

D R A F T

Northeastern Maine Library District Technology Plan For July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2013 Created on July 17, 2009

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to outline the technology plan for the **public libraries** in the Northeastern Maine Library District (NMLD) to cover the years 2010 through 2013. It is also intended to serve as a qualifying document for various state and federal grant programs such the Universal Service Fund Program (E-rate).

The NMLD strives to provide expertise in using the resources, and the environment that enhances study, supports lifelong learning, provides needed information, supports economic development, and promotes the acquisition of knowledge through the auspices of our member libraries. Technology expands the services that the NMLD delivers to the member libraries and extends the capacity of each of these libraries beyond the traditional library walls.

According to the Gates Foundation, nearly 80 percent of all library systems in America serve rural areas and small towns. Those libraries found in the NMLD are no exception. Action needs to be taken to ensure that those living in rural areas have access to broadband where access is currently limited.

Access to broadband can be transformative. It allows rural communities like those found in our district the opportunity to dramatically enhance the quality of health care and education. It gives every rural business access to regional, national, and international markets. It reduces barriers of time and distance, levels the playing field, and makes rural communities better places to live, work, and raise a family. For many of those communities the broadband oasis is their public library. Public libraries have helped close the digital divide by providing free computer access. This service has especially benefited certain socioeconomic groups that are less likely to have access at home or work. The challenge before our district now is to ensure that our member libraries can continue to provide the technology and training to keep pace with their communities' needs.

SUMMARY

Technology plays an essential role in enabling our member libraries to meet their mission of connecting people with information. Through technology planning, our district will strive to remain up-to-date, reliable, resilient, and flexible. Because changes in software and hardware can be expensive and often bring with it steep learning curves, our technology plan helps ensure that changes are planned and managed carefully, with the

least amount of disruption necessary. Through solid technology planning, our member libraries can achieve greater productivity, increased staff efficiency and improved service to both those staffing our member libraries and their users.

As a beneficiary of the federal government's Universal Service Fund Program (E-rate), our member libraries must have an up-to-date technology plan which guides our planning and investment. It must contain clear goals and realistic strategies to achieve those goals. It must include an assessment of where we are today, where we plan to go, a budget to support those goals and an evaluation process which monitors progress.

More importantly, an up-to-date technology plan is critical for supporting technology funding requests. It is a practical tool for focusing limited resources on those objectives which are of the highest priority. A technology plan for our member libraries demonstrates that our library community is both creative and pragmatic.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The **Northeastern Maine Library District** (NMLD) is one of three library districts in the Maine Regional Library System (MRLS). The Maine Regional Library System was created in 1973 with the enactment by the Maine Legislature of Public Law 626. The purpose of this act was to improve library service for the citizens of Maine. Membership consists of public, school, academic and special libraries. The Maine Regional Library System is administered by the Maine State Library located in Augusta, Maine.

The NMLD serves seven Maine counties: Aroostook, Hancock, Knox, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Waldo, and Washington. The U.S. Bureau of the Census records the population at 403,774 covering 19,103 square miles. The district serves 104 public libraries.

The Maine School and Library Network (MSLN) established in 1996 is a statewide access point for all types and sizes of libraries in Maine and provides core resource sharing services. The level of participation will vary and be determined by various factors such as the library size, type of library and the individual library's mission.

Today, MSLN provides internet access to approximately 950 schools and libraries statewide. MSLN is paid for using a combination of funding from the Federal E-Rate program (approximately 60% of the cost) and the Maine Telecommunications Education Access Fund (MTEAF) (approximately 40% of the cost). Funds are generated through an assessment on interstate phone bills for the Federal E-Rate portion and on intrastate bills for the MTEAF portion. The Legislature authorized the creation of the Maine Telecommunications Education Access Fund (MTEAF) in 1999 ([35-A M.R.S.A. § 7104-B](#)). The rule implementing the Maine Telecommunications Education Access Fund is [Chapter 285](#).

Maine InfoNet is a collaborative of academic, public, school, and special libraries that provides leadership in resource sharing, promotes cost effective solutions for quality library information services, and supports the cultural, educational, and economic development of Maine.

Maine InfoNet provides management and coordination of a number of statewide library services, including the operation of the Minerva and URSUS consortial catalogs, which combined with the holdings of libraries contributed through the SOLAR program and directly from a number of independent catalogs that form MaineCat, the statewide union catalog. These provide access to the collections of nearly 100 libraries comprising over seven (7) million items.

Maine InfoNet also supports numerous digital projects that help provide online public access to important historical documents, digitized art collections, online collections of sheet music, and the holdings of special collections and archives across the state, as well as the Maine InfoNet Download Library for audiobooks.

STATEWIDE RESOURCES

MARVEL! Maine's Virtual Library is available statewide and implemented in a manner that demonstrates, complements, and strengthens the role of our member libraries.

MARVEL! is our state's vast collection of electronic resources available to all Maine citizens through the Internet and made possible through Maine InfoNet, the Maine State Library, the University of Maine, and the Maine Public Utilities Commission through the Maine Telecommunication Education Access Fund (MTEAF).

