

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2011

July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011



Major Accomplishments in FY 2011

- ➔ Major upgrade launched to result in Ethernet circuits for over 90% of network.
- ➔ Three new statewide database subscriptions acquired with LSTA funding.
- ➔ New web-based help desk software for Support Center tickets was implemented.
- ➔ Ohio Web Library federated search API was utilized on all Dynamic Website Kits.
- ➔ New Zimbra web-based mail application replaced previous webmail service.
- ➔ Webmail storage capacity was increased from 25 MB to 1 GB.
- ➔ OPLIN built two mail servers for optimal functionality, reliability, and security.
- ➔ E-Rate workshops and consulting services provided for all Ohio public libraries.

Founded in 1995, the **Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN)** provides broadband Internet connections and related information services to Ohio public libraries. Our primary mission is to ensure that all Ohio residents have fast, free public Internet access throughout the 251 independent local public library systems in Ohio, as well as the use of high-quality statewide research databases not freely available on the World Wide Web.

As a state government agency, OPLIN receives extensive fiscal support services from the State Library of Ohio and contracts with the Ohio Office of Information Technology (OIT) for assistance with network management. As a result, only about 10% of the OPLIN budget is used for administrative costs, such as personnel, rent, equipment, and supplies. The remainder of the budget is used to purchase the services provided to Ohio public libraries, primarily Internet telecommunications (about \$3.11 million annually) and subscriptions to basic information databases (about \$1.55 million). As a result, public libraries do not need to pay for these services from their limited individual budgets because OPLIN is able to provide them.

OPLIN is governed by Director, Stephen Hedges, and a Board of Trustees composed of 11 members selected from the staff and past or present Boards of Trustees of Ohio public libraries, who serve for a term of three years. Since OPLIN seeks a variety of representatives from public libraries, board members are chosen based on location, library size, and skill. *The five staff members currently employed at OPLIN are listed below:*

OPLIN Staff Members

Director:	Stephen Hedges
Technology Project Manager:	Karl Jendretzky
Library Services Manager:	Laura Solomon
Network Support:	Vincent Riley
Customer Relations/Support:	Amie McReynolds



OPLIN Services & Resources

Originally, OPLIN only provided two major, important services for libraries: Internet connectivity and databases. Over the years, OPLIN has grown beyond its initial mission to provide a host of other valuable services that public libraries would otherwise be unable to afford themselves. We provide these additional services and resources in a streamlined and efficient manner without incurring unreasonable or extra charges due to staff ingenuity and skill as well as by using free or open source solutions when available, and low-cost alternatives when not.

are crucial both to the public and staff, especially in this declining economy with limited budget funding and increased necessity for access to library resources and technology.

- Internet connectivity
- Research databases
- Support Center assistance
- Email accounts
- SMS text messaging
- Dynamic Website Kits
- State DNS services
- Internet filtering grants
- E-Rate workshops
- Public Library Data Center
- OPLIN mailing lists
- Technology newsletters
- Social media/blogs
- Instructional materials

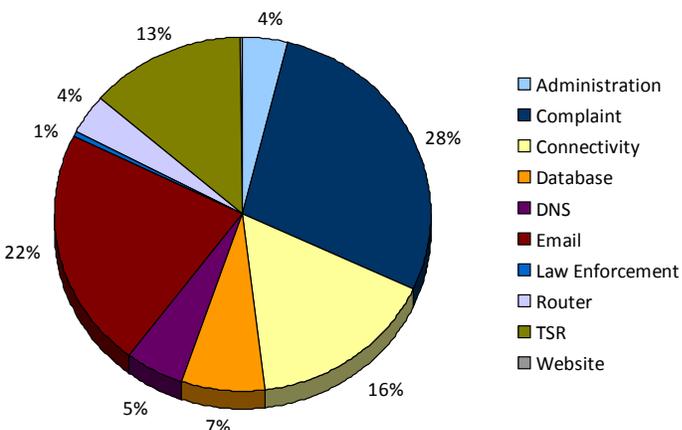
While the eventual consumers of our services are often members of the general public, our actual customers are in fact limited to the public library systems of Ohio. The goal of Ohio public libraries is to provide free and open access to all types of information resources and technology for the citizens of this state, and the services that OPLIN is able to offer libraries

Every year, OPLIN strives to implement changes to make our services more cost-effective and efficient as well as user data more stable, reliable, and secure. We use Linux-based software solutions when possible because they offer numerous advantages, including cross-platform compatibility with multiple operating systems and a large support community.

