



2020 Provincial Grants Report Thompson-Nicola Regional Library

Introduction

The Thompson-Nicola Regional Library (TNRL), a department of the Thompson-Nicola Regional District, is a system of 13 libraries and a Mobile Library, operating on the traditional territory of the Indigenous and First Nations communities including Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, Nicola and Nlaka-pamux peoples. Incorporated in 1967, the TNRD functions as a partnership of its municipalities and electoral areas. With a population of 132,663 (2016 census), the TNRD includes 11 municipalities (Ashcroft, Barriere, Cache Creek, Chase, Clearwater, Clinton, Kamloops, Logan Lake, Lytton, Merritt and Sun Peaks) as well as 10 electoral areas within a geographic area of approximately 45,000 square kilometers.

The TNRL administrative offices are in the main population centre of Kamloops, which accounts for 75 percent of the regional district's population and operates the two largest and busiest libraries– Kamloops and North Kamloops, Library Home Service and a Mobile Library along with Support Services that undertakes acquisitions, cataloguing, processing, Integrated Library System (ILS) management, and liaison for the library's website. As a department of the Thompson-Nicola Regional District, TNRL enjoys shared services including: Human Resources; Finance; IT; and Facilities Management.

The following are the TNRL locations:

1. Large Libraries
 - a. Kamloops Library
 - b. North Kamloops Library
 - c. Merritt Library
2. Mid-Sized Libraries (26-30 open hours per week)
 - a. Ashcroft Library
 - b. Barriere Library
 - c. Chase Library
 - d. Clearwater Library
 - e. Logan Lake Library
 - f. Mobile Library (serves 30 stops on a 3 week rotation, averages 17 open hours per week)

3. Small 'Gateway' Libraries (16 open hours per week)
 - a. Blue River Library
 - b. Cache Creek Library
 - c. Clinton Library
 - d. Lytton Library
 - e. Savona Library

Background

2020 was an unprecedented year in both the world at large and in public libraries. The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically altered library processes and our operation. It challenged us to consider public service in an entirely different way – seeking new opportunities and methods of serving our patronage and how to remain relevant as a public service. Like all public libraries across the province, we closed our doors in mid March. As a stop-gap, we initiated Library Takeout in May. After considerable work on the health and safety front, and in accordance with provincial guidelines, TNRL was able to re-open all of its locations with limited services in July 2020. All locations have remained open since, with COVID-safe practices in place.

Other projects of note that were completed in 2020 include:

- ✓ Increased public Wi-Fi available outside all our locations 24/7;
- ✓ Launched new Library Takeout and Personal Picks services;
- ✓ Offered online library card registration for the first time;
- ✓ Provided virtual programming in a variety of formats for all age groups;
- ✓ Enhancements to our suite of licensed electronic offerings;
- ✓ Completed background work on brand new library website to be launched in early 2021;
- ✓ Significant planning toward the development of a third Kamloops library to serve the city's South population;
- ✓ Enhanced staff engagement and learning with the introduction of Niche Academy.

Main Goals for 2020

The Thompson-Nicola Regional Library's strategic plan for the 2015-2019 period, entitled *Discover Connect Inspire* provides direction for the following priorities:

1. Connect more residents with the unique benefits the library has to offer through partnerships and marketing initiatives
2. Strengthen the community with lifelong learning opportunities.
3. Serve the community as a commons to discover, connect and inspire.
4. Bridge the digital divide in our communities through staff expertise and technology.

It is anticipated that the TNRL will move forward with a refresh of the strategic plan in 2021.

2020 Library Operational Priorities were as follows:

Capital Projects

- 1) South Kamloops Planning and Infrastructure Grant Submission (*delayed pending site procurement*)
- 2) Finalize Upgrades to Chase and Clinton Libraries to provide barrier-free access
- 3) Public consultation for Ashcroft Library interior to maximize use of space

Technology

- 1) E-commerce implementation to better support public services/ease of payment/fund development
- 2) Updated website to enhance patron experience (*launched February 2021*)
- 3) RFID feasibility and business case (*In Progress – projected completion 2021 Q2*)

Customer Experience

- 1) Development of Library Strategic Plan and public engagement (*Initiated, Postponed due to COVID-19*)
- 2) Flexible Use Planning for North Kamloops Computer Lab and expanded Mobile Maker programs (*Postponed due to COVID-19*)
- 3) Finalize branding of all library collateral material and interior signage (*In progress*)

2020 Grants Received

Base Operating Grant	\$ 345,733
Resource Sharing Grant	\$ 1,707
Literacy Equity Grant	\$ 24,000
OneCard Grant	\$ 16,500
Tech Grant	\$ 36,382
TOTAL	\$ 424,322

With the exception of the Technology Grant (project delays), all other grants received were fully expended in 2020 for the intended purpose. The TNRL supported the

priorities articulated in the conveyance letter received from Libraries Branch to the best of its abilities.

