Using the Edge Toolkit to Tell Your Story
OLA 2016 Conference

Lourdes Aceves
Senior Program Manager, Edge Initiative
Urban Libraries Council

Session Overview

- What is Edge?

- Why Are Partnerships Important?

- What Is the Executive Tool?

- How Are Libraries using the Executive Tool to Achieve Outcomes?

EDGE OVERVIEW

Edge Coalition

What is Edge?

An assessment and planning tool for public libraries to evaluate technology access and identify how it can be used to help communities.

Why is Edge Important to Public Libraries?

- **Assess** current public access technology and how it's used

- Identify ways to **strengthen** or enhance public access technology

- **Engage with key leaders** about the role for the public library in improving communities

The Edge Toolkit

BENCHMARKS

ASSESSMENT TOOL

RECOMMENDATIONS & RESOURCES

TRAINING

PLANNING TOOLS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Why Are Partnerships Important?

In today's world of limited economic resources, successful relationships and partnerships are important because they result in increased:

- Resources
- People power
- Visibility

Who Are Your Partners?

Library personnel
- Staff
- Board members

Funders
- Local government
- Foundations
- Individual donors

Public institutions
- Schools
- Hospitals
- Local employers
- Small and large local businesses

Volunteers
- Friends of the Library groups

How Do Partners Support Your Advocacy Efforts?

- Your partners will:
    - Advocate on your behalf.
    - Help obtain funding for the library.
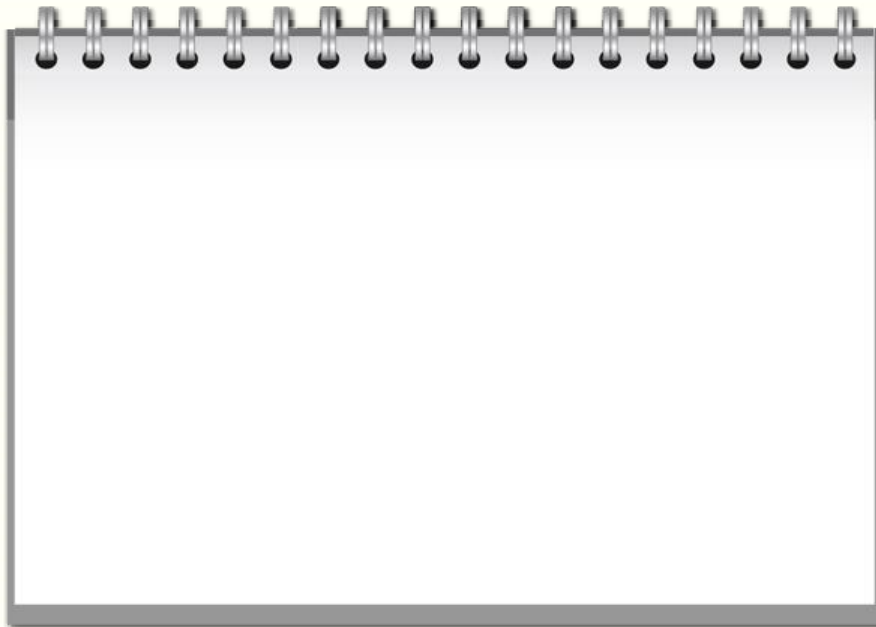   - Contribute input to decisions.

**What is the most
useful form of support?**

*Positive public perception is your library's
most useful resource.*

Reflection Question

Take a moment to think about who in your community:

- Impacts funding
- Supports technology (give examples)

The Big Three

1. Identify **three** initiatives in 2016 that will require additional resources

2. Identify what additional resources are needed for implementation.

3. Identify partners, funders, and other stakeholders to who you will "make the ask".

Tools for Community Engagement

Executive Tool

- Designed to help libraries tell their story

- Showcase the value of the library to local leaders

- Helps libraries "make the ask"

Gotham City Public Library

Serving the Community through

Public Technology-Related Services

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

- Libraries are leading the way towards providing **high-quality** public technology services

- Local libraries offer a welcoming environment and a **breadth** of technology resources

- The computer access and training offered at the library are **essential services** to the community

