice that sets the direction for INFOhio. In addition, INFOhio is about relationships, partnerships and collaboration. INFOhio's success is a tribute to its ability to work with others to achieve goals that are in the best interests of students, teachers, and librarians. INFOhio also is about the future. In 1989, a few educators in northeastern Ohio wanted to make it easier to share resources within their district. They dreamed about one day providing all Ohio students with equal access to online resources and sharing information statewide through a single library automation system and union catalog. Now, that dream is a reality. With this formidable task accomplished, the founders and supporters of INFOhio, once again are looking to the future with the goal of breaking through the clutter and making it simpler and easier for students to learn and teachers to teach. This award would be recognition of their past efforts and encouragement to continue such bold thinking and innovations for the future.

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#### **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

## 7. Kenton County Public Library: (Online resources for the region's history and genealogy)

**LOCATION:** Covington, KY 41011

**WEB SITE:** [www.kentonlibrary.org](http://www.kentonlibrary.org)

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### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Genealogy and Kentucky History is the most visited section of the Kenton County Public Library's web site. It is heavily used by local residents and genealogists from around the country. The library's staff, community volunteers, and local businesses have all worked together to make our collection one of the best in the state.

The Kenton County Public Library has created three distinct online resources detailing the regions history and genealogy. These three resources can be found at <http://www.kentonlibrary.org/genealogy>. The first online resource made available on our web site is the KCPL Northern Kentucky Newspaper Index. Since 1976 library staff has indexed daily issues of Northern Kentucky newspapers. Our staff indexes articles concerning the entire 14 county region of Northern Kentucky. We currently have over 800,000 newspaper articles indexed and available on our web site. Beginning in 2004, the library has added digital images of many older newspapers. The newspaper index is searched approximately 10,000 times per month.

In 2001, the library inaugurated GenKY (Genealogy in Northern Kentucky Database). This database includes over 215,000 entries including census indexes, city directory abstracts, church record indexes, digital images of the records of two major cemeteries, and abstracts of the records of the regions largest hospital. A majority of these records are only available online from the Kenton County Public Library. This database continues to grow.

Library staff and volunteers are planning new online resources which will be added to the webpage in the future. Our most recent addition is a database of local photographs entitled Faces and Places: Northern Kentucky Photographic Archive. Currently the database contains over 7,000 images. Each photograph includes identifying information such as names, dates, locations, and subject. Many of these photos were donated to the library by the Kentucky Post, the regions newspaper of record. Additional images are currently being added. It is the intent of the library to digitize our entire photograph collection of more than 35,000 images. The photograph collection includes images of the region dating back to the 1880s. Digitization will protect our collection and provide greater access to the public.

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### PROJECT TECHNOLOGY

SirsiDynix's Community Resources is used for the Newspaper index. This allows indexers to work independently, using the MARC format for records. It also provides a Z39.50 server. An RSS feed of recently indexed historical newspaper citations is also available through a locally written java program which uses JDBC to perform an SQL query. The results of the SQL query are then reformatted into an XML file. The interface of the GenKy database is written in php with a PostgreSQL database backend. Full text articles are provided via the Acrobat pdf format. ColdFusion is used for the interface of Faces and Places. It has a PostgreSQL backend, and uses jpg format for its images.

Because we wrote the interface using ColdFusion, we can easily add new features, giving the database a Web 2.0 feel. Both GenKy and Faces and Places run on a Linux Redhat server which uses an Apache webserver. Both interfaces were written internally and can easily be adapted to provide new services. They both use SMTP to allow patrons to email citations or images to themselves.

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## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The library's newspaper index provides the only index to local Kentucky papers for time periods before 1990. It is used by genealogists, historians, students, and local business people. Whether researching a school paper, a relative's death, or a legal case, the newspaper index is an invaluable resource to our community. The GenKY database provides access to thousands of records that are only available at the Kenton County Public Library. For example, St. Elizabeth Medical Center donated to the library the first eighty years of their admissions records to the library. These fragile records could not be made available to the public in their original format. The library digitized and indexed these records to make them available on our web site. Many of these records predate Kentucky death and birth records, and therefore are very valuable to genealogists from across the country. Many patrons have told us they had been looking for death dates for ancestors for years, and were only able to find them on GenKY.

Faces and Places benefits the community by providing greater access to our extensive photograph collection. Users can now access our photographs from their home, school or workplace at their convenience. These images document the rich heritage of the Northern Kentucky region. Previously patron access to these images has been limited due to security and preservation issues. Faces and Places will allow patrons to search for photographs and order them online, eliminating the need to access the fragile originals. The library receives many local history and genealogy requests from across the United States and other countries. The library's online services allow people to research their ancestral roots even though they no longer live in the Northern Kentucky region.

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## EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS

The Newspaper Index typically receives nearly 100,000 searches each calendar year. Additional funds would allow us to add more digital images to our collection. This would allow us to archive more of our fragile paper materials in proper storage.

The newspaper index is available on the library's web site:

<http://216.68.116.14:8081/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=main>. In the past year, the GenKY database has received over 130,000 page views. We have received many positive comments from researchers, librarians and professors about the quantity and quality of the service.

GenKY is available on the library's web site: <http://apu.kenton.lib.ky.us/gen/genadb.php>. Faces and Places was launched on March 20, 2006. During the month of March there were 6,572 images viewed. The library has provided no publicity for this new service. In the future we can only imagine the success it will have once more people in the community are aware of the service. Staff has received many positive comments about Faces and Places.

As an example, an employee of the local city government recently searched the database for her mother's maiden name. She was delighted to find a photograph of her great-grandfather whom she had never met. Faces and Places is available on the library's web site:

<http://www.kentonlibrary.org/genphotos/>. The Kenton County Public Library is recognized in the community as the major resource for Kentucky history and genealogy information. Recently we have received a grant in the amount of \$35,000 from the Scripps-Howard Foundation to digitize and index additional materials from our collection. This grant is contingent upon finding matching funds. If we receive this award, funds would be applied to assist us with this grant.

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## WHY IT DESERVES TO WIN (AS STATED BY THE NOMINATOR)

The Kenton County Public Library has a consistent record of using technology to provide expanded access to our local history and genealogy collection. The Newspaper Index, GenKY database and Faces and Places Photographic Archive were all created and funded by the Kenton County Public Library, thus proving our commitment to providing access to Kentucky history and genealogy materials. The code for



GenKY and the Faces and Places Photographic Archive was written in-house by the systems librarian. The Kenton County Public Library is a leader in providing online access to local history and genealogy materials in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

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## **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

## 8. Lansing Public Library: (Three-Step plan to connect with the community with technology)

**LOCATION:** Lansing, IL 60438

**WEB SITE:** [www.lansing.lib.il.us](http://www.lansing.lib.il.us)

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### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In January 2005 Lansing Public Library decided to build a better community by offering resources with new technologies and encouraging our community to connect through the library. We set three goals: to give the library a more visible space in the community; to meet the users in their space and connect with them in the most convenient way for them; and to connect with users who are using newer technologies. We wanted to establish relevance with our users of all ages and become a constant presence in our patron's lives.

To meet these goals, we formed an ongoing action plan. The first step in our plan is to provide services through technology and to educate patrons in using these technologies through various methods (hands-on classes, instructional fliers, and instructional, informative web pages). The second step is to build relationships with other libraries and librarians, in order to open up more resources to our patrons and community. The third step is to keep abreast of the community's needs and provide them with the most current technologies and services available. All of the steps in our plan are still being performed simultaneously, and all work in different ways to meet our goals for the community, as explained in detail below.