LIBRARY PRIORITY 1

Improving Access for British Columbians

The TNRL fully supports the provincial government's priority of improving equitable access to library service. COVID-19 provided an obstacle to in-library services, however through creativity TNRL has accomplished this goal in a number of new and exciting ways:

Introduction of free Wi-Fi outside all library locations, all the time

TNRL's first initiative after closing to the public was to implement free Wi-Fi outside all library locations, at all times. Previously, Wi-Fi signals had not been strong enough to reach outside all locations, and were only provided during library open hours. This service proved popular with patrons and as a result, we have continued this practice after re-opening our doors to the public.

Online Library Card Registration

Shortly after closing our doors to the public, TNRL developed an in-house method to offer online library card registration. By completing a form on our website, patrons are issued a temporary library card. This card allows patrons to place holds on physical items and provides access to our digital offerings such as eBooks and eAudiobooks, as well as our suite of online resources. These temporary cards expire after three months, and patrons are asked to bring identification and proof of address to one of our locations in order to convert the temporary card to a card with full borrowing privileges. So far over 1,000 TNRL residents have taken advantage of this new way of accessing library services. Online card registration and being able to readily access e-content has provided a lifeline to new patrons while our doors were closed, and continues to offer patrons convenient ways of discovering what the library has to offer.

hoopla Digital Launch

On December 1, 2020 patrons were able to begin borrowing streaming movies, TV shows and music through our TNRL's new subscription to *hoopla Digital*. With few movies being produced and launched in 2020, and the future of physical media uncertain, TNRL is looking toward digital offerings to provide patrons with the content they want. The initial launch branded as 'Home for the Holidays with hoopla' saw 153 checkouts the first month, with growing numbers in 2021.



TNRL website banner featuring hoopla Digital.

Planning and Development for New Library Website

In-house planning and development of the new library website with the support of the TNRD's shared IT service continued in 2020. The new tnrl.ca is powered by Wordpress and features:

- ✓ Improved navigation. Simplified and streamlined structure, with ability to search the website
- ✓ Better ability to showcase our collections, programming and resources;
- ✓ Help guides for our online resources and other computer skills;
- ✓ Improved visibility for library information and Mobile Library routes;
- ✓ Responsive and accessible design; and
- ✓ The ability to easily update the website.

The new website is light-years ahead of the previous TNRL site enabling patrons to access our busiest 'branch'- our E-Library. The new website launched in February of 2021.

Increased Online Presence

Immediately following the TNRL's closure to the public, the Library launched a new blog in order to:

- ✓ Keep patrons up to date with service changes due to COVID-19, especially in light of our previous website which could not be easily updated;
- ✓ Build content for launch of new TNRL website;
- ✓ Support online programming, including instructions for crafts, and technology posts dubbed 'Tech Tuesdays'

TNRL launched an Instagram account in 2020. The account currently has 353 followers.

TNRL's Facebook page received a lot of attention in 2020, in part due to online programming hosted on this platform. It was well-received as the number of 'Likes' of the page increased by 15% during the closure.

Accessibility Upgrades at Clinton and Chase Libraries

2020 saw TNRL finalize upgrades to Chase and Clinton Libraries to enable barrier-free access, in accordance with our Facilities Master Plan. Previously, Chase Library had poor wheel chair ramp access, and Clinton Library's wheelchair access through the back door was inadequate. All locations, including the Mobile Library, now provide universal accessibility for individuals using wheelchairs, walkers, strollers, etc.

LIBRARY PRIORITY 2

Building Capacity

Some capacity building opportunities, such as the planned second installment of TNRL's *SAILS (Symposium for All Interior Library Staff)*, were waylaid by the Pandemic, while others thrived.

