

Howe Library Technology Plan Overview



The Howe Library technology plan is part of the long-range planning process begun in 2006 as directed by the Howe Library Corporation. Members of the Long Range Plan Committee as well as additional members from the community comprised the Technology Committee.

The Technology committee reviewed all of the data collected from the Long Range Plan survey and focus groups, reviewed literature concerning library technology and technology trends, and evaluated the services currently offered. The committee also visited the Jones Media Center and the News Center at Dartmouth College's Baker/Berry Library.

The purpose of technology planning as part of the long range planning process is to determine how technology can help to fulfill the mission and the goals of the long range plan. Technology in the library serves a support role. The Technology Committee seeks to balance the technology available and the cost therein with the information needs of the library patrons and staff.

This technology plan presents opportunities for growth into the future. However, we offer one caveat: the pace at which technology is changing and developing makes a long-term plan difficult. It is impossible to know now what the technology available a year from now will look like. The only thing we do know for certain is that it will be different from what it is today. So we recommend that the library staff remain flexible, adaptable and informed. The following suggestions are our best efforts to fulfill the objectives of the Long Range Plan and to adapt to the information world of the 21st century.

Howe Library Technology Plan Strategic Opportunities:

New and expanded technology	Enhancements to library catalog to improve patron service	Website as virtual library	Collaboration with area libraries and institutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain and expand the public access network to meet demand including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laptops • Macintosh computers • time management software • color printer 2. Expand self-service options. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • add self-check units • include self-check-in 3. Include more software options on public access computers. 4. Enhance tech support of library programs and public meetings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • update equipment • train more staff to offer support 5. Emphasize staff training in new technologies. 6. IT structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technical services reorganization • town IT support 7. Form a permanent technology committee. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upgrade the web catalog and add features to the catalog that allow for patron involvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patron Reviews • RSS Feeds 2. Subscribe to Innovative's ResearchPro making the library catalog a portal to all information resources. 3. Purchase Encore to allow for community involvement and integrated searching. 4. Purchase the Ecommerce module to allow patrons to use credit cards for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fees • fines • donations to the library 5. Consider the use of handheld devices to improve staff efficiency. 6. Consider OCLC membership for cataloging resources. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make the virtual library a priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dedicate staff resources to website management • keep it fresh and visually stimulating 2. Make use of current Web technologies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blogs • podcasts • RSS feeds 3. Improve services to teens -- "meet them where they are" with social software. 4. Investigate and seek grant support for a digital collection of local history. 5. Marketing library services and programming should be a key focus of the virtual library. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage the expansion of the NH Downloadable Audiobook Consortium to include downloadable video. 2. Seek opportunities for collaboration with area libraries such as a digital archive of local history. 3. Continue to advocate for a shared catalog with the school libraries. 4. Initiate discussions with the Dartmouth College Library for opportunities to share Innovative modules. 5. Partner with Valley-Net to offer more public technology workshops.

Opportunities for the Future

New and Expanded Technology

Because it is difficult to predict what technology will be available in the near future, making recommendations ten years out is speculative. While Howe Library should keep pace with developments in information technology, it is unlikely it will ever need to be an early adopter. Careful evaluation, research and cost-benefit analysis should continue to be the standard procedure before acquiring any new technology.

A frequent request from the community survey and focus groups is for more computers. Public access computers are in such high demand that despite the increase of 12 new public access PCs in 2005 we are still unable to meet demand. It was hoped that with the addition of WiFi, demand for computers would diminish. This has not happened; there are times throughout the day when people wait for an available computer.

The addition of time-management software would alleviate some of the congestion during high-use times. Computer users are asked to limit their use to one hour; due to the increase in public access computers throughout the building and the number of users it is difficult for staff to enforce this rule. This software would also relieve staff from the burden of manually monitoring time and negotiating with patrons who have exceeded the time limit.

Aging laptop computers need to be replaced as they are an important part of the public access network, particularly during high-demand times. The laptops are also used by groups for presentations in the meeting rooms, by other town departments and for library sponsored programs. Both the police and fire departments

frequently borrow the library's laptops and digital projector.