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### PROJECT TECHNOLOGY

Website Instant Message Reference and Readers Advisory Blogs: Adult, Teen, Teen Book Blog, Youth, and Information Technology Email notices RSS Podcasting Del.icio.us Flickr.com Library Toolbar Firefox Search Engine Plug-In Juice (formerly iPodder) Customizations on Horizon Information Portal Google Site Map iTunes Credit Card Payments accepted online via E-Pay Video Games (MarioKart, Dance Revolution, Online Games) Library Elf Myspace.com Feedburner.com Remote access to online databases and resources including: Horizon Information Portal, SWAN Catalog (Metropolitan Library System), I-Share (Illinois Libraries), NoveList, NoveList K-8, EbscoHost, NewsBank, Learn-A-Test, FirstSearch and WorldCat.

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### COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Library resources are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year from home or patrons' workplace. Patrons have choices of how they want to receive information: subscribe to email notices of overdue items & holds awaiting pickup or choose mailed paper overdue notices. Those choosing email notices help us save on postage and crash mailers, and save staff time making phone calls to notify patrons of holds awaiting pickup. Staff time and funds we save because of email notices can be allocated to better serve our users. We also offer a link to LibraryElf as an option to receive reminder notices before items are due.

We have customized HIP to add links to on order items, new books, award winners, selections from our book discussion groups, and recently added audiobooks, CDs, and DVDs. Patrons love being able to place holds on titles we have on order, and enjoy browsing the new materials from home. We also customized search result screens to include icons that indicate the item format (large print, audio cassette, audio CD, music CD, DVD, video), award winners such as Caldecott, Newberry, Edgar Mystery

Award, or language (Spanish.) We also activated online renewals in HIP, and this has been quite popular. Users can pay their library fines online with a credit card or echeck using E-Pay, made possible through a partnership with the Illinois State Treasurers Office.

Users can choose to subscribe to library news feeds via email, RSS, download the print newsletter, or read the events on the web site or blog. Our podcasts are available in iTunes, our branded, pre-loaded version of Juice, or via the RSS 2.0 feed with their favorite aggregator. Our RSS feeds are directed through Feedburner.com, offering our patrons a variety of subscription choices. Our web site serves as a portal to link our users to the variety of resources we offer with remote access (HIP, NoveList, NewsBank, Ebsco, FirstSearch, Learn-A-Test, I-Share, SWAN and WorldCat), but we also use our web site to educate and inform our users of new technologies. We have plain-English web pages explaining e-mail notices, IM, RSS, and Podcasts. Google sitemap ensures new additions to our web site are promptly added to the search engine.

We are proud to say we have a #1 ranking in Google, MSN, and Yahoo! for Lansing Library or Lansing Public Library. We added our holdings to WorldCat (with the added benefit of our holdings appearing in Google's find in a library search). We are meeting the users in their space. If patrons download our library toolbar, they can search our catalog, SWAN or WorldCat, without launching our web site. Library news is pushed through the toolbar as RSS feeds as well. Users do not have to understand RSS; the news notifications are right there in the toolbar each time they open their browser (Internet Explorer or Firefox) and we become a constant presence in their online experience! If the users prefer the Firefox Search Engine Plug-in, we offer that as well. We have Instant Message screen names on AOL, MSN, and Yahoo, and have customized names for each department so users can direct their question to the Readers Advisory/Adult Programs Desk, Adult Reference, Youth Reference or Teen Desk. Instead of a faceless virtual reference product with an unfamiliar interface, our patrons can add us to their buddy list and we are there when they need us!

Our blogs: Adult News, Teen News, Youth News, Information Technology News, and the teen Book Blog offer our users the option to subscribe with their favorite feed reader or via email. We have partnered with High Browse Online, the Readers Advisory blog of the National Library Singapore, to offer our patrons additional book reviews, and a different perspective. Our blogs have comments enabled so readers everywhere can comment. Our podcasts are listed in iTunes, we post photos to Flickr.com, and bookmark sites in del.icio.us, once again we are meeting the users in their space, and myspace.com too! Users can also subscribe to RSS feeds from our Flickr.com and del.icio.us accounts. Local teachers are more aware of the technologies offered and are more eager to promote our resources to their students. We've partnered with the local schools and offer their Accelerated Reader lists on our web site, and we've received positive feedback from faculty and parents.

A year ago, we often heard students and parents tell us their teachers said they could not use the computer for their homework. We gave the teachers information explaining our online databases and reminded them that the library catalog is on the computer, and the confusion has disappeared! The addition of gaming programs, the use of CD-ROMs to disseminate Teen Summer Reading information, and a grand prize of an iPod are establishing relevance for teens. We are also starting a volunteer program called ITeens, where high school students can volunteer to assist with common computer questions such as: how do I change my font in Word, or how do I use the library's print-vend system? Many teens need volunteer hours for various organizations or college applications, and this is a great activity to show them they are valuable members of the community. Hands-on computer classes are playing an important role in these technology changes. Users can attend a class and learn how to use the features of HIP, email, or navigate the Internet, and we create an enthusiastic new audience for the innovative ideas! We set up a blog for Lansing's local cable station LNN, and now they can post their program schedule on the web.

If we expand "community" to include the library community as a whole, we should note that it was a member of our staff who recorded & uploaded the first podcasts from the 2005 CODI Conference! Staff

have benefited from reading blogs and listening to podcasts when budgets have not enabled us to attend as many innovative conferences and presentations as we would like to attend. Our users benefit from the new ideas! We also hope through our use of technology tools that we have put Lansing, Illinois, on the map, and during the current search for a new director, it will attract forward-thinking applicants!

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## EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS

We have new faces attending programs: for example, 84% of teens who attend our new gaming afternoons have not attended a library program before! Usage of online databases such as EbscoHost and NoveList have gone up dramatically since adding remote access in late 2005.

Our web site traffic increased 25% in 2005, and our 2006 year-to-date usage is up 33% over the first quarter last year. In nine months, 65 users have installed our Lansing Public Library toolbar with RSS feeds. Since activating online renewals in September 2005, patrons have renewed 2,460 items, and usage continues to grow each month for this convenient feature. In less than a year, we've had 92 users subscribe to our blogs, and 93 users subscribe to our podcasts. We had 42 downloads of our podcast of the Teen Interviews from our Great Games program in just one week, and the total has now grown to 62 downloads. <http://lansinglibraryteen.blogspot.com/2006/03/great-games-interviews.html>.