Niche Academy

TNRL subscribed to Niche Academy in 2020, initially to access *Ryan Dowd's Homeless Library Academy*. The majority of TNRL staff have now taken this training, that provides valuable skills training and understanding for working with our most vulnerable library patrons.

Due in part to the success of Homeless Library Academy training, TNRL has now subscribed to Niche Academy to provide learning opportunities not only for staff, but for the public. Numerous computer and technology skills guides are now available through TNRL's website including training for Google tools, social media, library resources and more.

Staff Training and Conference Attendance

With the switch to online conferences, TNRL employees were able to increase the number of courses attended and learning attained. TNRL employed all staff during the closure, with dedicated time for professional development including: Readers' Advisory webinars, writing courses and program training and development. Virtual programming in particular has required staff to develop their technology skills – video recording and editing, and live-streaming using various platforms (Zoom, WebEx, Discord, etc.).

Of note, the Coordinator of the Kamloops Early Language and Literacy Initiative (KELLI) offered the first Parent-Child Mother Goose Teacher Training via Zoom to Library staff. Two sessions were offered to staff (April 26th and May 6th). Each training session consisted of four mornings and were 2.5 hours in duration. Staff received a certificate of completion so that they may offer sessions at the TNRL or in community offered sessions.

The Zoom platform made it possible to support staff training for those who live outside the Kamloops area. Typically, the TNRL would pay wages, travel, accommodations, as well as backfilling at the home library to offer our staff this invaluable training. As a result, we were typically limited to the number of staff that could undertake this training each year. In April/May 2020, a total of 23 staff attended the sessions. A little under half of the staff reside outside of Kamloops in communities that do not have a Parent-Child Mother Goose facilitator or an ongoing program. Staff as far away as the remote community of Blue River (pop. 157) attended.

For many of our staff, this training was their first introduction to the Parent-Child Mother Goose Program and early literacy programming. With great anticipation, we look forward to being able to offer in-person programming again and support our caregivers and children. In the meantime, staff have put these skills to use with e-programming, as well as sharing a song with children and caregivers when enjoying a short visit to the library!

Additionally, TNRL staff attended and participated in the following courses and conferences, mostly online:

- ✓ Employers' Advisors Office workshops/Occupational Health & Safety
- ✓ eBooks Summit
- ✓ British Columbia Library Association Conference
- ✓ Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services
- ✓ Ontario Library Association Conference
- ✓ Innovative Users Group Conference
- ✓ Access 2020
- ✓ ABCPLD workshops

Implementation of E-Commerce Solution and Giving Opportunities

2020 saw the introduction of E-Commerce at the TNRL. E-Commerce enables patrons to pay overdue and replacement fees and fines online, through their library account. This user-friendly system is powered by PayPal, and supported the Library's to continue collecting revenue in a COVID-19 safe manner.



Example of E-Commerce solution appearing in patron account, powered via PayPal.

Additionally, TNRL subscribed to Canada Helps for the first time in 2020, increasing our ability to accept online donations with automated charitable receipts.

LIBRARY PRIORITY 3

Enhancing Citizen Engagement

Kamloops Equity Forum

TNRL continues to participate in the Kamloops Equity Forum, led by Thompson Rivers University to help local service providers discuss common issues they are facing and how we can collaborate to provide more equitable services in Kamloops. Through this forum staff have created new partnerships with other community organizations and learned valuable resources to direct our staff and patrons to.

Barriere Library's StoryWalk®

In 2020 the Barriere Library raised funds to install a StoryWalk® in their community, immediately adjacent to the Library at Fadedear Park. A StoryWalk® is an innovative way for children and adults to enjoy reading and the outdoors at the same time. Laminated pages from children's books are attached to wooden stakes that are installed along an outdoor path. As you stroll down the trail, you're directed to the next page in the story.

To date, three titles have been shown, with positive attention from both the media and patrons. Unsolicited donations have come forward to support this initiative.



Ribbon cutting for Barriere Library's StoryWalk®

Public Consultation Regarding Ashcroft Library

As outlined in the TNRL's Facilities Master Plan, the Ashcroft library (circa 1974) is overdue for a major refresh of its interior space. Public consultation was undertaken in fall 2020 via online and print surveys soliciting feedback regarding usage and what residents would like to see ahead with a refurbished space. Over 40 responses were received, with input taken into consideration for planning as the refresh gets underway in 2021.

