NORTHSTAR - STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION

Digital literacy has been a part of public library service since the first public computers were installed nearly 40 years ago.[1] Adding public internet service to those computers added a layer of complexity to digital literacy exchanges. Removing both access to public computers and much face-to-face interaction with patrons in 2020 moved digital literacy transactions into an entirely new territory, particularly at a time when patrons were pushed into situations requiring new levels of digital literacy: working from home, applying for new jobs or new benefits, and supporting online learning for family members.

At their September 2021 meeting, the Board of the State Library of Ohio approved $60,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support a statewide license to Northstar Digital Literacy (https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org) for Ohio's public libraries through OPLIN. The purpose of acquiring this license is to 1.) help individuals assess their current level of digital literacy, 2.) provide tools for individuals to develop competencies, 3.) provide optional curriculum for library staff to assist in developing digital literacy skills among their patrons, and 4.) provide an optional certification process for libraries that are interested in helping their patrons gain credentials.

GOALS

Libraries are and have been engaged in the work of digital literacy, whether they have formally recognized that work or not. For many library staff, this work may feel like something "extra" that they have to do, often especially if they don't feel supported in that work. For library staff administrators, it is often difficult to find the resources to support their staff the way they would like. Northstar can and will be that support.

First Goal: Helping Library Staff Feel Better About Their Role In Digital Literacy Training

This goal will be achieved by:

- Training select library staff at every Ohio public library to be site administrators
- Training all library staff who engage in digital literacy to be aware of how Northstar works.

Our "stretch goal" under this category is

- Signing up all library staff at every Ohio public library for a Northstar staff or user account.

Second Goal: Helping Patrons Increase Their Digital Literacy Skills

This goal will be achieved by:

- Ensuring that a link to Northstar is on every website for every Ohio public library
- Providing marketing support for every Ohio public library to reach patrons.

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[1] "Public Access to Microcomputers." *Library Journal*, vol. 110, no. 8, May 1985, p. 105. *EBSCOhost*, search-ebscohost-com.proxy.oplin.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lxh&AN=8583738&site=ehost-live.

Our "stretch goals" under this category are

- Having the Northstar link featured *effectively*[2] on every Ohio public library website
- Providing marketing support to Ohio public libraries for communicating with community partners and stakeholders.

Third Goal: Provide Patrons With Identifiable Digital Literacy Credentials

This goal will be achieved by:

- Training select library staff at Ohio public libraries to be proctors
- Identifying at least one library in each Ohio county with the interest and capacity to engage in proctoring
- Having at least one library in each Ohio county identified on the Northstar map as a proctoring site.

Our "stretch goal" under this category is

- Training at least one staff member in every Ohio public library to proctor Northstar assessments.

PROJECT AUDIENCES

The potential for interest in this project is wide. The initial audiences are implied by the initial purposes of the ARPA grant and the goals outlined above. To develop our implementation plan, it is helpful to consider the needs of each of these audiences.

Library Site Administrators

Library site administrators will be responsible for:

- acting as the primary contact for local Northstar implementation
- assigning other roles (staff, proctor, user).

Library Staff

Library staff will benefit from Northstar as:

- a professional development tool to increase confidence with digital literacy skills
- a framework for approaching digital literacy questions with patrons
- a ready-made curriculum for individual or class-based computer training sessions.

Library Staff Administrators

Library staff administrators (i.e. directors, HR, managers) will benefit from Northstar as:

- a method of skills assessment for new or developing staff
- a consistent benchmark of service competency for existing staff
- a professional development tool for staff to learn new skills.

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[2] See the results of the OPLIN survey, "What's that Called Again?" from June 2021.

Library Patrons

Library patrons will benefit from Northstar as:

- a method of skills assessment to evaluate current competencies and potential for growth
- a resource for developing new skills
- a potential source of credentialing for employment.

Local Community Partners and Stakeholders

As libraries gain confidence with Northstar, they may wish to engage with local community partners regarding the service. That engagement may be as simple as creating awareness, or it may become as in-depth as partnership for proctoring, or it may fall somewhere in between. Some potential partners include:

- Local ABLE programs
- Local Chamber of Commerce
- Local school districts
- Local service organizations (Lions Club, Rotary, etc.).

Local Goodwill chapters and other potential community partners may already have licenses for Northstar; it is recommended that library staff research existing Northstar customers via https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/find-location.

Statewide Community Partners and Stakeholders

Though not part of the initial implementation plan, Ohio's Connectivity Champions (https://ohio-k12.help/remotedx/connectivity-champions) are interested in the project. The project manager has promised to keep the Connectivity Champions leadership apprised of the project status.

TIMELINE

The program will be rolled out statewide for all library sites simultaneously, but initial follow-up on implementation will concentrate most heavily on targeting sub-sets of Ohio's public libraries (i.e. Metro libraries, participating GOO libraries, and/or consortia like CLEVNET and SEO. We expect to achieve the First Goal (staff training) and the Second Goal (promotion to patrons) by January 2022 for all of these libraries.

The program manager will follow up with the remaining libraries that do not opt-in on training and promotion activities by January individually, and we expect that all 251 public libraries in Ohio will achieve the First Goal (staff training) and the Second Goal (promotion to patrons) by June 30, 2022.

