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How the Pflugerville Library Address the Digital Divide
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The Pflugerville Public Library was one of the first libraries in Texas to offer Wi-Fi hotspots for checkout. In 2016, KUT and NPR featured the library for this initiative. The hotspots allow patrons to access the internet outside the library utilizing cell phone service.

In addition, the library offers public computer access for everyone regardless of whether or not they are library cardholders. Our philosophy in this matter is that we allow people to use the library, the Wi-Fi and library materials within the building, so we should let them access computers also.

Patrons under the age of 17 who do not have a library card, must have in-person, parental permission to use a computer. The computers are available for one-hour sessions but and can be extended for additional time if there is no wait.

Free Wi-Fi is available throughout the Library for patrons to use with their personal devices. In addition to in-library use of Wi-Fi, the library offers free Wi-Fi at the Heritage House Museum.

The library offers online training through Lynda.com, a resource that allows patrons to learn software, technology, creative and business skills to achieve their personal and professional goals.

Another electronic resource, Texas Education and Reference Center offers free access to test preparation and practice tests. These range from high school skills to graduate and career prep.

Texas Legal Forms allows users to download the most current legal forms.

Other resources include homework helpers, eBooks, eMagazines, and streaming movies and music. In total, there are approximately 100 online resources available for free to cardholders. To those who do not hold a card at Pflugerville Public Library, all of these resources are available from our public computers.

Library programs are also free and open to the public. These include one-on-one tech help (by appointment), basic computer classes for adults, teen tech programs, simple robotics programs for all ages, STEM programs, and more.

In 2018, the library began offering DigiT cards to PfISD high school students who cannot come to the library. These cards allow access to all eResource (except those whose contracts restrict access). We have recently expanded that to anyone in the district who needs access.

The library offers access to computers with specialized software for all cardholders. The Computer Classroom computers are equipped with scanning software, role-playing game software and the full Adobe Creative Suite. These are available when there are no programs scheduled in the classroom.

The library has a number of areas that the public can utilize for study, business, or to take an online class.

The Association of Retired Persons (AARP) offers free online tax preparation during tax season, and the library is currently working with the Complete Count Committee to create access to the online census forms.

Pfab Lab instruction including laser cutting, 3D printing, Tinkercad and more are available to all customers. Customers with library cards have the added bonus of one-on-one training and the ability to schedule appointments for their own projects.

The Girls Who Code classes are available for students in grades 6-12. Girls Who Code is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to closing the gender gap in technology. Students can explore coding in a fun and friendly way. The class is NOT limited to girls it is open to all students.

Finally, all staff assist computer users with basic operations and access. We estimate the number of individual appointments and programs focused on technology surpassed 500 in FY 2019.

Library staff and professionals participate in continuing education opportunities, research the latest initiatives, and monitor the PEW Research report on Public Libraries, the Horizon Report on Public Libraries, and other professional studies and publications.

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Electronic resource use	97,368	112,461	197,906
Library Visits- Electronic	151,506	161,721	182,952
Internet Users- In House	32,325	33,319	30,201
Wi-Fi checkout	319	689	700

Further Reading

Rancaño, V. (n.d.). A Pflugerville Library Wants to Bridge the Digital Divide by Lending Out Wi-Fi Hotspots. Retrieved from <https://www.kut.org/post/pflugerville-library-wants-bridge-digital-divide-lending-out-wi-fi-hotspots>

Young, Brenda. *Pflugerville Library to Get Makerspace*. Community Impact, <http://communityimpact.com/austin/city-county/2016/02/22/makerspace-adds-new-chapter-to-pflugerville-library-programs>.

McDowell, B. (2018, September 27). Check out Maker Kits at library. Retrieved from <https://www.statesman.com/NEWS/20160930/Check-out-Maker-Kits-at-library>.