Great Falls Public Library
Technology Plan

Great Falls Public Library

your lifelong resource

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Great Falls Public Library Mission Statement

To provide excellent library service for the City of Great Falls, for Cascade County and for our various partnerships, in support of the quest for a better quality of life.

This mission is best fulfilled through a focus on service to people of all ages and their needs, with an emphasis on services to youth; through service delivery to the underserved; through development of appropriate collections and technologies; and through maintenance of an informed and progressive organization.
(Adopted by the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees March 16, 1998.)

Advancing technologies provide many opportunities for fast, cost-effective access to a multitude of resources for not only the public, but the library staff as well. The library's collections are no longer limited to what is physically accessible. Resources from within the library and from around the world are made available with virtually seamless access.

Great Falls Public Library currently offers the following electronic services:

- Online catalog -- 24-hour access via Internet and in-house computer stations. Patrons can browse the library's collection including book reviews, summaries and jackets, determine what items they have checked out, renew items, place holds, get information on fines or fees, patron initiated requests for purchase and research requests
- Circulation of all library materials is tracked by a library automation system, maintaining a high level of accuracy for the benefit of both public and library staff
- Cataloging and acquisitions functions are integrated in the library automation system
- Online catalog, circulation and cataloging system for the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (Great Falls MT)
- Online databases and multimedia products for use on the library's computers
- Online databases are available for remote access
- Public internet access is available from 22 computer stations in the library
- Internet access is available to staff from 23 workstations
- Instructional sessions for staff and public on Internet-related issues, general computer information and use of the library's computers, online catalog and databases
- Library website that offers information on library services, hours and policies, events in the library, links to online databases, the library's online catalog and local, regional and international Internet sites
- Internal website for staff that includes information on library policy and procedure, contact information, calendars and more
- Ready reference services are available in person and by telephone or email
- Access to email and interest group mailing lists give library staff the ability to network with people and resources around the world
- Bookmobile services to city and county locations with computerized circulation transactions
- Library newsletter outlining events and programs is distributed in paper form, from the library website and via email
- Public wireless network available throughout the library

Technology Goals

1. *Enhance access to information for the Great Falls and Cascade County communities*

   - Enhance and expand existing electronic services
     - Add access points within the library through use of traditional (hard wired), wireless or alternative networks
     - Provide Internet access in the Kids' Place
     - Replace all OPAC (online public access computers) computers
   - Expand the functionality of the public access catalog
     - Provide community information database available from the catalog
     - Customize online catalog interface for ease of use, expanded functions
     - Add specialized booklists to online catalog for convenient retrieval
     - Create direct links into online catalog for special search types
   - Evaluate, purchase and install hardware/software for staff and public workstations on an ongoing and timely basis
   - Continue to purchase and install software applications in an attempt to provide all users (public and staff) with the same applications to ease training and maintenance
   - Expand and enhance access to existing databases
     - Customize existing databases as necessary
     - License and provide access to additional databases
   - Continue to evaluate, purchase and install additional security software or hardware components for all computer systems within the library to stop unauthorized access and modifications to the system and/or software
   - Continue to evaluate, purchase and install software components for all computer systems within the library to help control unauthorized viruses, popups, malware and spam
   - Implement telecommunications from the bookmobile to enable real time circulation transactions, Internet access and access to other electronic resources
   - Continue to create direct links from the library web page into subscription electronic databases
   - Implement virtual reference services through the use of instant messaging tools
   - Implement blog services targeting specific library user groups
   - Continue to develop downloadable audio services, investigate adding video and/or music download services

2. *Pursue funding resources to enable sufficient technological development*

   - Assess budget priorities to align with technology goals
   - Apply for any available federation funding for technology
   - Apply for LSTA grants as available
   - Work with city and county funding to develop technological applications
   - Apply for state and federal discounted rates for telecommunications
   - Research grant funds available for technological projects in libraries
   - Continue to participate in group purchases and software licensing

