



# **Annual Report**

## **Fiscal Year 2014**

*July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014*



## OPLIN Overview in FY 2014

- Majority of OPLIN network currently consists of 250 Ethernet circuits (98%).
- New vendor contracts with better pricing allowed for a large number of upgrades.
- OPLIN implemented its new service to test local library networks, if necessary.
- The Ohio Web Library collection included five new information resources.
- OPLIN officially launched an improved version of the Ohio Web Library website.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps moved to a new home with an updated interface.
- State Library (and OPLIN) awarded LSTA grants to establish Digitization Hubs.

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.

OPLIN is defined in the Ohio Revised Code section 3375.64 as “an independent agency within the State Library of Ohio, for the purpose of ensuring equity of access to electronic information for all residents of this state.” Planning for OPLIN started at the beginning of 1994 under the leadership of the Ohio Library Council (OLC), and it was established in the State Library budget in fiscal year 1996.

As a state government agency, OPLIN receives extensive fiscal support services from the State Library of Ohio and network management assistance from the Ohio Office of Information Technology (OIT). The majority of the OPLIN budget is used to purchase the services provided directly to Ohio public libraries, primarily Internet telecommunications at approximately \$3 million annually, and subscriptions to basic information resources at typically \$1.5 million. As a result, public libraries do not need to pay for these services from their limited individual budgets because OPLIN provides them.

OPLIN is governed by Director Stephen Hedges, and a Board of Trustees composed of eleven members selected from the staff and past or present board members 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.

### OPLIN Board Members

Karen Davis (*Chair*), Sylvester Memorial Wellston Public Library  
 Jill Billman-Royer (*Vice-Chair*), Southwest PL Trustee  
 Don W. Barlow (*Secretary*), Westerville Public Library  
 Benjamin Chinni (*Treasurer*), Euclid Public Library Trustee  
 Susan Brown, former Washington-Centerville PL Trustee  
 Joe Greenward, Lane Libraries  
 Cindy Lombardo, Cleveland Public Library  
 Jamie Mason, Rocky River Public Library  
 Michael Penrod, Wood County District Public Library  
 Sondra Plymire, Muskingum County Library System  
 Rebecca Schultz, Portsmouth Public Library

### OPLIN Staff Members

|                                   |                 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Director</b>                   | Stephen Hedges  |
| <b>Technology Project Manager</b> | Karl Jendretzky |
| <b>Library Services Manager</b>   | Laura Solomon   |
| <b>Customer Relations/Support</b> | Amie McReynolds |
| <b>Network Support</b>            | Vincent Riley   |



## OPLIN Services and Resources

OPLIN originally 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 services and resources in a streamlined and efficient manner without incurring unreasonable or extra charges as well as by using free or open source solutions when available and low-cost alternatives when not.

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 residents of this state, and the services that OPLIN is able to offer libraries are crucial both to the public and staff, especially in this climate of

declining state budget funding and increased necessity for access to library resources and current technology.

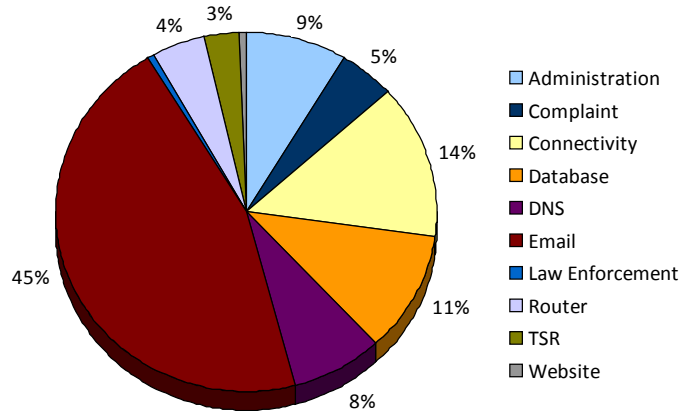
- Internet connectivity
- Research databases
- Support Center assistance
- Email accounts
- SMS text messaging
- OpenDNS filtering service
- Dynamic Website Kits
- State DNS services
- E-Rate workshops
- Explore Ohio website
- OPLIN mailing lists
- Tech blogs/newsletters

Every year, OPLIN strives to implement changes to make our services more cost-effective and efficient. We use Linux-based software solutions when possible because they offer numerous advantages, including cross-platform compatibility with multiple operating systems.