Support Center Tickets

The OPLIN Support Center provides assistance for a wide variety of technical questions and issues for libraries in addition to monitoring and maintenance services for networks and databases. In this fiscal year, Support Center personnel used upgraded help desk software to open 2,055 tickets for 251 library systems (256 circuit connections) at 729 buildings in a total of ten categories.

We have found that ticket distributions remain fairly steady; however, definite trends have developed in recent years. The majority of support tickets were related to complaint notices involving copyright and spam abuse (28%), email issues (22%), and Internet connectivity (16%). TSR requests, including circuit upgrades, accounted for 13%, and problems with research databases were just 7% of tickets.





Internet Connectivity

OPLIN provides an Internet connection for the Ohio public library systems in addition to connections for the State Library of Ohio and the four regional library systems for 256 total circuits. We have state contracts with Time Warner Cable (TWC), AT&T, and TW Telecom to supply these fiber and copper Internet connections. Currently, more than half of libraries still use T1 lines, but we have upgraded many to Ethernet over this past year. The total network bandwidth usage for libraries at the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1, 2010) was 940 Mbps, and at the end of the year (June 30, 2011) was 1,350 Mbps.

Total number of Internet connections:

July 1, 2010 –

193 T1 lines, 2 DS3, 61 Ethernet circuits

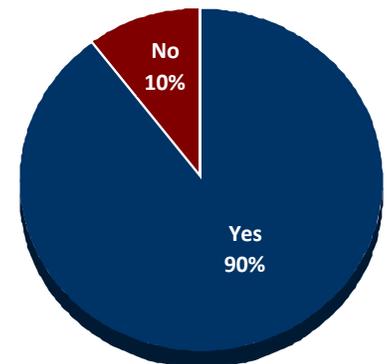
June 30, 2011 –

170 T1 lines, 2 DS3, 84 Ethernet circuits

The number of libraries that received circuit upgrades this year was 23, but that number will increase substantially next year due to the large number of Ethernet upgrades. This major upgrade project was launched in FY 2011, but these Ethernet upgrades will not be completed until FY 2012. At that time, we expect that the majority of the OPLIN network (over 90%) will be Ethernet with only 23 T1 circuits remaining, mostly due to the lack of existing area infrastructure.

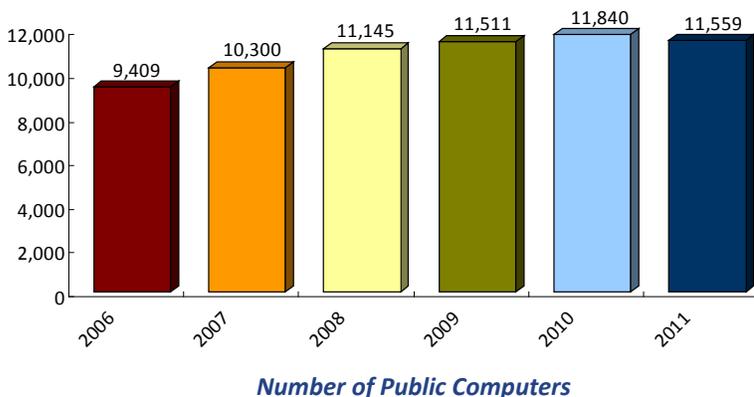
In past years, a library was eligible for a circuit upgrade, or increased bandwidth, if the circuit maintained an average of 80% utilization during peak hours over a specified time period. Beginning last year, the circuit upgrade threshold was reduced to 70%, which means that libraries can qualify for an upgrade earlier. Based on area network infrastructure, we try to upgrade circuits to broadband Ethernet when possible, which is newer technology and rapidly replacing older T1/DS3 connections. A single T1 line has a capacity of 1.54 Mbps, DS3 (bundle of 28 T1s) has 44.74 Mbps, and Ethernet carries a range of 2 to 500 Mbps on our network.

