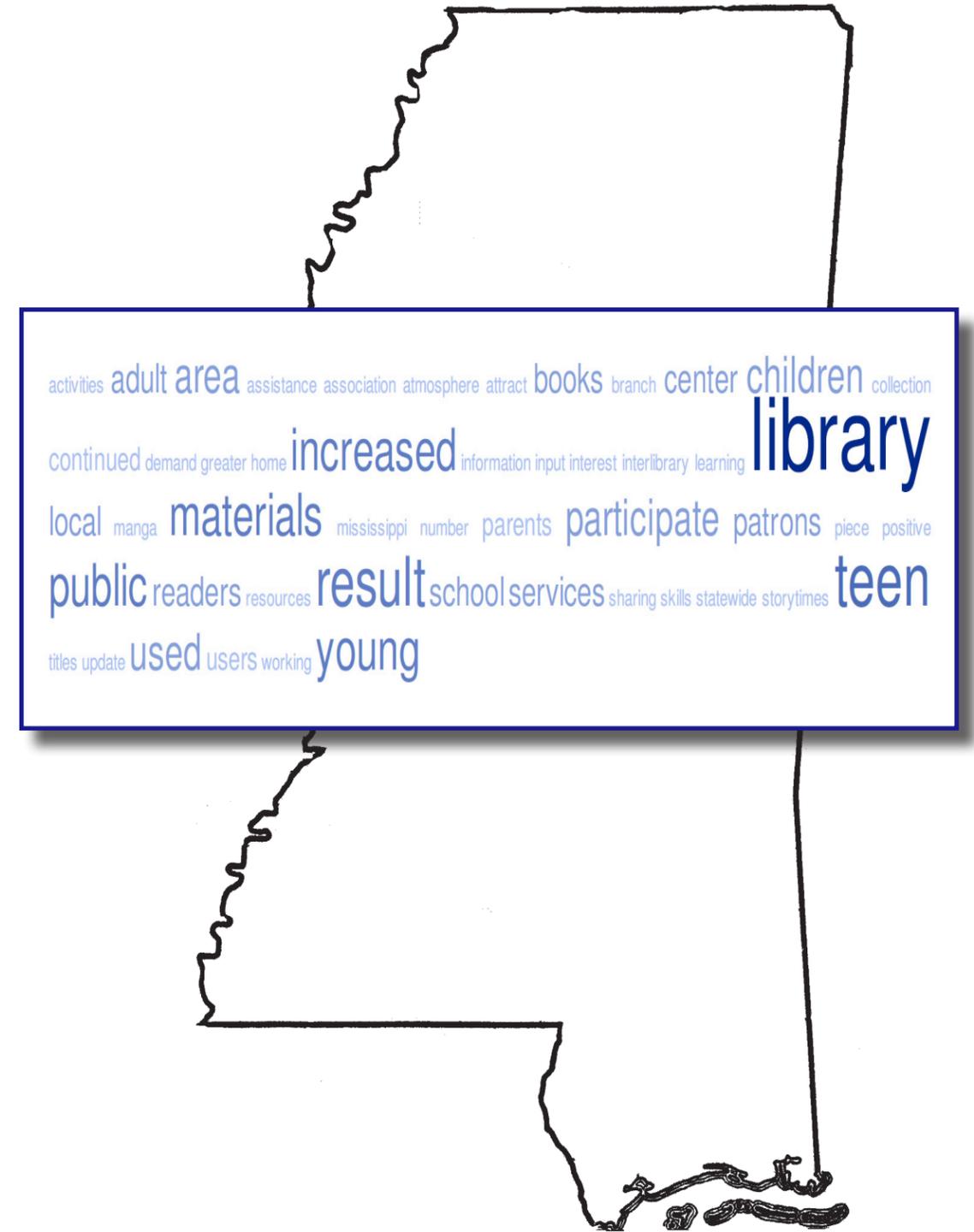


# Library Services & Technology Act — *Making a Difference in Mississippi* —



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*Young Adult Media Room.* The Pass Christian Public Library, destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, operated out of a single-wide, donated trailer where space was at a premium and programming was difficult. As a result, many area teens, who were also dealing with family hardships due to the

hurricane, stopped using the library. To bring tweens and teens back to the new Pass Christian Public Library branch of the **Harrison County Public Library**, an LSTA grant was used to purchase gaming systems, video games, and related furniture/equipment for the teen area of the newly-built library building. Coupled with increased teen programming which has resulted in a 300% increase in attendance, check out of young adult materials increased from 700 items to 2,300 per month. Parents have expressed their gratitude that, with the media room, the library offers as safe place and a place teens want to come.

