Technology Plan Guidance for Kansas Public Libraries

As of the funding year beginning July 1, 2011, Technology plans are no longer required as part of the federal E-rate program providing discounted telecommunications and Internet services.¹

The State Library does not require technology plans. However, as public libraries become increasingly reliant on dependable effective technologies and communication methods in order to provide quality service, it's good practice to have a written plan that brings together in one place the resources available and the needs to be addressed.

This toolkit is not designed to take you from that blank page to a complete plan that meets E-rate requirements.

What is a Technology Plan?

A technology plan is a written record of how technology is used in your library, and how you intend to change that use in the future.

Why do I need a plan?

It's very easy when dealing with technology in libraries to get the cart before the horse. Tech issues in libraries come with a built-in sense of urgency. You can find yourself spending money on impulse or under stress, and end up with products you don't need.

You need a plan because:

- It gives you something to refer to when technology needs change, or conflict with other important things in your library's overall plan.
- The experience of writing a plan helps you carry the important parts of it in your head - so that if you have to act fast, you can still act right.

A tech plan shows that you and your board:

- have given serious thought to the services you provide (and request help in paying for).
- know how technology relates to your local vision of library service.
- know what steps you will take to be sure library staff understand, use, and help patrons use your library's technology.
- know what technologies you are using, what you need to add or change in the near future (1-3 years) and why.

¹ Plans are still required of applicants for Priority II Service (Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections) Discounts.

http://www.usac.org/sl/applicants/step02/technology-planning/default.aspx
• know the cost of your current and future tech expenses, and have budgets or budget plans that show how they will be paid for.
• Will not purchase and use technologies without measuring how useful they are, getting feedback or other information that will help you determine if and when changes need to be made.
• Good technology plans help assure everyone that public dollars are being well used.

Does my plan have to be approved?

Only if required by board policy, or as regulated by your taxing authority (city, county, etc.) or if you are applying for Priority 2 E-rate services

http://www.usac.org/sl/applicants/step02/technology-planning/default.aspx

Even if not required, the five elements required for approval as an E-Rate tech plan are useful to have in mind when writing a plan:

1. GOALS AND A REALISTIC STRATEGY FOR USING TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

   Strategy is not about what you do today. When making decisions about technology, what is your “road map?”

2. A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

   Strategy is the difference between staff development and as-it-comes training
   This is a chance to explain your “How and Why” of keeping staff trained in technology skills

3. AN ASSESSMENT OF TELECOM SERVICES, HARDWARE, SOFTWARE, AND OTHER SERVICES NEEDED

   An inventory lets you plan based on knowledge of where you are now
   An inventory is not an assessment:
   Assessment = Inventory of what you need + why

4. SUFFICIENT BUDGET AND OTHER RESOURCES NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

   Budget
   There should be enough information in the plan to allow your board and community to understand how it relates to the overall library budget.

   Other resources
   Staff
   Hardware & software
   Professional development and other services

5. AN ONGOING EVALUATION PROCESS.

   "Ongoing" doesn't mean "once"

   If your board expects to see evaluation results, build documentation into the process.
   Document, document, document!
How many years can the plan cover?

E-rate rules wouldn't allow approval of a plan covering more than three years. It's entirely up to you now, but that's a reasonable limit, considering the fast pace of change in the technology world.

A number of Kansas libraries have chosen to do one year plans. The important thing with multi-year plans is to review and update them at least annually. This gives you the best of both worlds - long-range planning, plus only one year's from-the-ground-up planning to do at a time.

Format

This plan is for the use of library administration, staff and board, and it's prudent to write it to be a public document.

There are many ways to organize the content of the plan - by time frame, by element of planning, or as part of an overall strategic plan for the library - the important thing is that it's useful to you and your community.

There's a useful planning tool at WebJunction TechAtlas:
http://ks.webjunction.org/techatlas

Other format examples can be found at the end of this toolkit.

Your own format is fine, too!

Where can I learn more?