Expansion of Library Home Service to Clinton and Barriere

For over thirty years TNRL has provided Library Home Service delivery to homebound residents of Kamloops. 2020 saw the first steps toward bringing that service to the rural communities. A request for volunteers from Barriere and Clinton was met with great enthusiasm by residents. Volunteers have now been hired, and we look forward to launching this service shortly in these communities with expansion to all other TNRD rural communities in 2021.



Library Home Service logo

TNRD Talks

In partnership with our parent organization the TNRD, TNRL hosted several *TNRD Talks* in 2020. These adult-oriented programs facilitated by TNRD staff provide public outreach on topics such as invasive plant management, and recycling and solid waste management. As well as being informational these programs provided opportunities for the public to engage one-on-one with the staff.

TNRL continued partnerships into 2020 as follows:

- ✓ SD 73 and the Kamloops Boys and Girls Club
- ✓ Distribution of *Books for Babies Bags* through the immunization clinics at the Interior Health Authority in Kamloops
- ✓ Kamloops Early Language and Literacy Initiative
- ✓ Raise-a-Reader Campaign
- ✓ Interior Savings Unplug and Play Family Literacy Week
- ✓ Continued support for Battle of the Books program with SD 73 through the purchase of additional titles
- ✓ Continuation of our partnership with SD 73 in providing the Grad 3 VIP Library Card Campaign.
- ✓ Kamloops Pride
- ✓ *Remember When* story time at Brocklehurst Gemstone Care Centre and Ponderosa Lodge. *Remember When* is facilitated by Library Assistants and is designed to encourage elderly patrons share their personal stories and remembrances.
- ✓ Our continued partnership with the Kamloops Society for the Written Arts. Shared hosting duties and launch of virtual programs
- ✓ Kamloops Film Society
- ✓ Kamloops Art Gallery including joint *Story time and Craft* programming
- ✓ Kamloops Arts Council - *Art in Public Spaces* program. 21 artists have been featured from 2019 to 2020
- ✓ Thompson Rivers University

New Partnerships for 2020:

- ✓ Kamloops Brain Injury Association
- ✓ TNRL partnered with our parent organization to provide *TNRD Talks*
- ✓ Kamloops Wine Festival - *Silent Write: Wine Edition* program
- ✓ Kamloops Museum & Archives, including *Women's History Month Activities* and *Holidays Around the World* story times
- ✓ Ask Wellness. Partnered to provide our *Dating Over 50* series



Promotional material for Dating over 50 Series, one example of shared programming and citizen engagement

LIBRARY PRIORITY 4

Enhancing governance

Public consultations

As the TNRL is a department of the Thompson-Nicola Regional District, a number of reports/initiatives went forward to the TNRD Board in 2020 and were approved as follows:

- ✓ Adopted Foundation for the Future 2020 Thompson-Nicola Regional Library Facilities Master Plan as a guidelines to support decisions concerning library facilities and space;
- ✓ Pursue site and development options for the establishment of a third library for Kamloops in the city's southwest;
- ✓ Pursue major capital funding opportunities for the establishment of a third Kamloops Library; and

- ✓ Set aside library reserve funds towards the establishment of a third Kamloops library
- ✓ Funding application to the Indigenous Skills Employment & Training Program (ISETP) for (2) summer students.

Support and enthusiasm for all initiatives was as a result of planning, setting a high bar and demonstrating the impact projects will have in extending and improving library services.

TECHNOLOGY GRANT- FINAL REPORT

Project Overview:

At the Thompson-Nicola Regional Library, the 2020 Library Technology Grant was planned to pilot two projects:

- “Borrow the Internet”: This is a wireless hotspot lending pilot project. The kits will include a hotspot and a Chromebook. A total of 10 kits will be loaned at three of our rural branches. The loan period will be two weeks. The pilot will gauge if adding hotspots as a regular part of our loanable collection is of value to the communities we serve.
- “Chromebook Lending Pilot”: A fleet of 15 Chromebooks will be made available in a handful of rural community libraries for in-branch and take-home lending. This pilot will determine if Chromebooks would make a useful and impactful addition to the technology regularly offered to our patrons.

