INTRODUCTION

Together with the library field, the Edge Initiative - an effort driven by a coalition of leading library and government organizations - is developing benchmarks that will help library staff understand best practices in public access technology services for their communities and determine what steps they need to take to improve their public technology services.
The Edge Benchmarks are organized into three main categories that assess:

- **Community Value:**
  external practices that connect the library to the community.

- **Engaging the Community & Decision Makers:**
  specific programs, services and supports that enable people to get value from their use of technology.

- **Organizational Management:**
  internal management & infrastructure.

Each of these strategic categories contains two or more benchmarks which describes an aspirational goal for providing access to technology resources and services. Success on each benchmark is determined by a set of indicators that measure a library’s progress in achieving a benchmark. Some benchmarks have just one indicator, while others have several.
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COMMUNITY VALUE

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY & DECISION MAKERS

ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT
Recognize libraries that provide the staffing, support, and services that patrons need to take advantage of digital opportunities so that patrons are able to fully utilize technology services to achieve life-enriching benefits.

6 BENCHMARKS & 12 INDICATORS
BENCHMARK 1

Library staff and volunteers provide assistance and training with the goal of increasing the level of digital literacy in the community

1.1 The library provides monthly structured and scheduled digital literacy training located in at least half of its outlets in at least two of the following topics:

- Basic computer skills
- Office productivity software
- Internet searching
- Privacy & security
- Library resources
- Social media
- Patron owned devices (e.g., eReaders, iPods, smartphones)
- Provides technology classes in languages other than English

1.2 The library provides individual assistance for digital literacy through some/all of the following:

- Curated online training content
- One-on-one help by appointment with library staff or volunteers for at least 30 minute sessions
- One-on-one help available on-demand for at least 10 minutes sessions
- One-on-one help from staff on digital storage or online account creation available at all times
- One-on-one help with patron-owned devices (e.g., eReaders, iPods, smartphones)

COMMUNITY VALUE

Recognize libraries that provide the staffing, support, and services that patrons need to take advantage of digital opportunities so that patrons are able to fully utilize technology services to achieve life-enriching benefits.
BENCHMARK 2
Libraries provide access to relevant digital content and enable community members to create their own digital content

2.1 The library has some/all of the following tools available on public access computers for creating digital content:

- Office productivity at all outlets
- Photo editing software at 50% of outlets
- Web development software at 50% of outlets
- Video/audio recording and editing equipment and software installed in at least one outlet
- Ability to store documents on portable devices at all outlets
- Licensed software are current versions

2.2 The library engages in some/all of the following practices to monitor its service delivery of online content:

- Performs web analytics on its site with monthly reports to subject librarians and digital content managers
- Updates website content quarterly
- Receives and reviews reports on subscription content (database) use
- Performs a content inventory of its website annually
BENCHMARK 3

Libraries provide technology to meet community members’ job-seeking and entrepreneurial needs

3.1 The library supports use of public technology for workforce development and entrepreneurship by providing some/all of the following:

- Software for creating resumes and business cards
- Curated content related to job-seeking, professional skill-building, or certification activities
- Databases for career and small business development resources
- Electronic career testing preparation resources
- Library-organized or hosted group instruction on using online job-seeking, career development, and small business development resources at least quarterly
- Semiannual training provided to staff from an HR or small business expert
- Certificate/continuing education classes for job seekers, underemployed, and employed individuals

3.2 The library has surveyed patrons about their use of public access technology with regard to the following activities:

- Searching for employment opportunities
- Researching job-related information
- Working on resumes
- Receiving online job-related training
BENCHMARK 4

Libraries provide technology to meet community members’ demand for government and legal information and services/assistance

4.1 The library supports use of public technology for eGovernment or legal purposes by providing some/all of the following:

- Comprehensive curated links portal of eGovernment resources and services at local, state, and federal levels updated quarterly
- Curated guides and instruction for identifying, finding, and using online government resources
- Access to electronic legal research information and services
- Electronic access to information on local court practice, procedures, and rules
- Library-organized or hosted group instruction for patrons on navigating online government resources at least quarterly
- At least semiannual training for library staff on most recent government forms and procedures, preferably from a government agency representative

4.2 The library has surveyed patrons about their use of public access technology with regard to the following activities:

