

Brown County Library Sector

Why Is This Important?

Today, libraries are more than just books on the shelves. Everything from the card catalog to checkout can be simplified with the help of high-speed Internet. Public libraries often play a vital role in the community by providing every resident with the opportunity to receive instruction and use the Internet free of charge. Though they are not available 24 hours a day as a home computer is, libraries are still a central point of access to the Internet. Ohio Public Library Information Network OPLIN provides Internet connections and information services to Ohio public libraries. OPLIN's mission is to ensure that all Ohio residents have fast, free public Internet access through the 251 independent local public libraries in Ohio, as well as the use of high-quality research databases not freely available on the World Wide Web. www.oplin.lib.oh.us

Many businesses have been launched as a result of research conducted on a computer in an Ohio library. Many children are able to do their homework online or research reports because of the Internet access provided by the local library. Because the library plays such an important role in the community, it is essential that local libraries are on the cutting edge of technology and are continuing to develop new methods of keeping their patrons up-to-date. High-speed Internet can help libraries continue their tradition as a trusted and indispensable resource.

Brown County's public libraries are actively involved in resource sharing, not only within the county, but within the region and state. Libraries are no longer 'warehouses' of stored information, but are now 'facilitators or mediators of access'. Most of this new function of public libraries is made possible by technology and automation. The Brown County Public

Brown County Libraries

- Brown County Public Library, browncountypubliclibrary.org
- Union Township Public Library, www.ripleylibrary.com.
- Southern State Community College Learning Resources Center, lrc.sbcc.edu
- Chatfield College Library, www.chatfield.edu/library.php
- SWON Libraries, swonlibraries.org
- Ohio State Library, winslo.state.oh.us
- Digital Media Service, www.overdrive.com
- Ohio Electronic Library, www.infohio.org/default.asp
- Ohio State Archives, www.ohiohistory.org/resource/statearc
- InfOhio, www.infohio.org
- MCOECN, www.mcoecn.org

Library and the Union Township Public Library recently provided statistics for usage in 2001, which was the last 'good' year for adequate funding of public libraries in Ohio, and for the year 2006, which reflects a decrease in library funding in Ohio. These statistics show that materials purchased down by 61%, books added down by 55%, periodicals holdings down by 27%, and interlibrary loans increased by 98%. Internet use also increased by 73% during this period of funding reduction.

Where Are We Today?

Brown County has two public libraries with six branches. The Brown County Public library uses Goodsearch for computer searches and library fundraising. There are many links to local education and government sites. The Union Township public library uses an on-line card catalog and hosts an adult computer class. Georgetown library has 17,638 registered borrowers with 266,129 items in circulation, and Ripley library has 6,693 registered borrowers with 153,950 items in circulation.

Brown would like to enhance the online catalogs by adding a discovery layer that provides more capabilities for the user including Web 2.0 features; ability to use ecommerce with catalog, and other tools that users are expecting of today's search engines. They would also like to see public libraries used as workforce development centers to help the public with finding jobs, filling out resumes, etc. More professional development is needed to enhance use of the technology already in place. There are networks for file sharing, however, several public school libraries do not currently have wireless access.

Residents also have access to State of Ohio's Library online at winslo.state.oh.us. The online catalog is available to place requests, check on the status of your requests, or renew your books from the comfort of your home. Other library resources include; INFOhio a virtual K-12 library at www.infohio.org/default.asp, OhioLINK offers access to more than 47.6 million library items statewide at www.ohiolink.edu/, and eResources at scoebook.seo.lib.oh.us/751896FA-50CF-4F3A-81B4-AFE6B50E1C9D/10/200/en/Default.htm.

Libraries Sector Assessment Overview			
Category	Current Assessment	Future Vision	Additional Comments
Networked Places	4	5	
Applications & Services	4	4	
Leadership	4	5	

The Brown County eCommunity Leadership Team found that the libraries sector is currently using technology to its advantage, and seeks to use as much as they are able.

- **Networked Places** – In the category of Networked Places, Brown County’s libraries sector is currently at stage 4 on a 0 to 5 scale. Public libraries have added network ports or wireless networks and electrical outlets to carrels.
- **Applications & Services** – In the category of technology Applications & Services, the libraries sector is currently at stage 4 on a 0 to 5 scale. Patrons may review their accounts online and pay fines by credit card. Patrons can access the library online as a portal for other online information services.
- **Leadership** – In terms of technology Leadership within the libraries sector, Brown County is currently at stage 4 on a 0 to 5 scale. Libraries help the community understand copyright issues and how to protect privacy on the Internet. New hires are required to have experience using new technology. Libraries take internal responsibility for continuing erate and other discounts. Libraries have developed network management policies and technologies to prevent patrons from sending spam.

Where Do We Need To Be?

The Brown County eCommunity Leadership Team has set forth a two-year vision for enhancing the library and allowing it to serve the community more effectively and efficiently. The team’s vision includes:

- Most public libraries offer patrons a 54 mbps or faster wireless network.
- Patrons may review their accounts online and pay fines by credit card. Patrons can access the library online as a portal for other online information services.
- Libraries continue to upgrade their facilities to offer the community the next generation in technology, services and training. Libraries actively promote information technology literacy to drive

positive impacts on economic performance, skills and innovation in the community.

- Internet & Bandwidth
 - Free WIFI wireless access in all county libraries.
 - Increased bandwidth for additional needs, including streaming video, audio and graphics.
- Cutting Edge Technology
 - Online library catalog enhancement through the implementation of a discovery layer service.
 - Computer replacement policies to ensure library users are using the very latest equipment and software available to them.
 - Effective electronic delivery of library resources to every part of the county and increased access to resource sharing so that residents can get what they need, no matter where it's located.

How Do We Get There?

Priority Projects

- Implement education and training initiatives.
- Education and training of library staff and other county employees (train the trainer approach).
- Once the trainers are ready, providing education and training to the general population of Brown County, including;
 - Searching and effectively using the Internet.
 - Placement and assessment of citizens for formal and informal education, test preparation, and diagnosis of learning needs so that users can effectively use resources already available to Ohioans, like Learning Express Library.
 - Assisting displaced workers and citizens needing continuing education or training to enter the workforce or find employment.
- Funding and training of additional IT support staff to assist libraries with technological needs to support such a network infrastructure.
- Collaborate with other county and state support agencies in workforce development, travel and tourism, commerce and business growth, etc.
- More assistance to the public on how to use Internet on a basic level and also as a tool for workforce development.

Other Potential Projects

- Seek sources of funding for cooperative projects and sustainable technology endeavors.
- Improve and enhance communication with the general public and target audiences to help market services and resources available at libraries.
- Provide WIFI wireless access in all libraries.
- Provide Broadband Internet access for rural county residents on mobile branch bookmobiles.
- Encourage the awareness and use of online databases, online catalogs, and other resources that provide access to information.

The eCommunity Leaders within the libraries sector include:

Melissa Cropper, Georgetown Jr./Sr. High Librarian

In working toward the implementation of the sector-specific goals, Connect Ohio will recommend specific additional participants be brought into the process, who may include technology providers, subject matter experts, other community organizations, funding sources, government agencies, and the resources of agencies and commercial providers of products and services to the libraries sector.

Sage Cutler, Southwest State Operations Manager for Connect Ohio will continue to work with the sector leaders to advance selected projects toward their completion. By leveraging Connect Ohio's project management process, its research information, and its partners, projects will be defined, developed, and reviewed to help assure that the local teams are equipped to execute them. Connect Ohio will assist in the identification of funding sources, introducing technical resources, and helping to define the measurable goals and timelines that will ensure that the projects are actionable, measurable, and valuable.