As for public wireless access, libraries handle their own setup and costs if they choose to provide Wi-Fi for their patrons, but 654 Ohio public library buildings currently offer free wireless to their user communities, which has increased from last year. These libraries allow patrons to use their own laptops on the wireless network while some libraries also provide loaner laptop computers.



Wireless Access

The number of computers available for public use in libraries has fallen slightly to 11,559, and the computers available for staff use is now 10,332, for a total of 21,891 computers in Ohio public libraries. Previously, these numbers had continued to increase as the use of technology and Internet access became a necessary focus of public libraries, however, budgetary cuts and use of patrons' own laptops and other mobile devices might be possible reasons for the decrease.



OPLIN paid about \$3.11 million, or \$259,000 per month, for public library telecommunications.



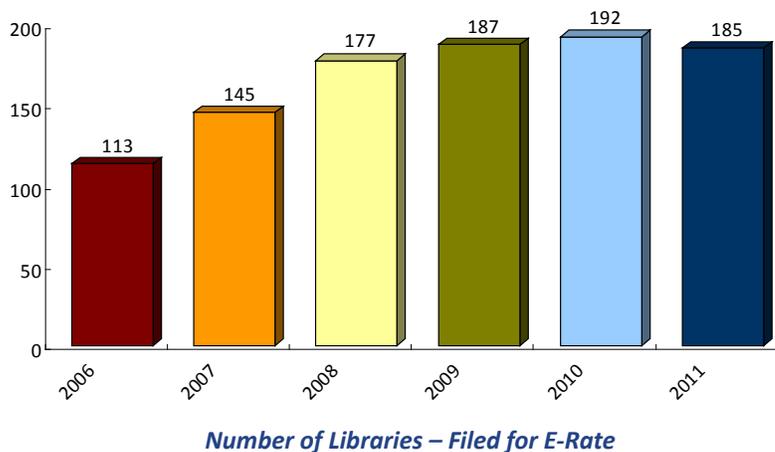
Internet Filtering Assistance & E-Rate Program

Internet Filtering Assistance grants are provided to Ohio public libraries to satisfy a legislative requirement that OPLIN offers to assist local libraries use filters, which helps them in becoming CIPA-compliant (Children’s Internet Protection Act) or maintaining CIPA-compliance. To become eligible for these awards, a library must install or maintain Internet filtering technology on any of its public access computers to screen out inappropriate, obscene, or illegal materials. (Filters used primarily to block viruses and malware are not eligible for funding.) The grant funds were awarded to libraries in three categories: 1) new filtering measures (top priority); 2) upgrades/expansions of existing filters; and 3) maintenance or renewal of existing filters.

Internet Filtering
OPLIN awarded \$81,000 in grants to 49 libraries, and 167 libraries currently use Internet filters.

E-Rate Program
185 public libraries filed for E-Rate refunds and were awarded approximately \$3.5 million.

The federal E-Rate program, administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), provides discounted rates to assist schools and libraries in obtaining affordable telecommunications and Internet access. All public libraries are eligible to receive E-Rate refunds by simply completing some required forms,