\*Our Horizon Information Portal (custom tabs Good Reads and Audio & Video) <http://64.27.155.198:81/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=lssout>

\*Lansing Public Library's home page <http://www.lansing.lib.il.us>

\*Lansing Public Library's Library 2.0 page <http://www.lansing.lib.il.us/L2.htm>

\*Lansing Library's Teen Blog (comments from the teens at the gaming event) <http://lansinglibraryteen.blogspot.com/2006/01/great-games.html>

We have received recognition by the Metropolitan Library Systems Zephyr Innovation Incubator for our innovative funding and technology application for library user podcast downloading at Lansing Public Library. Lansing Public Library received support from its friends group to offer a library-branded version of Juice, podcasting software. Lansing Public Library's branded version can be downloaded by library users, and it comes with the library's podcasts ready to listen to. Zephyr applauded our innovative use of technology and political support for innovation! <http://www.mls.lib.il.us/cats.cfm?catid=175&mid=990>

What others are saying about us:

RSS4Lib, June 24, 2005 <http://www.322.pair.com/ginnblog/rss4lib/archives/000790.html>

The Shifted Librarian, Dec. 23, 2005  
[http://www.theshiftedlibrarian.com/archives/2005/12/23/mls\\_libraries\\_rock.html](http://www.theshiftedlibrarian.com/archives/2005/12/23/mls_libraries_rock.html)

The Shifted Librarian, Nov. 22, 2005  
[http://www.theshiftedlibrarian.com/archives/2005/11/22/leveling\\_the\\_playing\\_field.html](http://www.theshiftedlibrarian.com/archives/2005/11/22/leveling_the_playing_field.html)

Madison, NH library blog (linking to us to define RSS & podcast)  
<http://madisonlibrary.blogspot.com/2005/11/okay-lets-get-going.html> Salon.com, Nov. 26, 2005  
<http://blogs.salon.com/0001004/2005/11/26.html#a10330>

TameTheWeb, January 24, 2006 [http://tametheweb.com/2006/01/itunes\\_podcasts\\_library.html](http://tametheweb.com/2006/01/itunes_podcasts_library.html)

TameTheWeb, March 16, 2006 [http://tametheweb.com/2006/03/branded\\_casted\\_and\\_wikied\\_some.html](http://tametheweb.com/2006/03/branded_casted_and_wikied_some.html)

Open Stacks, March 14, 2006 <http://openstacks.net/os/archives/000929.html#000929>

Success story: a patron who took a few computer classes at the library came in a few months later and had gotten a job based on the fact that the skills he learned at our classes enabled him to post his resume to an online job site.

### **WHY IT DESERVES TO WIN (AS STATED BY THE NOMINATOR)**

Everything we have done has been free! Lansing, Illinois is not a rich community, nor is it a rich library. In our community 272 families are below the poverty level, according to the 2000 Census. We are tackling projects that bigger libraries with larger budgets and staff have not! [Our Friends of the Library upgraded our Flickr account to FlickrPro, and donated funds for the branded version of the podcast aggregator, Juice and equipment for wi-fi.] We have added a lot of new services and programs in a short span of time. Library speakers such as Jenny Levine & Michael Stephens are using our web site as an example of what libraries can accomplish!

In January 2005 we had a web site, IM reference, and access to our catalog, SWAN, NewsBank, and Learn-A-Test. Everything else mentioned in this application has been added since January 2005. Since the beginning of 2005, we have begun offering hands-on computer classes in Mouse Skills, Beginning Internet, Library Catalog, Email, Microsoft Word, and NoveList. We added our holdings to WorldCat (with the added benefit of our holdings appearing in Google's find in a library search). We added remote access via our web site to NoveList, and our Ebsco databases. We started blogs. We offered a library toolbar. We podcasted our first program, and created some computer-instruction podcasts.

So far in 2006, we have added additional topics of hands-on computer classes including classes in Ebsco, NewsBank, FirstSearch, Searching SWAN, I-Share and WorldCat, Trusted Websites. Classes in using Bloglines, Blogger, and Juice begin this April. We also debuted our custom branded version of the podcast aggregator, Juice, preloaded with our podcast feeds. Even if patrons unsubscribe to some of our feeds, our logo will remain. With this award, we would be able to offer more technology innovations to the community, and in step three of our action plan, to provide our patrons with the most current technology and services available.

We would like to add at least one PC to be used as a creation station to encourage creativity. It would be loaded with a CD burner, loads of RAM, and creation software. Let the patrons create podcasts, edit photos, make movies, mashups, or whatever they want! Our current equipment does not allow this flexibility. We would also like to purchase some laptops that would be available for checkout. They could be used in the library with our new public wi-fi (coming summer 2006) or could be taken on a business trip, or just used at home. We could also create a dedicated space for computer classes, enabling us to offer more classes each month, without sharing the meeting room space, which limits when classes may be scheduled.

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### **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

**9. Memphis Public Library & Information Center:** (LINC – A comprehensive community information and referral service)

**LOCATION:** Memphis, TN 38111

**WEB SITE:** [www.memphislibrary.org](http://www.memphislibrary.org)

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Memphis Public Library & Information Center introduced LINC (Library Information Center) service in 1975 as a comprehensive community information and referral (I&R) service for the greater Memphis area. Throughout the country, United Way organizations normally host the community I&R service role. The library was fortunate that the United Way of the Mid-South recognized Memphis Public Library's well established role in the community for providing I&R service and has provided partial sponsorship money each year. From 1975 through 2005, LINC's I&R service was available by telephone, and included TTY/TDD service. In 2005, I&R services were expanded significantly through the introduction of 2-1-1, enhanced database management, e-mail, and chat reference.

The vital role of the library's LINC service was acknowledged in February 2005 when LINC became the designated 2-1-1 service provider for the Shelby, Fayette, Tipton, and Lauderdale counties in Tennessee. All residents of these counties can now call 2-1-1 for their community information needs, including rent and utility assistance, food, protective services, and much more. The early days of LINC involved only telephone service and hand written card files to find community information.

Over the past 18 months, Memphis Public Library chose to take advantage of new technologies from many different perspectives to offer customers services that would be more accessible to them through enhanced telephone technology, introduction of computer technology through database management of community information, and web based technology of e-mail and chat reference. The new 2-1-1 service provided the impetus to allow the library to further upgrade hardware and software.

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## PROJECT TECHNOLOGY

The library took advantage of technologies from many environments in order to be prepared to both successfully manage LINC internally as well as provide appropriate information to each customer who calls LINC. Voice, data, and web based technologies were all included to maximize service. Data Upgrades: A successful I&R service is only possible with a strong marriage of a current database of all community services and qualified staff who can listen to customers and refer them to the appropriate service needed. Technology allowed the original hand written card files to transition to the DRA Classic platform approximately ten years ago. The library recently invested in Resource House, the new standard for I&R databases. This new technology will provide several enhancements to the LINC I&R service.

- The database is much easier for staff to maneuver and search mechanisms will provide more effective results.
- The reference feature will allow staff to find information more quickly on related topics, providing more accurate information and appropriate matches to customer needs.
- The software keeps electronic tabulations of referrals with enough specific detail that demographic trends for I&R services can be tracked and then analyzed.
- The administrative section allows for community agencies to update their own information which LINC then verifies before updating the database. This new feature will increase efficiencies through timely updates of information.

The Resource House database will be available worldwide via the library's web site, [www.memphislibrary.org](http://www.memphislibrary.org), by early this summer. The LINC Manager serving as Tennessee state president of I&R agencies, TNAIRS, was a guiding force for advocating that all agencies have uniform telephone and software so 2-1-1 agencies across the state had compatible resources. This will allow access to resources from across the state for any customer who needs it. This forethought in planning will immediately save time and money for all 2-1-1 service providers. Through a statewide Tennessee Regulatory Agency grant, Resource House will be installed in all I&R agencies by July 1, 2006.

**Web Based Upgrades:** Email technology has allowed more efficient access to ready reference and I&R services. When introduced a year ago, email requests were minimal, having only 6-8 requests each month. Requests have mushroomed to over 150 requests each month. This represents over a 125% increase in demand for services EACH MONTH. This has been partially due to the library's web page promoting Ask A Librarian from every page on the site. The majority of the requests are for ready reference. The majority of I&R requests have been from service providers. LINC staff has also used email to initiate a listserv called LINChub.