*Moveable Teen Center.* After surveying teens and staff, forming an advisory group of teens, area merchants, and educators, a Moveable Teen Center was established at the Van Cleave Public Library branch of the **Jackson-George Regional Library**.



The Center is designed to attract, inform, entertain, and positively occupy teens coming to the library after school each day. The Teen Center, equipped and furnished with LSTA funds, has resulted in a more harmonious, positive atmosphere for library users of all ages. The teen advisory group has continued and now shares ideas, gives input into library services, and provides a voice for teen library users.

*Transport Cooperative.* To encourage the sharing of books among library systems and to lessen the burden of participation in resource sharing among libraries, the Transport Cooperative Grant Program was established. To participate in the statewide program, public libraries must agree not to charge patrons to borrow materials through interlibrary loan nor to charge borrowing libraries. In return, libraries are reimbursed for items loaned to or borrowed from other Mississippi public libraries. To date, 34 of 50 public library systems have elected to participate and more than 20,000 items have been shared by these libraries. At a minimal value of \$6.50 per item, the sharing of these materials has saved more than \$133,000.

**LEARN-A-TEST** — An online tutorial database, is provided free to all Mississippians. The practice exams and tutorials include elementary math, vocabulary and reading skills, middle school exams, high school exams, GED, GRE, ACT, SAT and professional-level exams such as PRAXIS, military entrance, nursing, fireman, police, even real estate exams are available. In addition, standardized tests used to improve academic achievement and professional development are available through all Mississippi public libraries.

A major promotional campaign was implemented to inform citizens of the availability of this free service. In partnership with Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB), three television spots and one radio spot were developed. The spots were aired throughout the state on both MPB, broadcast and cable networks as well as radio. As a result, visits to the Learn-A-Test site increased 13%, test taken increased 25%, and courses taken increased 52% over the previous year.



Mississippians are actively seeking self-improvement and turning to their library for assistance, and finding it through this LSTA funded service. The value to our state during these difficult economic times is readily apparent by the 152% increase in practice tests and 184% increase in courses taken over the past three (3) years.

*From Dark to Light.* Creating an inviting, relaxing, and fun children's area resulted in a 32% increase in the number of children using the Bond Memorial Library in Ashland (Benton County Library System). Child-sized shelving, tables & chairs, and casual seating on brightly colored rugs create an enjoyable atmosphere for learning.

*Out with the Old, In with the New.* Replacing the old, out-of-date, and tattered books with new, current and attractive titles made a measurable difference at the Bond Memorial Library. Check out of children's books increased by 47% as a direct result of the LSTA grant. Creating an inviting atmosphere and purchasing new materials, Benton County Library System is encouraging a new generation of readers and library users.



*Seed Money Yields Big Results.* Eighteen (18) Discovery Packs (child-sized backpacks containing books, puppets, games, puzzles, and activities) were used at the Columbus-Lowndes Library System to encourage parents and caregivers to read and learn with children. The demand for the Packs was so great that parents/caregivers donated the funds needed to purchase of seven (7) additional Packs. Comments from parents included, "The Discovery Packs provide hands-on activities to use with your child in emphasizing a given topic."; "Great learning experience for small children."; "I think they are great and my child enjoyed taking the backpack home like we were going to school." A great example of a small project that had a tremendous local impact.

*HelpNow!* Using HelpNow!, an online homework help center, First Regional Library provides students of all ages one-on-one assistance with homework throughout the day and night. The 300,000 residents of DeSoto, Tunica, Tate, Panola, and now have access to subject specialist tutors whenever assistance is needed regardless of library hours. Whether the subject is quantum physics or a third grade science project, help is available any time. A major part of the success of the project has been working with school boards, principals, and teachers.

