

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: April 21, 2021
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Meeting Date: April 28, 2021
TO: Library Board
FROM: Carol Nelson, Director, Planning & Communications
SUBJECT: 2020 Technology Initiatives Provincial Library Grant Report

SUMMARY

VPL received an additional one-time provincial grant in 2020, and this report summarizes the use of the grant, following the format requested by the Province of BC Public Libraries Branch.

PURPOSE

This report is for information.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board receive the attached report for information.

BACKGROUND

VPL received a one-time provincial grant in 2020 in the amount of \$47,253. The attached report provides information about the programs and services that VPL introduced using this additional funding, which was focused on transforming core services to digital delivery.



TECHNOLOGY GRANT – FINAL REPORT

Total Technology Grant Amount: \$47,253

Summary

During 2020, VPL responded to the considerable demand for digital programs, support, and materials due to Covid-19 related health and safety concerns. This is a shift that has demanded (1) Increasing staffing in video / digital production; (2) licensing new software and digital collections; and (3) rethinking delivery of core programs intended for connecting communities and encouraging literacy.

With funds from the one-time Digital Technology Grant, VPL funded various transformations of services to address these needs.

We have:

- Transformed core, in person children's programs into digitally consumable formats;
- Supported access to digital collections for patrons previously interested in print only
- Envisioned how to build digital skills for both staff and the public through programs delivered virtually

This transformative work done in 2020 (wrapping up in March 2021) was only possible with the support of this grant funding. It enabled us to achieve many digital transformational goals from the 2020-2023 strategic plan and accelerated the pace of this work to meet with the urgent digital needs created by the pandemic.

Below are the priority areas we addressed, followed by the metrics that tracked our progress.

Outcomes Overview

Improved Access to Programs and Support

VPL Virtual Story Times – The COVID gathering restrictions left families who previously relied on in-person story times isolated, unconnected, and with fewer opportunities to nurture early literacy skills. By increasing staffing with skills in video production, VPL transformed 3 core program series

to a virtual format. This reconnected families to familiar library programs and allowed preschool and school-aged children, parents and caregivers to engage in entertaining and educational programs, as well as introduced these series to new users who prefer digital access.

Discovering the Digital Library – Physical distancing recommendations spurred changes in reading and in service usage patterns. Due to health and safety concerns, patrons who previously relied on print have turned to digital collections. By creating programming targeted to specific audiences who may be interested in dipping their toes into digital reading, listening, and viewing, VPL continued to make digital resources and services available to new digital learners and broaden the resources available to Vancouverites.

Developed Skills and Expanded Resources

Zoom, A New Digital Essential Skill – With limited in-person options, Vancouverites were looking for new ways to connect online personally and professionally. VPL has developed a series of digital programs providing instruction on how to attend an online program, and demonstrated ways to stay connected to friends and family using patrons' existing hardware (phone, tablet, computer). Patrons learned the practicalities of using Zoom, and also best practices for hosting their own Zoom meetings.

Sharing Your Voice – VPL launched a series of digital programs that increased the audio and video digital skills of patrons. Four core Inspiration Lab courses were transformed to virtual delivery. These courses provided patrons with tools to create their own podcast, knowledge of how to conduct virtual interviews, and explored best practices in both audio and video production.

Expanded Digital Magazine Access – VPL invested in 25 new magazine titles to increase access to high interest media in a digital only environment and provide needed stimulation and recreation.

Digital Programs Impact and Comments from Patrons:

Overall our patrons felt welcomed and comfortable in the new digital programs they attended, and said that they learned something. Many of them reported that as a result of the course that they were inspired to take action and or try something new.

- 93% of attendees indicated that they felt “very welcomed and comfortable” at the program they attended.
- 76% said they felt more connected to other people as a result of the program they attended.
- 72% said they learned a lot; 24% said they learned a little.
- 97% said the program they attended inspired them to take an action or try something new.
- 83% said the program met their expectations; 17% said it partially met them.

From patrons who said they would take an action or try something new – “what are you going to do as a result of attending this program?”

- “Will try hosting meetings after this workshop” – attendee at How to Host a Zoom Meeting

- “I went through the various areas of the digital VPL site, tested out searching for books, requested two books on hold.” – attendee at Enjoying Ebooks and Audiobooks on Your Phone or Tablet
- “Experiment more with my kobo” – attendee at Enjoying Ebooks and Audiobooks on Your Kobo
- “I'm going to create my own brand” – attendee at Let's Talk About Self-Publishing

From patrons who answered that they felt “very” or “somewhat” welcome, answers to “What was it about the program that made you feel welcome?”

- “Very laid-back presenter; small group; presenter was willing to stop and answer questions; presenter was willing to acknowledge if there was something they were not familiar with” – attendee at Enjoying Ebooks and Audiobooks on Your Kobo
- “We could ask any question we wanted and it was our pace” – attendee at How to Host a Zoom Meeting