### Support Center Assistance

The **OPLIN Support Center** provides assistance to public libraries for a wide variety of technical questions and issues in addition to maintenance services and monitoring of networks and databases. In this fiscal year, Support Center personnel opened 1,253 tickets (compared to 1,424 last year) for 251 library systems in a total of ten categories.

The total number of tickets dropped from last year, mostly due to a change in our criteria for determining when to open tickets. We no longer open tickets for copyright complaints, which was the largest category in past years. As usual, the majority of support tickets were related to email (45%) and connectivity issues (14%). Telecommunications Service Request (TSR) is the category involving circuit installs, upgrades, and disconnects. A new “TSR” ordering system was implemented this year to help improve efficiency and cross-platform compatibility.





## Internet Connectivity

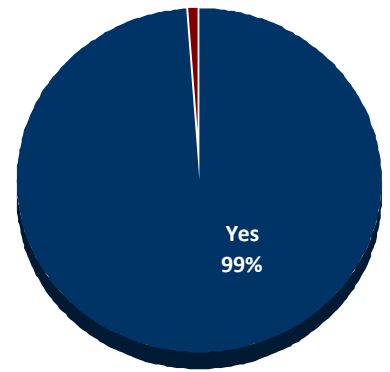
OPLIN provides an Internet connection for each Ohio public library system in addition to connections for the State Library of Ohio and the four regional library systems for 256 total circuits. We have existing state contracts with Time Warner Cable (TWC), AT&T, ComNet, Horizon Telecom, and Agile Networks to supply fiber and copper Internet connections. Agile Networks is a local wireless provider used to replace T1 lines in rural areas that we are unable to reach with regular Ethernet.

Due to new TWC and AT&T contracts with better pricing, we were able to file upgrade orders for approximately 88 circuits last spring. In many cases, we can now buy 100 Mbps for less than we paid for 10 Mbps circuits, although we still have to go through all the necessary steps for E-Rate contract changes before upgrading. Bandwidth for new upgrades is generally determined as follows: Libraries with less than a 10 Mbps circuit will be upgraded to 20 Mbps, and libraries with a 10 Mbps or higher circuit will be upgraded to 100 Mbps *if advantageous pricing is available at the library location.*

However, our policy for determining library circuit upgrade eligibility remains the same – the circuit must maintain an average of 70% bandwidth utilization during peak afternoon hours over a specified time period. The majority of the OPLIN network (98%) is Ethernet with only five T1 circuits remaining,

which should be upgraded by next year. Over the past fiscal year, the total network bandwidth usage has increased by 37% from 2.7 Gbps to 3.7 Gbps. This prompted the need to upgrade to 10 Gbps core router hardware to handle additional bandwidth last year.

As for public wireless access, libraries manage their own setup and costs if they choose to provide Wi-Fi for their patrons, and 703 out of 710 public library buildings offer free wireless to their user communities, which has again increased from last year. This number does not include bookmobile/outreach, or buildings not considered to be “public libraries.”

