Mobile Devices and Gadget Services

South Central Library System, last revised November 23, 2010

Introduction

This document will detail the support level and service that South Central Library System will provide to member libraries for mobile devices and gadgets such as e-book readers, NetBooks, iPads and iPods.

Survey Results

In late September of 2010, SCLS asked member libraries several questions regarding the use of mobile devices and gadgets by library staff and patrons. Patron-owned (rather than Library-loaned) e-book readers that interact with library resources led the list of responses. Smart phones such as iPhones and Droids were also mentioned by almost every respondent as something patrons were using in conjunction with library resources.

Printing from mobile devices was a feature that around 65% of respondent felt was somewhat or very important.

While respondents said that they envisioned library staff using mobile devices to perform roving reference for patrons, most wanted library staff to understand mobile devices well enough to help patrons connect personally owned devices to library resources.

Laptop Support (library-owned)

Noticeably missing from this service is any mention of laptop support. SCLS views support for library owned, fully-featured laptops used by staff members the same way we view support for a desktop machine.

Unfortunately, SCLS is not able to offer support for patron-owned laptops.

NetBook Support (library-owned)

NetBooks, the inexpensive laptop-like devices, are by nature difficult to support in the same manner SCLS supports standard PCs. NetBooks normally have a limited version of Windows installed, and may not use standard internal components. Consequently, support from SCLS will be different when compared to standard PC support.

- SCLS can assist member libraries in ordering NetBooks

- SCLS will assist libraries in understanding how to upgrade software loaded on the NetBooks; since NetBooks cannot join the SCLS Windows Network, SCLS cannot offer automatic updates as a service.

- SCLS can offer access to the Microsoft Office agreement, giving libraries a reduced cost for Office on the NetBooks

- SCLS will attempt to identify disc locking security software for use on a NetBook so that libraries can lock the NetBook for use with patrons.

Roving Reference

Many libraries mentioned utilizing mobile devices to assist librarians offering roving or roaming reference to their patrons. Here is how SCLS can help support this service:

- A member library can borrow the Apple iPad from the SCLS through the SCLS gadget pack and its online registration.

- Since Koha is web based and not specifically tied to a specific network, the iPad can easily access LINKCAT through the library's public wireless network.

- Subscription databases can also be accessed from the iPad, providing library staff access to those resources as well.

- If libraries find the iPad solution to roving reference useful, they can then go ahead and order one.

- SCLS will provide basic training and documentation on setting up a library-owned iPad.

The SCLS Wireless Network

Currently, SCLS helps libraries provide wireless Internet access through a third-party provider like AT&T or Charter. In the future, SCLS plans to offer wireless access via the SCLS Network. A secure segment of the connection to the Internet will be configured to be used by patron and library-owned public mobile devices. Most likely, a separate segment will be configured as part of the internal Windows Network. This segment would be used by SCLS-supported hardware such as staff Laptops, and would connect staff members to various pieces of network equipment.

Mobile Device Services

The following list will detail many of the services SCLS will be offering in terms of Mobile Device and gadget support.

- E-Book Reader inventory

  South Central will continue to maintain an inventory of various e-book readers such as Kindles, Nooks and Sony E-books, expanding the number of readers available at any time while providing an easy online method of reserving the devices for use by library staff members. Member libraries will be able to borrow the devices for an extended period of time, giving staff members a chance to learn the various interfaces and practice connecting the devices with library-provided content.

- Other mobile device inventory

  SCLS will continue to maintain an inventory of other mobile devices such as the iPad and iPod touch for member libraries to borrow.

- E-Book Reader training

  SCLS will continue to offer training on E-book readers, both in person and through online documentation, screen casting videos, and tutorials.

- Other mobile device training

  Like the e-book reader training, SCLS will provide training materials for the other mobile devices in the SCLS inventory.

- Wireless printing from mobile devices

  Most of the mobile devices mentioned in this document cannot currently interact with library printers. SCLS will be looking at a comprehensive printing solution package for libraries in 2012. At that time, SCLS will investigate wireless printing for a variety of mobile devices.