

## 2022-24 Technology Plan

Burbank Public Library is committed to providing consistent, updated technology services that respond to the needs of the community. This 2022-24 Technology Plan, based on public input, research and analysis, will guide priority activities toward achieving that goal in the context of the Library mission to connect the community to opportunities for growth, inspiration and discovery.

The overall objectives of the 2022-24 Technology Plan are to:

- Update existing technology to industry standards and recommendations
- Standardize and expand services at each Library location
- Increase and diversify training opportunities for the public as well as staff

### BACKGROUND

Despite general improvements to access to technology in Burbank, Los Angeles County and the United States, significant disparities remain in access to and knowledge of technology, including basic internet access and computer knowledge. During the COVID-19 pandemic – when school and jobs moved online – this digital divide moved to the forefront of national discourse. For decades, public libraries have worked to counteract the impact of the digital divide by providing computer and internet access and training. In recent years, those services have expanded into areas such as advanced digital media equipment, and software and workforce-focused training programs.

Over the past two years, Burbank Public Library has made great strides to improve access to cutting-edge software and hardware within the Library. The [Spark! Digital Media Lab](#) opened in January 2020, only to close its doors due to the pandemic shortly thereafter. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Library closures afforded staff time to learn new skills and take stock of the current state of the technology within the Library.

In 2021, the Library embarked on an information-gathering process to identify priority areas for technology improvements to meet community needs. Staff conducted multiple surveys, focus groups and inventories, the results of which

demonstrated a need to improve basic services and a desire for public training in both basic computer skills and advanced creative technology.

This Technology Plan is the culmination of this information-gathering process and outlines objectives and projects that respond to the community's needs.

## PURPOSE

This plan will guide and focus the Library's technology-related work over the next three years. It is based on extensive research, analysis and public input that helped staff understand the current state of the community's needs and desires; how the Library is meeting those needs; and how the technology offerings at Burbank Public Library compare with other libraries and trends in the overall field. As staff work to implement the objectives identified in this plan, they will continue an open conversation with Library users and the larger community to ensure the Library is fulfilling its commitments to the community.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Update existing technology to industry standards and recommendations.** While the Library is home to some cutting-edge technology, this is not true across the board. While this work is never complete, fulfilling this objective will create a baseline standard that allows for more new services in the future.
- **Standardize and expand services at each Library location.** As part of a commitment to providing a comparable and consistent user experience at each of the three Burbank Public Library branches, the Library will identify deficiencies and make improvements to basic technology available throughout the system.
- **Increase and diversify training opportunities for the public as well as staff.** Technology training at Burbank Public Library has historically been inconsistent. Under this plan, staff will develop annual training programs to deliver both to the public and to staff who support everyday public needs for technology assistance.

## THE PLAN

### *Update existing technology to industry standards and recommendations*

- Keep all key software, including the online public catalog and self-service checkout machines, up to date with the latest versions of software
- Upgrade the public PC Reservation system to implement more modern features
- Complete research and planning for a full review of the integrated library system in 2024-25

### *Standardize and expand services at each Library location*

- Expand public document scanning opportunities
- Offer printing services for mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets
- Expand the circulating technology collection
- Add accessible computer workstations and expand accessible features on general public computers
- Assess possibilities for adding public device charging stations

### *Increase and diversify training opportunities*

- Increase the number and variety of Spark! Lab and basic digital literacy classes offered annually
- Identify technology-related areas of training staff need to provide consistent service to community members and create a staff training program to respond to this need
- Develop public-facing technology programs and services that respond to the changing needs and desires of the community

## COMMUNITY INPUT

This plan was developed with input from community members, staff, the Burbank Board of Library Trustees, and the Burbank Youth Board. During the research period, staff conducted focus groups with teens and the Board of Library Trustees. Public input was gathered via a survey that reached 431 respondents in May 2021. The survey asked respondents to identify their technology-related interests, current technology ownership, and other ideas for improvements.

Along with public input, Library staff contributed ideas via staff survey, and key staff in the Library's Digital Services Division researched trends in the public library field.



## KEY RESULTS

- Library users continue to utilize public PC access, public Wi-Fi access, printing and scanning services, but they are no longer satisfied with basic, inconsistent or limited access to these services.
- Staff are committed to the community and feel they could do their jobs better and with less confusion with additional training and equipment and a consistent technology-related user experience at all locations.
- Frontline staff have unique insight into the devices and services that community members request, such as a need for document scanners and the ability to print from smartphones and tablets.
- The Digital Divide remains an issue in Burbank, particularly affecting individuals and families in certain socioeconomic classes and age groups. The Library can help narrow this divide by providing access to technology, modern services, training spaces, and circulating technology. Desire for a wide variety of technology-related Library programs – which are free and easily accessible – remains high.
- Trends in libraries suggest an expansion of self-serve options and more online information and presence. Some examples of self-service options available at libraries include: updated self-service checkout kiosks that allow library card and program registration; 24/7 wifi and printing options; library materials vending machines at offsite locations; 24/7 access to lockers for items that are on hold; and mobile library apps.
- Younger users are particularly interested in sound recording and production equipment, such as a sound booth and Apple devices that come with a user-friendly interface and software.