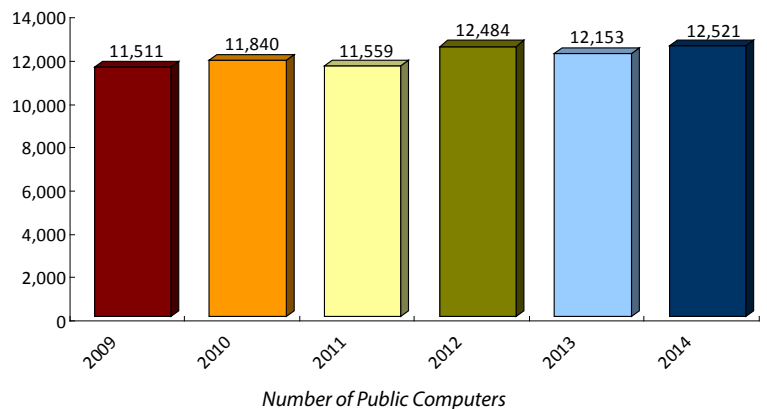


Wireless Access

The number of computers available for public use has increased to 12,521 with a total of 25,124 computers in Ohio public libraries. Typically, these numbers have continued to increase as the use of technology and Internet access became a necessary focus of public libraries; however, budgetary cuts and use of patron-owned devices caused a decrease in the figures for FY 2013.

**Total number of Internet connections:**

- July 1, 2011 –  
84 Ethernet circuits, 2 DS3, 170 T1 lines
- July 1, 2012 –  
234 Ethernet circuits, 2 DS3, 20 T1 lines
- July 1, 2013 –  
247 Ethernet circuits, 2 DS3, 7 T1 lines
- July 1, 2014 –  
250 Ethernet circuits, 1 DS3, 5 T1 lines



**OPLIN paid \$2.8 million, or \$235,000 per month, for public library telecommunications.**



## Ohio Web Library Resources

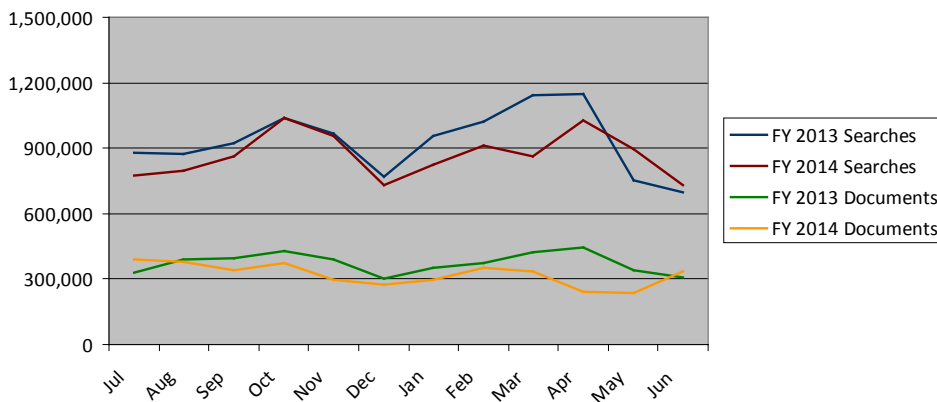
The Ohio Web Library is a collection of over 80 electronic information databases provided by Libraries Connect Ohio (LCO), composed of INFOhio, OhioLINK, OPLIN, and the State Library of Ohio.\* LCO cooperatively purchases access to these statewide resources at a cost-effective rate whereas most individual libraries would never be able to afford them on their own. Within the licensed databases are full text journals, magazines, newspapers, and tutorials, available for free to all Ohio residents either through public library websites or directly from the website maintained by OPLIN, located at <http://www.ohioweblibrary.org>.

Usage numbers have remained fairly consistent with the usage trend seen in previous years, but both numbers have decreased this year due to corrections made in the gathering of statistics.

The Ohio Web Library collection changed in FY 2014. The LCO committee negotiated with database vendors for the next five years because the contracts expired at the end of June 2013. Starting July 1, five new resources were added to the collection: 1) EBSCO Consumer Health Complete; 2) EBSCO Literary Reference Center; 3) EBSCO Points of View Reference Center; 4) EBSCO Science Reference Center; and 5) Learning

Express Workforce Skills for 21st Century Success. On the downside, the ART Collection, Oxford Reference Online, Mango Languages, and NewsBank were all officially discontinued on June 30, 2013.

