Southwest Georgia Regional Library
Technology Plan
FY25 – FY28
Introduction

The Southwest Georgia Regional Library System serves the citizens of Decatur, Miller, and Seminole counties through three facilities and outreach services. The library system is a member of the PINES network allowing library cardholders to check out materials in any of the 300 libraries in 52 library systems covering 146 counties in Georgia.¹ Library cards are free to Georgia residents or person who attend school, own property, or are employed in Georgia.

The Library system offers over 200,000 books, audiobooks, music CDs, and DVDs in traditional and downloadable formats. Exhibits and cultural programming are offered for children and adults. A growing number of programs are related to technology including computer classes, Minecraft, STEM, and computer coding.

The Southwest Georgia Regional Library System Information Technology department supports over 400 devices utilized by staff and patrons. One of the many influences libraries are experiencing today is a shift in the creation, distribution, and consumption of information. The Southwest Georgia Regional Library System must maintain their relevance in an increasing digital society.

Library Mission Statement

The Southwest Georgia Regional Library System mission is to provide access to information resources and library services to our citizens that enhances their quality of life and provides opportunities for personal, community, and economic development.

Library Vision

The vision of the Southwest Georgia Regional Library is to become the best library in the world, building on the foundation of being the best library in the United States as denoted by the 2002 National Library Award.

Technology Vision

The Southwest Georgia Regional Library System’s vision is to be the community’s universal access point to information and provide technological services that will enrich their lives.

Guiding IT Principles

- Use proven, cost-effective methods to maintain, upgrade, and enhance technologies and to introduce new ones.
- Provide opportunities to help our patrons learn the skills they need to become digitally literate.
- Train staff so they remain current with the new technologies so they may train our patrons on how to use them.

- Employ technologies that enhance the customer experience and provide operational efficiencies.
- Monitor technology trends and implement them if feasible and appropriate.

**Technology Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inventory</th>
<th>Decatur</th>
<th>Miller</th>
<th>Seminole</th>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>11</td>
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</table>

All technology assets are tagged and documented in the Computer Inventory List and on Fixed or Expendable Property Lists.

Equipment no longer useful or in use is disposed of in accordance with the Sale of Unserviceable Property Policy.
Computer Software

- Microsoft Windows 10 or 11 on workstations
- Microsoft Office 2013
- Microsoft Office 2019 on 3 staff computers

Network and Infrastructure

The Southwest Georgia Regional Library System technology infrastructure consists of switches (4 with 48 network ports in Decatur; 1 with 48 network ports as well as 1 with 24 network ports in Miller and Seminole), 3 Sonicwall TZ670 firewalls, 11 Wi-Fi Access Points, and 3 cloud key management controllers.

Decatur and Seminole offers 1 GB internet connectivity while Miller offers 500 MB. The wired network in all three locations via Category 6 Ethernet cabling.

Public Devices

Public computers are configured with internet access, office software, screen reader NVDA, and ABC Mouse.com. All public computers use Deep Freeze that returns the PCs to a default configuration when rebooted and prevents access to system configuration settings. Public computers are configured with a self-service time and print management system from Envisionware. The devices are used to create or edit documents using Microsoft Office, Open Office, and/or Google applications, to access the internet, searching online resources, and for recreational purposes including gaming.

The children’s department provides AWE Learning Computers for patron use. These computers are not connected to the internet and provide literacy-focused digital learning. The AWE Learning Computers include a timed shut off system.

Each library offers dedicated PINES Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) computers. They allow patrons to search the online catalog but restricts other internet access.

Mobile Devices

Windows based laptops are available for library programming. Each device has Microsoft Office and/or Google applications. Specialty programs may be loaded including Minecraft, Fortnite, and Roblox.

Chromebooks are available for patron checkout. They circulate for 14 days and are not non-holdable.

Hotspots are available for patron checkout. They circulate for 7 days and are holdable.