- Learning about laws or regulations
- Accessing government forms
- Learning about government programs and services
BENCHMARK 5

Libraries provide technology to meet community members’ demand for educational support

5.1 The library supports use of public technology for children, teens, and adults enrolled in or pursuing formal educational opportunities by providing some/all of the following:

- Early literacy games, web-based read-along programs, and/or electronic toys or tablets
- Online interactive language learning tools
- Curated content related to homework help, research, and information literacy for students
- Proctoring of exams for online learners
- Curated online information about financial aid
- Curated online information about college selection
- Electronic preparation for education testing (e.g. SAT, GRE, GMAT, TOEFL)
- Library-organized or hosted group instruction on using or navigating educational resources at least quarterly
- Semiannual staff training or meetings with educational leaders or teachers to plan around coursework or curriculum

5.2 The library has surveyed patrons about their use of public access technology with regard to the following activities:

- Learning about educational programs
- Doing homework assignments
- Participating in online instruction
BENCHMARK 6

Libraries provide technology to meet community members’ demand for health and wellness information

6.1 The library supports use of public technology for health and wellness purposes by providing some/all of the following:

- Curated content related to medical conditions, procedures, finding a health care provider, and prescription drugs
- Access to medical databases
- Designated access point for health and human services information assistance (211 service)
- Library-organized or hosted group instruction on using or navigating health and wellness resources at least quarterly
- Training for staff and librarians offered semiannually by a medical professional or medical librarian

6.2 The library has surveyed patrons about their use of public access technology with regard to the following activities:

- Learning about medical conditions
- Learning about medical procedures
- Learning about diet or nutrition
- Learning about exercise or fitness
Encourage libraries to raise awareness of and build a positive perception of the library as a valuable community resource so that communities experience an innovative, agile, and inspirational organization and service.

3 BENCHMARKS & 4 INDICATORS
Libraries have leaders and staff who actively engage in high-level community planning and digital inclusion efforts to amplify their value in the community.

7.1 The library has leaders (and staff) who maintain on-going relationships with community leaders by doing some/all of the following:

- Has at least one library representative who sits on a key community board (e.g., community planning)
- Has at least one leader from a community-based organization serving on a library committee or governing board
- Has at least one board member with an IT management background
- Arranges to meet at least annually with a key community IT decision-maker
- Has at least one library representative who sits on a local technology advisory committee
- Makes at least one presentation annually about library technology to a community group (e.g., Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce)
- Includes representatives of disability support organizations in library planning activities
- Assesses needs for information and technology resources in languages other than English
- Attends regular meetings of local funding bodies

7.2 The library gathers feedback from the community about its public technology needs by doing any of the following:

- Sponsoring a telephone, mail, or door-to-door community-wide needs assessment survey that includes questions about library technology
- Including library technology needs assessment related questions on a local government survey
- Convening a community-representative focus group on library technology needs
- Holding an advertised community forum on library technology needs
BENCHMARK 8

Libraries build strategic relationships with community partners to maximize public access technology resources and services provided to the community

8.1 The library develops and maintains partnerships that amplify the library’s reach, avoid duplication of efforts, aid the library in planning or advocacy, or are otherwise mutually beneficial by doing some/all of the following:

- Engages in at least one resource sharing partnership with local economic development offices, employers, business organizations, and/or local vocational providers
- Engages in at least one resource sharing partnership with K-12 schools, community colleges, universities, supporters of independent learning and online education, and/or child and youth support agencies
- Engages in at least one resource sharing partnership with local government and quasi-governmental agencies, and/or social services organizations
- Engages in at least one resource sharing partnership with local, state, and federal government agencies and/or community-based organizations focused on health and wellness
- Collaborated on a grant with a community organization
- Reviewed and assessed the effectiveness of partnership in the past two years
- Has an emergency response plan produced in cooperation with local government agencies and community-based organizations

8.2 The library engages in technology outreach activities by doing some/all of the following:

- Maintains mobile training equipment for library-sponsored technology training in partner facilities
- Loans devices or space to community organizations for technology-related training classes
- Maintains a roster of community organizations to distribute materials about library services
- Maintains a roster of community service organizations to easily refer community members in case additional services are needed
BENCHMARK 9

Libraries support continuous improvement in public access technology services by sharing expertise & best practices with other providers locally, regionally, and nationally

9.1 The library participates in a community of practice and shares public access technology knowledge, resources, and other tools by doing some/all of the following:

- Shares its training resources and curricula with other libraries or community-based organizations
- Shares its network management policies and practices with other libraries
- Uses existing resources for improving public technology management and services (e.g., TechSoup, WebJunction, Benchmarks Portal)
- Presented at formal professional gatherings (conferences, webinars) in the past year
Manage library resources to ensure equitable access to opportunities through technology so that members of the community who need or want access can get it at their public libraries regardless of ability, skill, personal technology, or available time.

