

# **TCDL 2023 Poster**

## **Lending Longterm Technology: An Unexpected Journey**

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### **I: In the Beginning**

How can we help? As we did our best to stay calm, this question became a mantra during the COVID-19 shut down. TWU Libraries adapted every service to meet the needs of our community. Access to technology was a major concern. The Digital Strategies & Innovation (DSI) unit jumped into action! Our journey begins here.

### **II: Setting Out**

In the fall of 2020, the TWU Libraries were awarded a \$49,980 Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) and Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to promote digital inclusion. The grant enabled the Libraries to purchase 30 laptops and 6 hotspots, all of which were made available to students on our Denton, Dallas, and Houston campuses.

### **III: On Our Way!**

The Cataloging unit created item records, Library Marketing made promotional materials and signage, and updated our website, and Access Services facilitated circulation. Students checked out the tech on a first-come first-serve basis for the entire semester with the option of one renewal.

### **IV: Bumps in the Road**

We encountered a few pitfalls. By 2022, concerns about communication, equity, and tech maintenance grew.

- Students who had made a long commute to campus were too often turned away if items were unavailable.
- Students experienced issues connecting to networks off campus.
- Items were checked out or renewed for unenrolled students.
- Loan periods often went beyond the renewal maximum, which complicated system updates and hardware checks.
- There were too many points of contact for the program, and an unofficial waitlist was created.
- Students reported confusion over the “long-term” checkout rules

### **V: New Funds**

The Libraries were able to build on semester-long technology checkouts with the award of a \$69,975 grant from TSLAC and IMLS. With this grant, the Libraries hosted a series of guest speaker workshops for students and library staff called Developing Digital Competencies. Participants attended through the grant funded virtual lab which included 33 laptops and 22 hotspots, all of which were added to the long-term checkout collection.

### **VI: Back On Course**

We established one point of contact, organized proactive communication, scheduled consistent reminders for students, and created an official waitlist through a Google request form. We created a circulation procedure, which includes a Hold Shelf process and requires supervisors to have students connect and login to the main network hub before leaving with their laptop to ensure reliable

connectivity off campus. We reached out to the library's Policy Work Group and published an official policy with specific borrowing rules. We also rebranded the program as "semester-long" instead of "long-term."

## **VII: Smelling The Flowers**

### **Subheader: Student Benefits**

During the height of the shut down, students who would normally use technology provided on-campus could now take home a laptop and/or hotspot. Having a reliable internet connection and computer allows students to stay enrolled and complete their coursework. We strive for equity, so even though we follow set policies and procedures, we make room for exceptions to meet students most in need. The popularity of the program continues to grow!

### **Subheader: Library Benefits**

Collaboration strengthened interdepartmental relationships: CMRS, Access Services, DSI, Marketing, Administration, and the Dallas and Houston campuses worked together to better serve our students. This program has put the library on the map and university departments have noticed. As a result, the libraries received a donation of laptops from the TWU Pioneer Center.

The journey will continue...

## **References/Resources**

Alexander, I. (2020). *Gondor sketch map*. Wikimedia Commons. Retrieved from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gondor\\_sketch\\_map.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gondor_sketch_map.svg). CC BY-SA 4.0