



Guiding Ohio Online

Level Up: Put Together a Technology Policy

Set Priorities. What are our priorities? Listed here are some common technology questions asked by patrons. Gather a committee of 3-5 library staff and have each staff member rank these questions 1 to 10, 1 being the top priority, 10 being the lowest priority.

Rank	Type of Question
	Questions about the use or operations of databases the library subscribes to or is part of the Ohio Web Library. <i>For example: Can I use Ancestry Library Edition at home?</i>
	Questions about the general function of the internet. <i>For example: How do I get to Google?</i>
	Involved questions about the functions of the internet. <i>For example: How do I download a video from YouTube?</i>
	General questions about a downloadable or streaming service the library subscribes to. <i>For example: Does the library have eBooks?</i>
	General questions about a downloadable or streaming service not provided by the library. <i>For example: Where on the internet can I get free movies?</i>
	Device-specific or involved questions about a downloadable or streaming service the library subscribes to. <i>For example: Can you walk me through downloading an eBook to my Kindle from the library?</i>
	Device-specific or involved questions about the functions of a computer and/or device not provided by the library. <i>For example: Can you show me how to use my new Windows 8 laptop?</i>
	Device-specific or involved questions about the functions of a computer and/or device provided by the library. <i>For example: Can you show me how to use the library's new Windows 8 computer?</i>
	Error messages or troubleshooting questions related to a downloadable or streaming service the library subscribes to. <i>For example: Downloading a library eBook, I get an error message on Adobe Digital Editions. What's wrong?</i>

	Error messages or troubleshooting questions related to a downloadable or streaming service not related to a service the library subscribes to. <i>For example: My Amazon.com password isn't working. What's wrong?</i>
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As a group, discuss:

What's missing from this list? Do we need to add an extra row?

How much time do you consider an involved question to be? More than 15 minutes? More than 30 minutes? An hour?

What's a grey area?

Collectively, what are your top 5 rankings?

Collectively, what are your lowest 3 rankings? Where does each of you personally draw the line at providing service?

If you wanted to open the dialogue to all library staff, an alternative method to gather the same information is to write this list on a poster in a break room or workroom and give each staff member 5 dots and ask them to put a dot by each of their top 5 priorities.

At your next meeting, decide who is responsible for what.

Ask the group:

At what level can we expect our staff to handle involved questions about technology?

- Frequently (5 or more involved questions per person per week)
- Semi-frequently (3 or more involved questions per person per week)
- Infrequently (1 or 2 involved questions per person per week)

Which departments or positions are responsible for which types of questions?

Type of Question	Who's Responsible?
Questions about the use or operations of databases the library subscribes to or is part of the Ohio Web Library.	
Questions about the general function of the internet.	
Involved questions about the functions of the internet.	
General questions about a downloadable or streaming service the library subscribes to.	
General questions about a downloadable or streaming service not provided by the library.	
Device-specific or involved questions about a downloadable or streaming service the library subscribes to.	
Device-specific or involved questions about the functions of a computer and/or device not provided by the library.	
Device-specific or involved questions about the functions of a computer and/or device provided by the library.	

Error messages or troubleshooting questions related to a downloadable or streaming service the library subscribes to.	
Error messages or troubleshooting questions related to a downloadable or streaming service not related to a service the library subscribes to.	

Technique to Use to Build Consensus: Five Finger Voting

Five-finger consensus is designed to encourage significant agreement without jeopardizing the quality of the solution. You can use this to have the group come to a consensus to the top priorities. This is especially helpful if you feel there are widely different opinions among the group. Here's how it works.

First, ask "What did everyone write for 'Questions about the functions of the catalog or ILS?'" If everyone had the same answer, then move on to everyone's number 2 priority. Discuss why this is a priority, what about it is important and why. When the group is ready to check for agreement, the group leader does the following:

She/he explains that on the count of three, each person should hold up between one and five fingers indicating the level of support for the recommendation on the table.

5 Fingers Strongly Agree

4 Fingers Agree with some reservations

3 Fingers Can see pluses and minuses, but willing to go along with the group

2 Fingers Disagree but can see some benefit

1 Finger Strongly disagree

0 Fingers (a Fist) Strongly disagree and can't support at all

If everyone shows a 5, 4 or 3, consensus has been reached, and the group can move ahead to the next priority. If there are any 0s, 1s or 2s, they are given the opportunity to explain to the rest of the group why they gave the rating and make recommendations to change in order to make it acceptable to them.

Once the 0s, 1s or 2s have spoken and alternative has been posed, then the group tests five-finger

consensus again. If everyone shows a 5, 4, 3 or 2, the decision is made, and the group can move ahead.

Five-finger consensus encourages the group to listen carefully when there is disagreement; and, in fact, encourages listening carefully twice if necessary. But the technique doesn't allow a solution to be watered down because a few disagree. Though admittedly there may be one or two who don't like the alternative, five-finger consensus helps ensure that all are heard, and heard well.

Where can we refer patrons to?

Take out "Steps to Success: Referrals" Which of the places listed could your library refer patrons to for the questions below:

Name	Type of Question
	Questions about the use or operations of databases the library subscribes to or is part of the Ohio Web Library.
	Questions about the general function of the internet.
	Involved questions about the functions of the internet.
	General questions about a downloadable or streaming service the library subscribes to.
	General questions about a downloadable or streaming service not provided by the library.
	Device-specific or involved questions about a downloadable or streaming service the library subscribes to.

	Device-specific or involved questions about the functions of a computer and/or device not provided by the library.
	Device-specific or involved questions about the functions of a computer and/or device provided by the library.
	Error messages or troubleshooting questions related to a downloadable or streaming service the library subscribes to.
	Error messages or troubleshooting questions related to a downloadable or streaming service not related to a service the library subscribes to.

Wrapping Up

Take your findings from the above exercise and put them into the following fill-in-the-blank:

At [name of library], our top priorities from helping patrons with technology are [list top 5]. All staff are expected to do [list], our [name position or department] staff supports [list] and in addition our [name position or department] staff supports [list]. At this time we do not [list] but will refer patrons to a list of companies or organizations that may be able to assist with their needs.