- Explore and leverage available library foundation funds

3. *Provide adequate levels of training for staff and public*

- Continue training for staff on all library automation software upgrades (both vendor and in-house training)
- Develop computer training packet/curriculum for all new staff
- Continue and expand training for staff and public on Internet and computer-related applications and protocols
- Expand Kids' Place computer training, including software applications, online catalog and Internet training
- Continue to develop training for staff on library policy as reflected in technological areas, including acceptable use and privacy issues
- Encourage and enable staff to attend technological training opportunities offered by Montana State Library, Montana Library Association and other organizations
- Utilize public computer area as a computer training lab for patrons and staff

4. *Maintain awareness of new technological developments*

- Maintain contact with other professionals in technology fields
  - System administrator attends automation vendor user conferences
  - Maintain contact with vendor listservs and users' groups
  - Maintain contact with technology related listservs, users' groups and committees
  - Literature pertaining to technological advances will be made available to staff members
- Maintain communication with the Montana State Library on technology issues
  - Participate with Montana State Library consultants on federal telecommunications discounts application process, as necessary
  - Participate with Montana State Library on grant opportunities
  - Participate with Montana State Library on training opportunities

5. *Pursue cooperative structures to enhance technological delivery of information*

- Help to form and manage new users' groups and/or committees as needed
- Explore statewide applications for reduced telecommunications charges
- Explore statewide applications for reduced database subscription charges
- Explore shared electronic resource projects with Cascade County Historical Society Archives, GF Genealogy Society and other area organizations (digital archives)
- Maintain contact and develop applications between library and city/county entities
- Explore federation-wide cooperative efforts in shared technological resources
- Explore connection of area libraries as branches of the Great Falls Public Library or creation of new local branches through use of software, hardware, telephone lines, data lines or alternative technologies
- Promote shared catalogs among area libraries

- Collaborate with area health agencies to provide expanded access to electronic consumer health information resources

Computer Equipment
Currently In Use

- **Sun Blade Server**
  - Sirsi library automation system
    - Online catalog
    - Circulation module
    - Cataloging module
    - Acquisitions module

- **Gateway Windows NT Server**
  - File server
  - Public multimedia and office applications
  - Internal web page content

- **DSL Circuits**
  - 2 DSL circuits (1.5MB and 7MB)
  - Connection to local Internet service provider – Softworx, Inc.
  - One circuit for wireless network, one circuit for wired network

- **Actiontec DSL Gateways (2)**
  - Connection to DSL circuit and Internet service provider
  - DHCP services to library network

- **Netgear 24-port Ethernet Switches (5)**
  - Connections to DSL gateway for in-house computers/servers
  - Connections to DSL gateway for wireless network users

- **Ethernet hubs (7)**
  - Connects workstations throughout the library to the network
  - 24-port hub in computer room
  - 4-6 port hubs throughout library departments

- **Workstations/Personal Computers**
  - Public computers – 33 total
    - 12 online catalog access only
    - 22 public Internet access
    - 1 multimedia/game applications

- 1 online databases/library catalog/office applications

- Staff computers – 23 total
  - Sirsi automation system
  - Microsoft Office applications
  - Internet access – Internet Explorer
  - Online databases
  - Specialized applications by department

- Laptops – 2 total
  - Dial-up and network Internet access
  - Microsoft Office applications
  - Used in conjunction with 3 LCD projectors (2 mobile, 1 overhead) for training and programs

- **Printers**
  - 5 laser printers, 1 with scanner
  - 3 network laser printers
  - 2 ink jet printers, 1 with scanner
  - 10 receipt printers
    - 6 thermal
    - 4 dot matix
  - 1 high speed dot matrix system printer

Barcode Scanners
- 12 total

- **Modems**
  - 1 - 56K fax/modem

Funding and Additions to Existing Equipment & Services

Great Falls Public Library incorporates funding for technological equipment and software into its regular budget. Additional budgeted amounts are allocated for staffing. We will continue to offer the current level of computerized services, while expanding and enhancing those services in the future. We will continue to investigate additional funding sources from various areas:

- Additional funding from city and county sources
- LSTA grant funds
- Shared resources through group purchasing/licensing to lower overall costs
- Other grant sources, as available
- Explore and leverage available library foundation funds