A COMMITMENT TO IMPACT

21st Century libraries are more impactful than ever

9 out of 10 Americans ages 16 and older say **public libraries are important to their communities**

Pew, 2013

2 in 3 libraries report an **insufficient number of computers**

ALA, 2012

77% say **free access to computers and the internet** is a "very important" service of libraries

Pew, 2013

MORE THAN BOOKS

We **offer services** that cater to the community's digital and technology needs and interests:

- Access to Technology: **computers**, internet, work stations

- eResources: **eBooks**, eReaders, audio/visual access

- Staff Support: knowledgeable library staff for **personal assistance**

USE OF LIBRARY SERVICES

Americans ages 16 and older said they would embrace technology at libraries and would be likely to use the following services:

- 73%: Online research services allowing patrons to pose questions and get answers from librarians

- 69%: Access to technology "petting zoos" to try out new devices

- 63%: Apps-based access to library materials and programs

- 63%: "Redbox"-style lending machines or kiosks located throughout the community where people can check out books, movies or music

Local Elected Officials and Funders

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

Continuous **improvement** of the library is needed to meet the evolving needs of the community

- **Edge** is a professional tool used to elevate libraries' digital and technology services

- The program is funded by the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**

EDGE ADVANTAGE

As an Edge library, we're working to **create an even greater impact** on the community

- Edge **enables** libraries to connect their services to community priorities

- Edge supports libraries in **making strategic decisions** and identifying areas for improvement

BEST PRACTICES IN LIBRARIES

edge

Edge evaluates library programs, management and operations in three core areas:

Community Value

Specific programs, services, support that enable patrons to benefit from the use of technology

Engaging Community and Decision Makers

External practices that connect the library to the community

Organizational Management

Internal management and infrastructure

PARTNERING FOR IMPACT

- We'll discuss **important actions** that represent significant opportunities to strengthen technology services

- We hope that you will contribute to **aligning resources** to better serve our community

Gotham City Public Library

Libraries are critical community partners, working directly with local governments to achieve mutual goals.

Gotham City Public Library is an important partner in pursuing and attaining our community's goals. The library provides essential services to citizens based on community demographics and priorities, and public technology services are one of our most valued resources. Through the Edge Initiative, a national assessment program funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, we are aligning these resources to better serve this community

These important actions represent significant opportunities for the library to strengthen high quality technology services and make a difference for the community:

9 out of **10** Americans ages 16 and older say public libraries are important to their communities.

Pew, 2013

People use library technology to access eGovernment services such as filing for unemployment, registering to vote, and applying for services.	*Gotham Public Library seeks ongoing and regularly scheduled training from the Gotham IT Department on e-government services to better assist patrons with all their e-goverment needs.*
Libraries regularly survey their users to make sure that its technology services meet the needs of the community.	*We need $500 to purchase the US Impact Survey, an online survey tool to survey patrons about public access technology services at the library, and use the information to improve those services for our community.*
Libraries provide assistance and technology to meet the unique needs of people with disabilities.	*We seek funding for Assistive Technology Workstations at $5,500/station. Stations will include wheelchair access, vision and hearing assistance, screen readers, and other assistive technologies.*

77% say free access to computers and the internet is a "very important" service of libraries

Pew, 2013

Community Organizations and Potential Partners

EDGE ADVANTAGE

As an Edge library, we're working to **create an even greater impact** on the community

- Edge helps libraries **connect their services** to community priorities

- Edge encourages **libraries and local organizations** to work together to ensure they are achieving community goals

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

Exploring opportunities to **join forces and together help the Watertown community:**

- Develop tutorials or classes making use of LearningExpress Library

- Procure iPads for use by preschool-aged children preloaded with early literacy apps

- Share a Spanish speaking staff member to better serve the growing Latino population

NEXT STEPS

- Working **together**, we can put our ideas into action with a few simple steps

- We hope that you will contribute to **strengthening** our library's technology services and further **benefitting** our community

Watertown Public Library

Libraries are critical community partners, working directly with local governments to achieve mutual goals.