This has become the backbone for all community service providers to expand their knowledge of information and referral resources to better serve their own clients. Through the library's role as information providers, LINC staff has undertaken the role of consistently broadcasting information about services, trainings, and issues to service providers. The library has initiated a chat feature which allows customers real-time chat capability with librarians. This has not been as popular with customers as we had anticipated, but because of current staffing shortages, the library has not been able to offer this service during all open hours. Therefore, the library and LINC will be addressing customer usage issues to encourage better usage of the service.

The library is anxious to get its new SirsiDynix Enterprise Portal Solution software operational, because this new upgrade will allow the LINC database and 2-1-1 to be featured and positioned on the library's web page as one of its essential services.

**Telephone Upgrades:** Telephone technology is the foundation of the library's new 2-1-1 service. A TTY/TDD service for the deaf and hearing impaired is also available. With funding from the United Way, the library purchased new hardware and software, including the Nortel Symposium Server. This is a call center software solution which provides:

- Detailed reporting capabilities on all incoming calls, including demographic information which will allow the library to continually monitor community needs and viable solutions.
- Matching capabilities of customer needs with staff most appropriate to answer the call. Staff skills are inputted into the software through a skills-based profile allowing calls to be channeled through this so the most appropriate staff receives the call.
- Toll free access to 2-1-1 despite the fact that it is a multi-county service.
- Messaging to customers when the library is closed. While the software has been installed, this piece is still under development so effective messages can be left for customers.
- Routing capabilities which in the future will allow 2-1-1 service to be ultimately available 24/7. The library and LINC have also had to address unforeseen barriers to providing 2-1-1 service. LINC's perseverance and leadership have tackled these issues:

Corporate telephone lines must be reprogrammed to gain access to 2-1-1. This is important to companies trying to make referrals to agencies as well as corporate employees who want to access 2-1-1 services for personal needs.

The library continues to advocate so corporations will change their technologies so 2-1-1 is accessible. Cell phone companies do not automatically make 2-1-1 service available to customers. The library has initiated contact with the majority of cell phone companies to provide 2-1-1 service. Two contracts with

major cell phone companies have already been signed. A third contract is nearing completion. Contact with the majority of other cell phone providers has been initiated. This is a very timely process since each cell phone company requires a unique contract negotiated individually.

Because 2-1-1 services must be easily accessible via telephone, Internet, or in-person, the library has included availability to the Resource House database in its two mobile services, which travel throughout the community to places where library services would otherwise not be accessible. These are JobLINC (targets information for customers seeking jobs) and InfoBUS (targets information for ESL populations). Through two grants, the library installed broadband access via satellite and Internet so library resources can be effectively used.

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## **COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

It is important that libraries continually pulse their communities and offer services which meet their needs. In today's world more information than ever before is being provided in multiple formats. Complicating this is the customer's desire for instantaneous access to information. The library plays a crucial and vital role to linking customers with accurate and timely information on any topic. The library's and LINC's role as the 2-1-1 provider gives the customer this gateway to accurate and timely information. Resource House allows the library to organize and access the resources which customers will need. To date, the Memphis Public library is the only library in the country to assume responsibility as a 2-1-1 provider. Research states that, on average, customers make seven calls before they reach the appropriate I&R agency to meet their needs. The availability of 2-1-1 and the upgraded database allow a customer to discuss their needs with a library staff member who can then refer the customer to the most appropriate human service agency. Therefore, the customer makes one call instead of seven.

Email and chat capabilities have allowed the library to tailor communication to meet the expectations of its customers in today's technology world. This also allows customers direct access to the database so they can search for information on their own. The new availability to update information about each service more efficiently allows customers to have more accurate information. Resource House and Symposium both have sophisticated tracking systems which will allow the library to monitor and analyze incoming calls. This data will allow the library to inform community leaders and city officials of trends in human service needs for not only our local community, but adjoining counties.

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## **EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS**

- Evidence that it is accomplishing library goals includes the following:
- In the first year of 2-1-1 service, I&R telephone requests have jumped 20% to 1,200 per month.
- The new e-mail service is already receiving service provider requests on a regular basis and the LINC hub list serve developed by LINC is broadcasting valuable information to all service providers on a regular basis.
- Hits to the webpage for both the database and 2-1-1 are increasing rapidly. During Hurricane Katrina, Memphis became a haven for evacuees. LINC staff jumped into action by gathering information about services specifically geared to hurricane victims. This was a natural complement to their local I&R role. LINC's ability to react quickly with accurate and timely information resulted in their becoming an integral part of the local disaster planning team. LINC ultimately became the call center for all relief efforts. In addition, residents of New Orleans were accustomed to using 2-1-1, so upon their arrival in Memphis used the service, resulting in calls coming to the library and LINC. LINC is now part of the core team to handle any upcoming emergencies which need to be



addressed. This degree of success could not have been achieved without the new technologies installed and implemented.

LINC Community Information

[http://draweb.memphislibrary.org/Web2/tramp2.exe/log\\_in?setting\\_key=CIF&guest=guest&screen=CommunityInfo.html](http://draweb.memphislibrary.org/Web2/tramp2.exe/log_in?setting_key=CIF&guest=guest&screen=CommunityInfo.html)

2-1-1.org entry for LINC <http://www.211.org/ReferWeb/Detail.aspx?s38112;0;0;72649;82714;47753>

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#### **WHY IT DESERVES TO WIN (AS STATED BY THE NOMINATOR)**

For more than 30 years Memphis Public Library has made community information a priority and has, thereby, made itself a vital resource for building better communities. Beginning with a simple walk-in and local telephone service, the library has adopted and implemented new technologies to extend and enhance LINC's service to the community. The library has addressed technology in the broadest context possible to maximize services to its customers, including normal hardware and software computer upgrades, and has also included telephone technologies and satellite accessibility.

The library has been willing to pursue these, even when budget limitations would have otherwise precluded it, by finding private funding through various grants which now total well over \$250,000. The impact of having these many technologies has resulted in the library being better able to achieve its mission of satisfying each customer's need to know. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita allowed the library to reach past its traditional customer base and have a dynamic impact on the evacuees.

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#### **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

**10. NCSU Libraries:** (Endeca catalog interface that benefits the user community)

**LOCATION:** Raleigh, NC 27695-7111

**WEB SITE:** <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/>

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## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The NCSU Libraries have implemented a revolutionary search interface for its SirsiDynix Unicorn catalog that is offering tremendous, immediate benefits to its user community. This groundbreaking implementation uses technology that was first deployed on major e-commerce Web sites to provide a simple, easy-to-use search interface that effectively exploits the vast amount of information contained in the catalog. This approach to information retrieval, Guided Navigation, mimics the human discovery process by integrating the two most common means of finding information online – searching and browsing. This integration allows users to adapt and hone their searches based on their own determination of relevancy.

For keyword searches, the catalog presents a list of matching results ranked by relevance and several options for search refinement based on characteristics of the result set. These navigation options include: topic, genre, material type, format, library, and availability. For example, users can now easily filter a search results list to display only items that are available electronically. Result sets can be resorted by publication date, title, author, call number, or popularity. Improved relevancy ranking for keyword searches, as well as new spell correction and “Did You Mean?” features, help users find resources of interest easily and quickly. A second search box on the catalog Web page lets users who are looking for a known title or author go directly to those items. The Browse feature, believed to be the first of its kind for a library catalog, offers the ability to view the entire collection organized by Library of Congress classification (i.e., subject) without having to start with a search. The Browse tab also allows users to view all new titles added to the collection within the past week.

