



OPLIN's Evolving Mission

The needs of Ohio's public libraries are constantly changing, and OPLIN strives to be flexible enough to change along with them.

With that in mind, the OPLIN Board of Trustees approved updates to *OPLIN's Mission, Goals, Objectives, and Activities* in late 2006.

The intent of the Board is that this document will serve as OPLIN's

strategic plan, and that it will be reviewed at the annual Board retreat each spring. Any changes will then take effect on July 1 of that year.

This approach will help ensure that the goals of the organization are in line with the evolving needs of public libraries. The current document can be read in full at oplin.org/oplin/policies/missionGoals.xhtml.

GOAL 1: CONNECT OHIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES TO THE INTERNET

OPLIN will connect Ohio public libraries to the Internet so Ohioans can access the diverse resources of Ohio's public libraries and, through the libraries, access international, federal, state, regional, and local information resources.

Background: One of the unusual characteristics of OPLIN is the fact that it provides and manages a physical network connecting libraries to the Internet; most other library "information networks" primarily deliver content and services over a physical network provided by some other organization. When OPLIN was established in 1995-96, the network was built from copper-wire "T1" circuits. In 2006, fiber-optic "ethernet" circuits began replacing the older T1 circuits.



Objective 1.1: Provide an Internet connection to every library system

Objective 1.2: Provide Internet bandwidth to every Ohio public library system

Objective 1.3: Assist Ohio public library systems with their branch connections

Objective 1.4: Protect the network from intrusion

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SELECTED ELECTRONIC INFORMATION

OPLIN will provide access to high-quality databases of electronic information for Ohio's public libraries and for all Ohioans.

Background: Providing answers to questions is a basic service of public libraries; currently this service may be delivered in-library, using print and electronic resources, or remotely, generally using electronic resources. Because of the importance of electronic resources, one of OPLIN's main functions has always been to provide access to high-quality electronic information databases.



Objective 2.1: Provide online subscriptions to high-quality databases of electronic information

Objective 2.2: Increase usage of high-quality databases

Objective 2.3: Increase marketing and promotion of OPLIN resources



OPLIN's Evolving Mission (from page 1)

GOAL 3: ASSIST PUBLIC LIBRARIES WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WORLD WIDE WEB TECHNOLOGIES

OPLIN will provide direct and indirect assistance to Ohio public libraries in the implementation of technologies that enable web-based delivery of services to library users and all Ohioans.

Background: This is a relatively new role for OPLIN, but one which is becoming increasingly important as libraries struggle to remain relevant in the rapidly changing environment of the World Wide Web. This goal is of particular benefit to the smaller public libraries.

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Objective 3.1: Inform public libraries of new developments in web technologies

Objective 3.2: Implement and test new web technologies

Objective 3.3: Provide web hosting services for public libraries

Where Does the Money Go?

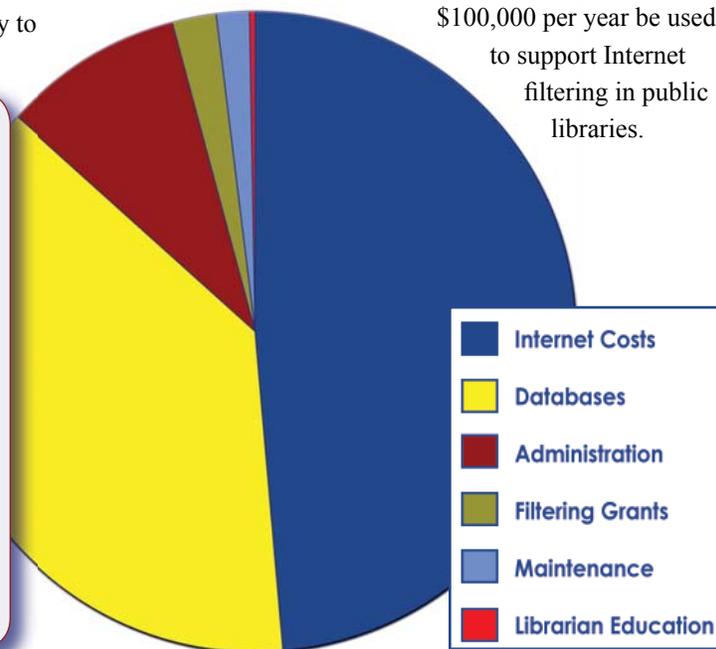
OPLIN receives most of its revenue from the state's General Revenue Funds, allocated to us as part of the State Library of Ohio's biennial budget. We also receive "spending authority" from the state, allowing us to spend funds we collect from sources other than the General Revenue Funds. For the most part, these other funds consist of: 1) E-rate reimbursements, and 2) database fees collected from libraries and passed on to vendors under group subscription agreements.

The spreadsheet and chart shown here give an overview of what funds were received and how they were spent between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007. The Internet and database costs represent spending directly related to OPLIN Goals 1 and 2 (as described on page 1). Administration costs are all expenditures related to keeping the OPLIN office functioning, including staff salaries. Librarian education is the cost of training, publications, and support for conferences aimed at improving librarians' ability to use OPLIN resources.