Watertown Public Library is an important partner in pursuing and attaining our community's goals. The library provides essential services to citizens based on community demographics and priorities, and public technology services are one of our most valued resources. Through the Edge Initiative, a national assessment program funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, we are aligning these resources to better serve this community

These important actions represent significant opportunities for the library to strengthen high quality technology services and make a difference for the community:

9 out of 10 Americans ages 16 and older say public libraries are important to their communities.

Pew, 2013

Libraries provide digital literacy training to help patrons advance their education and employment.	*To support the development of digital literacy skills in the growing Latino population of Watertown, we seek funding to add one Spanish speaking staff member to offer one-on-one tech help and lead technology training classes.*
People use library technology to meet their professional goals, including career development training, finding a job, and starting a business.	*To encourage small business development, we seek funding to repurpose a section of the library as a Business Resource Information Center (BRIC) to include resources on creating and running a business, sample business plans, business planning classes.*
Libraries are centers for learning. They provide education resources and technology for people of all ages.	*To help improve test scores, we seek to procure 20 iPads for use by preschool-aged children preloaded with early literacy apps selected by the library, along with resources for parents.*

77% say free access to computers and the internet is a "very important" service of libraries

Pew, 2013

MIFFLIN COUNTY LIBRARY

ABOUT MIFFLIN COUNTY

- Small/Rural

- Ranks 66 out of 67 counties in per capita income

- Aging

- We were already depressed so the latest "Great Depression" had an even more significant impact on our population and county

- Close knit community with many faith based organizations and civic groups

ABOUT MIFFLIN COUNTY LIBRARY

- Three branches (we had 5 but closed two this year)

- 12 full and part-time staff

- 25 volunteers

- About $500,000 a year operating budget

SNAPSHOT OF MIFFLIN COUNTY BEFORE EDGE

- No Broadband

- 14 year old ILS

- Out-of-date technology plan

- Aging computers

- Uneducated staff – they didn't know what they didn't know

HERE'S WHAT WE LEARNED AND IMPLEMENTED

- The Edge Initiative changed our service to the community

- Be *terminally perky* about the EDGE initiative. This isn't one more thing you have to do!

- Permeate and integrate your organization with the initiative as if your entire funding depended on EDGE participation

- Take a long term approach to the initiative

ATTITUDE

- Understand that evoking the "Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation" adds a layer of **credibility** to conversations with key stakeholders

- Remind them the Edge Benchmarks are **national** standards.

- Be as **specific** as possible. Put a number behind what you need.

IDENTIFY YOUR CHAMPIONS

- Library Board and Friends of the Library

- Funders – pick one person from each funding base and gain their support. Let them sell this initiative to their colleagues.

- Community Organizations

- Edge Leader at Your Library

- Volunteers

ASK…ASK…ASK FOR SEED MONEY

- Ask the Friends, Funders, for a specific allocation for 1 Edge Priority

- Allocate money in next year's budget for at least 1 priority

- Target specific community groups to fund a priority

THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS

- Keep "talking" about the Edge Initiative- Social Media, Letters to the Editor, Newsletters, community outreach, etc.

- Put the Edge logo on your webpage

- Use the tool kit as appropriate BUT customize it to YOUR community.
  – Refine your elevator speech until it just rolls off your tongue.
  – Be practical and answer the question "What can EDGE do for Me?" before someone asks
  – Attend Strengthening Library Partnerships webinar to learn how to create elevator speech

MIFFLIN COUNTY LIBRARY'S EDGE OUTCOMES

Most of this was done in-house with existing staff

- County Commissioners provided $16,000 in seed monies
  (this didn't cover all they've done but it surely helped)

- Shifted staff duties and 'created' a Technology Services Coordinator position using existing staff

- Completely new website
  Our district center provided staff training, wrote some code, and helped the library tweak, refine and enhance the site

MIFFLIN COUNTY LIBRARY'S EDGE OUTCOMES

- New Broadband network

  We hired a consulting firm to help us with this

- Updated our ILS and it's now cloud based

- Installed Time and Print Management software in all public access computers

  Our district center provided training and installation help

- Implemented staff training program to update and learn new skills