Rationale:

These two projects were chosen as pilots because of the opportunities they offer for bridging the digital divide that exists in the Thompson-Nicola Regional District. The “Borrow the Internet” pilot will explore if hotspots can be used to ameliorate the lack of internet access in rural communities where connectivity is limited and expensive. In a number of TNRD communities, the local library is the only place to access the Internet. The importance of public internet as a core service was highlighted during the COVID-19 Pandemic when libraries closed. It revealed that in-branch access to the internet needs to be supplemented by innovative approaches to offering connectivity. The “Borrow the Internet” pilot will assist us in determining how best to address this service gap and service continuity in the event libraries face closure again.

The Chromebook lending pilot will explore how affordable laptops could augment technology currently offered by the TNRL. For many people, the COVID-19 pandemic has made access to personal computers an important part of how people work, learn and interact. The community libraries chosen for this pilot will use the Chromebook lending to extend library services and allow us to assess how similar technology can be made available at other locations.

Final Report Follow Up:

Ultimately, TNRL was unable to procure Chromebooks in sufficient quantities to support the project due to shortages in the supply chain. Also, TNRL could not find data plans that would enable the project to proceed in a sustainable way. Therefore, Technology Grant resources have been redirected to develop the 'Service Extender' at the Ashcroft Library. A much scaled back "Borrow the Internet" pilot will move forward in 2021.

Ashcroft Service Extender:

A key priority in the TNRL's Master Facilities Plan is "support for rural sustainability through the Thompson-Nicola Regional Library Service Extender". This priority recognizes that rural libraries serve a critical role in maintaining the communities in which they are located. They are also often the only source of broadband Internet in the area. However, given smaller populations, library hours are limited in these rural areas. With this in mind, the interior refresh of Ashcroft Library will be designed to include a 'Service Extender'.

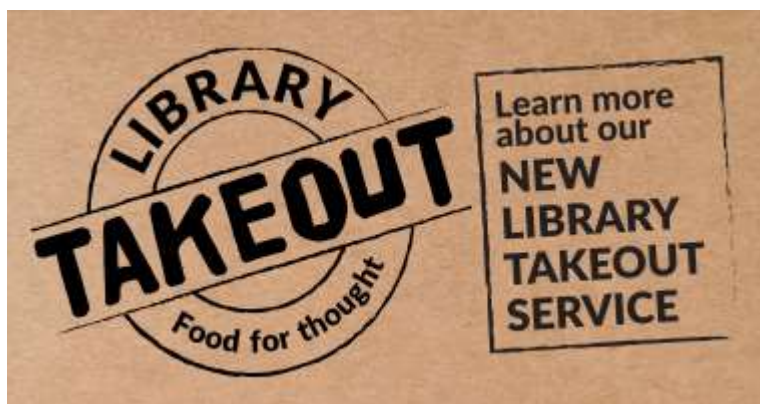
The Service Extender will include automated services to provide options beyond core operating hours. This will work much like an ATM lobby, with an electronic lock triggered by the patron's library card. At Ashcroft, this will be housed in a small portion of the existing branch, providing access for those who cannot use the library during regular open hours. Hold lockers, return box and Internet access will also be included. Planning for the Ashcroft Library's renovation and Service Extender began in 2020, with project completion by the end of 2021.

COVID-19 AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Like all libraries across the province and the world, COVID-19 has had an enormous impact on how our patrons access our resources and the ways in which we provide those services. While the learning curve has been steep, TNRL has risen to the challenge by providing new and existing products and services in innovative ways.

Library Takeout and Personal Picks

Once TNRL locations had closed to the public, focus shifted toward being able to offer pickup of holds. Beginning in May, TNRL rolled out its new Library Takeout service for holds pick up. In order to support Readers' Advisory, a Personal Picks web form was also developed, whereby staff prepared Library Takeout orders consisting of material based on patron preferences. Both Library Takeout and Personal Picks have continue to thrive now that all locations have re-opened, available for those who are immune compromised or who just love these services!



TNRL Library Takeout advertising

Rise of Online Programing

TNRL had provided virtual programming via Facebook pre-Pandemic, but electronic methods of programming went into overdrive as public gatherings were banned and library doors were shuttered. To date TNRL has provided hundreds of virtual programs, from our *Women's History Month* activities, to live and pre-recorded Storytimes and *Parent-Child Mother Goose*, to *Dungeons and Dragons* for teens and tweens and computer skills training. Both our adult and teen Summer Reading Clubs went virtual this year, including take-and-make packages patrons could complete with little or no supplies or internet connection. In an effort to increase accessibility, virtual programs were provided in a variety of formats where possible. For example, author talks could be watched through Zoom, teleconference, on YouTube and Facebook. Following events, all recordings are posted to Facebook and YouTube.