To allow libraries the opportunity to arrange for replacements and budget for expenses, the Board decided to extend two popular subscriptions *for public libraries only*. NewsBank was available for another four months until the end of October 2013, and Mango Languages was available for another six months until the end of December 2013.



**OPLIN paid \$1.8 million for statewide resources.**

*In FY 2014, a total of 10,407,704 searches were performed, and 3,856,159 documents were retrieved.*

### Ohio Web Library Statewide Databases

- American and English Literature
- Ancestry Library Edition
- Biography Reference Bank
- EBSCO Academic Search
- EBSCO Business Source
- EBSCO Consumer Health Complete
- EBSCO Kids Search
- EBSCO Literary Reference Center
- EBSCO Newspaper Source
- EBSCO Points of View Reference Center
- EBSCO Science Reference Center
- EBSCO Student Research Center
- Facts on File Science Online
- Job and Career Accelerator
- LearningExpress Library
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
- Workforce Skills for 21st Century Success
- 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 and SMS Services

OPLIN email service is extremely flexible and easy to use for libraries, and we provided webmail storage capacity of 1 GB per user. In June 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 for webmail (<http://mail.oplin.org>) users, and an advanced administration and management console for OPLIN staff to increase workflow and efficiency.

In addition, OPLIN offers two active 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 bulk ILS notifications and distribution lists as well as for hosting OPLIN and library-related listservs.

In June 2012, we increased email security and began requiring SMTP authentication for outgoing mail due to public library computers becoming compromised by malware and sending spam. This change should only have affected regular staff email accounts because libraries should use the listserv mail server (<http://lists.oplin.org>) to send ILS library notices and other bulk mail due to the SMTP requirement not being enabled for these types of uses.

In FY 2012, SMS text messaging service became widely available for public libraries to use in conjunction with their ILS servers for sending patron notices, and we switched to a more reliable provider, Trumpia, in April 2012.

*OPLIN provides approximately 2,600 email accounts to public library staff members.*

### SMS Text Messaging Statistics

- 97 total library systems have used SMS
- 46% increase in sent texts from last year
- Total number of text messages sent: 473,691
- First week of FY 2014: 8,067 msg/wk
- Last week of FY 2014: 11,416 msg/wk

### New Dynamic Website Kits

- Ashtabula County District Library
- Bossard Memorial Library
- Brown Memorial Public Library
- Burton Public Library
- East Palestine Memorial Public Library
- Guiding Ohio Online (State Library)
- Licking County Library System
- Monroeville Public Library
- Muskingum County Library System
- Newcomerstown Public Library
- Reed Memorial Library

## 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 an affordable price. The cost includes the initial setup, maintenance/upgrades, hosting, and free staff training at the OPLIN office. Professional sites are essential to meet the changing needs of library communities in addition to illustrating 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 websites are standards-compliant, which provides in-

creased accessibility and usability, and utilize responsive web design (RWD) so that a separate mobile version is no longer required for viewability on phones and tablets.

*The total number of Ohio public libraries using the Website Kit service is 69 with 11 completed in FY 2014.*



## Internet Filtering and E-Rate Program

Internet filtering is provided to Ohio public libraries to satisfy a legislative requirement that OPLIN offers to assist local libraries use filters, which will help them in becoming CIPA-compliant (Children’s Internet Protection Act) or maintaining CIPA-compliance. CIPA compliance is a requirement for participating in the federal E-Rate program.

The State of Ohio budget bill for the last three years has stipulated that OPLIN “...shall research and assist or advise local libraries with regard to emerging technologies and methods that may be effective means to control access to obscene and illegal materials.” Starting in July 2012 (FY 2013), OPLIN fulfilled this requirement through a statewide contract with OpenDNS to provide a web-based Internet content filtering system available to all Ohio public libraries at no charge.

Libraries can set up a free OpenDNS account through OPLIN and associate their IP address range with the account to control types of content that patrons can see, similar to a traditional content filter that the library might otherwise buy. As of June 2014, 89 libraries had registered for OpenDNS accounts through OPLIN.