Whether you need e-Rate approval or not, it's a good idea to visit the official e-rate site's pages on tech planning:
http://www.usac.org/sl/applicants/step02/technology-planning/default.aspx

Where can I get help?

Find out if your regional library system offers help with tech plans. If you've never written one, don't even start until you've done this.

Contact Jeff at the State Library at 800-432-3919. Email me a draft of your plan at jeffh@kslib.info and I'll offer suggestions and advice.
Examples: Plan Format and Structure

* Instructions and Template for Writing a Three-Year Technology Plan

Instructions for Writing a Three-Year Technology Plan

Although effective with the E-Rate funding year beginning July 1, 2011, technology plans are no longer required (except for Priority 2 services, Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance), a good technology plan will meet the five criteria for E-Rate approval:

1. Establish clear goals and realistic strategies for using telecommunications to improve library services
2. Ensure staff know how to use these new technologies
3. Assess hardware, software, and services needed to improve library services
4. Provide sufficient budget to acquire and maintain hardware, software, and training to implement strategy
5. Evaluate the implementation of goals

Note: These are paraphrased versions of the criteria. The official versions may be found at http://www.usac.org/sl/applicants/step02/technology-planning/default.aspx

It’s a good idea to read your final draft with these suggestions in mind and look for weak spots:

1. New and existing services:

   If your plan includes introduction of new services, programs, or installations (integrated library system, web server, videoconferencing, etc.) be detailed and specific, but don't forget to talk about existing services!

   Even if you aren't planning to upgrade internet connections, phone service or internal connections (network, wireless access, etc.) be sure to include maintenance and upkeep in your narrative and budget statements.

2. Evaluation plans:

   How will you evaluate the success of this goal? The number one cause of returned plans is insufficient information about how you will evaluate the results of carrying it out:

   Not just “survey patrons” but how you'll survey them. What type of contact? Only current users? Set questions or interview?

   Not just “statistics” but what numbers you will collect, for how long, what you'll compare them to, any targets you have “use of public computers for non-internet purposes is expected to increase by 30%” etc.

   If you use this template form for your technology plan, don't just check one of the suggested
options - this is a place where a good plan must be specific. Don't confuse the data you collect for evaluation purposes with the actual evaluation!

3. Budget information:

What are the costs to meet this goal, and where will the money come from? Part of the purpose of the technology plan is to document a sound financial basis for the services you propose to provide. In order to truly reflect your library's circumstances, it should describe your overall technology situation, whether or not your plans will be supported by E-rate discounts. In any 3-year plan there has to be some estimating. A one-page summary of your library budget that would support the budget for year 1 of your plan would be a great attachment.

4. Time lines:

All of the activities to be carried out during the life of the plan should be related to each other chronologically. Write your plan as if you know you won't be the one implementing it. It should be clear what happens first, last, or at the same time.

5. Library-wide focus:

SLD's information about the Technology Plan includes this good advice:

“It is critical that technology planning is not viewed or treated as a separate exercise dealing primarily with hardware and telecommunications infrastructure. There must be strong connections between the proposed physical infrastructure of the information technology and the plan for professional development, curriculum reform, and library service improvements.”

In other words, your plan should make it clear that you know how you are going to use technology to serve the public and train your staff. It may reflect changes you will make to collection development, library policies, staffing requirements, etc. You don't have to describe all of this in your technology plan, but try to include language that indicates it is part of a larger picture.

Need more help?

* A list of Technology Planning: Questions to Consider has been developed and provided by SLD as Appendix B to the Technology Planning Policies and Procedures at the E-rate Website: [http://www.universalservice.org/sl/applicants/step02/technology-planning/questions-consider-technology-planning.aspx](http://www.universalservice.org/sl/applicants/step02/technology-planning/questions-consider-technology-planning.aspx)
Writing your plan

The librarian, staff, and board should brainstorm how technology can improve service in your library.

Consider the following points and options:

Your technology plan should include, if necessary:

* purchasing computers and software
* purchasing furniture
* wiring your building
* maintenance
* training staff and patrons
* writing technical policies

Consider how all the factors mentioned above would come together in a technology plan for improving library service.