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## **PROJECT TECHNOLOGY**

The new interface to the NCSU Libraries SirsiDynix Unicorn and Web2 online catalog is an implementation of the Endeca ProFind, Guided Navigation® platform. The Endeca technology creates a navigation engine process that responds to search queries and an API for building a web application that communicates with this back-end server. NCSU created a servlet-based Java web application that uses URL parameters to construct the users query, send that query to the Endeca navigation engine, and display the results.

The application server uses Apache and Tomcat. Once a properly formatted query is submitted, the Endeca navigation engine returns a complex object that includes the resulting records and their properties (title, author, etc.) as well as all available refinements. The web application parses this object to display the results list page. Java Beans are used to parse holdings-level data into easy-to-use objects for the JSP files that actually produce the resulting web pages. For keyword searches, MARC records are exported from the Unicorn system, modified, and re-processed by Endeca. SirsiDynix’s Web2 catalog powers the detailed record display page. Web2 and Unicorn continue to power authority browse searching. For additional information about the data processing, see <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/endeca/technology.html>.

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## **COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

For the NC State community, the new Endeca interface leverages the library’s long investment in detailed cataloging and classification, and makes finding high-quality information much easier and more efficient.

Studies conducted in the library's Usability Research Laboratory have demonstrated the effectiveness of the new catalog in meeting NCSU student and faculty information needs.

New features under development should make the interface even more user-friendly for today's students and scholars. These include displays based on the principles of the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records model; automatic mapping of seeterms in subject authority records to records with the authorized heading; improved integration with the Web2/Unicorn functionality; shopping cart functionality; and RSS and web services tools.

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## **EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS**

A comparison of 100 topical keyword searches (from our OPAC logs) in both the Web2 and Endeca interfaces showed a 33% improved relevancy of result sets (measuring the number of the top 5 hits that were relevant in each result set) and a nearly two-thirds reduction in the number of queries that resulted in no hits. Visit the new catalog by selecting Catalog on the Libraries homepage or by going directly to <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog>.

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## **WHY IT DESERVES TO WIN (AS STATED BY THE NOMINATOR)**

The project exemplifies the NCSU Libraries creative approach to adapting current technologies to support the delivery of cutting-edge services. By showing what is possible, the NCSU Libraries has raised the bar for development of the next generation of online catalogs.

Introduced in January 2006, the interface has generated considerable buzz in the library profession and beyond. The project has been blogged-on several dozen Web sites and was a featured story in *Library Journal Online*. The implementation team members have been invited to speak on the project at several leading academic libraries and national meetings. Echoing attendees at the January meeting of the American Library Association, Will Owen, head of Systems at UNC-Chapel Hill, said, This is absolutely the coolest thing I've seen all century. The libraries' primary user community, university students and faculty, agree.

An NC State junior majoring in statistics wrote the following in an e-mail to the libraries [on February 8, 2006]: "The new Endeca system is incredible. It would be difficult to exaggerate how much better it is than our old online card catalog (and therefore that of most other universities). I've found myself searching the catalog just for fun, whereas before it was a chore to find what I needed." See: <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/endeca/> .

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## **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

**11. New Mexico State Library:** (Digital Documents Archive, providing electronic access to New Mexico government documents)

**LOCATION:** Santa Fe, NM 87507

**WEB SITE:** [www.stlib.state.nm.us](http://www.stlib.state.nm.us)

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Description of technology project: The project we are nominating for the SirsiDynix Building Better Communities Award is the Digital Documents Archive at the New Mexico State Library. Our project provides permanent electronic access to web-based New Mexico government documents. The Digital Archive is providing an exciting new opportunity for all stakeholders in the government information community – government agencies that produce the materials, users who are seeking information, and libraries who maintain documents collections – a way to preserve digital government publications and to make them permanently accessible to our public.

Our web page on the project will provide additional information (<http://www.stlib.state.nm.us/DigitalArchive.htm>). As in all states, many New Mexico state agency materials are published on agency web sites. These state publications are online for a short while only, and then disappear from public view. Federal agencies, and the Government Printing Office, are publishing materials in born digital format that are only on the web for a short time. In addition to capturing New Mexico state agency documents, the Digital Archive provides a mechanism for the State Library to capture fugitive federal electronic documents. We harvest publications from regional federal agencies in New Mexico, and capture timely federal materials of national interest that are not part of the Federal Depository System. One of the missions of the New Mexico State Library is to preserve New Mexico history through the acquisition and preservation of our government publications – both in paper and in electronic format. Our mission is to not only provide access to these materials through our library, but to make it possible for the 25 state depository libraries in New Mexico, and their patrons, to have the same access to web-based state and federal materials through their local online catalogs.

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## PROJECT TECHNOLOGY

Technologies used: MARC records

New Mexico State Library staff wanted to capture and preserve digital materials, but knew that simply saving these at risk publications on a local server was not the answer. We wanted to provide full cataloging access through our Horizon ipac, SALSA, (<http://salsa.stlib.state.nm.us>) to these materials, and we wanted them to be integrated into our existing collections, rather than exist as a standalone archive. We had no funding to hire additional staff, but wanted to provide access to these electronic publications in as thorough a manner as we do for our paper documents. The solution was to use a long established format, MARC, to provide access to the bibliographic information, and to use the 856 MARC tag which provides linking to the Web, and to the permanent link we wanted to create for long-term accessibility.

OCLC Digital Archive subscription In May 2003 the library purchased a subscription to OCLCs Digital Archive software, which allows for the creation of a new, unique record for an electronic resource in WorldCat, by using the Connexion cataloging interface. Through the harvesting and ingesting process, the Digital Archive software uses the original URL to go to the original agency web site for the resource, make a copy, and deposit that copy in the Digital Archive server, along with a permanent link in a new 856 MARC tag. Going beyond the basic cataloging, which makes both print and electronic publications searchable through the library catalog and in the OCLC WorldCat database (thus fully accessible

electronically to other libraries in the state and nation), the library is working toward the preservation of these electronic publications.

- New Mexico News Plus web site  
[http://www.stlib.state.nm.us/services\\_more.php?id=361\\_0\\_13\\_0\\_M64](http://www.stlib.state.nm.us/services_more.php?id=361_0_13_0_M64)

New Mexico News Plus is a free, web-based information research service designed to serve as an access tool for New Mexico's libraries, students, teachers, citizen activists, and federal/state government policy makers to current, important government information. Updated each morning in response to the news of the day, New Mexico News Plus provides the user with links to government documents and agency contacts behind each story. After identification in News Plus, important local federal materials are cataloged, harvested, and archived using the Digital Archive in order to provide long-term access to these items.

- Digital Archive shiplists  
Shiplists of digitally archived electronic resources are sent out regularly to the 25 New Mexico depository libraries, whose staff have been trained to import these materials into their local cataloging systems. The Digital Archive shiplist provides the OCLC record number, bibliographic information, and the Digital Archive permanent url. This information allows all depository libraries, whether or not they have access to OCLC, to include these materials in their local catalog.