The focus groups brought to our attention the need to provide Apple computers for our users. The public access network is entirely PC based. In the Hanover community there are many Apple users; the Hanover schools and Dartmouth College support Apple technology. The addition of some Apples for public use would enable users to work within a familiar environment.

The library needs to provide a wider variety of software to its user community. Patrons have requested more browser options and photo editing software on the public access computers. While staff support for these programs will be an issue, the committee recommends that the library staff be flexible and responsive to the needs of users and aware of new software programs as they are developed. With the addition of photo editing software, the library should also consider the addition of a color printer for public use.

Some of the recommendations of the Long Range Plan will have an impact on staff time. The technology committee recommends an increase in the number of self-check units to allow for refocusing of some staff. Currently, there is one self-checkout computer available to the public. A concerted effort by the staff to encourage patrons to use the self-service option will allow some staff to be shifted from public service desks. The committee also recommends that self-service be expanded to allow patrons to renew items, self-checkin and fine and fee payment (via credit card).

As part of the technology enhancement during the expansion project, the Corporation purchased a digital projector for public use in the

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meeting rooms; it is often used by other town departments and for library sponsored programs. The library also provides TV/VCR/DVD and sound system technology for meeting room users. This is an important, and in some cases, required service for many programs and meetings. The library should continue to provide this service and update this equipment as technology and user needs change. Additional staff time may be necessary to continue to maintain this service.

Staff training in a number of areas related to technology is a vital part of providing good public service. Of particular importance is the ongoing training for new technologies in general, for Innovative Interfaces (our integrated library system), and for new Web technologies like podcasts, RSS feeds and social software. A stronger emphasis on staff training is absolutely essential.

The current organization of the Technical Services Department should be reevaluated as the current staffing levels are insufficient to handle the increased need for technology support. The position of Technical Services Supervisor has expanded beyond the supervision of the Technical Services Department and the administration of the Innovative system to the Web catalog, new technologies and technical support. The Committee recommends that this job description be formalized and more staff time in Technical Services be added for continued efficient workflow.

The library is one of the more technology-dependent departments in the town and the only department that provides technology for public use. This technology is sophisticated and library specific and the needs of library patrons and staff do not easily fit in the one-size-fits-all computer policies of the town.

The library staff and the town information technology (IT) staff must work closely together to fulfill the goals of the library. While the library recognizes that balancing the hierarchy of priorities is difficult for the IT department, it is imperative to the success of the library that all involved subscribe to the mission of the library.

Finally, the Committee recommends that a permanent technology committee be established by the Corporation. This committee would meet a few times a year to evaluate the current services of the library and look at developments in technology so that the library would have flexibility in adapting to trends. This committee should also have the responsibility of monitoring the library website and making recommendations for enhancements.

Enhancements to the Library Catalog to Improve Patron Service

It is vital that we continue to maintain and enhance the KnowHowe Library Catalog and the Innovative Interfaces integrated library system (ILS) that supports it. In order to do that, we recommend the following.

- Any redesign of the Howe Library Webpage should include a redesign of the KnowHowe Catalog. Recent changes to the Catalog software provide more flexibility in the creation of screen displays. Investigate other ways to improve Catalog functionality. We recommend the purchase of the recent enhancements including spell checking, patron reviews, RSS feeds, advanced keyword searching with relevancy ranking.

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- Purchase Innovative Interfaces' Research Pro federated searching product for searching across multiple library-selected resources. This tool makes it possible for users to simultaneously search the catalog and all of the library's subscription databases and more to retrieve full text electronic resources as well as print materials. Along with this product, the library should consider broadening online reference service to include, for example, investment sources. ResearchPro integrates with the next phase of development, Encore (see below).
- Purchase Encore, Innovative Interfaces next-generation catalog which incorporates ResearchPro and provides a new and enhanced user interface that allows for community participation like tagging, for example. With ResearchPro and Encore, the library catalog could become the information source of choice for patrons.
- Purchase the Innovative Ecommerce module to allow users to use credit cards online to pay fees and fines, thereby facilitating patron self-service. It can also be used to collect contributions to the Library.
- Consider the use of handhelds to enable staff to be more efficient and more available to assist patrons throughout the library. With handheld devices, staff can quickly search the catalog for a patron, place a hold, and perform collection maintenance work in the stacks. Software support will be required to integrate handhelds with the library catalog.
- Investigate the advantages of participation in OCLC, the international database for biblio-

graphic data. More than 41,555 libraries in 112 countries use OCLC services to locate, acquire, catalog, lend and preserve library materials. OCLC has recently developed a relationship with Google making library holdings visible in Google Scholar. This is an excellent opportunity for libraries to become more visible.