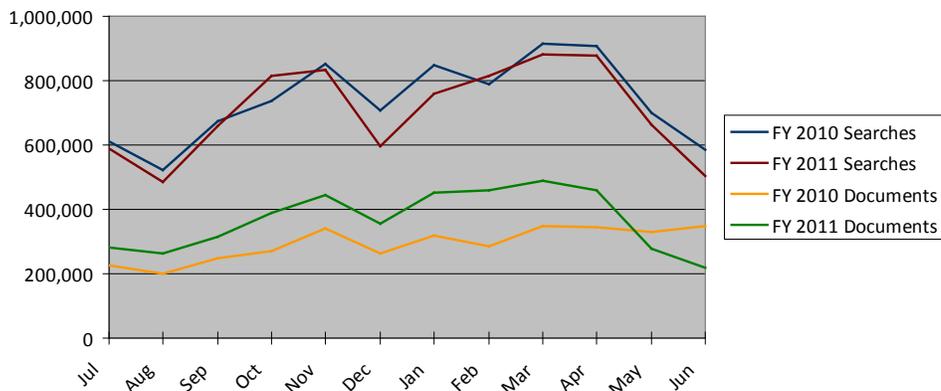
and once reimbursed, libraries can spend the money on anything that they need. The OPLIN discount averages 50% to 60%, but can range from 20% to 90%, which can be a critical source of additional revenue due to widespread budget cuts. Because it is so important for libraries to claim their E-Rate funds, OPLIN and the State Library sponsor E-Rate workshops presented by Lorrie Germann, Educational Technology Consultant at eTech Ohio, to assist public libraries in completing these forms. All Ohio public libraries are required to submit some E-Rate forms to OPLIN annually, regardless of whether the library itself participates in the E-Rate program.

OPLIN received approximately \$1.38 million in E-Rate reimbursements in FY 2011 – we also received a favorable ruling on our appeal of denied E-Rate funds for FY 2005.



Ohio Web Library – OPLIN Databases

The Ohio Web Library is a vast collection of 278 electronic information resources, or databases, provided by Libraries Connect Ohio (LCO), composed of four library networks – OPLIN, OhioLINK, INFOhio, and the State Library of Ohio.* Within these licensed databases are 7,131 full text journals, magazines, and newspapers, and the databases are accessed through a federated search tool, which is a fast, Google-like search interface, located at <http://www.ohioweblibrary.org> or <http://www.oplin.org/databases/>.



LCO can cooperatively purchase access to these statewide resources at a cost-effective rate whereas most individual libraries would never be able to afford them on their own. These research databases are available for free to all Ohio residents and include on-line publications and research resources, such as journals, magazines, newspapers, and tutorials.

OPLIN paid about \$1.55 million for information resources (databases).

In FY 2011, a total of 8,477,416 searches were performed, and 4,407,372 documents were retrieved. These numbers are fairly consistent with last year, however, it appears that searches have slightly decreased while retrieved documents have increased. This discrepancy could be explained by more efficient search processes – search translators have been improved, and users have become more savvy searchers. The number that is really more important in determining database usage are the downloaded documents.

Starting July 1, 2011, the collection will include three new database resources – Ancestry Library Edition and Mango Languages (both one-year pilot projects) as well as World Book Early World of Learning. Also, H.W. Wilson merged with EBSCO Publishing on May 31, 2011, but this will not affect Biography Reference Bank.

Ohio Web Library Statewide Databases

- Ancestry Library Edition
- American & English Full Text Literature
- ART Collection
- Biography Reference Bank
- EBSCOhost Databases
- EBSCO Business Source
- EBSCO Kids Search
- EBSCO Newspaper Source
- EBSCO Student Research Center
- Facts on File Science Online
- Job and Career Accelerator
- Learning Express Library
- Mango Languages
- NewsBank (Ohio Newspapers)
- Oxford Reference Online
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
- World Book Online
- World Book Early World of Learning
- World Book Kids

* Funded in part through an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) LSTA grant awarded by the State Library of Ohio.



Email & SMS Services

OPLIN-provided email service has become extremely flexible and easy to use for libraries. On June 1, 2011, OPLIN migrated to a new user-friendly, web-based mail application called Zimbra. Specifically, Zimbra Open Source Edition (OSE) provides an updated appearance and additional features to replace the older webmail interface, SquirrelMail. This change primarily affected those users who login to webmail (<http://mail.oplin.org>) through their Web browsers, not those using email clients.

