Providing Short-Term Tablet Circulation In the UF Libraries

Proposal submitted by:
Patrick J. Reakes, Associate Dean for Scholarly Resources and Services
George A. Smathers Libraries
P.O. Box 117000/529 Library West
352-273-2517
pjr@uflib.ufl.edu

The George A. Smathers Libraries have a long history of providing students, faculty and staff with the technologies necessary to support the teaching, learning and research missions of the university. As part of the Libraries ongoing efforts to continue and increase this support, the recently developed Strategic Directions for the Libraries include a specific focus on providing "integrated space, technology and services." As presented in the Strategic Directions:

> users expressed clear expectations for Next-Generation environments that combine services, programming, instruction, collaboration and specialized resources. The Libraries will continue to provide flexible and integrated spaces and technologies, meeting user needs through effective library and information resources and services.

One of the goals associated with this strategic direction is to "Deliver diverse and up-to-date technology resources to foster innovation, enhance learning and improve collaboration." To fulfill that goal the Libraries commit to "provide an array of resources to best meet user needs, including supporting Apple and Open Source systems alongside Microsoft systems and tools" and "expand the variety of equipment and accessories available for in-library use and borrowing (iPads, cables, headphones, mobile device chargers, etc.)."

Purpose/Impact/Benefit

To support these efforts the Libraries are requesting $69,619 in technology fee funding to purchase 86 iPads, along with necessary charging carts, support hardware, protective cases, etc. detailed in the preliminary budget. The iPads will be available to students and faculty via short term, in-house circulation at four of the library locations: Library West, the Education Library, Marston Science Library and the Architecture and Fine Arts (AFA) Library. Making the tablets available in this manner not only provides the technology necessary to meet the needs of students in the Libraries, it also potentially saves students the cost of purchasing their own hardware and/or allows them the option of coming to campus without having to carry a personal laptop or tablet. Additionally, the lack of power outlets available in many of the library facilities often makes it difficult for students to find a place to plug in personal laptops or other devices they bring with them.

The iPads procured with funding from this proposal will provide technology not previously available for in-library use. The utilization of the iPads will differ from the tablets currently being circulated for external, long term use outside the confines of the various library locations. The unfortunate reality is that the new technology provided with this funding, which differs from but builds on the earlier highly successful Netbook program, will be unavailable to students unless funding is provided via this proposal. The cost is prohibitive within the constraints of the current level of Libraries funding.

The extensive use of the UF Libraries by a broad cross section of disciplines represented by every unit from across campus is well documented, with over 2.5 million patrons per year utilizing the four facilities

where the service will be implemented. The student demand for hardware to support their research, access online course reserves/course management software, write papers, etc. is underscored by the extremely heavy use of desktop computers in the Libraries as well as the consistently high circulation of the Netbooks/laptops referenced earlier. The results of a recent survey of students who have used the Netbooks in the past indicates the primary uses are; writing papers or assignments (61%), doing research (49%) and accessing course pages [Canvas/Sakai] (43%).

The Libraries have over eight years of experience supporting this type of program through previous initiatives loaning both laptops and Netbooks. Based on circulation statistics, both of these previous services were very heavily used by students in both Marston Science Library and Library West. Library West alone had over 12,500 short term loans during the 2014 calendar year despite battery life limitations and other condition issues. The Netbook circulation service was discontinued last semester due to the age and condition of the Netbooks, the need for extensive battery replacement and the outdated technology. In addition, the four libraries included in this proposal currently circulate iPads for long term use outside of the library-circulation statistics are consistently very high for those as well, precluding their availability for in-house use.

The specific choice of iPad's in the proposal is supported by a recent logon survey of students using the Libraries. Over 1,200 students participated in the survey, with a majority choosing iPad's from a list that included the choice of Galaxy Android Tablet, Surface Pro 3, iPad or Dell Laptop. Earlier concerns about the utility of tablets for word processing and other activities that were previously limited to laptops has been substantially alleviated by both the development of UFApps and the increase in a large selection of other applications that can be pre-loaded on iPads to expand their capabilities. Additionally, the iPad's will interface with the UFIT Mobile Printing solution, allowing users to print directly from the device (https://print.at.ufl.edu/computing-lab-services/mobile-printing/).

Apps to be provided initially are listed below. Student suggestions for additional apps will be reviewed by library staff and personalized apps may be downloaded via individual iTunes accounts while the iPad is checked out.
BrowZine
Cisco AnyConnect
Dictionary.com
~~Dropbox~~
eBook Search
Evernote
Facebook
Free Spreadsheet
gFlash+
gFlashPro   - $3.99
Google
Instapaper
Kindle
*Microsoft Excel
*Microsoft PowerPoint
*Microsoft Word
NOOK
Notability
Pages   - $9.99
Pandora Radio
SlideShark Presentation App
The Loop UF
Tutor Matching Service
Whiteboard Lite

WolframAlpha   - $2.99
YouTube
* Free to view files. Office365 account required for full app use, which is provided to Students/Faculty/Staff by the university

In addition to the traditional single user circulation model, the iPads will also be utilized in a number of other ways, including:
-Support for classes from other colleges/departments using library spaces for instruction or other purposes. Specific examples of this will include the use of the tablets to supplement the existing technology in the Marston Science Library Visualization Lab or the Scott Nygren Scholar's Studio in Library West. The design of the *Lock N' Charge* charging carts being proposed includes "cradles" that hold four tablets each and will be used to transport multiple units to the various spaces where classes may be held.
-Through coordination with the UF Libraries ADA Advisory Committee and the UF Disability Resource Center (DRC), offer applications that support the needs of students needing special disability accommodations while working in the Libraries. The various library locations currently provide services and resources meeting and exceeding ADA requirements, but the iPads will provide additional options not currently available.
-The Libraries currently provide tutoring spaces for both the University Writing Program and the Office of Academic Support. The iPad's will be available for use as necessary to support the need for additional technology in the tutoring spaces.
-The iPads can be used in conjunction with the large monitors or technology tables available in most library locations to facilitate collaboration/group study. The libraries included in the proposal have a total of 43 study rooms and offer dozens of other collaborative spaces. In addition, the Air Media solution is available in the 21 Marston Science Library Collaboration Commons study rooms, allowing wireless connection to the monitors. There are plans to expand the number of monitors in Library West, currently available in eight rooms, and deploy Air Media as soon as funding is available.

Sustainability

As in previous Technology Fee funded projects the Libraries have received, the substantial start up and ongoing technical support costs, the cost of any additional applications, and the cost for iPad repair will be absorbed by the UF Libraries. In addition to these, there is substantial cost share from the Libraries in terms of the circulation staff support of the program. The development of policies, procedures and workflows requires significant time and effort and each desk transaction for checking the tablets in/out is relatively time consuming.

Timeline:

August 2015:   Funding awarded

September-October 2015:   Hardware received/configured, app purchase/installation

October 2015:   Policy/procedure development and staff training

October-November 2015:   Equipment installed in Library West, Education Library, Marston Science Library and Architecture/Fine Arts Library

November 2015:   Begin iPad circulation to patrons

Ongoing: Hardware maintenance and repair, policy/procedure review, data collection