5 BENCHMARKS & 13 INDICATORS
ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Manage library resources to ensure equitable access to opportunities through technology so that members of the community who need or want access can get it at their public libraries regardless of ability, skill, personal technology, or available time.

BENCHMARK 10

Libraries integrate public access technology into planning and policies

10.1 The library has technology management policies that include some/all of the following:

- Hardware replacement plan with a 3-5 year refresh cycle
- Software upgrade plan with a 3-5 year refresh cycle
- Network security policies for timely application of updates and patches
- Patron privacy policies for retention of online information and handling of sensitive information
BENCHMARK 11

Libraries have sufficient staff with technology expertise to help patrons achieve their goals

11.1 The library provides its staff work time to engage in technology-related learning activities (e.g., webinars, online tutorials, trying new devices, reading articles, participating in communities of practice).

11.2 Library staff responsible for assisting patrons with technology have technology competencies embedded in some/all of the following:

- Job descriptions
- Annual performance evaluations
- Annual goal setting

11.3 Percent of staff in public-facing positions who provide technology help to patrons
BENCHMARK 12

Libraries have sufficient devices and bandwidth to accommodate user demand

12.1 The library has a sufficient number of device hours available on a per capita basis.

12.2 The library has sufficient bandwidth capacity to support user demand. See the Bandwidth Planner/Calculator for an approximation of how this calculation will be performed.

12.3 The library assures adequate time for patrons to complete domain-related tasks by doing at least one of the following:
   • Empowers library staff to extend public access sessions
   • Lends devices with extended loan periods within the library
   • Designates certain public access terminals with extended session periods
   • Lends devices for use outside the library

12.4 The library offers some/all of the following peripheral equipment to enable patron tasks:
   • Printers
   • Scanners
   • Headphones
   • Video conferencing equipment
   • Presentation equipment (e.g., projector, microphone, etc.)
   • Private areas to conduct meetings, interviews, telemedicine, or other activities for which privacy would enable the patron to find information or conduct business or personal tasks
BENCHMARK 13

Libraries manage their technology resources to maximize quality

13.1 The library manages Internet connectivity by tracking some/all of the following:

- Knows maximum available bandwidth speed available at each branch
- Monitors connectivity (up/down) continuously at the network level for all branches
- Monitors traffic by packet type and volume
- Receives alerts about connectivity problems in real time
- Optimizes network bandwidth to provide stable service by splitting bandwidth between library staff functions and public Internet access

13.2 The library minimizes out-of-service devices employing any of the following:

- Lockdown software programs (e.g. Deepfreeze)
- Image mirrors with reboot (e.g. Clonezilla)

13.3 The library measures and tracks some/all of the following for planning purposes:

- Cold spares available to switch out downed devices with fresh hardware
- Aggregate network traffic (gigabits/person served)
- Number of hours per device (number of hours public devices are in use)
- Average session length
- Average wait times for public devices
- Number of wireless sessions
- Number of requests for one-on-one technology help
- Number of attendees in technology classes
- Tracks emerging trends in technology in terms of the needs of the community
BENCHMARK 14

Libraries ensure participation in digital technology for people with unique needs, including those with disabilities

14.1 The library seeks to implement universal design for its public access technology services by doing some/all of the following:

- Includes specific accessibility goals in the strategic plan
- Maintains a website compliant with W3C
- Offers screen readers (either JAWS or enable in the computers’ O/S)
- Offers screens with magnification (either specialized equipment or that enabled in the computers’ O/S)
- Has hardware that enables easier user input for disabled or elderly patrons (touch screens also acceptable) that can be rotated in on any terminal
- Ensures all workstations can accommodate a wheelchair or mobility vehicle

14.2 The library provides staff training at least annually for recognizing and serving patrons with disabilities or other unique needs.