Assignment 5: Technology Plan Part I

Frank J. Skornia

November 7, 2010

ILS 534 – Technology in Libraries

Dr Liu

ILS 534 – Technologies in Libraries

Technology Plan Part I

I have chosen to analyze the technology of Buley Library at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU). SCSU is a publicly funded state university with a full time enrollment of 9,528 (Management Information & Research Current Enrollment, 2010). It provides undergraduate and graduate degrees in 44 departments across four schools (Academics Academic Departments, 2010). The students at SCSU come from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds with a variety of needs. Buley Library serves this large and diverse population, not only with academic resources but technological ones as well. The focus of the library's mission is primarily on the students and faculty of SCSU, but also, due to their public status, it serves the residents of Connecticut as well.

The technology in place at the library falls into three different spheres. These spheres can be clearly defined, but they are interconnected with each other creating a larger whole of Buley's technological systems. These three spheres are infrastructure technology, technology for the public, and technology for the staff. Each of these is comprised by both hardware and software.

Infrastructure Technology

I define the infrastructure technology as the technology that provides the foundation on which the library operates. This includes the library's network, the hardware used to create the network, and the ILS system used by the library. In regards to networking, Buley has both a wired Ethernet network and a wireless network installed. Now being a component of the larger university system, much of this networking infrastructure has been installed and is maintained by SCSU's Information Technology (IT) department, but they still make up a crucial aspect of the

library's operations. This is also one example of the interconnectedness of the technology

spheres, the network is accessible and usable by the public and staff as well, so it can easily be

considered part of those spheres as well.

The library's technology infrastructure also consists of their server. The server houses

the library's integrated library system (ILS) as well as any other online electronic resources that

would be needed to be installed locally. It also provides them the capability of being able to

install and use a variety of different software such as content management systems, like Drupal

or ContentDM, as well as host their website and OPAC. The server also provides hosting and

storage space for the electronic reserve documents to support SCSU's faculty and classes.

The third major infrastructure technology at Buley Library is their ILS. Buley's system

runs on Innovative Interfaces, Inc. (III)'s Millennium system. Millennium is a modular system

that allows them to connect and use different portions of the software. Millennium modules used

by Buley include the circulation and acquisitions. This shows another connection with the

technology sphere for staff, as the modules chosen for the ILS will determine the software

available for the staff to provide their services. It is also through the ILS that the library is able

to provide its OPAC and searchable access to its collection. The integrated library system, as it

names suggests, is what ties the library's infrastructure technology to both the staff and public

technologies, integrating them into the whole.

Staff Technologies

ILS 534 – Technologies in Libraries

Technology Plan Part I

Like the infrastructure technologies, the technology used by the library staff consists of both hardware and software components. Each librarian working at Buley has their own desktop computer installed with standard software packages provided by the university through enterprise licensing, such as the Microsoft Office suite and Adobe Acrobat. These computers, along with the many of the other machines in the library, are part of a four year refresh cycle. So every four years, their computers are replaced with upgraded models and software. This helps to prevent the technology from becoming obsolete, and allows the librarians access to newer versions of software with improvements and additional features. The staff computers were just upgraded this past summer prior to the Fall 2010 semester. In addition to computers for their personal use, there are several centrally located computers for the use of circulation processes and for aiding in reference work. The computers located at both the reference and circulation desks are equipped with second monitors and a switch to allow patrons to conveniently see what is on the librarian's screen. The reference computers also are equipped with additional keyboards so the patron can actively assist when questioning the reference librarian. Also available to the librarians' use are a variety of printers and scanners. Many of the printers are monochrome laser printers, although there are a couple of color laser machines as well. They range from light duty personal printers to heavy duty office machines.   The scanners primarily used by the staff are Fujitsu feed scanners (without a flatbed) commonly used for digitizing documents either for document delivery services or electronic reserves.

Miscellaneous other technology commonly used by the staff at Buley Library includes barcode scanners and anti-theft devices. The barcode scanners simplify the circulation process,

ILS 534 – Technologies in Libraries

Technology Plan Part I

as well as aid the librarians in accessing the collection database. Each item in the collection is

labeled with a unique barcode which links it to the appropriate record in the library's catalog.

For security purposes, each book is also tagged with a magnetic anti-theft strip that can be

detected by "gates" located at the library's entrance. These "gates" alert the library if a patron

tries to leave the building without first having the strips in their materials deactivated. Machines

used to deactivate and reactivate the strips are located at circulation and in the access services

office. For media materials like DVDs and CDs, Buley Library uses clear acrylic containers that

magnetically lock the item inside. These containers can only be unlocked at the circulation desk,

and are also tagged with the anti-theft strips.

For staff software, I have already mentioned the software packages provided by the

university and the Millennium ILS system. In addition to these, the library uses the web-based

LibGuide content management system. LibGuides allows librarians to easily design a variety of

online resources for use by other the library's staff or its patrons. Buley Library uses the

LibGuides as research guides for individual subjects, collecting information, electronic

resources, and links to appropriate databases into a single site. They also use them for library

tutorials on a variety of areas such as using the OPAC to offsite access.

Public Technologies

Completing the three spheres, Buley also provides a variety of technologies focused on

public use. I have already discussed the networks that make up part of the library's

technological infrastructure, both wired and wireless. These allow not only the library to provide

ILS 534 – Technologies in Libraries

Technology Plan Part I

many of its services, but also provide the user with access to the library's resources or the

internet on their own personal computers. If the patron does not have their own computer, there

are also several banks of computers installed for public use. On the first floor of the library is a

collection of 24 computers that officially are managed by the university's IT department, but the

library's staff provides support when needed. Smaller collections of three computers are also

available on the second and third floors of the building for public use. In addition to these, there

are two workstations dedicated for OPAC access at different points in the library.

Also available to the public are two card-operated copying machines. These copiers

require the use of the SCSU student id and for money to be available through the student's

account. There is a machine available at the reference desk which allows students to add

additional funds to their accounts if they need. Completing the major components of hardware

available to the public are the televisions with VCRs and DVD players. These are often used by

students to access the media that has been placed on reserve by SCSU's faculty. To help

maintain a quiet studying atmosphere in the building, the library also has sets of headphones

available to loan.

Finally, also available in the public sphere, is the library's OPAC. They specifically use

WebPac Pro which is an OPAC service managed through the III Millennium ILS. Buley's

catalog is shared with the three other schools in the Connecticut State University system as well

as the State library. This allows the patrons of Buley to not only search for items within the

library's collection, but the collection of four other libraries at the same time. There is a devoted

courier service that allows the students and faculty to have quick and easy access to the materials

in the other library's collections without going through Buley's official interlibrary loan

procedures.

Conclusion

This provides a general overview of the technologies used by Buley Library for the

benefit of its staff and its community. These technologies can be organized into three

interconnected technology spheres based on their intended uses. These three spheres are the

infrastructure technologies which provides the technological foundations for the rest of the

library's services, the staff technologies which aid the library's staff in providing its services to

the community, and the public technologies which gives the community access to the library's

technological resources and collection. None of these spheres could exists alone and rely on the

others to provide better technological services to the library.

ILS 534 – Technologies in Libraries

Technology Plan Part I

References

Management Information and Research Current Enrollment. (2010). Retrieved from

      http://www.southernct.edu/management_info_research/currentenrollment/

Academics Academic Departments. (2010). Retrieved from

      http://www.southernct.edu/academics/academicdepartments/