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Filtering Grants: Go, Go, Go!

For the third consecutive year, the Ohio Legislature has allocated \$100,000 to OPLIN to help public libraries purchase Internet filtering technology. As in past years, OPLIN will be distributing this money to libraries in the form of Internet Filtering Assistance Grants.

Any Ohio public library system that wishes to install new filters, upgrade existing ones, or renew annual licenses is eligible and encouraged to apply for a grant. The intent of the legislature is that this grant money is used for software, hardware, or support fees directly related to the implementation of filtering technology. Therefore, these funds cannot be used to reimburse libraries for monies already spent on filters, and requests for new workstations, unrelated hardware purchases, or staff costs cannot be approved.

The initial deadline for applications is

October 11th. If funds are still available after that round of applications, a second round will be accepted until **December 13th.**

For details on applying for funds, go to www.oplin.org/filters. Detailed information on library filtering options is available at libraryfiltering.org (with thanks to Lori Bowen Ayre). If you know of a filtering vendor that is not represented on that site, please ask them to complete the survey there. Additional information about CIPA, filtering, and E-rate can be found at <http://CIPA.US>.

As part of the grant process, OPLIN asks libraries to submit two separate reports, which detail how any awarded grant money has been spent.

In the first two years of the grant program, OPLIN has supplemented the money received from the state in order to fulfill all of the accepted applications.

Watkins, I Presume

OPLIN has a new Library Services Manager. Before joining OPLIN, **Laura Watkins** worked for ECNext, a search engine optimization company that provides technology for Thomson Gale's AccessMyLibrary service.

Prior to that, Laura worked at both the Linden and Martin Luther King branches of the Columbus Metropolitan Library, where she performed a variety of tasks, including teaching Internet classes to the general public.

Laura is also a prolific writer. Some of her recent articles (easily found online) include "AccessMyLibrary, Squidoo, Know It Now, and Wikipedia: The Four Best Free Resources on the Web" and "Top Ten Things You Didn't Know You Could Do At Your Library." Laura will be the primary voice behind *Ohio Library News* (see page 3).

Stakeholders is Sneaking Up

OPLIN's annual Stakeholders Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, October 10th** at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. Like last year's meeting, this one will kick off the 2007 OLC Convention & Expo, running from 10:00 a.m. to noon on the opening day of the conference. The OPLIN Stakeholders Meeting is free, and attendees do not need to pre-register. However, if you are planning to also attend the OLC event, registration information can be found at the OLC website (www.olc.org).

The agenda for the meeting is still coming together, but some of the topics you can expect this year include:

- A report on network upgrades. Learn the

current status of our efforts to improve the circuit capacity and speed of the OPLIN network statewide.

- Discussion of database changes. OPLIN staff will talk about the anticipated changes to the OPLIN database collection and our efforts to make database access faster and simpler.
- A look at the new Ohio Web Library. We will discuss some of the prototypes OPLIN has developed to deliver database content in a more efficient and attractive package.
- A catalog of new services. Get a progress report on *The OPLIN 4cast*, our web hosting service, and OPLIN's future plans.



Database Access Makeover

As part of our ongoing effort to make it easier for library patrons and the general public to access and use the OPLIN-provided databases, the OPLIN Research Databases page (oplin.org/databases) has undergone some recent renovations.

The Locally Purchased Databases Tab

Listing the databases available to the entire state is easy, but delving into the ones that are only available to certain libraries has always been problematic. Ohio libraries purchase hundreds of databases on their own every year, so listing everything is not viable. But leaving those databases off the list makes them invisible to library patrons looking for them through OPLIN.

Our solution? We now have three tabs on the page - one for Statewide Databases, one for Locally Purchased Databases, and one

for Help. The goal is for library patrons to be able to access all of their databases in one place, whether they are provided statewide through OPLIN/Libraries Connect Ohio or purchased by individual libraries.

To ensure that the list appearing in the “locally purchased” tab is accurate for your library, please review the page from a computer within your building. This information may be incomplete, since OPLIN doesn’t have a good way of knowing all of the databases your library has purchased. We can easily add any missing databases if you send an e-mail to support@oplin.org with your library’s name and the *specific name* of any missing database.

Although the OneSearch page is still active, libraries may choose to link directly to this new page, which we feel is a better way to list the databases available to your library and authenticate your access to the subscriptions.

To Alphabetize or Not To Alphabetize?

Another notable change to the OPLIN Research Databases page is the default listing of databases by subject, as opposed to listing them alphabetically.

Although bookish types tend to prefer the alphabetical list, most library patrons aren’t familiar enough with the databases to understand their content, or what sort of information they contain, by title alone (i.e. “What’s an EBSCO?”). Essentially, defaulting to a subject listing gives some direction to the users who aren’t as resource-savvy as librarians.

But fear not! Take note that the alphabetical listing is only a click away, via a link at the top of the page. Also rest assured that any databases your library purchases separately will appear under the “Locally Purchased” tab in alphabetical order only.