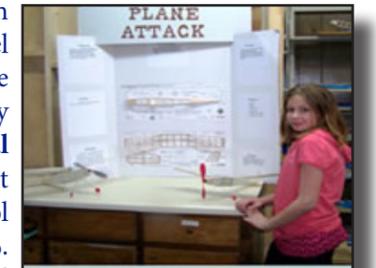


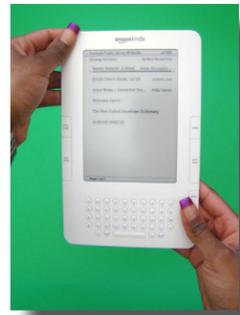
*Get Wild About Reading!* **F i r s t Regional Library** used Between the Lions Preschool Storytimes to train library staff on early literacy skills and techniques. Storytimes, based on the PBS



Between the Lions series, were developed for young children. As a result, preschoolers throughout the five (5) counties have increased opportunities to develop early literacy skills and many parents now report repeating the concepts at home. An unanticipated outcome of the grant was, in the words of the Youth Services Coordinator, Victoria Penny, "Preparing for Between the Lions caused all youth services specialists to reexamine their storytime presentation skills in a thoughtful manner, resulting in overall improvement in the delivery of children's programming throughout the library system."

*ALOFT.* Learning through flight using model aircraft construction, the Burnsville Public Library in **Northeast Regional Library** increased student participation in afterschool library programs by 75%. One mother reported that her eleven-year-old son with Asperger's Syndrome had always avoided participation in activities involving others until the ALOFT library program. Fascinated by airplanes, he overcame his reluctance and has now built three planes, including one that is remote controlled. The youngest participant, an eight-year-old girl, built and flew two planes. Getting more kids into the library has resulted in increased check out of materials and a greater awareness of library services. The program has also resulted in greater community support, both public and private, for the library. The program recently received national recognition when honored with the American Library Association's Marshall Cavendish Excellence in Library Programming Award.





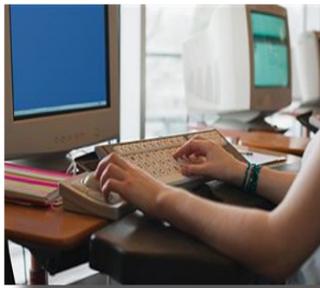
*Check Out E-Books.* Hoping to reach a wider audience, to test a new technological format, and to satisfy patron demand for newer titles, the **Carnegie Public Library of Clarksdale & Coahoma County** used grant funds to acquire and check out ebooks and ebook readers. Project goals were met with patrons adapting quickly to the new technology as evidenced by the constant demand and waiting lists. Customer satisfaction was increased and the wait-time for the latest titles was reduced. Patron comments remain positive. An unanticipated result was the number of library patrons over 65 who LOVED the devices!

*Bridging the Gap.* Limited local resources and an out-of-date young adult book collection had resulted in dwindling library usage by Carroll County teenagers. To entice young people back into the library, the **Carroll County Library** designated an area of the library for teens and used a LSTA grant to purchase new age-appropriate books and materials. As a result, check out of young adult materials rose from 90-a-month to more than 200-per-month, a 135% increase. More teens and tweens now visit the library and are encouraged to suggest additional titles. Teen readers have expressed their gratitude for their own area, for new materials, and for the opportunity to provide input.

*Growing Brain Cells! The Copiah-Jefferson Regional Library* was determined to turn young non-readers and reluctant readers into library users. Armed with input from community organizations working with children including local schools, the library sought and received an LSTA grant to purchase books in a variety of formats including print, ebooks, playaways and audiobooks of interest to young readers. The project was advertised in the local newspaper, on blogs, with the Chamber of Commerce, and through the schools. A children's book club was started and eye-catching displays featuring the new "books" were set up throughout the library to draw children.



Library Services for Everyone. Patrons with limited sight are now able to use library resources, including completion of online job applications, at the Copiah-Jefferson Regional Library because of an LSTA grant to purchase accessible equipment/software. Visually impaired residents are now regular participants in library-sponsored computer training courses and access to the technology is attracting visitors from surrounding areas. To accomplish the project, relationships have been established with the Council for the Blind, the Federation of the Blind, and the local Lions Club. Program statistics reveal the availability of assistive technologies has increased programming participation by 50%, large print checkout by 20%, and interlibrary loan by 20%. As a result of the program, the library has since hired a full-time employee to handle the demand.