* You’re ready to write your technology plan!
Three-Year Technology Plan
for
__________________________________________________
Library

Date approved by the Board of Trustees
(if required by local and/or library policy)

Librarian: ...............................................................................................................................

Library Name: .......................................................................................................................

Street Address: .....................................................................................................................

Mailing Address, if different from above: .................................................................

City, Zip: ..............................................................................................................................

Telephone: ___________________________ Fax: ..............................................................

Email: ................................................................................................................................

Person writing this plan: .....................................................................................................

Telephone, if different from above: .................................................................................

Email: ................................................................................................................................

Time period covered by this plan: ....................................................................................
(Please give exact begin and end dates - July 1, 20XX - June 30 20XY, January 1 - December 31, 20XX, etc.)

Adapted from training materials created by Chris Rippel, Central Kansas Library System. Used by permission.
Rev. March 1, 2011
Year 1: _______

Goal 1 improves:
- hardware ______
- software ______
- internet accounts ______
- phone lines or bills ______
- staff training ______
- other ______

Goal statement:
(Be specific! See [http://skyways.lib.ks.us/KSL/libtech/erate/techplangoals.htm](http://skyways.lib.ks.us/KSL/libtech/erate/techplangoals.htm))

List steps (i.e., strategies) required to implement goal 1:

Budget required to implement and maintain goal 1 $________

Amount budgeted to implement and maintain goal 1 $________

How will you evaluate implementation of goal 1?

Survey: ______

Interview: ______

Other (describe):
Three-Year Technology Plan
2010-2011, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013

________________________ Public Library

_________________________ Public Library

_________________________ KS

Librarian: ____________________________
Phone: ____.____
FAX: ____.____
Email: ________(@)______.

Approved (date): ____________________

Person writing this plan: ____________________________
Telephone, if different from above: ____________________

Summary:
This plan addresses four goals, each with three years of actions
1. Internet connection
2. Library staff continuing education
3. Library computing equipment
4. Automation system (ILS)
Goal 1: Provide library Internet connection

2011-2012 Goal Statement:
[Kan-ed 2.0] Continue T-1 Internet access for all library computers for the 2011-2012 planning year.

[Migrating to Kan-ed] Discontinue DSL and install T-1 Internet access for all library computers for the 2010-2011 planning year.

[Local provider] Maintain high speed Cable and install T-1 Internet access for all library computers for the 2011-2012 planning year.

2011-2012 Goal Steps:
[Kan-ed 2.0] Provide letter of agency, as required, to support Kan-ed’s consortia T-1 e-Rate application
[Local provider] Review Kan-Ed T-1 subsidy requirements as needed
Pay cost of Internet access and Telco in a timely manner
Provide local wireless Internet connectivity for patron and staff computers
Review patron Internet use polices for board approval and Adoption.
Advertise about public Internet access availability for library patron use by March of 2012

Budget required: $ 
Amount budgeted: 

2012-2013 Goal Statement:
Maintain high speed Cable and T-1 Internet access for all library computers for the 2012-2013 planning year.

2012-2013 Goal Steps:
Evaluate existing Internet connection for adequate bandwidth.
Review Kan-Ed T-1 subsidy requirements as needed
Pay cost of Internet access and Telco in a timely manner
Provide local wireless Internet connectivity for patron and staff computers
Review and create patron Internet use polices for board approval and Adoption.

Budget required: $ 
Amount budgeted: 

2013-2014 Goal Statement:
Maintain high speed Cable and T-1 Internet access for all library computers for the 2013-2014 planning year.

2013-2014 Goal Steps:
Evaluate existing Internet connection for adequate bandwidth.
Apply for Kan-Ed subsidy if available
Pay cost of Internet access and Telco in a timely manner
Provide local wireless Internet connectivity for patron and staff computers
Review and create patron Internet use polices for board approval and Adoption.