We carefully researched and considered alternatives before making this transition, and Zimbra offered the best choice in terms of flexibility, reliability, and stability. It provides a superior mail application for OP-

LIN webmail users, and an advanced administration and management console for OPLIN staff to increase workflow and efficiency.

In addition, OPLIN now offers two Linux mail servers to provide public libraries with options for increased functionality, reliability, and security. One mail server (<http://mail.oplin.org>) is used mainly for staff email accounts and accessing webmail, while the other one (<http://lists.oplin.org>) is used for mass ILS notifications and distribution lists as well as for hosting OPLIN listservs. This setup allows us to segregate personal user-generated email from bulk mail, so that the bulk mail does not slow down our main server.

Another improvement this year is the increase of webmail storage capacity from 25 MB to 1 GB. Also, free SMS text messaging notification service became widely available for any public libraries to use in conjunction with their integrated library systems (ILS).

OPLIN provides approximately 2,520 total email accounts to Ohio public library staff members.

SMS Text Messaging Statistics

- Over 90 library systems are now using SMS (includes both SEO and CLC libraries)
- Total number of text messages sent: ~98,600
- First week of FY 2011: 104 msg/wk
- Last week of FY 2011: 3,705 msg/wk

Dynamic Website Kits

Since April 2008, OPLIN has been offering Dynamic Website Kits to Ohio public libraries, a service that provides modern, updated websites with advanced features and options at a modest price. The fee includes the initial setup, maintenance/upgrades, hosting, and free training at OPLIN. Professional sites are essential to meet the changing needs of library communities in addition to showing patrons that libraries are still vital and relevant institutions. Website Kits are built with Drupal, a popular content management system (CMS), for ease of use, ability to update content, and custom appearance. These sites are standards-compliant, which provides increased accessibility and usability.

The total number of Ohio public libraries using the Web Kit service is 33 with 16 completed in FY 2011.

New Dynamic Website Kits

- Brown County Public Library
- Cardington-Lincoln Public Library
- Carnegie Public Library (East Liverpool)
- Chillicothe and Ross County Public Library
- Clark County Public Library
- Conneaut Public Library
- Cuyahoga Falls Library
- Dover Public Library
- Ida Rupp Public Library
- Loudonville Public Library
- Mary L. Cook Public Library
- Monroe County District Library
- Napoleon Public Library
- Puskarich Public Library
- Williams County Public Library
- Wood County District Public Library

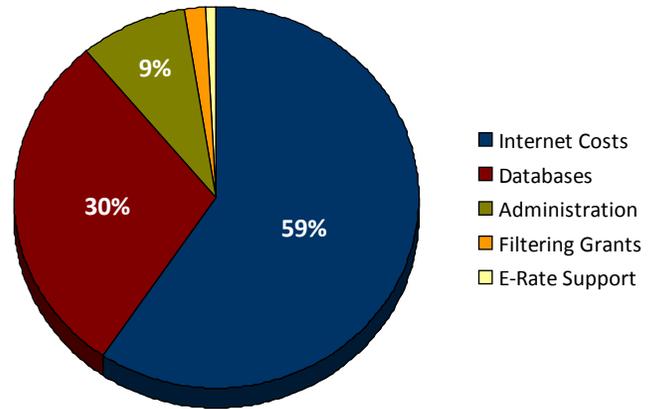


OPLIN Financial Highlights

The State of Ohio government is in financial and economic turmoil as is the federal government, which has consequently affected all Ohio state agencies. For the overall state budget, 10 cost savings days (unpaid days) per fiscal year were implemented for all state employees in FY 2010 and continued in FY 2011. OPLIN is already a streamlined and efficient state agency with only five employees, and over 90% of our budget is going directly toward services to Ohio public libraries. Any additional budgetary cuts would be the same as cuts to individual libraries, which are already struggling in recent years. For OPLIN’s part, we use free and open source software (FOSS) whenever possible for our network and staff computers for monetary as well as for quality reasons.

