Assignment 6: Technology Plan Part 2

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ILS 534: Technology in Libraries

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Recommended Technology for Buley Library, Southern Connecticut State University

Laptop Lending Service

One of the recognized issues I noted during my analysis of current technology at Buley Library at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) was that at times the use of available computers was extremely high. Even with the computer lab operated by the university's IT department available on the fourth floor, the desktop computers located throughout the building still see high demand. I propose that in order to better meet the needs of the students who work and study at Buley Library, the library should implement a laptop lending service. There are a few major arguments to support this proposal based on the current student body, the changing face of technology use, and the overall changing use of the library by students.

The way that students use technology at the university and in the library has changed quickly over the past decade. In 2008, sales of notebook computers surpassed desktop sales (Hachmann, 2008), showing the growing push towards mobile technologies. As this trend continues, there will be increased expectations and demand by students and library visitors to access information wherever they want. They no longer want to be tied to the traditional desktop-PC computer lab model and instead use portable notebook and netbook computers. The first major step in this direction has been made with the development of SCSU's wireless network. This network, though, "is not enough in itself, sufficient to meet the computer needs and expectations of all students" (Hsieh & Holden, 2008, p. 434). Access to computers is also needed, and this access is increasingly expected to be flexible and mobile. Also, shifts in perception have increased the awareness of data privacy and security – items that are difficult to

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protect in a traditional desktop-PC lab setup. The students at SCSU work in the lab

environments in Buley because they have little choice otherwise. An option to borrow laptops

form the library would provide them more options to match their expectations and needs.

Not only is technology use changing, but how the library is perceived and used by the

community. SCSU supports a large number of commuter students, who do not have their own

personal space on campus for studying purposes. Many of these students, including myself, use

the library as a general purpose study location. They utilize the space and computer facilities,

often without accessing any of the other physical library services. The same can be said, as well,

of resident students who are seeking a study space or a place away from the distractions of their

residences. In connection with this changing perception of the library as a communal study

location from the prior perception that it was a repository of information; there has been a

developing trend in academic libraries away from devoted stacks space and fixed computer

installations towards open and adaptable solo and group study areas. These group study areas

are also becoming a major part of the academic library environment, and the few spaces offered

in Buley's current arrangement are in very high demand throughout the day. By implementing a

laptop lending service, Buley library would support this shift by allowing the students to create a

study space for themselves that fits with their desires and styles. Students who wish to work

alone and in quiet can find a space in the library away from the general bustle normally seen on

the first floor where one of the labs is located. In addition, students working with a group will be

able to bring the library's computing capabilities into the group study spaces, and not interfere

with the activities of students using the computer labs.

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As I mentioned in the first part of this assignment, the students enrolled at SCSU come

from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds and lifestyles. Constantly dropping prices in

technology has increased the access to computers for many, but not everyone is able or willing to

own a personal computer. They rely on the public computers made available to them by the

university in the library and at other labs on campus. Also, study habits and needs have changed,

and the traditional multiple desktop-PC computer lab environments may no longer fit the ways

that students need or desire to use computers. By providing a laptop lending service, Buley

Library will be better able to serve its entire community and encourage them to use all of the

library's facilities in the manner they wish. It will help to ease the digital divide between the

students who have portable computers and have more options in how they can utilize Buley

Library's space, and those who do not and must limit themselves to the computer lab

environment.

In short, by providing a laptop lending service, Buley Library will be more capable of

meeting the needs and expectations of SCSU's diverse population of students. The service will

help support the changing trends in library and technology use as well as help ease the digital

divide issues for those that are unable to afford portable computers. Based on studies at other

universities (Hsieh & Holden, 2008) (Briden & Marshall, 2010), if properly organized and

marketed, a laptop lending service should provide a valuable resource to SCSU's community.

References

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Briden, J. & Marshall, A. (2010). Snapshots of laptop use in an academic library. *Library Hi Tech, 28*(3), 447-453.

Hachmann, M. (2008, October 29). Notebooks finally outsell desktops in the U.S. *PC Magazine*. Retrieved from http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2333549,00.asp

Hsieh, M. L. & Holden, H. (2008). A university library lending service: An analysis using two students' surveys. *Library Hi Tech, 26*(3), 424-439.

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Southern Connecticut State University

Buley Library

Technology Plan for 2011-2012

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Part 1: Technology Mission/Goals and Strategies of the Library:

A. Buley Library's Technology Mission

The Library is an active, collaborative learning environment conducive to scholarship and creativity, with a robust technology infrastructure to support new ways of learning and the delivery of new and enhanced services. The Library leads the University in using current information technology to provide broad access to growing and diverse information resources across the campus and beyond.

The Library collaborates with campus, community, state, and national partners to provide access to resources, to enhance the skills of the Library staff, and to advance the field of librarianship. The Library promotes cross-departmental collaboration, co-curricular planning, and the integration of educational technologies into instruction and curricular resources.

B. Goals for purchases and acquisitions that will improve library services are:

- To meet the changing technological needs of today's students and faculty

- To provide open access to technology and the library's resources for the entire university community

- To utilize technology to make the library environment adaptable to the library community's needs.

In FY 2011-2012, the library will acquire:	Which will provide this service:
1. Ten Dell Latitude E5510 laptop computers	**1.** For public in-library use and check-out availability
2. 10 extra AC adapters for the Dell Latitude E5510 laptops	**2.** Simplify the process of keeping loaner laptops charged and available for use
3. Laptop Charging Cabinet	**3.** Provide security for loaner laptop collection and simplify the process of keeping them charged

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Part 2: Assessment of Current Status

See the first submitted part of this Technology Plan

Part 3: Professional Development Plan

Access services staff, including student workers, will be provided in-house training of the policies and procedures for lending the laptops to the student body, checking them in to the system, and maintaining the collection in regards to security and operability.

Part 4: Budget

The library's operating budget, provided by the Connecticut State University system and the state of Connecticut, will be used for the purchases of the laptops and associated accessories needed for the laptop lending service. Funds will also be used to provide publicity for this new service starting in the 2011-2012 academic year.

Part 5: Evaluation

The laptop lending program will be continuously evaluated throughout the 2011-2012 academic year and revised if necessary. The program will be formally reviewed by the head of access services, the digital services librarian, and the access services department at the end of the academic year. A decision will be made to continue or expand the program will be made at this time.