Launchpads are pre-loaded Android tablets containing learning apps developed and adapted for children. They circulated for 14 days and are not eligible for renewals.
Website and Email

In 2023, the library redesigned the website and transitioned to Revize. Georgia Public Library Service hosts the website as well as the library’s email. The website includes information about each library location, services, programming, and links to online resources.

Technology Accomplishments

- Increased Bandwidth in Decatur and Seminole Counties to 1 GB in FY23 and Miller County to 500 MB in July 2022.
- Replaced computers and monitors.
- Offered ABCMouse.com remote access.
- Staff participated in online training to improve technology skills including Gmail, online resources, and new online platforms.
- WiFi access points replaced to better serve the needs of our community by reaching parking lots in Decatur in FY24.
- Installed coin-op machine and combined print/copy services in Seminole in FY22.
- Awarded 101 Chromebooks for patron checkout through a GPLS GEER grant in FY23.
- Installed new phone system in Seminole as the county switched to VOIP in FY24.
- Installed color copier for SWGRL admin in FY22.
- Installed ceiling mounted people counter that connects to network in Decatur in FY22.
- Upgraded camera system in Seminole in FY22.
- Installed Book/Large Format Scanner in Decatur in FY24.
- Installed self-service kiosk allowing patrons to checkout and renew items in FY24.
- Installed Mobile Printing in Decatur in FY22.
- Awarded 40 Hotspots from Emergency Connectivity Fund in FY22 and an additional 40 hotspots in FY23.
• Transitioned computer classes to one-on-one assistance by appointment.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Support Growth of Internet Access Needs

Objective 1a: Grow Internet Access Capacity
• Evaluate annually internet needs for patrons and staff.
• Utilize E-Rate, GPLS, and local funding to increase internet service as required.

Goal 2: Provide resources to support the improved delivery of services

Objective 2a: Upgrade Hardware and Software
• Evaluate benefits of upgrading to Microsoft Office 2021 or 365 for staff computers.
• Evaluate and update backup systems.
• Replace hardware due to obsolescence and wear and tear from daily usage. Depending on manufacturer support requirements, devices will be replaced on a three-year to five-year replacement schedule.
• Evaluate and update network security.

Objective 2b: Leverage New Technology
• Investigate wireless printing for patron’s mobile devices in branches.
• Explore the need for scanning services and evaluate possible implementations.
• Assess needs for improved virtual programing.

Objective 2c: Utilize Digital Resources
• Offer material in a variety of formats including print and digital.

Goal 3: Increase Technology Literacy within the Community

Objective 3a: Provide computer/technology learning opportunities
• Offer hands-on training sessions in either group or individual settings.
• Explore partnerships with other organization to expand class offerings.

Objective 3b: Provide staff development opportunities
• Train staff on using equipment to better serve patrons and provide refresher training periodically.
- Highlight resources including webinars for individual training on software and online programs.

- Utilize Niche Academy, Georgia Public Library Service Continuing Education, and PINES for training opportunities online resources, using the circulation system, and software updates.

**Goal 4: Use technology to communicate more effectively with the public**

**Objective 4a: Ensure the library website is current**
- Monitor and evaluate website links and content at least monthly

**Objective 4b: Utilize Digital Signage**
- Develop process for using Smart TVs for signage in library foyers.

**Budget**

The Library participated in the Federal Communication Commission’s Universal Service Discount Program also known as E-Rate. This program allows for affordable access to advanced telecommunication services. The Library will utilize as it has in the past both Category 1 and Category 2 depending on current needs including internet access, cabling, and infrastructure.

The Library budget includes funding for both telecommunications and technology. Currently, the Library is operating on a three-to-five year replacement cycle for computer related equipment. Georgia Public Library Service also provides funding for internet access not covered by E-Rate.

**Ongoing Evaluation**

In order to evaluate this plan, the Library will need to understand the impact of new technology. Data to be evaluated includes but is not limited to computer statistics, WiFi statistics, digital literacy program attendance, online resource statistics, and comments/suggestions from patrons. Current and emerging trends will be identified and evaluated for possible implementation.

Approved by the SWGRLS Board on 7/17/24.