Web Site as Virtual Library

The library Web site is an essential part of library service. For many users, the Web site is the first and in some cases the only point of contact with the library. The library must redesign the Web site to reflect current trends in Web site design. The work of updating and refreshing the Web site must become a shared responsibility among the staff and must make use of new technologies to communicate with patrons and allow patron input through blogs. Also, the staff should investigate the effectiveness and efficiency of content management software for maintaining the library website.

Current Web technologies should be employed by the staff to engage patrons and encourage community involvement in the library. The library staff should identify groups of users who can be served via the Web site. The library should consider podcasting of library programs in the near future. Reference staff can use blogging for reader's advisory service and invite readers' participation. Reference service can be enhanced by opening another line of communication via one of the many free chat programs.

RSS Feeds (Real Simple Syndication) have become common on library Web sites. RSS gives users the option to be informed any time new content is added to the Web site. An RSS feed for the

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new books list for example would notify users as soon as a new list is posted.

The Youth Services staff can engage teens where they are by making use of social software. Homework help and opportunities for parents and children to work together were both mentioned in the survey and focus groups. The Youth staff should use the Web site as a homework resource for parents and students.

The Web site should also be used for marketing and donor support. There should be a continued emphasis on the Web site to highlight the services at the library, the café or downloadable audio for example. The library should encourage donors to support the library and make it possible to contribute online via credit card. Marketing library services raises the level of awareness of the library in the community thereby generating support for library programs.

Again, an emphasis on staff training is of critical importance. More staff training in Web technologies and social software will be necessary to accomplish these community-building goals.

Collaboration with area libraries and institutions

Howe Library joined the New Hampshire Downloadable Audiobook Consortium at its inception and participated in the planning and implementation phases. Downloadable audio and video will be the future delivery method of media content, and therefore the library staff should encourage and advocate for the expansion of the NH Downloadable Consortium to include downloadable video.



Many libraries are digitizing their local history documents, maps, photographs and oral histories. A consortium of libraries and historical societies in the area could seek grant funding to produce a digital collection of local history that would be accessible to everyone. Howe Library should recruit volunteers to participate in digitizing projects.

The Town of Hanover Libraries, with a combined catalog, has been a very successful collaboration. A similar collaboration with the schools in Hanover and the Dresden School District would be of great benefit to residents. Howe Library staff should continue to advocate for this and watch for new technology that can connect the catalogs of the school and public libraries.

The Dartmouth College Libraries are a great resource for the library staff. Dartmouth College Librarians are among the authors of this document. The Technical Services Department has an established relationship with the Systems Librarian and the Library Communications and Web Manager; they are an invaluable resource. The possible sharing of future Innovative modules and enhancements should be studied.

The Howe Library/ValleyNet collaboration has a long history and has been mutually beneficial. ValleyNet continues to hold technology workshops at Howe Library. The focus groups and surveys revealed an interest in technology related programs. The library staff should work with ValleyNet to offer more workshops on topics specific to the needs of library users.

Technology Plan Conclusion

The technology committee recommendations provide a framework for achieving the strategic goals of the Howe Library Long Range Plan. The library staff recognizes the essential role technology plays in the future of library service and it has already established itself as a leader in technology and a recognized resource in the community. Continued investment in technology is vital and must include a commitment to invest in ongoing support by both the Town of Hanover and the Howe Library Corporation. Without this support, the initial investment in technology is meaningless. This report strongly advocates increased investment in technology in support of the library's public service goals.



Continued staff training in technology is also crucial. The technology enhancements recommended in this report will require staff to develop new skills. Staff training in new Web2.0 technologies to expand the “virtual library” via the Website is of critical importance. This is a commitment that the library cannot ignore. We urge the standing technology committee, when created, to continue to advocate for staff training in all areas, and put particular emphasis on Website development and application of new Web technologies.