Great Falls Public Library will add or modify computer hardware and/or software on an ongoing basis every year. For upcoming year:

- Purchase any necessary hubs/switches for workstation connections to the network
- Upgrade Sirsi automation system
- Upgrade/purchase workstations as needed
- Further customize iBistro online catalog interface
- Add public Internet access computers in Kids' Place area
- Develop increased access to electronic resources and downloadable formats to promote learning and literacy objectives

Projections for the next 2-5 years:

- Evaluate needs and develop timeline and procedure for regular upgrade and/or replacement of workstations within the library
- Regular upgrades of Sirsi automation system
- Investigate options and pricing models for increased bandwidth within the library
- Investigate options for telecommunications access from the bookmobile to the central library automation system
- Investigate joining the Montana Shared Catalog or other shared catalog consortiums

Service/Maintenance Contracts

Great Falls Public Library currently has several technology-related service contracts in place

- Sirsi – maintenance of Sun equipment and service and upgrades to Sirsi software
- Qwest DSL service -- monthly charges for DSL circuits
- One standard phone line used for computer telecommunications
- Four standard telephone lines for voice communications
- Blackbox Network Services telephone/voicemail system
- OCLC -- includes on-line access to cataloging and interlibrary loan functions and bibliographic database, software upgrades and service
- Acquisitions ordering modules -- includes access and software upgrades for Brodart and Baker & Taylor ordering systems
- Subscriptions to Gale InfoTrac, Ebsco Auto Repair Reference Center and Newsbank full text Tribune Indexing
- Softworx, Inc. – provides library's Internet access and houses library website
- 3 Rivers Wireless – provides cellular phone service to the library
- Computer Associates anti-virus license for all workstations
- TeamSoftware Public Web Browser site license
- Faronics Deep Freeze – provides computer security and preserves system integrity on public computers
- Envisionware PCReservation and LPT:One – provides fair and equitable access to public computer resources and reduces loss/waste in public printing operations

Training for Staff and Public

Training for both the library staff and the public on new technologies benefits the library community as a whole. Library staff can work with patrons in a more efficient and timely manner with a shared understanding of resources. Great Falls Public Library will continue to offer and/or implement the following training resources.

- Continue hands-on computer and Internet-related instruction for the public and staff as staff time and demand allows
- Continue computer instruction for children on the use of computers in the Kids' Place as necessary
- Offer training workshops for staff
  - In collaboration with Montana State Library and other entities
  - In-house training on library automation software and other topics as necessary
  - Vendor training as necessary
  - Online training opportunities
- Combine training opportunities with other libraries in an effort to share costs and expertise
- Produce and update procedural manuals and informational handouts for both the public and staff on using available technologies
- Update library web pages, both internal and external, with links to sites offering instruction, FAQs and help pages on using Internet and computer technologies
- Continue to purchase instructional video- and audiocassettes on computer and Internet applications
- Use City of Great Falls' collection of instructional videocassettes on software applications as necessary
- Participate in training opportunities offered through BCR, OCLC, Montana Library Association, Montana State Library and other organizations
- Staff attendance at user and library conferences

Evaluation and Assessment

Great Falls Public Library uses a variety of methods to evaluate technology projects and electronic services offered, and to determine appropriate levels of service and funding.

- Usage of electronic services is tracked through in-house and vendor supplied statistics to determine need for increased resources and/or equipment

- The library's integrated library system is kept current with vendor releases, including software, operating systems and hardware. However, the need/demand for upgrades is also determined by patron and staff requests for increased functionality versus any trade-offs with current functionality

- Patrons and staff have the opportunity to provide the library with feedback on current services though the use of direct contact, email links from the library website, paper forms available in the library and online catalog request functions

- Technology expenditures are evaluated on a yearly basis to determine necessary levels for following years

- Assessment of equipment and software and staff/patron functionality needs is done on an ongoing basis throughout the year

- Network analysis tools are used to determine appropriate levels of network functionality

- Technology plan is reviewed by the library director, assistant director and library board and updated as necessary at least once every three years