Budget required: $ 
Amount budgeted: 
Goal 1 (Internet Access) Evaluation:
For each of the Plan years:
Maintain a file of ISP and Telco invoice copies as needed
Keep records or notes Kan-Ed subsidy applications and payments
Collect statistics of Patron use sessions of Library Internet access

Goal 2: Library staff continuing education

2011-2012 Goal Statement:
Library staff training to enhance knowledge and skills of library technology.
2011-2012 Goal Steps:
50% of library staff will attend at least two system or state approved training activities.
By May 2012 select from and complete:
Office classes as provided by the Technology Trainer.
KLOW website classes as provided by the Technology Trainer.
On Line classes as available via Web Junction.
“Reaching for Excellence” Continuing Education Training

Budget required to implement goal: $  
Amount budgeted: $  

2012-2013 Goal Statement:
Library staff training to enhance knowledge and skills of library technology.
2012-2013 Goal Steps:
50% of library staff will attend at least two system or state approved training activities.
By May 2013 select from and complete:
Office classes as provided by the Technology Trainer.
KLOW website classes as provided by the Technology Trainer.
On Line classes as available via Web Junction.
“Reaching for Excellence” Continuing Education Training

Budget required to implement goal: $  
Amount budgeted: $  

2013-2014 Goal Statement:
Library staff training to enhance knowledge and skills of library technology.
2013-2014 Goal Steps:
By May 2014 select from and complete:
Office classes as provided by the Technology Trainer.
KLOW website classes as provided by the Technology Trainer.
On Line classes as available via Web Junction.
“Reaching for Excellence” Continuing Education Training

Budget required to implement goal: $  
Amount budgeted: $  

Goal 2 (Staff continuing education) Evaluation:

For each of the Plan years:
Library staff to maintain documentation of completed library related continuing education activities.

Goal 3: Provide for library computing equipment

2011-2012 Goal Statement:
Plan and implement a system to maintain and replace computing equipment.

2011-2012 Goal Steps:
Compile Inventory of Library Computing Equipment by August 2011.
Implement a four year incremental replacement/upgrade cycle.
Solicit quotes from vendor to acquire equipment by January 2012.
Install new equipment with help of vendor or Tech Consultant by April 2012.

Budget required: $  
Amount budgeted: $ 

2012-2013 Goal Statement:
Review and continue the system to maintain and replace computing equipment.

2012-2013 Goal Steps:
Update Inventory of Library Computing Equipment by August 2012.
Identify equipment to be replaced next in the four year incremental replacement/upgrade cycle.
Solicit quotes from vendor to acquire equipment by March 2012.
Install new equipment with help of vendor or Tech Consultant by April 2013.

Budget required: $  
Amount budgeted: $ 

2013-2014 Goal Statement:
Review and continue the system to maintain and replace computing equipment.

2013-2014 Goal Steps:
Update Inventory of Library Computing Equipment by August 2013.
Identify equipment to be replaced next in the four year incremental replacement/upgrade cycle.
Solicit quotes from vendor to acquire equipment by October 2013.
Install new equipment with help of vendor or Tech Consultant by April 2014.

Budget required: $  
Amount budgeted: $
Goal 3 (Equipment) Evaluation:
For each of the Plan years:
Create or update computing equipment inventory
Have System Tech Consultant review Equipment replace plan and make recommendations.

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Goal 4: Library Automation system

2011-2012 Goal Statement:
Migrate library Automation system (ILS: Integrated Library System)

2011-2012 Goal Steps:
Maintain servers and/or Internet connection as required for ILS
Budget for and pay ILS maintenance and migration fees
Begin ILS migration to new system: consult with System staff
Evaluate ILS database for migration to new ILS
Staff training for Automation system as provided by vendor

Budget required:  
Amount budgeted:  

2011-2012 Goal 4 (Automation) Evaluation:
Evaluate current ILS for continued applicability for library needs.
Solicit ILS user opinions on level of satisfaction of Library automation system

2012-2013 Goal Statement:
Maintain library participation in the Consortium ILS (Integrated Library System)

2012-2013 Goal Steps:
Maintain Internet connection for hosted ILS
Budget for and pay ILS maintenance fees
Consult with System/Consortia staff as needed
Staff training for Automation system as provided by consortium