Some notes:

- Totals do not include funds collected from libraries and passed through to vendors for group database purchases (\$642,252).
- Unspent State funds (General Revenue Funds) cannot be carried forward and must be returned to the State.
- The State biennial budget stipulated that \$100,000 per year be used to support Internet filtering in public libraries.

	State Funds	E-rate Refunds	
Beginning Balance	\$0	\$1,983,628	
Receipts	\$4,330,000	\$0	
EXPENDITURES			TOTAL
Internet Costs	\$2,395,026	---	\$2,395,026
Databases	\$1,376,842	\$500,000	\$1,876,842
Administration	\$423,991	\$30,119	\$454,110
Filtering Grants	\$107,195	---	\$107,195
Maintenance	\$19,666	\$62,701	\$82,367
Librarian Education	\$6,941	---	\$6,941
TOTAL	\$4,329,661	\$592,820	\$4,922,481
Returned to State	\$339		
Ending Balance	\$0	\$1,390,808	





OPLIN Annual Survey Says...

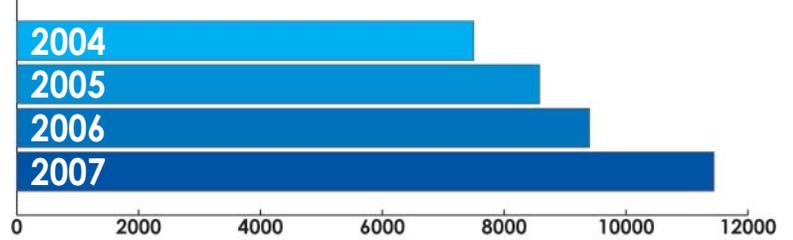
Every year, OPLIN asks public libraries to participate in an annual survey of public Internet access in libraries. The survey is an invaluable tool for OPLIN, allowing us to develop effective plans and accurately report information about the public library network to the legislature and other government entities that help make critical funding decisions.

Perhaps the most surprising result of this year's survey is the sharp increase in the number of public computers in libraries. While the number of staff computers stayed relatively close to last year (9,343 workstations in Fall 2006 compared to 9,744 this Fall), the number of public computers jumped from 9,409 last year to 11,443 this year. In addition to providing public computers, 516 of the 726 public library buildings in Ohio now provide wireless Internet access for people bringing their own laptops to the library. Public libraries have clearly made a serious commitment to providing public Internet access.

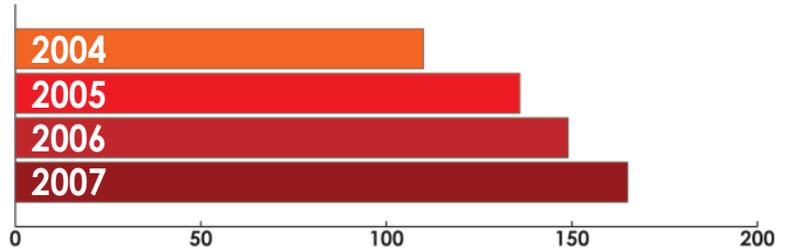
The amount of Internet traffic traveling over the OPLIN network has increased by about 30% in the last six months.

This commitment is reflected in the sharp increase in Internet bandwidth used by public libraries. Here we need to explain that when we refer to "Internet bandwidth," we are talking about something very different from "circuit capacity." A T1 line going to a library has a capacity of 1.5 megabits per second (mbps), but the library seldom actually passes 1.5mbps over the circuit. OPLIN measures Internet bandwidth by adding together all of