Shifting Use of Collections

With library doors shut to the public for over four months, TNRL saw both a dramatic drop in use of physical library materials, and an equally a dramatic increase in use of E-

Materials. With a 31% increase in eBook and eAudiobook circulations, roughly \$40,000 of collections monies was reallocated to these formats.

SUMMARY

2020 was set to be another busy year at the Thompson-Nicola Regional Library, made more hectic by the COVID-19 pandemic. TNRL staff had to be flexible and adaptable. The important work undertaken during this year will ensure our relevance as a library system and support the aspirations of all of our TNRD community's now and into the future.

Thank You!

On behalf of the Thompson-Nicola Regional Library System patrons, the TNRD, our Board of Directors and TNRL staff, a big thank you to the Province and our BC Libraries Branch for ongoing and excellent support of our public libraries.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Moore, Chief Librarian
Thompson-Nicola Regional Library
jmoore@tnrd.ca
250.377.7070

Thompson-Nicola Regional Library
2020 Library Technology Grant Interim Report

Project Overview:

At the Thompson-Nicola Regional Library, the 2020 Library Technology Grant is being used to pilot two projects:

- “Borrow the Internet”: This is a wireless hotspot lending pilot project. The kits will include a hotspot and a Chromebook. A total of 10 kits will be loaned at three of our rural branches. The loan period will be two weeks. The pilot will gauge if adding hotspots as a regular part of our loanable collection is of value to the communities we serve.
- “Chromebook Lending Pilot”: A fleet of 15 Chromebooks will be made available in a handful of rural community libraries for in-branch and take-home lending. This pilot will determine if Chromebooks would make a useful and impactful addition to the technology regularly offered to our patrons.

Rationale:

These two projects were chosen as pilots because of the opportunities they offer for bridging the digital divide that exists in the Thompson-Nicola Regional District. The “Borrow the Internet” pilot will explore if hotspots can be used to ameliorate the lack of internet access in rural communities where connectivity is limited and expensive. In a number of TNRD communities, the local library is the only place to access the Internet. The importance of public internet as a core service was highlighted during the COVID-19 Pandemic when libraries closed. It revealed that in-branch access to the internet needs to be supplemented by innovative approaches to offering connectivity. The “Borrow the Internet” pilot will assist us in determining how best to address this service gap and service continuity in the event libraries face closure again.

The Chromebook lending pilot will explore how affordable laptops could augment technology currently offered by the TNRL. For many people, the COVID-19 pandemic has made access to personal computers an important part of how people work, learn and interact. The community libraries chosen for this pilot will use the Chromebook lending to extend library services and allow us to assess how similar technology can be made available at other locations.

2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: THOMPSON-NICOLA REGIONAL LIBRARY

Total Technology Grant Amount: \$36,500

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
Connectivity (internet speed, connection capacity, etc.) Loanable Hotspots	Provide at-home access to the internet for patrons in communities underserved by internet providers.	In this pilot, circulation, and patron surveys will help gage the impact of this project.	Loaning wireless hotspot kits aligns with the provincial strategic priority to improve access for British Columbians.	Purchase Hotspot hardware, peripherals, data plans. Prepare them for circulation. Circulation phase. Evaluation phase.	n/a	October 2020: purchase devices and peripherals November 2020: Roll out to staff and public. March 2021: Evaluate this project.	\$21,938		Slow supply chains may delay project launch.
Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.) Loanable Chromebooks	Improve patron access to technology in-branch and elsewhere, by lending adaptable, easy to use laptops.	In this pilot, circulation statistics and staff feedback will help gage impact of this project	Accessible, loanable laptops support the provincial strategic priority to improve access for British Columbians.	Purchase a fleet of Chromebooks. Prepare them for circulation. Circulation phase. Evaluation phase.	n/a	October 2020: purchase devices and peripherals November 2020: Roll out to staff and public March 2021: Evaluate this project.	\$7,862		Slow supply chains may delay project launch.