Howe Library is an important technology resource for the community. As the survey and focus groups revealed, there is strong support for and expansion of the technology offered in the library. Because the costs for technology are an increasing part of the library budget, collaboration with area libraries is highly recommended as a way to share costs and meet the demand for these services.

Technology has become the corner stone of library service and newer technologies are altering the way libraries deliver their services. This change in library services has happened rapidly and will continue apace. The predominant message of this technology plan is that Howe Library should continue to be a model of flexibility and openness to change. Libraries must strive to maintain relevance in the information age. They must balance the dual roles of adopting new technology and keeping the library moving forward while maintaining traditional library services.

Technology Plan Committee



Committee Members:

William Ghezzi	Cataloging and Metadata Services Librarian, Dartmouth College Library
Polly Gould	Librarian, Howe Library
Mary LaMarca	Library Communications & Web Manager, Dartmouth College Library
Steven D. Lubrano	Assistant Dean, Chief Operations Officer, Tuck School, Dartmouth
Betsy McClain	Director of Administrative Services, Town of Hanover
Jim Matthews	Software Developer, Fetch Softworks
Pamela Smith	Librarian, Howe Library

Appendix I: Highlights of Current Strengths

The Technology Plan, as part of the Howe Library's Long Range Plan, was approved by the Howe Library Board of Trustees on May 10, 2007 and endorsed by the Town of Hanover Board of Selectmen on June 25, 2007

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Technology Plan

Appendix I

HOWE LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY PLAN: HIGHLIGHTS OF CURRENT STRENGTHS

Public Access Network	Staff Network	Resources
<p>32 public access computers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet searching • E-mail only • Catalog-only • Self-check out • laptops • printing <p>Broadband access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high speed via cable modem <p>Wifi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • available throughout the library <p>Services for computer users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide technical support • training 	<p>20 computers</p> <p>2 servers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows 2003 network server • Innovative ILS server <p>Printers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 color printer • 5 laserjet • 4 receipt printers <p>Innovative System modules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web catalog • Kids Online • Acquisitions • Cataloging • Circulation • Serials 	<p>Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • library resources and services • new items lists • calendar • community links <p>Databases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EBSCO • Historical NYT • NewsBank • Ancestry Library • Heritage Quest • Books in Print • Biography Resource Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Search • Magill on Literature • Novelist <p>Downloadable audiobooks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expands the collection • saves resources spent on replacing damaged CDs

Technology Plan Appendix I

Technology at Howe Library in 2007

Public Access Network

In 2002 The Howe offered a total of 16 public access computers. That number has doubled in 5 years and there are currently 32 public access personal computers throughout the library, each with varying degrees of functionality including email, self-checkout, catalog searching, and general use. The library has become an essential resource for people seeking broadband access.

Users access these machines on a first-come basis and are encouraged to limit their time on a machine to 60 minutes. Printing is available from these machines at ten cents per page; in 2006 the library implemented print control software which has resulted in a noticeable decrease in paper waste and an increase in revenue.

Details of the 32 Public Access Computers - January 2007

Type	Q	Use
Adult	17	(Combination of general use, catalog-only, e-mail only and self-check out)
Teens	4	(General use)
Children	4	(Combination of general use and catalog-only)
Laptops:	6	(Circulated in-house)

Public access machines offer a combination of links and access depending on the location and function of the PC. A software program, Public Web Browser, manages catalog-only computers. Email-only computers offer links to the Internet as well as DHMC web mail and Dartmouth's Webblitz. General use computers offer access to the Internet, subscription databases and the NH Downloadable Audiobook Consortium. Microsoft Word and Excel are also available, as well as BigShot, screen magnification software. A computer equipped with screen reading software, JAWS, is also available to the public. Library staff routinely provides technical support to patrons with computer, Internet and printing issues.

The Long Range Planning survey completed in 2006 asked specific questions about public access computers and revealed a growing demand for more. It is clear from both the survey of our users and staff experience that supply is not meeting demand. The recent addition of the downloadable audio service has increased demand as people who do not have broadband access rely on the library for their high-speed Internet connection.

