Assessment Annual Report

Service or Collection
Technology Lending

Fiscal Year
2020-2021

Overview
The technology collection at The Valley Library consists of more than 25 different titles such as laptops, kindles, headphones and various other technologies. The technology collection provides the OSU community with free technology tools to support both their academic and life pursuits. By providing such items, the collection strives to increase accessibility, affordability, equity and academic success.

Adapting policy and procedures to provide support for the OSU community, most of whom are not utilizing the library in person during the COVID-19 pandemic, has been the primary focus of our technology lending program this academic year. The library has continued partnerships with the Human Services Resource Center (HSRC), Student Media Services (SMS) and Client Services (CS) to provide access to technology, like laptops and calculators, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These resources were mailed to students, faculty and staff by the library to support remote learning. We have continued our strategy of using FedEx to deliver needed technology throughout the year to support these remote students. Starting in Fall Quarter 2020, we resumed in person lending.

During this COVID-19 time, starting in March 2020, the collection was transformed from a focus of providing short term/just in time access, to long term/planned use with many items still remaining checked out to patrons. As a result, circulation statistics have shifted dramatically showing much longer use periods and many less users. At the time of writing, out of about 250 pieces of equipment currently on loan, the average loan length was 207 days. Pre-pandemic, the items in the collection had loan lengths between 3 hours and 7 days, most being 24 hour or less. Additionally, in the summer of 2020, the library leadership approved a near complete fines elimination proposal and all items in this collection are no longer fined for late returns. Because of the radical changes in circulation policy brought on by the pandemic, we are not able to assess what impacts this might have on how the collection is used.

As a silver lining in the pandemic, during Fall Quarter, we began a small pilot project to circulate 10 library funded hotspots to provide internet access to students who have been struggling with online education without access to reliable broadband. This critical need was

identified in a survey about remote learning led by the Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE) first done in April 2020. Going forward the library is seeking funding to expand this service to serve more students.

Strategic Significance:
The equipment collection connects to the strategic priorities of the OSULP Strategic Plan for 2018-2023 in numerous ways. Through providing access to resources essential to learning, the collection removes barriers and provides resources necessary to underserved OSU communities (External Priority 1 and 2). This also serves to reduce the financial burden of college, specifically addressing the ways of reducing or ideally eliminating fines and fees (External Priority 5). As a collection the equipment represents how we can co-create services with our community and the library's opportunity to work with campus partners and strengthen connections (External Priority 5). In addition, the collection mirrors the opportunity to "build collections that represent diverse experiences and complicated issues" that applies to not only collections of books and media (External Priority 2).

Takeaways:

- **COVID-19**
  - From our existing collection the main technology needed during covid was laptops. In addition, items in the collection that supported extended laptop use like noise cancelling headsets, mice, and chargers were especially popular for extended loans. During the late fall and winter months, all of our blue lights were also in use. Extending the loan periods was key to this support and we continued to extend loan periods by default as well as mail items when requested. We would like to consider if the pre-COVID loan periods still make sense in a post pandemic new normal. When we started in person loaning of equipment in the fall, we saw some short loans of headsets and of laptops as students needed to use them while in the library studying.
- **Partnerships**
  - Pulling together with partners across campus to support OSU in extraordinary times has been key to surviving the year. We can do more when we don't try to do it alone and focus on community needs instead of departmental boundaries.
  - Our ability to quickly pivot, scale up and mobilize based on existing relationships and trust and previous system/campus wide conversations provided credibility. Building on these high level connections around campus, we were able to do more together. We plan to continue looking at ways to support each other's strengths. One area is dropping the library's term long laptop lottery. Instead the library focuses on the short term need for all and we will refer students to HSRC for long term needs.
  - More students are aware of resources at HSRC and library services and resources; staff and student employees in both organizations are also more aware and able to refer students better.
- **Equipment Changes**
  - In response to emerging awareness of student needs, we began a pilot project to circulate wifi hotspots to 10 students. As a result of the positive response from students in the pilot project, we are seeking funds to add 30 more hotspots to the collection.

- **Changes to Fines**
  - In furthering OSULP's strategic priority to "identify ways to reduce or eliminate fees and fines," a successful proposal was made to the Library Administrative, Management, and Planning (LAMP) group to completely eliminate fines for OSULP owned material including equipment and books. It is OSULP's commitment to affordable undergraduate education that was the most compelling argument for their repeal as 67% of all fines were charged to undergraduates. The changes were made without having to make a significant sacrifice to other priorities as the fines collected made up about .003% of the overall library budget. Replacement and damage fees remain.

Next Steps:

Over the next year, we will need to transition from the pandemic accommodations back into more 'normal' use for this collection. However, we will need to do it thoughtfully in a way that takes what we've learned about more nontraditional needs into account and isn't needlessly punitive for users who have lost or damaged items that have been out for long periods of time.