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## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Benefits to New Mexico documents community and users: The New Mexico Digital Archive has provided many benefits to our user community, which includes state agencies, the general public, and the New Mexico Depository libraries, such as:

- All of our harvested materials are set to full public view in the Horizon ipac, SALSA
- Long- term access for the public, students, and state agencies to information which may disappear from web sites
- Users have immediate, free, local access to materials in our Horizon ipac, SALSA, or through depository library ipacs from anywhere over the Web.
- State agencies can file materials electronically, and know that their submissions are preserved for long-term use
- Depository libraries do not have to perform collection development for web documents and preserve them
- Greater awareness of documents, through our New Mexico News Plus web site, and through Open WorldCat
- State agencies can keep within their required publications budgets by not having to print and mail multiple copies of documents
- State agencies can fulfill their statutory responsibilities easily with an email containing a url of the publication, or attached document
- Training for depository library staff in the cataloging of electronic resources
- Our program has been a model for several state libraries who are undertaking a digital documents preservation program
- In addition to our Horizon iPac, SALSA, harvested materials are available on WorldCat, through Open WorldCat, Find in a Library, and Firstsearch
- Any library that downloads the MARC record from OCLC will also get the permanent link to the harvested material, plus any subsequent harvests linked to the MARC record (editions, revisions, serial issues) by just the single export of the MARC record
- Non OCLC libraries can also copy and paste the Digital Archive 856 MARC tag into their local ipac for free access to these harvested materials by accessing SALSA

- New Mexico depository libraries receive faster access to timely materials, such as the Governors Executive Orders, and have fewer paper items to shelve and process locally
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## EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS

Evidence of benefits of the New Mexico Digital Archive: The following examples provide statistical information on some aspects of our Digital Archive:

- So far over 1700 items have been harvested into our Digital Archive. To view the materials in SALSA go to <http://salsa.stlib.state.nm.us>, and in the opening screen type "OCLC digital archive" in the General Keyword search box.
- We have sent out over 120 state electronic publications to 25 depository libraries in New Mexico, which have been added into the local catalogs. As an example, the following is the pdf of the January 2006 shiplist, which includes monographs, serials, and digitally archived resources: <http://www.stlib.state.nm.us/files/2006-01.pdf>.
- A recent check of the original state url for materials in the Digital Archive showed over 90% of the documents had been removed from state agency web sites. These materials would have been lost to long-term access if the library had not harvested them before their removal. The original state agency url is still shown in the Digital Archive 856 tag, and most links are now broken. This is an example of the 856 MARC tag we use, which shows the permanent link to the harvested material, and the original url on the state web site, which is now a broken link:

Connect to electronic publication at: <http://digitalarchive.oclc.org/request?id%3Ddocnum%3A52906113>  
(Original URL on state agency web site at:  
<http://www.gmfsh.state.nm.us/PageMill%5FTEExt/WildlifeMgmt/cougarmgmt.html> .

We are averaging over 85 requests per month for the Digital Archive materials in our Horizon ipac, SALSA

State Depository libraries report a savings in staff time due to reduced shelving and collection maintenance in the preservation and access to the harvested electronic documents.

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## WHY IT DESERVES TO WIN (AS STATED BY THE NOMINATOR)

Why this library deserves the award: If we were to receive this recognition of the SirsiDynix Building Better Communities Award the New Mexico State Library would use the cash award to pursue further opportunities for librarians to learn about and investigate digital harvesting technologies. In recent years we have hosted both a national and a regional conference for state and federal documents librarians in Santa Fe.

We have also presented two statewide Library Technology Institutes for public libraries in New Mexico. We are very interested in hosting a regional meeting on the topic of preservation of digital materials. Such a meeting would allow librarians, from all types of libraries in the southwest area, an opportunity to hear about digital projects, grant opportunities, and newly available technologies. The New Mexico State Library staff are dedicated to professional development as it relates to new technology, and preservation of electronic resources. Staff are on national committees (ALAs Government Documents Roundtables Rare and Endangered Government Publications Committee, and the Library of Congress National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP)s State Governments Advisory Committee on the Preservation of State Government Digital Information), and have made numerous presentations on digital archiving at library and archives conferences.

The library staff has been asked to test new software developments for web harvesting by OCLC, and presented an OCLC webinar on our project which was attended by staff from over 15 state libraries. The



New Mexico State Library's work in collecting, preserving and providing permanent access to born digital documents, and in adding to the national cumulative knowledge about best practices in these areas has been recognized at both the state and national levels.

We are committed to continuing these efforts and collaborating and sharing our experiences with other libraries and other states at each step along the way. In recognizing the New Mexico State Library as the Government Printing Office 2005 Federal Depository Library of the Year, GPO stated: New Mexico State Library is a shining example of what can happen when conscientious dedication and technological advances meet. This combination has ensured that access to authentic Federal Government documents is among the top priorities at this now award-winning state library," said Bruce James, Public Printer of the United States. "The New Mexico community is served by some of the most resourceful, innovative, and knowledgeable librarians in the country, and GPO salutes their achievements."

[http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/fdlp/fdlofyear/05.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/fdlofyear/05.html) .

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## COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

**12. Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County:** (Get Set For Kindergarten, kindergarten readiness guide)

**LOCATION:** Charlotte, NC 28202

**WEB SITE:** [www.plcmc.org](http://www.plcmc.org)

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Get Set For Kindergarten ([www.getset4k.org](http://www.getset4k.org)) is a web-based monthly guide to kindergarten readiness that was developed by the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County (PLCMC). With content developed by librarians, educators, and the state's childcare licensing office, this comprehensive resource provides a holistic approach to helping children get ready for school. Specific activities, skills and concepts are highlighted each month in three sections on kindergarten skills developments, getting ready to read skills, and health and wellness. There is also a one-page printable summary of the month's section highlights, great for parents to hang on the refrigerator as a reminder. Each section provides:

- A skill to practice that month (i.e., cooperation & courtesy, choosing clothing appropriate for the weather, persistence)
- Why that skill is important, in layman's terms, for kindergarten readiness
- Numerous skill-related reading recommendations for children and parents with a direct link to the library's online catalog for easy access to checking out a book; and ☐

Selected links to other expert organizations or web sites for additional information and/or supporting activities. For example, a link to the Center for Social and Emotional Education to show parents how to help teach their kids empathy. In addition, there are direct links to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg public school systems often confusing kindergarten registration process, parent checklists, and additional information on the school systems kindergarten program.

GetSet4K was created after years of receiving questions from parents on the best way to help prepare their children for kindergarten and school success. This project takes a different approach to the role of libraries in helping children prepare for school. PLCMC, like many public libraries, has a host of emergent literacy/reading readiness programs. However, GetSet4K goes beyond reading readiness skills to more comprehensive school readiness skills. PLCMC is committed to increased partnerships and a willingness to develop or adapt resources and services to meet changing community needs. By combining expertise from librarians, educators, and other child professionals with a technology tool, we're providing information that parents need, helping strengthen education success, and providing easy access to parents accustomed to goggling for information.

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## PROJECT TECHNOLOGY

The GetSet4K Web site is managed entirely by a content management system developed in-house by the library's Web Services department using Microsoft Active Server pages. Content is stored using Web-enabled database and the site is dynamically updated whenever information is added or changed. The site highlights resources from the library's collection and provides a direct connection to the library's catalog to enable visitors to quickly reserve titles of interest. In addition, the site provides single sheet information guides created with Adobe Acrobat to provide visitors with a printable version of important information that downloads easily and quickly.

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## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Our goal and overall mission for community service is to expand minds, empower individuals, and enrich our community. We want to be a place of opportunity where information, education and enrichment is affordable, available and accessible to all people. To accomplish this, we develop both large scale and smaller community partnerships that focus on providing opportunities for personal success in reading and learning for everyone. We also look for ways to incorporate technology as a way to expand or improve program accessibility. Each year in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, more than 4,000 children begin kindergarten with little or no exposure to books, poorly developed language skills and other deficits that undermine their ability to learn. PLCMC partners with families and caregivers to help ensure that children in our community are ready to learn. GetSet4K, was developed specifically to address and relate to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Kindergarten Skills Checklist, a list of personal care, social, intellectual, and health skills or activities that are recommended a child knows upon entering kindergarten.