MARVEL! is available online in Maine at: <http://www.maine.gov/marvel/>. This searchable collection of magazines, newspapers, journals, dictionaries, encyclopedias, images and other sources is available 24 hours a day. For those citizens who do not have access to a high speed connection, the public library becomes the portal. MARVEL! is available at every public library with Internet access.

This valuable resource contains millions of articles in thousands of journals, newspapers, and encyclopedias. Patrons and librarians can find articles on virtually any subject: Business, Medicine, General Interest, Literature, Education, Computers, History, Psychology, Sociology, Science and Technology.

Some of the resources available on MARVEL!:

- Academic Search
- Business Source Premier
- Contemporary Authors and Contemporary Literary Criticism
- Encyclopedia Britannica
- Health Source (Both Consumer and Nursing Editions)
- MasterFile Premier

- NoveList and NoveList K-8
- NoveList Plus and NoveList Plus K-8
- Proquest Newspapers
- Searchasaurus

VISION

The Northeastern Maine Library District will support member libraries in their efforts to use technology to provide high quality library services to their communities.

MISSION

The mission of the NMLD is to guide and promote improved library services that expand and enrich the lives of the residents living in the communities of our member libraries by implementation of appropriate services and technologies.

GOALS

Goal 1: Provide local and remote public access to a variety of online databases.

Strategies:

- Review and augment existing subscriptions and services to online databases on an annual basis.
- Provide access to subscribed databases from any local or remote location.
- Promote MARVEL! Maine's Virtual Library to the citizens of our district.
- Promote Maine's Wireless program throughout the district, to all Maine citizens and visitors through a variety of venues. Potential partners: The Maine Tourism Association, the Maine Office of Tourism and local Chambers of Commerce.

Tactics:

- NMLD District Consultant and NMLD Representatives will continue to provide input to the Maine State Library and Maine InfoNet regarding the public library use of MARVEL! on a yearly basis. We will also inform libraries yearly about using the MARVEL! icon on their webpages.

Goal 2: Provide technology training for staff of member libraries.

Strategies:

- Offer one program each year open to all 104 member libraries that relates to new and emerging technologies.
- Continue to provide training opportunities for member libraries in the use of MARVEL! Maine's Virtual Library.
- Promote the use of online courses and webinars provided by the Maine State Library and WebJunctionMe.
- Provide information to new member libraries about the Maine School and Library Network (MSLN), the electronic databases (MARVEL!), the downloadable audiobook program hosted by Maine Infonet, and the Wireless project.
- Coordinate opportunities for staff training in new and existing technologies with our counterparts in the Central Maine Library District and the Southern Maine Library District.
- Collaborate with the Maine School and Library Network (MSLN) Circuit Rider to provide website development and other computer applications to member libraries that will expand services to the public via user friendly websites.
- Offer continuing education opportunities utilizing current and emerging social software applications.
- Offer training opportunities to member libraries on how to promote the technology resources available at their libraries.
- Collaborate with the Circuit Rider for hands-on training in computer maintenance to those member libraries who need the additional support and training in the maintenance of their equipment.
- Training for library staff and library users will be incorporated at every level of our statewide library network.

Tactics:

- At the yearly NMLD planning meeting the District Consultant and/or NMLD Executive Board members will review training programs to ensure technology training is incorporated into the annual training schedule for its membership.
- NMLD will use program evaluation to assure that training is successful and is meeting the needs of the member libraries.

Goal 3: Provide information and resources to assist member libraries in maintaining adequate technology resources to meet community needs.

Strategies:

- Provide information about generally-accepted public library technology standards, funding opportunities, and purchasing advice to help libraries keep computer systems running through hardware and software upgrades, maintaining Internet connectivity, and technical support.
- Communicate with member libraries about resources via NMLD web site, Maine State Library web site, InfoNet websites, library related listservs, newsletters, and consulting services.
- Promote and market the various services available from MSLN to participating libraries including connectivity, periodic bandwidth increases, router management, web site and email hosting, webmail access, domain registration and technical assistance, site traffic statistics, the network management tools, the function of the Help Desk, and other services that may be provided by the staff of MSLN.
- Clarify and promote the various roles of Maine InfoNet products such as Minerva, SOLAR, Ursus, MaineCat, Downloadable audiobooks, MARVEL!, consortial access and resource sharing.
- Work in collaboration with the Maine State Library's Learning and Technology Coordinator, the MSLN Circuit Rider, and Maine InfoNet representatives as an additional source of technology expertise.
- Use the District Council Meetings as well as other regional meetings as an opportunity to promote the various resources available to our membership.
- Promote the technological capabilities of our member libraries in library publicity, promotion and outreach efforts.
- Inform member libraries on strategies to utilize in marketing technology.
- Promote the use of TechAtlas for equipment inventory and budgeting.

Tactics:

- The NMLD District Consultant and/or Executive Board members will use the NMLD listserv, the NMLD web site, and Maine Regional Library Newsletter to inform libraries of potential grant opportunities.
- The NMLD will schedule one grant writing webinar and/or seminar annually.

