

## Erie County Libraries 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, or 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](http://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.

According to the State of Ohio Library statistics, Erie County Public Library System had 64,700 registered borrowers and a circulation of 1,250,000 items. The system contains approximately 338,000 books and volumes.

#### Erie County Libraries

- State Library of Ohio, [www.library.ohio.gov](http://www.library.ohio.gov)
- Ohio Web Library, [www.ohioweblibrary.org](http://www.ohioweblibrary.org)
- CLEVNET, [www.clevnet.org](http://www.clevnet.org)
- Ohio Public Library Info Network, [www.oplin.lib.oh.us](http://www.oplin.lib.oh.us)
- InfOhio, [www.infohio.org](http://www.infohio.org)
- Ohio Public Libraries, [www.oplin.org](http://www.oplin.org)
- Ohio State Library, [winslo.state.oh.us/](http://winslo.state.oh.us/)

## Where Are We Today?

Erie County has a total of (10) library facilities located throughout the county including main library locations in Sandusky, Huron and Vermilion. The libraries serve the informational, educational, entertainment and cultural needs of the citizens of Erie County.

Residents also have access to State of Ohio's Library online at [winslo.state.oh.us](http://winslo.state.oh.us). The online catalog is available to place requests, check on the status of requests, or renew books from the comfort of your home. Other library resources include; INFOhio, a virtual K-12 library at [www.infohio.org/default.asp](http://www.infohio.org/default.asp), OhioLINK offers access to more than 47.6 million library items statewide at [www.ohiolink.edu/](http://www.ohiolink.edu/), and eResources at [seoebook.seo.lib.oh.us](http://seoebook.seo.lib.oh.us).

All Erie County libraries have at least one T-1 line connection; Sandusky and Huron have 2 T-1 lines. All libraries have access to capability to provide public wireless networks (Wi-Fi). All Erie County libraries are part of the CLEVNET Library Consortium; a collection of 30 libraries in Northeast Ohio lead by the Cleveland Public Library. Libraries currently cannot take online credit card payments but are working toward this capability through the CLEVNET Consortium. CLEVNET provides member libraries with cutting edge technology they would never be able to provide on their own. Funding and space are limitations for most libraries. A number of locations have been recently renovated including: Sandusky, Huron and Vermilion.

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

The Erie County eCommunity Leadership Team found that the libraries sector is on track for enhancing access and using technology and its applications. The team plans to continue to make significant progress in making technology a priority.

- **Networked Places** – In the category of Networked Places, Erie County's libraries sector is currently at stage 5 on a 0 to 5 scale. Most public libraries offer patrons a 54 mbps or faster wireless

network.

- **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 community, Erie 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 Erie 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 has set goals to move Applications & Services from stage 4 to stage 5 and Leadership from stage 4 to stage 5, all on a 0 - 5 scale. The leadership team wishes to expand the use of online library services by patrons (downloading books, music, video, etc), expand the use of egovernment services by library patrons, and offer video conferencing for use by both patrons and library staff. The team's vision includes:

- 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.

## How Do We Get There?

Project Ideas

- Increase Broadband penetration in the county to drive use of online library services (downloading books, music, video, etc).
- Actively promote use of information, technology literacy, online library services and egovernment to library patrons.

- Improve Ohio e-government information and site usability. Currently each department has its own site with differing presentations of information processes.
- Implement video conferencing at select locations.
- Continue to stay up with technology by implementing regular server upgrades, adding PCs where demand dictates and replacing aged PCs

#### Other Potential Projects

- Encourage the use of online databases and online catalog.

The eCommunity Leaders within the Libraries sector include:

Anne Hinton, Huron Public Library

Beverly Johnson, Huron Public Library

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.

Dave Davidson, Northeast 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.