Emergency Support for NetWellness

In August, the OPLIN Board of Trustees voted 8-to-1 to extend emergency financial support to *NetWellness*, the non-profit consumer health website founded in 1995 (www.netwellness.org). Since its inception, faculty members from three Ohio research universities (University of Cincinnati, The Ohio State University, and Case Western Reserve University) have volunteered their time to provide high-quality health-related information to the public.

In its early years, *NetWellness* actually received state funding through OPLIN and the State Library, but over time it came to be funded primarily through federal grants. Those grants have now expired and were not replaced in the current biennial state budget. The OPLIN emergency support, coupled

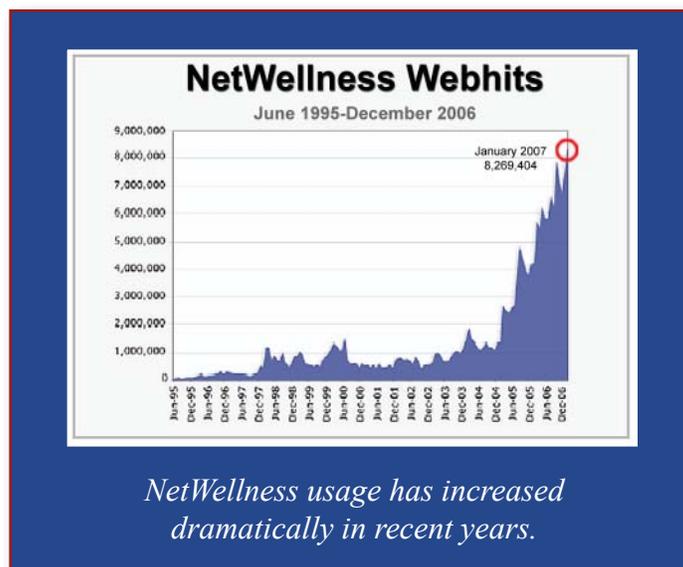
with support from the State Library, should keep *NetWellness* available to public libraries

multi-source funding model that includes contracts, licenses, grants, and state funding.

Stephen Marine, Program Director of *NetWellness*, testified before the House Healthcare Access and Affordability Committee last May in an unsuccessful attempt to secure the state support piece of this funding model. In the meantime, *NetWellness*’ most significant source of support is from the three research universities whose faculty create and contribute content, which is estimated to be worth \$1.5 million per year.

The *NetWellness* website receives roughly 100 million hits a year, which is much higher than most of the databases OPLIN provides.

This can be traced directly to the fact that *NetWellness* content is open to Internet search engines like Google.



and the public until their present funding problems can be resolved.

NetWellness is attempting to develop a



Help Us Help You

Earlier this year, OPLIN received word from the USAC that we would be receiving a significant amount of E-rate refund money. OPLIN staff are now trying to prioritize how this extra money in our budget should be spent, ideally in a way that provides maximum benefits to Ohio public libraries.

To help answer this question, OPLIN is conducting a series of focus groups around the state with front-line librarians, whose observations and insights will help inform our budgeting process. Focus groups were held in Delaware and at NORWELD in September. Sessions at NEO-RLS, SWON, and SERLS are scheduled for October.

One of our primary questions is: what portion of the E-rate refund money should OPLIN spend on subscription databases, as we've tended to do in the past? This time around, routine network maintenance and upgrades will chew up a portion of the refund money, but what about the rest?

One thing that became apparent during the first focus group session is that Ohio librarians are unaware of much of the news and changes coming out of OPLIN. One suggestion was that OPLIN return to publishing a printed quarterly newsletter, for those readers who are more comfortable with paper. This issue of *The OPLIN Circuit* is available in both print and electronic formats, and we will continue doing it this way moving forward.

Some Other Notables

The New Blog

In September, OPLIN unleashed a new blog onto the world. *Ohio Library News* promises to highlight "news and views from Ohio libraries (and more)" and is available at oplin.org/ohiolibrarynews or via RSS feed.

We welcome your input: If you've got library news you'd like to share, please e-mail Laura Watkins (watkinla@oplin.org) for consideration.

Pluggin' Away

You'll now notice an "Add Search Plugin" option directly under the "Find Articles" search box on the front of the OPLIN website. This search plugin allows you to add OPLIN's OneSearch to your IE or Firefox toolbar, so that you can search OPLIN's databases at any time, without having to do it from the OPLIN website.

New Board Officers

At their August 10 meeting, the OPLIN Board elected the following new officers: Gayle Patton, Chair; Mary Pat Essman, Vice-Chair; Bonnie Mathies, Secretary; and Bob Richmond, Treasurer.

Come Chat Us Up

The OPLIN Support Center's new live chat service is up and running at <http://support.oplin.org>. To start a live chat session with an OPLIN Support Center Technician, simply enter your name in the box on the right-hand side of the page. Bobbi Galvin and Vince Riley (our Support Center personnel) are available to assist you with any OPLIN-related questions during our recently revised hours of operation: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

After-hours calls concerning network outages are handled by the State Network Operations Center, reachable at 1-800-644-0701.