- The NMLD will use TechAtlas to identify libraries with old computers and work with the Maine State Library's Learning and Technology Coordinator to suggest ways and timelines for replacement.

Goal 4: Work to sustain high speed Internet access for member libraries through MSLN. Ensure there is adequate bandwidth to support new technologies and applications such as wireless access for patrons, social software activities, and web and video conferencing capabilities for professional staff development.

Strategies:

- Encourage libraries to monitor bandwidth use.
- Forward bandwidth increase requests and problems to the Maine State Library's Learning and Technology Coordinator and the Circuit Rider for the Main School and Library Network (MSLN).
- Encourage the development of strategies for ensuring technical expertise at the local, regional, and state level.
- Encourage members to use MentorMe, our statewide mentoring program, for technology assistance. <http://www.maine.gov/msl/lib/districts/mentor/>
- The membership will continue to advocate for funding to assist member libraries with their technology needs.
- The NMLD will collaborate with the other two library districts in the Maine Regional Library System and other library organizations in developing a public relations effort to raise public, legislative, and gubernatorial awareness of the benefits of a statewide library network and to promote support for it.
- Establish a district technology user group to discuss and resolve day-to-day practical technology issues and to ensure ongoing support and feedback for current and emerging technologies.
- Investigate and pilot new technologies including VOIP and Smartphones in libraries.
- Identify best practices and peer benchmarks for library technology.
- Explore ways to enhance the use of wireless technology.

Tactics:

- On a yearly basis (each fall) the NMLD District Consultant will use the listservs to inform libraries on how to check bandwidth by using the MSLN online tool to review.

BUDGET AND INVENTORY FOR MEMBER LIBRARIES

Member libraries have developed budgets for local hardware, software, and training technology needs. The District staff includes a full-time consultant who spends approximately 15% of her time on assisting with technology needs.

The NMLD district focus will be on the coordination and facilitation of professional development opportunities. The NMLD budget includes \$4,000 for training, attendance at programs and seminars, training facilitators, and District office hardware and software. District members will contribute an additional \$1,600 in fees to attend training.

In addition, the District will investigate partnering opportunities and grants to fund technology needs.

See attached Appendix C (Participating libraries with inventory and budget) **(this will need to be added at a later date)**

OVERALL EVALUATION

Each member library is responsible for ensuring that its own goals and objectives are met. The NMLD will assist in this process by encouraging annual evaluations and regularly updating their inventories using TechAtlas.

The District will utilize email, web site information, listservs, newsletters and emergent technologies to keep our membership informed.

All District training will include evaluative summaries.

The District will ensure that all technology training includes outcome measures.

The NMLD District Consultant, the Technology Planning Committee and the NMLD Executive Board recognize that planning is complicated by rapid changes in technology. This plan is intended to be formally evaluated at six-month intervals to determine progress with each of the broad goals and individual strategies. After each review the plan will be revised as necessary in response to emerging trends in information technology, changing membership needs, new partnership opportunities, and changes in funding available to the NMLD as a member of the Maine Regional Library System.

For the duration of this Technology Plan (July 1, 2010-June 30, 2013) a standing committee will be established by the NMLD Executive Board to work with the NMLD district consultant in the plan's evaluation process. This Standing Committee on Technology will consist of five people: three members-at-large from the Northeastern Maine Library District, the Chair of the NMLD Executive Board or his/her appointee, and the NMLD District Consultant.

The NMLD office will count the number of member libraries that have an automated circulation system and a public access catalog each year in July. Records will be kept of this information and reviewed annually.

The NMLD office will track the number of hits on MARVEL! Maine's Virtual Library on a quarterly basis.

The NMLD office will track and count the number of technology related inquiries received from its member libraries each year (July 1-June 30). The subject and resolution will be recorded so that the information gained might be useful in future technology plan revisions.

The NMLD District Consultant and the Learning and Technology Coordinator for the Maine State Library will develop a tool to measure the successful implementation of our strategies based on our goals. This tool will be a survey that will be sent to member libraries annually in June beginning in 2011, one year after the effective date of this Technology Plan. Based on the outcomes of this data collection, the NMLD Standing Committee for Technology will review options on ways to stimulate the effectiveness of the plan for our member libraries in the areas where success was not achieved.

Appendices:

Appendix A: The Technology Planning Committee

Appendix B: The Northeastern Maine Library District Executive Board

Appendix C: Participating libraries with inventory and budget **to be added**

Appendix A:

THE TECHNOLOGY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Participation in the development of this plan is as follows:

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Appendix B:

NORTHEASTERN MAINE LIBRARY DISTRICT EXECUTIVE BOARD

The purpose of the Executive Board shall be to coordinate the workings of the District Council.

- A. Develop, continuously review and propose, with the District Consultant, a comprehensive District plan of service for the approval of the Northeastern Maine Library District Council.
- B. Develop, propose, review and coordinate District-wide programs of service, for the approval of the Northeastern Maine Library District Council.
- C. Represent the needs of the District to the Maine Library Commission, the Maine State Librarian, and other officials and organizations

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Submitted to the Maine State Library for approval: ?????

