Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2018
July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

OHIO PUBLIC LIBRARY INFORMATION NETWORK

This Annual Report presents current information about the OPLIN organization, OPLIN financials, OPLIN services, and OPLIN technology leadership.

The **Ohio Public Library Information Network** (OPLIN) provides broadband internet connections and related information services to Ohio public libraries. Our vision is to ensure that all Ohio residents have fast, free public internet access through the 251 local public library systems in Ohio, as well as the use of high-quality statewide research databases.

OPLIN is defined in the Ohio Revised Code section 3375.64 as "an independent agency within the State Library of Ohio, for the purpose of ensuring equity of access to electronic information for all residents of this state." Planning for OPLIN started at the beginning of 1994 under the leadership of the Ohio Library Council (OLC) and it was established in the State Library budget in fiscal year 1996.

OPLIN collaborates with other state agencies, receiving extensive operational support from the State Library of Ohio and network management assistance from the Ohio Office of Information Technology (OIT).

The current OPLIN Strategic Plan is online at oplin.ohio.gov/strategic-plan.

Board of Trustees FY2018

Joe Greenward *(Chair)*, Lane Libraries
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OPLIN is governed by a Board of Trustees composed of eleven members selected from the staff and past or present board members of Ohio public libraries. OPLIN seeks a variety of representatives from public libraries, so board members are chosen based on their experience, library size and location.

OPLIN Staff FY2018

Director	Don Yarman
Technology Project Manager	Karl Jendretzky
Library Services Manager	Laura Solomon
Digital Resources Manager	Mandy Knapp
Network Support	Vincent Riley

Financials

Revenue

Public Library Fund	$3,689,788
E-rate reimbursements	$1,940,435
Website kits	$34,802
Telco refunds	$300
Total:	**$5,665,325**

Since Fiscal Year 2012, OPLIN has received an annual transfer of $3,689,788 from the Ohio Public Library Fund (PLF). The other major source of revenue is annual reimbursement of a portion of internet costs distributed through the Schools and Libraries division of the federal universal service support program (E-rate). The OPLIN state budget includes $2 million in "spending authority" to permit the expenditure of these federal funds. Minor revenue comes from refunds from telecommunications companies and fees charged to public libraries for website kits (oplin.ohio.gov/webkit).

E-rate reimbursements received in FY2018 amounted to much more than the usual ~$1.4 million, as reimbursements applied for in FY2017 were not received until early in FY2018.

Website kits are the only OPLIN service for which fees are charged, since not all public libraries use this service. These fees are kept low, covering only actual costs incurred.
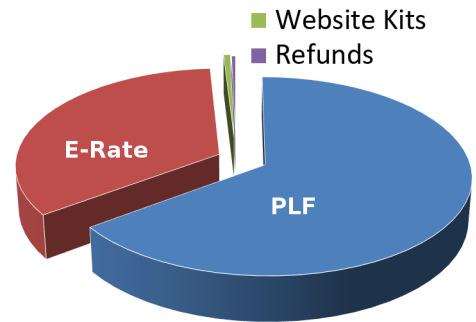

Expenditures

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Internet	$2,535,948
Databases	$1,214,121
Administrative	$603,583
Other services	$186,758
Total:	**$4,540,410**

Most OPLIN funds are spent on internet connectivity for public libraries and information databases for all Ohioans. Staff salaries, rent, board expenses, office supplies, and everything else that does not directly benefit libraries are considered Administrative; over 90% of expenditures were for direct services to libraries.

Items in the "Other services" category include annual **OpenDNS** licenses for filtering the internet, used so far by over 150 library systems; **EZproxy**, which supports remote access to databases; **E-rate** training and support; and the rent for space in the State of Ohio Computer Center, housing critical support systems and the new **Co-Location Service** available to public libraries and library consortia.

Services
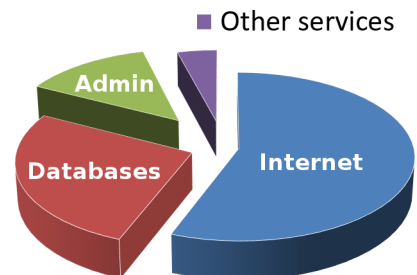
# Ethernet circuits and internet access

OPLIN provides an Ethernet internet connection for Ohio public library systems and regional library systems within Ohio, a total of **256** circuits. Circuit bandwidth is determined by actual usage. Each Ohio public library has at least **100 Mbps** (megabits per second) of circuit bandwidth, with larger circuits up to 2,000 Mbps.
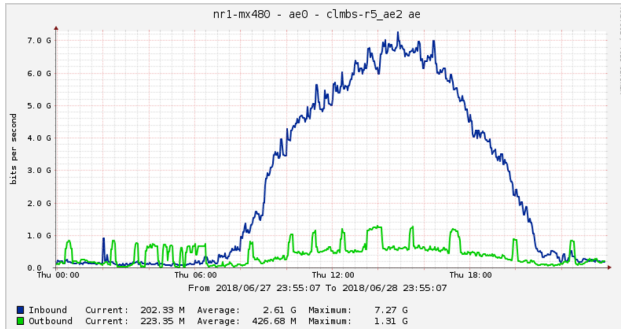
All data traffic from the circuits is aggregated at the State of Ohio Computer Center before it goes to the commodity internet. OPLIN purchases only the bandwidth needed, which typically approaches **8 Gbps** at peak times. The majority of this demand for internet access comes from over **13,000** public computers in Ohio libraries.