Additional purchases must consider the initial cost of the machine, the impact the purchase will have on the replacement cycle, the impact the purchase will have on maintenance schedules, and its compatibility with existing machines. The Howe Library Corporation supports increasing the public network to meet demand and at the same time is cognizant of the strain it puts on the town budget. In light of this concern, the Corporation took the unprecedented step of assuming responsibility for replacing in fiscal years 2009 and 2010 all 9 of the public access computers added during the construction project in 2005.

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Replacement Cycle

The systems at Howe Library reflect currently available technology. Computers are regularly updated as older machines are cycled out of circulation. The Town of Hanover Management Information Services provides technical support with assistance in selecting, implementing and utilizing software solutions; with oversight of the Town's wide area network and hardware replacement schedule; and with management of standard desktop components over a four-year useful life.

The majority of machines were purchased in 2005. A smaller number of machines are scheduled for replacement during the 2007 & 2008 fiscal years, but the more important consideration is in 2009 when a large number of machines are scheduled to be replaced.

<u>Purchase year</u>	<u>Q</u>	<u>Replacement Cycle</u>
2002	2	Recycle in 2007
2003	4	Recycle in 2007
2004	1	Recycle in 2008
2005	22	Recycle in 2009
2006	3	Recycle in 2010

Howe Library must plan to upgrade the fleet of public access computers recognizing that there is a very good chance that the kind of machine appropriate for library use in the future may be somewhat different than what we currently have.

Broadband Access

The public access network connects to the Internet via cable modem. The cable service is free to the library; however there is a cost associated with our Internet Protocol address for our subscription databases. For the most part, cable service is reliable and fast. Because many people in our area do not have broadband access, the library becomes an important resource for them.

Wireless Access

In 2005 the library opened the wireless network for people who want to use their own laptops. With the 2005 expansion, the library added 4 new access points to extend the wireless signal throughout the building, including all public meeting rooms on the lower level.

Staff Network

The Howe library maintains a network of staff computers, servers and printers that are used for internal operations: 20 staff computers, 1 networked color printer, 5 LaserJet printers and 4 receipt printers (for date due slips), a network server and the Innovative server for the integrated library system. The network server is due for replacement in 2009; the Innovative server, replaced by the Corporation in 2005, is scheduled for replacement in 2010. The staff computers are also on a four-year replacement cycle.

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Innovative

The integrated library system is the technical backbone of our service at the Howe Library. An integrated library system (ILS) consists of a number of functional modules that share a common bibliographic and patron database. The ILS modules work together to make it possible to track items owned, place orders, pay bills, and allow patrons to borrow items and discover resources in the collection and worldwide via the Internet. The Innovative Interfaces ILS modules implemented locally include public Web-based interfaces, the KnowHowe catalog and Kids Online as well as Java-based modules, acquisitions, cataloging, serials and circulation. A self-checkout service and other patron initiated services are also included. In addition, the system provides staff with the ability to access and manipulate data through Z39.50 and telnet connections.

Web Page

The Web page is constantly improving and serves a link to valuable resources, information and services at the library and on the Internet. Currently there is only one staff member who maintains the Web site and updates the content.

Some of the resources available at the library and posted through the Web page include:

- Circulation services - how to get a library card, hours of operations, etc.
- Reference assistance - the library catalog, online databases, Internet sites and search engines, the newspaper and magazine index, and how to ask a reference question
- Calendar of events and programs
- New items lists
- Information and news and events
- Special services for Children and Teens including books lists, special web sites, list of programming and other activities and "Kids Online", a children's interface to the library catalog.
- Community links

Databases

The library subscribes to a selected number of databases, some made available free to New Hampshire libraries by the State Library.

News and information:

EBSCO: magazine and newspaper index
Historical New York Times
News Bank: local and regional news 1989-

Genealogical:

Ancestry Library
Heritage Quest

Books and authors:

Books in Print
Biography Resource Center/
Contemporary Authors
First Search
Magill on Literature
Novelist



Painting by Alice Moir

Howe Library Ten Year Strategic Plan 2007—2017

For further information about the
library and the strategic plan
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