Time Warner Cable (TWC), AT&T, and TW Telecom have master state contracts with the Ohio Office of Information Technology (OIT) for fiber optic circuits. However, TWC does not charge extra for long-haul Ethernet, which should save money and also control connection costs with the competition since we have more options. By FY 2012, the majority of our Ethernet circuits will be provided by TWC due to better service and lower costs.

The same amount as last fiscal year, \$5 million annually, was transferred from the General Revenue Fund to the Public Library Fund to cover OPLIN and the Library for the Blind. In terms of the General Revenue Fund – Public Library Fund (GRF-PLF), OPLIN received \$3,702,150 from the PLF in FY 2011, which was the same amount that we received in FY 2010.



Financial Report

EXPENDITURES

Internet Costs	\$3,111,409
Databases	1,550,000
Administration	450,000
Filtering Grants	81,000
E-Rate Support	45,000

REVENUE

Public Library Fund	\$3,702,150
E-Rate Refunds	1,383,066
Website Kits	18,840

TOTAL	\$5,237,409	TOTAL	\$5,104,056
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Shortfall drawn from previous years' E-Rate Reimbursements		\$	133,353
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OPLIN Changes

In fiscal year 2011, we experienced changes and updates both to our vendor contracts and to the OPLIN network. OPLIN has been attempting to upgrade a major portion of our network by switching from T1 lines to fiber and copper Ethernet connections from Time Warner Cable and AT&T. Most of our new upgrades are TWC circuits due to lower pricing and widespread access in more rural and remote areas. This massive upgrade project was launched in spring 2011, but all sites will not be completed until FY 2012.

In addition, the AT&T State of Ohio Multi-Agency Communications System (SOMACS) contracts have been renewed for the final time, and we will move to month-to-month billing, starting on July 1, 2011 (FY 2012), for the remaining T1 and DS3 connections. As a result, the new T1/DS3 rate will increase slightly from \$400 to \$450 per month, but since we are no longer locked into a long-term contract, we can replace the majority of our network with Ethernet circuits.

Another recent policy change on June 10, 2011, was a revision to the *“Policy on Public Library Use of OPLIN,”* which was originally adopted by the OPLIN Board in June 1996. This was one of the very first

policies and had not been revisited in 10 years (last revision was in May 2001). The OPLIN Board felt that libraries are now quite aware of how the Internet might be used, and no longer needed an “encouragement” section, just a list of what they must and must not do with the OPLIN connection. The clause about public free nets was removed because the Board did not want it to be interpreted as a block to libraries that want to set up Wi-Fi hotspots outside their buildings.

Amended Substitute House Bill 153 (Am. Sub. HB 153), Biennium Budget Bill for July 2011 through June 2013, diverts money from the Public Library Fund (PLF) to support OPLIN and Library Services to the Blind and Physically Disabled – annually about \$3.7 million for OPLIN and \$1.3 million for LSBPD. The Ohio Library Council (OLC) drafted an amendment to the budget bill that would have transferred money from the General Revenue Fund (GRF) to the PLF to cover the diversion of funds for OPLIN and LSBPD, as happened in the last biennium budget, but this amendment was not adopted. The diversion to support OPLIN now reduces the monthly PLF distribution to public libraries by about one percent.

OPLIN Board Members – FY 2011

- Sondra Plymire (Chair), Muskingum County Library System
 - Jeff Wale (Vice-Chair), Toledo-Lucas County Public Library
 - Bonnie Mathies (Secretary), Washington-Centerville Public Library
 - Gary Branson (Treasurer), Marion Public Library
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- Don W. Barlow, Westerville Public Library
 - Jason Buydos, Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County
 - Benjamin Chinni, Euclid Public Library
 - Karl Colón, Greene County Public Library
 - Karen Davis, Sylvester Memorial Wellston Public Library (partial term)
 - Jim Kenzig, Cuyahoga County Public Library
 - Jamie Mason, Rocky River Public Library
 - Gayle Patton, Mansfield-Richland County Public Library (partial term)



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