Information databases

OPLIN cooperatively purchases statewide access to information databases in partnership with the State Library of Ohio, OhioLINK, and INFOhio (librariesconnectohio.org). This cost-effective arrangement provides all Ohioans with free access at ohioweblibrary.org to reference tools, newspaper and magazine articles, and genealogy resources that many individual libraries could not afford. In FY2017, public library users searched these databases **5,341,603** times and retrieved **3,121,559** documents.
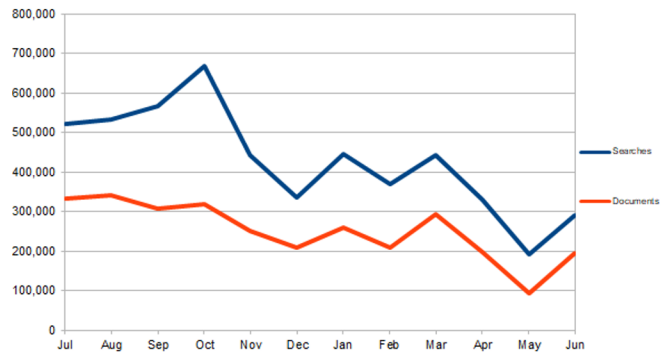
Internet filtering

OPLIN is required by law to "research and assist or advise local libraries with regard to emerging technologies and methods that may be effective means to control access to obscene and illegal materials." OPLIN satisfies this requirement by contracting with Cisco Umbrella to provide a web-based internet content filtering system available to all Ohio public libraries at no charge. As of June 2018, **153** public library systems used this service. (Over 75% of all public library outlets in Ohio filter the internet on their public computers.)

Website kits

OPLIN offers Ohio public libraries the option of using an OPLIN Website Kit to deliver information about the library to the public. These kits build professional websites with advanced features and options, with all maintenance, upgrades and hosting handled by OPLIN. Because this is an optional service, the library is charged a small fee to cover the cost of the service. As of June 2018, **75** Ohio public library systems used these kits.

Co-Location Service

OPLIN leases space in the State of Ohio Computer Center (SOCC) for libraries to house their servers and networking equipment in the state's **Tier III rated data center**. Space is free for equipment servicing more than one library system, or charged per U for services dedicated to a single library. In FY2018, **one library system and two consortia** have housed their equipment in the SOCC.

OPLIN *Technology Leadership*

In addition to the services listed on the previous page, OPLIN does a number of things to help Ohio public libraries efficiently use the internet.

E-rate training

The federal E-rate program provides discounts on telecommunications and internet access costs to schools and public libraries. Public libraries can receive these telecommunications discounts by completing some required forms, but these forms are complex and can be intimidating. OPLIN and the State Library of Ohio sponsor workshops presented by Lorrie Germann, the State E-rate Coordinator, to guide libraries through the process (oplin.ohio.gov/erateinfo). Lorrie is also available for individual assistance to libraries.

SMS text messaging

Many library patrons would prefer to receive notices and reminders from their library by text (SMS) message to their phone rather than by email. The software to integrate such a service with library automation systems is sometimes non-existent or prohibitively expensive. OPLIN therefore built an SMS messaging service (oplin.ohio.gov/sms) that can work with any Ohio public library's automation system and OPLIN pays all associated costs. In FY2018, this service delivered over **1,410,000** messages from **141** library systems, an annual increase of 36%.

Digitization support

For the past four years, OPLIN has been supporting efforts to improve and expand the digitization of non-digital information materials in public libraries so they can be published online. In March 2018, the Ohio Digital Network had its first harvest, or mass upload, of metadata records into the Digital Public Library of American (DPLA). There are 10 public libraries whose metadata is included in DPLA, with the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County acting as the largest overall contributor at over 35,000 records..

Technology blogs

In order to share technology news and developments that might impact public libraries, OPLIN publishes two blogs: the *OPLIN 4cast* (oplin.org/4cast), which is published every Wednesday morning; and *What Does This Mean to Me, Laura?* (meanlaura.com), which appears as needed.

Email lists

OPLIN hosts several electronic mailing lists so Ohio public librarians can share information among themselves (lists.oplin.org), with the two most important being OPLINLIST, for general library discussion topics, and OPLINTECH, for discussion of library technology topics.

Information tools

Sometimes people need a little help finding information about books and libraries. OPLIN has built two online tools that libraries can embed in their websites that are particularly helpful in this regard: *about:books* (aboutbooks.info), which searches for information by author, title, subject, or keyword; and *Find-A-Library* (oplin.org/fal), an app to find libraries by location or name.