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## EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS

Since its premiere nine months ago, GetSet4K.org has attracted 8,758 visitors (defined as unique IP address). Smart Start of North Carolina, a public-private initiative that provides early education funding to all of the state's 100 counties, is currently interested in distributing school readiness information in a calendar format. Smart Start is interested in using information found on GetSet4K as the basis for this printed, state-wide distribution. In addition we've had three public libraries in other states who have asked to link to GetSet4K. These libraries in Virginia and Kentucky are smaller libraries with limited resources, but heard of GetSet4K after it was featured in *School Library Journal*. And, although GetSet4K, has some links to school information specific to Charlotte-Mecklenburg, the overwhelming majority of information is applicable to any child and family.

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## WHY IT DESERVES TO WIN (AS STATED BY THE NOMINATOR)

Get Set4K is one of the latest web sites in the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County's (PLCMC) Family of Web Sites. PLCMC is a library leader in using technology innovations. To date, we have 18 distinct and content-rich web sites that provide new avenues for information, education and enrichment. GetSet4K is a simple idea, but re-defines the role of public libraries in early education. While most libraries embrace their role in getting young children to enjoy books and reading, they have not typically examined their role for a more holistic school readiness approach.

Combining that libraries do best provide quality information and referral resources with technology results in a important program that is lower-cost (no printing costs!), easier to update and refresh, and more accessible to families who may not physically come into the library, but who can access this project from the comfort of their home or work computer.

The advantage of this web-based resource also means that the work of PLCMC is benefiting children and families well outside our geo-political boundaries, in communities where such kindergarten readiness resources are not as widely accessible. Managed in-house by library staff, we've harnessed the advantages of technology in combination with the traditional library role of referral and research into a program that is benefiting thousands of children and the families who help them grow.

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## COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

**13. Scientific and Technical Information Center (STIC); US Patent and Trademark Office:** (Virtual Electronic Information Center, aiding patent examiners working remotely)

**LOCATION:** Alexandria, VA 22314

**WEB SITE:** STIC's web site is located on the USPTO's intranet site and *is accessible only to the employees of the USPTO.*

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

To support a major expansion in the USPTO's telecommuting program, STIC developed the Virtual Electronic Information Center to provide information resources and services and automation training support to patent examiners working remotely. Remote users have access to the same services provided with the quality and timeliness given to examiners working onsite at USPTO headquarters. (Examiners on campus receive information services and automation support from a network of technology-specific facilities called Electronic Information Centers.)

The Virtual EIC provides access to web-based electronic resources and employs collaboration tools to provide face-to-face virtual service between Patent Examiners and STIC librarians, technology training specialists, translators, and other staff members who directly support the patent examination process. The STIC's intranet web site is the basis for providing 24/7 access to information databases and resources. The web site also contains electronic forms used to request online searches, document delivery, translations, and other library services. The Horizon Online Catalog, accessible from the web site, contains metadata for all electronic resources and plays an important role in facilitating the use of the electronic collection. Links in the bibliographic records allow customers to easily access the full text of the 6,000 electronic books and over 17,000 electronic journals in the STIC collection. STIC's web site also organizes electronic resources in a series of technology-specific web pages that help examiners identify and access the most relevant resources for their work.

Owing to the rapid growth in availability of electronic content and STIC's aggressive transition to these formats, more than 60% of the information centers collections are electronically available. Due to active efforts to locate new electronic material, as much as 80% of the collection will be in electronic format by the end of 2006. During regular working hours, STIC staff are signed on to the collaboration tools, available for patent examiners to remotely access the Virtual EIC and submit research questions, translation requests, and obtain assistance in using desktop tools. Depending on the nature of the request, examiners can initiate a video conference call or transmit an instant message to contact the information center staff. Where assistance and instruction in using USPTO automated tools and web-based resources is involved, STIC staff and Patent examiners can co-browse web pages and search screens, providing a learning experience for examiners who need to use these tools.

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## PROJECT TECHNOLOGY

1. Nortel Network Collaboration Tools (MCS5100) > Enables face-to-face dialogue between information center staff and patent examiners > Collaboration tools include: Video conferencing; Instant messaging; whiteboard sharing; co-browsing capabilities and chat rooms.
2. Horizon Online Catalog and STIC Website > Website is a collection of technology-specific webpages listing appropriate databases and electronic journals and books. > The Online Catalog provides access to all materials in the STIC collections. > Website allows the submission of library requests via a series of electronic forms.
3. Microfiche/Film and Book Scanners > Creates PDF documents > Makes print and microform materials available to examiners working remotely and allows for the elimination of paper in all library transactions.

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## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

### **The Virtual EIC makes our community a better place to live because:**

1. The Virtual EIC allows patent examiners to work offsite, while still having access to all library resources and services and automation support.
2. Employees in the Washington metropolitan region have, on average, the third longest commute in the U.S. Commuting is considered a major source of employee stress. USPTO management encourages telecommuting as a way of improving the quality of life and because it helps employees better balance their family and work responsibilities.

### **The Virtual EIC makes our community a better place to work by:**

1. Using technology as a way to foster communication, and even virtual face-to-face interaction allows patent examiners working remotely to maintain relationships with their community and the STIC staff.
2. To assure continued examiner access to library resources and services remotely, USPTO management encouraged STIC to become early adopters of telecommuting technologies, assuring that virtual library services were available by the time the first examiners began working from home.

### **The Virtual EIC makes our community a better place to learn by:**

1. Using remote collaboration tool technology increases our ability to teach as well as provide service. Not only can examiners request services virtually, we instruct them in the best way to use the electronic tool.
2. The ability to share documents online and access web pages enhances the learning process. In the past, we provided this service when examiners visited the EIC and, to a more limited extent, we would also make office visits. Now this assistance can be provided to remote users regardless of location.
3. As part of the Virtual EIC, STIC posted quick reference guides for the databases and online tools accessible via our web site. We are also posting training slides for the classes and demos we provide.
4. We are also actively exploring how to deliver classroom (group) automation training as the next step in the Virtual EICs development.

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## EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS

The STIC's web site was redesigned last year and received over 1 million hits from patent employees during 2005, roughly tripling use from previous years.

Use of virtual library services is a component of the training taken by all examiners entering the telecommuting program.

Approximately 500 patents employees will be telecommuting by October 2006. As a result of the classes, STIC is reaching examiners who have been at the agency for some years who have not recently been aware of the availability of the full range library services. Additionally, the new technology is resulting in the ability to expand on newer services like search assistance using co-browsing of web sites.

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## WHY IT DESERVES TO WIN (AS STATED BY THE NOMINATOR)

1. The project uses technology to facilitate the strategic direction of the Office. > Telecommuting is a strategic initiative of the US Patent and Trademark Office. > In developing tools and support networks in anticipation of the telecommuting initiative, STIC has enabled the agency's efforts in this area, rather than accommodating itself to them after the fact. > STIC staffs early adoption of the telecommuting technology

highlights their integral role in the patent examination process. STIC is more than a workplace amenity: it is a full partner in the Offices mission.

2. The project integrates new technologies to permit remote user access to information, services, resources, and automation support > The project is unique in providing all library and information support services to the patents community virtually. These services encompass such diverse activities as a desktop automation support hotline, video conferencing services for reference, search assistance and Japanese language translation, and online forms for requesting library services. > A number of libraries have offered email and instant messaging reference services. The STIC Virtual Electronic information Center is among the first to offer video conferencing services to a broad community.