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

### **Internet Filtering**

*89 libraries currently use OpenDNS, and 13 libraries registered in FY 2014.*

*OPLIN paid \$44,000 for OpenDNS filtering.*

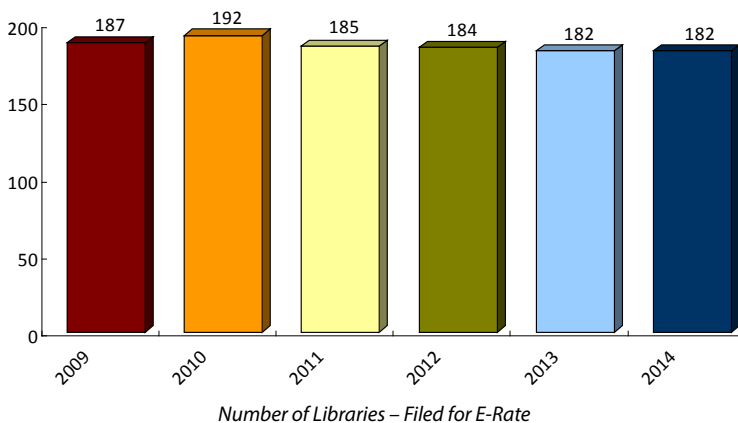
### **E-Rate Program**

*182 public libraries filed for E-Rate refunds and were awarded approximately \$3.6 million.*

*OPLIN paid \$45,000 for E-Rate support and workshops*

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 consortial discount averages 50% to 60%, but discounts for individual libraries can range up to 90%, which can be a critical source of additional revenue.

Because it is so important for libraries to claim their E-Rate funds, OPLIN and the State Library sponsor workshops presented by Lorrie Germann, State E-Rate Coordinator, who also assists public libraries in completing the application forms. All Ohio public libraries are required to submit additional E-Rate forms annually to OPLIN, regardless of whether the library itself participates in the program, because we need to know which libraries are CIPA-compliant before applying for E-Rate.



***OPLIN received approximately \$934,000 in E-Rate refunds in FY 2014.***



## OPLIN Financial Highlights

The State of Ohio finished the 2014 fiscal year with a nearly \$800 million surplus resulting from an improved economy and reduced sharing of revenue with local governments, so that it was possible to fill the Rainy Day fund to its legal maximum of \$1.5 billion and implement several tax cuts.

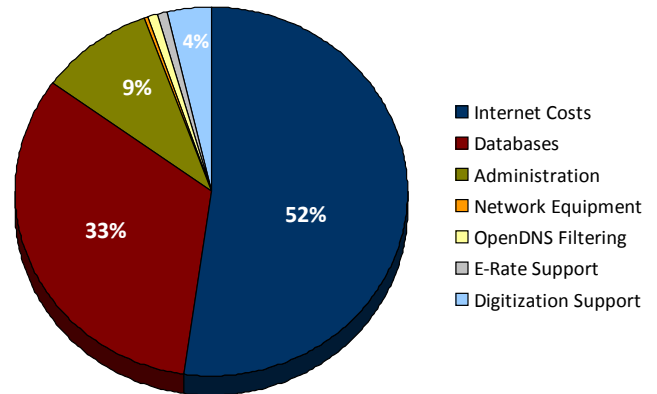
The overall objective of the Kasich administration remains unchanged: Restrain state spending while improving services to taxpayers. OPLIN continues to operate within this objective with only 9.4% of all expenditures going toward administrative costs, including personnel, and all remaining funds being used to provide direct services to Ohio public libraries.

OPLIN received \$3,689,788 from the Public Library Fund (PLF) in FY 2014, which is the same amount that was transferred from the PLF to OPLIN in FY 2012 and FY 2013, and will be the same amount transferred in FY 2015. OPLIN also received \$934,052 in E-Rate reimbursements in FY 2014 and \$56,012 from other sources.