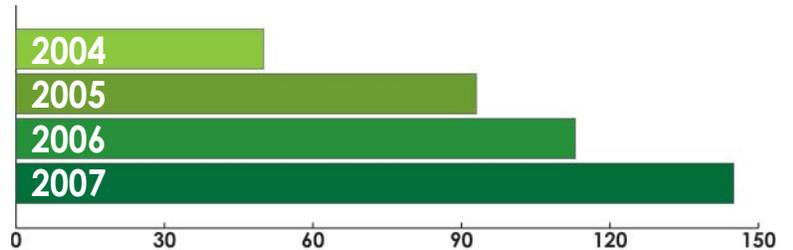
NUMBER OF PUBLIC COMPUTERS



NUMBER OF LIBRARIES USING FILTERS

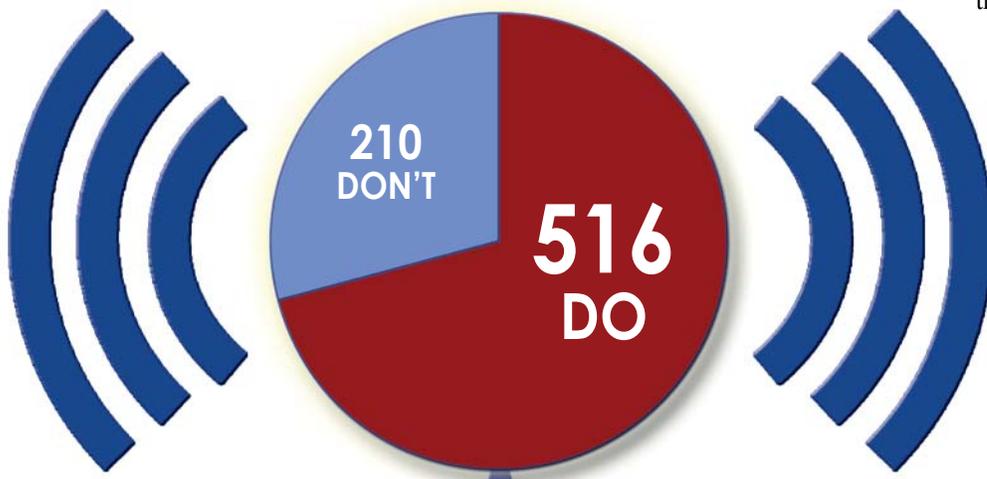


NUMBER OF LIBRARIES FILING FOR E-RATE



the megabits per second from all of the libraries that travel through our network core. While we did not pay close attention to this number early in the year, we have noticed that this total jumped by about 30% over the last six months and currently stands at about 420mbps.

This is both a point of pride and a point of concern for OPLIN. It is good to see that the public has embraced libraries as places for public computing. But OPLIN must buy each megabit of Internet bandwidth, currently paying around \$23,000 each month for just the Internet bandwidth. While charges for circuit capacity and circuit maintenance do not fluctuate, changes in the amount of Internet bandwidth used are causing corresponding increases in Internet bandwidth expense. OPLIN will have to watch this area of the budget carefully.



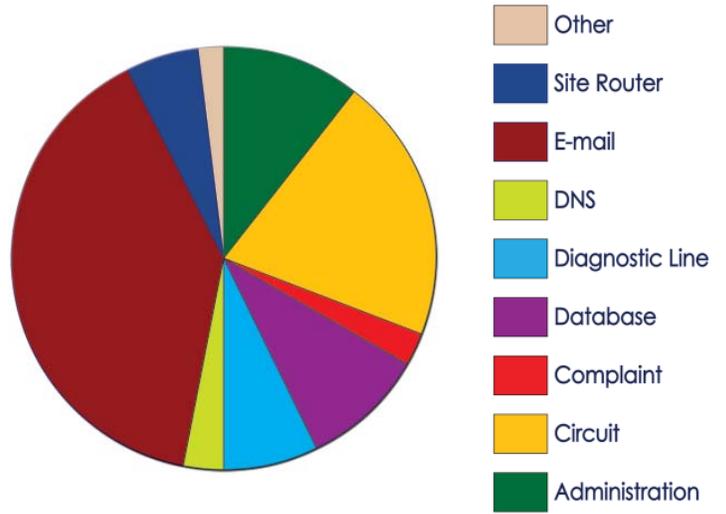
NUMBER OF OHIO LIBRARY BUILDINGS OFFERING WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS



OPLIN SUPPORT CENTER

The OPLIN Support Center fields a wide variety of technical questions from Ohio public libraries. In fiscal year 2007, Support Center personnel opened over 2,500 tickets, covering everything from database access problems to general Internet service issues at over 700 Ohio library buildings.

The majority of tickets (39%) were actually related to OPLIN e-mail accounts. One-fifth of all tickets dealt with library connectivity issues, while miscellaneous questions and requests (from librarians and the general public alike) accounted for nearly 11%. Questions and problems related to the OPLIN-provided databases amounted to 9%. In early 2007, diagnostic lines that had once been used to remotely troubleshoot library routers were all disconnected, accounting for over 7% of the tickets.



OPLIN DATABASES

The New Preview

For a number of years, OPLIN has organized a springtime “Database Preview” period, during which public libraries can test various products being offered, and then subscribe to them through group contracts. This gives libraries an opportunity to purchase databases above and beyond the ones OPLIN provides.

Originally, the OPLIN group contracts were administered through the State Library. Then in 2005, OPLIN and OHIONET combined their respective preview periods into a single event. While this greatly expanded the number of databases available for preview, it created some logistical confusion on the back-end.

This year, we decided to simplify things. Moving forward, OPLIN will continue to supply a core number of databases to all public libraries at no charge (you can see the current list at oplin.org/databases), but libraries that want to preview and obtain additional databases, either individually or under a group contract, can work directly with OHIONET. All of these databases - whether provided free through OPLIN or purchased separately through OHIONET - are now supported by OPLIN. So libraries get some databases free through OPLIN, can buy more through OHIONET, and can call the OPLIN Support Center if they have problems with any of them. We think this arrangement has been simpler and more efficient for everybody, and will continue with this arrangement next year.

Usage Up

Defining “searches” and “documents” is a tricky game. In theory, “searches” correspond to the number of queries submitted, while “documents” reflect the number of items retrieved. However, most publishers have some unique element that makes comparing database to database a bit like comparing apples to oranges.

For example, one database will count “page views” in addition to documents, while others make every effort to break down each type of retrieval (i.e. document vs. image vs. audio file).