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## **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

**14. Vick Knight Community Library:** (Development of a GIS to provide user demographic data/maps)

**LOCATION:** Lake Elsinore, CA 92530

**WEB SITE:** <http://www.riverside.lib.ca.us/riverside/>

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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Development of a Geographic Information System (GIS) to provide demographic data/maps for analyzing where residents live, focusing library card application campaigns, developing programming and outreach activities for the newly opened Vick Knight Community Library (now open 8 months) in Lake Elsinore, California.

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**PROJECT TECHNOLOGY**

ESRI GIS software v.9.1, Windows 2000 server, MS Office Suite, XML, web technologies, Litpro(Literacy software), Desktop Universe (Astronomy software)

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**COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

This project provided a bird's eye view to the community surrounding the library. Twenty-three thousand school children are residents in the study area, representing ages groups from preschool to high school. This technology allowed the library staff to refine programming needs into age appropriate events for kids, adults, and seniors, resulting in higher participation through the different programs and venues. This technology also helped with ordering library materials for the age groups at the new joint-use library which Vick Knight represents.

Instead of a one size fits all approach, the GIS allowed for working with the community around the library to select materials reflecting the community's desires and tastes, and encompassing a variety of languages. This has resulted in increased circulation numbers for the library and a more satisfied user community. The GIS also allowed analysis of Literacy needs of the surrounding community with the result that literacy classes are now held at the new library once a week, something that was not envisioned when it opened eight months ago.

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**EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS**

The Vick Knight Community Library, through application of the GIS, has consistently surpassed 11 other libraries in the Riverside County Library System (29 total) in circulation numbers, although it has only been open eight months. Additional benefits of mapped demographic data/population from the GIS include

- 1) Creating a reading event for 520 students at an elementary school with collaborative students from the local high school
  - 2) A specialized program on water conservation for kids K-3
  - 3) Upcoming Dia de los Ninos/Libros event for the Hispanic population in the neighborhood
  - 4) Age-appropriate summer reading programs for the community (ages 12-18) around the library instead of younger materials for younger patrons, as the GIS showed a much higher proportion of kids in the higher age bracket.
-

**WHY IT DESERVES TO WIN (AS STATED BY THE NOMINATOR)**

Vick Knight Community Library deserves an award for technology innovation because it uses cutting edge technology to analyze data and foster projects to market the library's programs and pinpoint where the library will derive its greatest payback in the community. This is important, as the library has a finite number of staff and resources. The staff is receptive to new technologies and is currently using GIS technology to further expand its influence in the community in two areas, 1) developing a library based astronomy-related outreach program for scouts and 2) efforts for those with low-level sight to experience firsthand the universe via tactile books from NASA and partners from the local Astronomy club with specially adapted optics.

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**COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

**15. Wichita Public Library:** (BookLetters, a free, online, librarian-produced newsletter service offering users book reviews and services)

**LOCATION:** Wichita, KS 67202

**WEB SITE:** [www.wichita.lib.ks.us](http://www.wichita.lib.ks.us)

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

With 147,250 library card holders in a Midwestern city of 350,000 people, the ten branches of the Wichita Public Library (WPL) understand that comprehensive service delivery is linked to a dual definition of library as both a physical destination and a 24/7 electronic resource. WPL's marketing goal is to be part of every business office, dorm room, private home and commercial access site. To this end, WPL staff redesigned the library's main web site in the late fall of 2005, making it quickly searchable, adding an interactive program calendar and causing a dramatic increase in BookLetters subscriptions. Available since March 2005, BookLetters is an online newsletter service providing customers with book reviews by email.

The product is fully customizable, and WPL staff determined BookLetters could be enhanced to offer WPL readers staff-created newsletters focusing on current programs (book recommendations for the 2006 Adult Winter Reading Program), and new resources (Genealogy and Local History, new CDs, new DVDs, etc).

BookLetters quickly became the 24/7 electronic equivalent of having a conversation with a knowledgeable librarian about your specific reading interests. When packaged with the new web site, BookLetters became easy to find and understand, thanks to the accompanying deep archives. Library users may subscribe online at no cost and are promised the latest information on their favorite topic.

Electronic holds are easily placed on desired books and materials by the searcher. The potential of this technology resulted in 461 new online subscriptions in the traditionally slow month of December. Registration numbers have continued to steadily escalate and demonstrate that this new technology offers a path for all public libraries to offer effective, low cost, yet personalized service delivery at any hour of the day or night.

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## PROJECT TECHNOLOGY

The Wichita Public Library operates on Dynix version 191. For a cost of \$4,150.00, (covered by endowment income from private donations), the library purchased BookLetters from ProMotion, Inc. of Nashville, TN. While some 200 libraries in the United States offer BookLetters, WPL librarians infused the standard book and media review product with Wichita-specific information, including the latest holdings and programs at the library. While the technologies used are not revolutionary, they enabled the customization of content tailored to the community of Wichita. Local online searchers to the library web site consistently found fresh information that changed rapidly, drawing them repeatedly to the site.

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## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Delivering library service in a successful, wide-reaching electronic format is critical to the future of Wichita. In the last census, Wichita, KS, profiled as a city whose Hispanic population has doubled. Economic downturns in the commercial aviation industry following the events of 9/11 have resulted in numerous layoffs, leaving many families with limited financial resources.

Public school libraries, from the elementary to high school levels, are lacking current reference resources due to cuts in tax funding. Each individual in Wichita, regardless of economic background, language restriction, degree of literacy, or age should be able to turn to the Wichita Public Library and find the knowledge that will ultimately give them the opportunity to change their lives for the better. Delivered 24/7 through the creative adaptation of technology, WPL can offer anyone who has access to a computer the ability to grow, to learn survival skills, to prosper and to freely enter a world of limitless knowledge.

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## **EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS**

The tracking history of BookLetters at WPL began quietly in March 2005 on the library's existing web site with 120 subscriptions. The library web site currently posts 60,000 to 80,000 hits per month. Through July to December 2005, as the targeted newsletters were added, subscriptions nudged upward. Despite traditional marketing efforts involving bookmarks, posters, television appearances, and cues in library handouts, only one action cause a huge rise in subscriptions. With the debut of the new library web site in December 2005, actively marketing BookLetters, subscriptions jumped 36%, posting 1,506 active subscriptions. As the library develops its larger media plan for advertising its services, these numbers are projected to double by year end.

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## **WHY IT DESERVES TO WIN (AS STATED BY THE NOMINATOR)**

The Wichita Public Library has no advertising budget to promote its services to the public. BookLetters was purchased through private donations to explore the potential of adapting current technology to deliver personalized library information electronically. Early numbers demonstrate the effort has succeeded well beyond the library's expectations.

Why is this worthy of an award? For the first time visitor to the library, either in person or electronically, there is one chance to make a first impression. Does the library have the latest DVDs, is there a Genealogy department, are there current titles in large print, etc.? Amazon and Barnes & Noble succeed for a reason – comprehensive, effective marketing.

The majority of public libraries in America are struggling to maintain resources and staff levels, with few if any budget dollars targeted to marketing. Wichita Public has taken a purchasable service, BookLetters, and creatively packaged and tailored its delivery to Wichita, KS. While the technology is not outstanding in its own right, the creative adaptation is, and worthy of an award. Wichita Public is making a difference, creating an electronic footprint that could, arguably at some level of investment, be replicated in any public library in America.

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## **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**