Out & About on the Circuit

OPLIN Stakeholders Meeting
Wednesday, October 10
Greater Columbus Convention Center

OLC Annual Conference
October 10-12
Greater Columbus Convention Center

OPLIN Board Meeting
Friday, October 12
Greater Columbus Convention Center

ALAO 33rd Annual Conference
Friday, October 26
Greater Columbus Convention Center

Internet Librarian 2007
October 29-31
Monterey, California

OLC Leadership
November 8-9
University Plaza Hotel, Columbus

OHIONET Annual Conference
November 15
Fawcett Center, Columbus

So, How's the Hosting?

In the last issue of *The OPLIN Circuit*, we announced details of our free web hosting service for libraries. Although we expected smaller libraries to be the most interested in the service, medium-sized libraries have actually been quicker to take advantage. Most are using the free hosting to supplement their already-existing web hosting arrangements, or as a test bed for new websites or services.

One unanticipated issue has been the

ambiguity over the meaning of "web hosting." Some libraries have incorrectly interpreted this term to include website design and development. OPLIN is exploring the possibility of providing website templates (in addition to hosting), but beyond that, there are no plans to venture into individual library website development or content management. We simply want to provide the server space where library websites can live and grow.



OPLIN DATABASE NEWS

AccessScience

In mid-August, McGraw-Hill launched a **revamped version of AccessScience**. The home page has a new look, with improved topic organization and features, including:

- Over 8,500 online articles from over 5,000 contributors, including 36 Nobel Prize winners;
- Research Updates from the *McGraw-Hill Yearbooks of Science & Technology*;
- 110,000+ definitions from the *McGraw-Hill Dictionary of Scientific and Technical Terms*;
- 15,000 illustrations and graphics, and bibliographies containing more than 28,000 literature citations;
- Biographies of 2,000 well-known scientists;
- And the latest news in science and technology;

AccessScience interviewed both users and librarians to inform the new site's design and functionality. New features and enhancements include Flash animations, image galleries (including images that can be saved to your personal space on the website), videos, federated searching, OpenURL, RSS feeds, and a brand new, fast, sophisticated search capability.

To access a new **librarian resource center**, which highlights news and features, click "Librarians" in the top menu of the *AccessScience* home page. An **FAQ for AccessScience 2.0** is also available from a link on the right-hand menu of that page.

EBSCO

EBSCO recently announced a significant number of new features and functionality updates, affecting the EBSCOhost web interface and EBSCOadmin, as well as the *Kids Search*, *Consumer Health Complete*, *Student Research Center*, *Searchasaurus*, and other interfaces. New features include:

- My EBSCOhost now supports multiple folders;
- Thesaurus search suggestions are visible to users;
- HTTPS access is available;
- Miscellaneous enhancements, such as an autocomplete upgrade and a customizable Ask-A-Librarian link;
- Administrators can customize database groupings;
- Shibboleth authentication service supports additional federations.

Encyclopædia Britannica

In July, OPLIN changed its Encyclopædia Britannica links, replacing the two links previously listed (*Britannica Online Academic Edition* and *Britannica Online School Edition*) with a single link to the ***Britannica Online Public Library Edition***.

The *Public Library Edition* includes two separate interfaces; *Britannica Reference Center* (the default interface) and *Britannica Online for Kids*. The *Reference Center* includes the full encyclopedia and is virtually identical to the *Academic Edition*. *Britannica Online for Kids* includes lower-reading-level encyclopedias and homework help features.

Encyclopædia Britannica offers free, one-hour **online training sessions** that you can attend without having to leave your library. Presentations will be conducted live by an Expert Britannica Trainer at 12 p.m. Eastern Time on these dates:

- Thursday, October 18th
- Tuesday, November 13th
- Thursday, December 6th

To sign up, just pick a date and fill out the online registration form at www.eb.com/webinar. This training is complimentary to Ohio librarians, as part of OPLIN's subscription. Note that there is a registration deadline one week before the session, and space is limited, so if interested you should sign up soon. You can invite others to join you at your computer to watch this presentation, but you should only submit one registration per location for each date.

During the session, you will learn ways to help both children and adults find answers to their questions and get started on projects, using *Britannica Online Public Library Edition*. This presentation will cover:

- The new "Kids" section with reference and educational materials for elementary and middle school students.
- The new Workspace storage tool for patrons to collect their own research materials for future use.
- Resources for every subject including History, Science, Geography, Art, Humanities, Business, and Technology.

The Expert Britannica Trainer will also answer live questions.

NetWellness

In recent months, *NetWellness* has spotlighted **Huntington's Disease** and **Psoriasis**. The *NetWellness* website has also added a completely redesigned **Children's Health Center**.