General Comments

- “It was a great introduction and I wish I had done it sooner!” – attendee at Let's Talk About Sound Recording
- “Learned more than expected Thank you so much for doing this!” – attendee at How to Host a Zoom Meeting
- “It was easy to understand and has many good information. Thank you for the great program!” – attendee at Let's Talk About Self-Publishing
- “My goal was to learn to download libby, explore the VPL digital library functions and accessing e-book borrowing. This is a new area of the VPL for me. My goal was achieved with concise and clear instructions from Zoey. Thank you.” – attendee at Enjoying Ebooks and Audiobooks on Your Phone or Tablet
- “They were patient with everyone and allowed us to play around with Zoom and ask questions. We covered most of what was intended but it was the practical things we asked was where I learned the most. The atmosphere was good though some people chose not to show their face or say much at all. It happened to be a small class which allowed for more interaction and freedom.” – attendee at How to Host a Zoom Meeting
- "Thank you. I love you. You've been my best friend since I was 7!" – attendee at Practice Zoom
- “Thanks for a great overview. I am fairly comfortable with using the digital options but was able to learn a lot more.” – attendee at Enjoying Ebooks and Audiobooks on Your Phone or Tablet
- “Happily, there was a Zoom workshop the next day which [a staff member] told me about and I attended [...]. It was wonderful--well done and clear--and so I'm able to read books again. Really it's opened up a door I am so grateful to be able to walk through again.” – attendee at Enjoying Ebooks and Audiobooks on Your Phone or Tablet

Virtual Storytime Comments

- We sure enjoy the online story option during this challenge time. In the spring when things were so challenging it was such a bright spot in our mornings.
- I had a patron today during a Zoom Babytime share with us that she has been watching all the recorded Babytimes on Youtube with her 12 month old. She joined us for the first time today and was so excited to be singing and dancing with us live! She told us she and her baby have learned so many new songs and her child has been doing hand motions to songs she has learned via our Youtube channel.
- I had a family in Children's Library on Sunday, Dec 20, tell me how much they are enjoying our online programs. For their daily routine they watch the live program with their little one, and then they let her pick one other Facebook or Youtube program to watch. They've bought her jingle bells because she enjoys joining in with the songs. They were very excited to have signed up for Happy Noon Year, their first zoom program, and their kid is particularly excited to see the other kids.

Additional details on these areas of need and outcomes are detailed below.

Outcome	Goals	Results	Strategic Links	Area of Need Met	Collaborative Links	Provincial Funds	In-Kind/ Leveraged funds
Leveraged Zoom Platform	Program suites: 75 adult programs 20 Zoom skill development programs Including “Connecting through Zoom” program	95 adult programs total; 20 Zoom Skill Development Programs 11 participants average per program 899 participants overall	Improving Access; Developing Skills	Digital platform for video calls during patron programs		\$2,250	\$1,500 in existing expenditures leveraged.
Planned and Produced Adult Skill-focused Virtual Programming	Deliver key virtual service programs: “Discovering the Digital Library” - 15 programs “Connecting through Zoom” - 20 programs “Share Your Voice” (audio	All programs delivered Sample patron feedback: “I went through the various areas of the digital VPL site, tested out searching for books, requested two books on hold.” – attendee at Enjoying Ebooks and	Improving Access; Developing Skills	Digital programming topics that met the digital first communication trend Staffing to support the development of adult virtual programs	Partnering with the DOXA Podcast Festival to virtually launch the Let’s talk about Podcast course (part of the “Share Your Voice” stream) in November 2020.	\$15,000	\$30,000 in existing staffing expenditures leveraged.

	<p>focus) - 30 programs</p> <p>“Share Your Voice” (video focus) - 10 programs</p>	<p>Audiobooks on Your Phone or Tablet</p> <p>“It was a great introduction and I wish I had done it sooner!” – attendee at Let’s Talk About Sound Recording</p> <p>“Learned more than expected Thank you so much for doing this!” – attendee at How to Host a Zoom Meeting</p>					
Licensed High Interest Digital Magazines	<p>~25 high interest digital magazines licensed and promoted</p> <p>15 “Discovering Digital Magazines and Newspapers” programs</p> <p>10% increase in digital magazine webpage traffic</p>	<p>~25 high interest digital magazines licensed and promoted</p> <p>6 “Discovering Digital Magazines and Newspapers” programs delivered</p> <p>37% increase in digital magazine webpage traffic</p>	Improving Access	Deeper electronic collections licensing		\$10,000	\$30,000 from existing electronic collections licensing funds.

<p>Created video-based programs to connect to family audiences who were unable to attend in-person programming due to COVID isolation and closures.</p>	<p>Virtual story times for pre-school aged children (via Facebook Live and YouTube) 6 days/week</p> <p>“Virtual Babytime” for caregivers of infants 1 day/week</p> <p>Virtual story time for elementary school-aged children 1 day/ week.</p> <p>Storytimes offered in additional languages – priority to languages most commonly spoken at home by Vancouver residents, and by priority audiences</p>	<p>55 virtual storytimes, babytimes, and read alongs</p> <p>Approximately 540 views on each video 324% increase on video views YTD 2020/2021 vs. 2019</p> <p>Approximately 62,000 total Facebook Live Storytime views (1 minute or longer duration)</p> <p>Storytimes recorded in Mandarin, Cantonese, French, Tagalog, and Haida. Multilingual storytime offerings are our most popular recorded content for children.</p>	<p>Improving Access; Developing Skills</p>	<p>Early Literacy digital programming</p> <p>Programming supporting virtual social connections for Middle Years children and parents</p> <p>Staffing to support the creation of video story times for children ages 0 -7</p>	<p>Partnerships with the Vancouver School Board (Summer Reading Club recorded programming) and Vancouver Childcare partners</p>	<p>\$20,000</p>	<p>Approximately \$67,000 in existing, operational staffing expenditures leveraged.</p>
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