Budget required:  
Amount budgeted:  

2012-2013 Goal 4 (Automation) Evaluation:
Evaluate current ILS for continued applicability for library needs.
Solicit ILS user opinions on level of satisfaction of Library automation system

2013-2014 Goal Statement:
Maintain library participation in the Consortium ILS (Integrated Library System)

2013-2014 Goal Steps:
Maintain Internet connection for hosted ILS
Budget for and pay ILS maintenance fees
Consult with System/Consortia staff as needed
Staff training for Automation system as provided by consortium

Budget required:  

Amount budgeted: $ 

**Goal 4 (Automation) Evaluation:**
- Evaluate current ILS for continued applicability for library needs.
- Solicit ILS user opinions on level of satisfaction of Library automation system
III. Narrative, adaptable for small to medium public libraries (adapted from Southwest Kansas Library System)

Technology Plan

________________________ Public Library

Dates Covered: __________________

Date of Approval: __________________

Library Name: ____________________

Director: _________________________

Street Address: ___________________

Mailing Address: ___________________

City, Zip: _________________________

Telephone: ________________________

Fax: ______________________________

E-mail: ___________________________
Vision Statement

The ____________________________ Public Library will provide free access to popular, high interest resources to meet the educational, recreational and informational needs of their patrons, through technological resources. The Library commits to utilize current technology and adequate telecommunication, and will assist patrons to acquire this information in an appropriate format and timely manner.

Technology Goals Years 1 - 3

* Provide Internet access by the fastest most cost effective means possible.
* Maintain _____ public access and _____ staff workstations
* Update hardware and software as needed
* Replace computers on a _____ year rotation

Implementation: Evaluate speed and Internet cost each year while preparing budget. Take into consideration the availability of E-Rate and Kan-Ed Funding. Attend at least one staff training class per year and participate in online classes. Evaluation of all equipment for possible replacement will take place during a walk-through with regional library system staff. Equipment is on a _____ year rotation plan for either replacement or upgrading.

* Provide trained staff to assist patrons.
* Attend training provided by the regional library system and other sources
* Share knowledge gained from training and workshops
* Provide Internet training
* Subscribe to regional and KanLib listservs

Implementation: Review training opportunities as they become available and send staff when possible. Read list e-mail.

*. Provide basic word processing and other popular software to patrons for personal and school use.
* Provide network and equipment necessary to complete projects.
* Have patron accessible printers, scanners, fax machines, etc.
* Maintain equipment with paper, ink, etc.
* Provide trained staff to assist and train patrons on the use of equipment

Implementation: Use TechSoup to purchase low cost software for patron computers when they need updating or use free open source for staff computer.

Technology Goals Year 1

1. Establish a wireless network to provide convenient access to travelers, patrons, and students
2. Assist patrons with e-mail

Implementation: Work with regional library system staff to configure a wireless router and a wireless brochure to assist patrons with accessing the wireless network. Attend training on e-mail.

Technology Goals Year 2

1. Promote the use of the Kansas Library Card, and all its available services, and the Kan-Ed and State of Kansas databases

Implementation: Attend a training to learn more about these services and then encourage and instruct patrons to use them.
Budget

The ____________ Library Board is committed to and has approved purchases outlined in this technology plan. On a yearly basis, the library board will budget $____.____ for the computer supplies. The board maintains a capital improvement fund for the replacement of computers and other equipment as needed on the rotation schedule established. Library administration will keep abreast of, and apply for, state and/or regional library system grants each year for supplement funding. We will continue to request funding for monthly access fees for voice/Internet and long distance through the universal service. The library will continue membership in the Kan-Ed consortium.

Evaluation

The library will evaluate on a yearly basis, progress toward specific goals and future goals. The library will solicit patron’s feedback to monitor what technology we need to provide. New developments and opportunities will always be discussed and considered. To assure this the Director will plan an annual walk-through with regional library system technology consultant staff to evaluate hardware and upgrades needed to provide quality technology for our patrons.