

Proceedings of the 5th Annual Federal Depository Library Conference April 15 - 18, 1996

Internet as a Shared Community/Library Experience in Michigan

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FLINT PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY NETWORKING CENTER

The Vision

The Director of the Flint Public Library and the Michigan Mideastern Library Cooperative collaborated on the best way to provide the Flint community with the state of the art networked digital information. Together the ideas of these individuals helped create the living Internet laboratory at the Flint Public Library.

Funding

The following organizations participated in the funding of the Internet lab at our library: University of Michigan School of Library and Information Science Crystal Ed Project, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Apple Library of Tomorrow Project, Flint Public Library, Mideastern Michigan Library Cooperative, Library of Michigan, and the Community Stabilization and Revitalization Project.

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The training syllabus included advanced strategies for effective use of e-mail, mastery of various protocols such as Gopher, WAIS, and FTP. The librarians identified projects with local focus to practice their new skills. The production and mounting of their projects on the WWW was the end result. The projects included local recycling information, local government officials, local resources of funding for small business, and sources of financial aid on a local level.

Accomplishments

Thirty librarians trained in the use of Internet, volunteers trained to assist patrons on use of Internet, development of an information infrastructure at the library necessary for WWW access.