Digital Equity in Theory & Practice

NYLA
Friday, November 15, 2019
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What we’re going to talk about:

- Who we are
- What is digital equity & inclusion
- What Pioneer Library System is doing
- What Wood Library is doing
- What you can do!
Who are we?
Wood Library

- Located on Main St in Canandaigua
- Service Population: 25,000
- Open 69 hrs (year round, Monday-Sunday)
- Staff size: 30
  - 7 full time
  - 23 part time
- Librarians: 4
  - Director
  - Children’s
  - Teen
  - Adult
- 1 high school (9-12, 1,105), 1 middle school (6-8, 799), 1 primary-elementary school (k-5, 1,540 students), 1 private school (k-8, 171)
Staff members on Hotspot team:
Digital Inclusion

1. Activities necessary for full participation:
2. Affordable home broadband
3. Appropriate devices
4. Digital literacy
5. Tech support
6. Applications
Digital Equity

in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy. Digital Equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.
33% Americans - no home broadband

Pew Research Center 2015
18-22%

New York households - no home broadband

U.S. Census American Community Survey 2015 and 2017
35%

New York households at/below $35K- no home broadband

U.S. Census American Community Survey 2017
NY households earning less than $50k/year indicate public library is primary point of internet access
What are Pioneer Library System & OWWL libraries doing?
National Digital Inclusion Alliance

https://www.digitalinclusion.org/
Goals:

- Gain a better understanding of challenges to digital inclusion in our region
- Create regional awareness of efforts to improve digital inclusion by the many community groups engaged in this work
- Consider a shared advocacy agenda that will allow us to work toward policy and funding to support digital inclusion
This map, based on data for December 2016 submitted by Internet providers to the Federal Communications Commission, shows the percentage of households in each Census tract that had “fixed Internet access connections” at download speeds of 10 Mbps or faster. Tracts are color-coded in ranges of twenty percentage points, e.g., 20% to 29.9%. 
Are libraries doing enough?
What is Wood Library doing?

● **School lending program:**
  ○ 2016-2017: 11 devices
  ○ 2017-2018: 32 devices
  ○ 2018-2019: 28 devices
  ○ 2019-2020: 29 devices

● **Public lending program: 2019**
  ○ January 2019: 4 devices
  ○ November 2019: 6 devices

● **Mobile Beacon to order devices**
How our school program began (2015)

● Pioneer Library System Assisting Those in Poverty grant: $1,200
● First put in touch with Canandaigua City School District’s Director of Communications
  ○ Who then contacted a middle school counselor
● First year (2016-17): 11 devices were loaned out to 8th graders
How the school program works in 2019

1. Now working with a Prevention Service Specialist who is both in middle and high school
2. Names are submitted to her
3. She hands out paperwork to be signed by parents
4. I bring device to correct school
5. School counseling office calls students down for pickup
Equitable access

- Devices are assigned to students as their names are submitted
- Returning families get “first dibs”
- Devices are checked out to the student’s library card
  - Started in 2018-19 school year
  - Easier way to keep track of devices
  - Raises the issue of fines if not returned
PUBLIC HOTSPOT PROGRAM

Devices now available for public circulation!

BRING THE INTERNET WITH YOU

Need WiFi at home? On vacation? At a sporting event? Check out a Wood Library hotspot for one week and stay connected, wherever you go!

Ask the checkout desk how to take out a device!
Things to think about before starting a program

- Who is running your program?
- How will your program impact day to day library hours
- Will your program be able to be sustained?
  - Devices will have to be replaced
  - Data needs to be renewed each year
Biggest challenges

- In the beginning, it was finding students
- Second year, nearly tripled devices- had to find students to fill them.
- Learning on the fly
What would I do differently?

- Start small
  - Fewer devices
- Public lending
- Use the resources available to you
The future of Wood Library’s hotspot program

- It is written into our budget
- Very helpful having the support of your director/manager
- Program is starting to gain notoriety, donations are given from local Rotary group and individuals.
Where to find data to support programs
What can you (realistically) do?
For statistical information, promotional materials, Wood Library’s Hotspot waivers (for school and public devices), and a copy of this presentation look here, http://bit.ly/NYLADigitalEquity
YOU CAN DO ANYTHING YOU WANT TO DO

THIS IS YOUR WORLD
Questions?
Let’s keep in touch

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