Some funds from previous E-Rate reimbursements were used this year to support three special projects: Ohio Digitization Hubs

project; Ohio Library Council’s “eBook Access for All” project; and special extension of the NewsBank and Mango Languages statewide subscriptions for public libraries.

OPLIN continues to buy last-mile telecommunications services from Time Warner Cable, AT&T, and several other telecommunications vendors using master state contracts negotiated by the Ohio Office of Information Technology (OIT) for fiber optic circuits. OPLIN uses the OARnet network for some data transport over long and middle-mile distances.



### Financial Report

#### REVENUE

|                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Public Library Fund | \$3,689,788 |
| E-Rate Refunds      | 934,052     |
| Website Kits        | 46,170      |
| Other Credits       | 9,842       |

**TOTAL** \$4,679,852

#### EXPENSES

|                      |             |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Internet Costs       | \$2,819,928 |
| Databases            | 1,784,861   |
| Administration       | 508,505*    |
| Network Equipment    | 11,295      |
| OpenDNS Filtering    | 43,925      |
| E-Rate Support       | 45,000      |
| Digitization Support | 196,609     |

**TOTAL** \$5,410,123

Deficit drawn from previous E-Rate refunds \$730,271

\* Administration figure includes \$20,000 for ebook access awareness campaign.





## OPLIN Special Projects

This year, OPLIN provided financial support for two special projects: Digitization Hubs project, and OLC's eBook Access For All project.

This was made possible by a large balance in our E-Rate reimbursement funds, which in turn was caused by the denial of OPLIN's E-Rate applications back in 2005. E-Rate refunds generally amount to about a quarter of OPLIN's total revenue, so OPLIN had to struggle through a couple of very lean years, with reduced staffing and some major belt-tightening. Since the denial was based on nothing more than a clerical error, however, OPLIN was eventually able to get the FCC to reverse the denial, after which OPLIN could start the regular – though much-delayed – reimbursement process. The E-Rate reimbursements we should have received in 2005-2006 finally arrived in 2011, and adding those to our regular reimbursements has left OPLIN with an unusual surfeit of funds.

The OPLIN Board has been considering how best to use those funds. Some have been used toward routine operating expenses, but having these funds available seemed like a good opportunity to do something special for libraries. The Board decided this year to devote some of these E-Rate reimbursement funds to two projects that will help libraries while still fitting within OPLIN's assigned mission of "ensuring equity of access to electronic information for all residents of this state" (ORC 3375.64).

The first project is the Digitization Hubs (<http://www.ohiodigitizationhubs.org>). We know that Ohio libraries, museums, and other community organizations (and individuals) have a wealth of historical information that would be much more accessible to

everyone if it was in electronic format. The Cleveland Public Library, Columbus Metropolitan Library, Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, and Toledo-Lucas County Public Library have been awarded \$508,457 in federal IMLS LSTA funds from the State Library of Ohio, which OPLIN has been pleased to match with \$251,964, to create a network of coordinated Digitization Hubs. These Hubs will be regional digitization centers that use state-of-the-art equipment and standardized metadata. They will digitize and provide online access to rare and culturally significant materials located in their libraries, other libraries, museums, archives, and local communities.

The second project is the Ohio Library Council's "eBook Access For All" (<http://www.ebookaccessforall.com>). Certainly one of the biggest impediments to equal access to electronic information has been the unpredictable and burdensome licensing arrangements that ebook publishers formerly imposed on libraries. OPLIN has therefore been pleased to be able to support OLC's project with a \$50,000 grant to pay for legal research and a public awareness campaign about ebook availability in libraries. It is our hope that recent good relations between ebook publishers and libraries will continue, and that there will indeed be ebook access for all. But if not, this work will prepare for federal legislation that would give libraries the same protections that the First Sale doctrine of copyright law has provided for over a century to print books.

We know that the general public today expects just about everything to be available online. Librarians know, however, that a lot of information has either not yet been digitized, or is locked behind confusing licenses that treat information as if it were software. Perhaps these two projects will help.



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