*Mission Impossible?* An LSTA grant to the **Harriette Person Memorial Library** in Port Gibson dispelled doubt about increasing teen usage of the public library. Local teens were surveyed to ascertain their willingness to participate in a library teen center; a teen space was specifically designated; and the area was outfitted with comfortable furnishings, computers, wireless connectivity, and age-appropriate materials. The result, an 80% increase in teens taking advantage of the library's homework services and assistance with school projects! An unexpected outcome was shattering of the assumption that more girls would participate than boys. In reality, the project has drawn more young men than young women.

*Retiring Dr. Kildare.* Medicine is one of the fastest changing areas of knowledge. Libraries struggle to maintain current information as out-of-date medical information can be not only incorrect, but dangerous to the consumer. Recognizing this fact, the **Yazoo Library Association** used an LSTA grant to thoroughly update the library's collection of information on health-related issues. New materials were added on diabetes, obesity, teenage pregnancy, nursing home abuse, etc. As a result, check out of these materials increased by 20%.



*The Oral Tradition.* To provide citizens of Rankin, Scott, Smith and Simpson Counties with a greater sense of appreciation for cultural diversity, the **Central Mississippi Regional Library System** used the centuries-old medium of storytelling. Nationally known, African-American, Hispanic, Native American storytellers conducted seventeen school programs and four evening library programs for an audience of more than 5500 adults and children. Simpson County school officials excitedly reported, "Students returned to the classroom anxious to write. They [the storytellers] interjected imagination in daily conversations and activities."

*Preserving the Past.* The Lincoln County Public Library branch of the **Lincoln-Lawrence-Franklin Regional Library** was gifted with tens of thousands of negatives and photographic images from the estate of a local professional photographer whose career spanned many decades in the area. Preserving and making available the rapidly deteriorating history of southwest Mississippi in a permanent, cost effective way required digitization. The LSTA grant allowed the library system to undertake the massive project. Thousands of images have been digitized with metadata and placed on the library's website. Working with the local newspaper, the library has also identified many individuals and locales in the photos. Already, the collection has drawn the attention of numerous researchers and genealogists.



*MANGA.* To stimulate interest in the library and young adult materials, **Starkville-Oktibbeha Public Library System** used LSTA funds to add a new, very popular genre, MANGA, (cartoon books based on a Japanese comic artwork style). Popularity among teens resulted in a 175% increase in check out of young adult materials. The library continues to build the MANGA collection for teen readers who have now taken an interest in protecting funding for the public library. Exceeding all expectations, the project has resulted in a core of teen users, positively impacted by the library, who are now committed to the future of the library.



**Skills Development Program** — Equips public library staff members in Mississippi with the confidence, knowledge, and humor necessary to effectively serve the information needs of the citizens of Mississippi. With 21st Century technology at their fingertips, well-trained staff members provide outstanding library service in even the smallest and most rural communities.

In 2010, twenty-two (22) workshops were provided to the public library community. Forty-seven (47) out of the forty-eight (48) public library systems in Mississippi took advantage of the continuing education program with 927 participants attending workshops. Additionally, 106 online courses were completed by public library staff members on topics such as managing difficult patrons, copyright basics, developing and supervising volunteers, budget and finance, teen services, and more.

Highlights include:

**Enhancing Accessibility & Usability of Public Library Websites** – By providing accessible, user-friendly websites, Mississippi's public libraries help bridge the digital divide and increase access to electronic resources that support students, small businesses, and job hunters.

**Librarianship 101 Institute** – A four-day, in-residence institute designed as an intensive skill- and knowledge- building experience for front-line public library staff. Forty (40) applicants from twenty (20) different library systems applied for the institute.

**Directors' Symposium** – A four-day, in-residence workshop covering personnel and management topics for public library directors. Directors representing forty-two (42) out of fifty (50) public library systems participated in the symposium.

**Creating Dynamic Library Atmospheres** – Functional, comfortable libraries serve their communities as gathering spaces for intergenerational programming, educational and cultural programs, and anchors of local activity.

**Statewide Summer Library Program** — Supports the statewide provision of library services to children and youth at Mississippi's public libraries. Summer library programs decrease "summer reading loss" and help bridge the achievement gap for children living in poverty. In 2010 over 2400 summer library program events were held throughout the state with 106,421 children participating and checking out 525,402 items. 6002 teenagers attended 393 events just for teens and checked out 41,727 items. The library commission supports public libraries' abilities to hold summer library programs through the distribution of themed manuals of ideas and activities, holding training programs for children's librarians, and the development of theme-related posters, book marks, and reading certificates.