As the technology collection continues to expand, the library should revisit loan policies to reduce the number of existing policies. This will simplify lending by reducing the number of policies for employees and the community to remember.

There is not currently an existing regular budget devoted to the technology lending collection. In the coming year, we would like to propose that set replacement and new acquisitions budgets are established for the small equipment collection and laptops respectively. This would assist in meeting demand by adding both new items and more of items we already have that students need most to succeed academically and would allow us to plan the growth of the collection strategically.

Assessment:

During this year, there was rarely time for traditional assessment at the library. We responded to emergency needs as we found out about them from individual users in what was often a crisis, the regularly changing scientific information about the spread of the virus, and from campus needs surveys like those from the Office of Undergraduate Education. When one time exceptions to policy worked to solve a problem for someone, we did it. When it became clear that the problem affected more users, we made temporary adjustments to policy and procedures and iterated changes based on user feedback and new public health information.

For the new hotspot pilot project, we surveyed students about their experience and its usefulness. We have conducted 2 surveys so far with a total response rate of 55% with 90% of the respondents reporting that they used the device either daily or between 2 and 5 times per week and that the devices were either extremely or moderately easy to use with 100% reporting that they are extremely satisfied with the hotspot. More important than the quantitative data to our considerations are the responses to the questions, 'What did having the hotspot allow you to do or allow you to do more easily?" and "Anything else you would like us to know about your experience with the hotspot so far?". Responses included the following:

- *Having the hotspot allowed me to work when I needed to and where I needed to since my internet service at home is usually spotty. It also allowed me to keep*

working for the couple weeks after the Portland-area ice storm when I had electricity at home and work again, but not any internet service again yet at either location. Without the hotspot, I would not have been able to complete work at all during that time.

- *I live in a rural area with issues sometimes with my internet. This hotspot helps me to be able to always be able to do my coursework no matter what. I use it when taking quizzes and tests too, as I can guarantee that I always have secure connections when taking them. It's such a great help!*
- *It has been awesome! It has vastly improved my learning experience. Thank you!*
- *I was able to attend my zoom lectures, meetings, and virtual events. I was also able to do my homework and projects.*
- *The internet connectivity is fantastic! I had to go into a town and wait for my daughter to have some appointments. I needed to work on homework on my OSU laptop, so I took it and my hotspot with me and I had great connectivity and was able to get my work accomplished*

As we roll out of the pandemic and back to a new normal time, we are pleased to offer no fines and rethink lending practices and loan policies. We hope to continue lending hotspots and continue to deepen our partnerships.

Respectfully submitted,

_____   _____
Signature of the person (or persons) who prepared this report   Date submitted

Attachments

Appendix A: Assessment Data

Loan Data (July 1 2020 - March 28, 2021)

The table below shows the number of times technology items were checked out and renewed for fiscal year 2020-21 to date. Loan periods have all started as the end of quarter for their due date and extended to additional quarters both on request and in bulk for all items still checked out near the end of the quarter before. As a result, this data is not comparable to data from previous years. For example, pre-pandemic, average weekly loans of laptops were about 250 more than double the annual loans for this year. This is not the complete list of all circulating equipment in the collection, but focuses on technology items.

Title	Loans (In House + Not In House)
Valley Laptops - 1 Day HP Chromebooks	103
Valley Noise Cancelling Headphones	54
Valley USB Cables	48
Valley Laptops - 1 Week Dell Latitudes	38
Valley Laptops - 1 Week Chromebooks	36
Valley Laptop Chargers	32
Valley Calculators	23
Valley Mice USB	16
Valley Monitor Adapters	15
Valley Blue Light Lamps	10
Valley External Drives	6
Valley Headphones	6
Kindle Reader Voyage	3
Valley Keyboard USB	1
Valley Microphone	1
Valley Y-Adapters (Headphone Splitters)	1
Grand Total	**393**

Average Loan Length Snapshot

This is a snapshot taken 3/30/21 of the average amount of loan length for selected items from the collection compared to their pre-pandemic loan period.

Equipment Type	Regular Loan Length	Average Pandemic Loan
Noise Cancelling Headsets	3 hours	146 days
Calculators	6 hours	220 days
1 day laptops	1 day	234 days
1 week laptops	7 days	231 days

Laptop program data

	1-day Chromebooks	1-week Chromebooks	1-week Dell Latitudes	Long Term Laptops	Refurbished Dell Latitudes*
Owned by:	CN/IS	CN/IS	CN/IS	ETS	CN/IS
Currently available:	95	51	34	39	48

*We were originally given 50 Refurbished Dell Latitudes to supplement our collection. These will go back to CN/IS at the end of the pandemic. They are not repaired/replaced and are withdrawn as they break.