We will offer opportunities for libraries to self-select with regard to the Third Goal (credentials by proctoring) through June 30, 2022. The program manager will follow up with libraries to ensure that there is at least one proctoring library in each county by September 30, 2022.

EVALUATION

One way to define success for this program is that every public library in Ohio will be "doing digital literacy on purpose." However, that is a difficult concept to evaluate. Instead, we will begin our evaluation of the statewide implementation with an initial four-pronged approach.

Tracking Library Training (First Goal)

The first step to successful implementation will be ensuring that library staff are adequately trained for the implementation. To that end, the program manager will track attendance at the live sessions, and she will create a Google Form for staff who view the recorded sessions asynchronously to document their participation in program training.

Surveying Library Staff (First Goal)

The second step to successful implementation will be checking with library staff to see how we can adjust the training and other supports to increase their effectiveness in building their own confidence. This will take place through a Google Form survey to all library staff, distributed via the local site administrators. There will also be a link to the Google Form available on the Northstar project page for libraries at https://www.oplin.ohio.gov/services/northstar.

Assessing Library Participation (Second and Third Goals)

The program manager will track baseline participation (i.e. linking to the service on local websites and utilizing basic marketing materials) through communication with the local site administrators and review of library websites. She will develop a Google Form for libraries to self-report the location of the service link on their local websites and corresponding promotional activities, and she will follow up with sites that do not self-report with a combination of site review, emails, and phone calls.

The program manager will also track participation in the proctoring program through similar means.

Providing Feedback Opportunities For Patrons & Other Stakeholders (Second and Third Goals)

Thinking ahead to the potential to leverage this program in conversations with OPLIN funders and other statewide stakeholders, the program manager will also develop a feedback form for members of the public, both registered Northstar users and local library stakeholders. The format of this feedback form will be determined with input from local library site administrators.

A comprehensive communications plan will be vital to the success of the project. With the audiences and goals outlined in the project summary above, here is a model for the communications that we will need to develop. Please note that there may be need to differentiate messaging between nonprofit community and for-profit community stakeholders

Communication Type	Lib Site Admin	Lib Staff	Lib Staff Admin	Patrons	Local Partners (nonprofit)	Local Stake-holders (for profit)	Connectivity Champions
NS Listserv implementation announcements	X						
Site admin survey	X						
Site-specific emails	X						
Site-specific phone calls	X						
Asynchronous training forms	X	X					
OPLINLIST general announcements		X	X				
Targeted press release				X	X	X	X
Website assets	X						
Posters for library sites	X						
Flyers for library sites or distribution				X	X	X	X
Bookmarks for library sites or distribution				X	X	X	X
Survey for library staff feedback	X	X	X				
General feedback form				X	X	X	X

October 2021

- Hold initial informational webinar for Ohio public library staff regarding the project
- Confirm library site administrators

November 2021

- Create site accounts for all Ohio public libraries, OPLIN, and the State Library of Ohio
- Plan for library site administrator training
- Plan for library staff training
- Plan for proctor training
- Plan for other training needs
- Schedule training events
- Hold training events
- Create asynchronous training survey
- Start to utilize Northstar listserv for library site administrators
- Create press releases (proctoring and non-proctoring)
- Create website assets (proctoring and non-proctoring)
- Create library posters (proctoring and non-proctoring)
- Create flyers and bookmarks for library patrons (proctoring and non-proctoring)
- Create survey for library staff feedback

December 2021

- Hold additional training events
- Create site administrator survey
- Check on training progress
- Follow up with targeted subset of libraries that are not trained
- Follow up with targeted sub-set of libraries that do not have Northstar link on website
- Create flyers and bookmarks for local partners, local stakeholders, and Connectivity Champions
- Create general feedback form for end users

January 2022

- Goal check: targeted subset of libraries trained
- Goal check: targeted subset of libraries linked
- Goal check: targeted subset of libraries with promotional materials

February 2022

- Follow up with other public libraries that are not trained
- Follow up with other public libraries that do not have Northstar link on website
- Analyze proctoring site distribution
- Create plan for coverage in all 88 counties

March, April, May 2022

- Continue follow-up with any public library that is not trained
- Continue follow-up with any public library that does not have Northstar link on website
- Start to implement plan for proctoring coverage

June 2022

- Goal check: all public libraries trained
- Goal check: all public libraries linked
- Goal check: all public libraries with promotional materials

July, August 2022

- Continue follow-up with counties missing proctoring coverage

September 2022

- Goal check: proctoring coverage in at least one public library in all 88 Ohio counties

The initial set-up was done as bulk account creation via a contact spreadsheet. The current copy of the spreadsheet is available in the OPLIN _Functions shared folder (see REVISED Northstar Location Import).

Ideally, there should be two administrator contacts per location. At the point of implementation, we asked Northstar to add only an OPLIN administrator for each site (i.e. oh0001@oplin.ohio.gov). We will add other administrators from the Original List tab to the sites and to the Current tab after the library has completed the necessary steps to "go live."

Administrators can create other user types (proctors, staff, general user). Administrators can also update local settings for visibility on the Northstar location map (https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/find-location) and the availability of proctoring services. The option for self-created accounts will be turned on by OPLIN after the library has completed the necessary steps to "go live."

Although we anticipated the need for authentication services via MASK, we have since discovered that Northstar does not require any authentication method for self-registered users.