



A Vision for 21st Century School Libraries

WHY ARE SCHOOL LIBRARIES IMPORTANT? *School libraries help kids learn.*

Studies have shown that students in schools with quality library programs get better grades and score higher on standardized tests than students without quality programs. In fact, nearly 100 percent of the more than 13,000 Ohio students from Grades 3-12 who took part in a recent research study indicated that the school library, its services and school librarians have helped them with their learning.*

The data also revealed the role of the school librarian as a dynamic agent of student learning and achievement – helping students learn not only how to use technology to access and evaluate information but also how to use these tools effectively in their school work. This includes the ability to conduct research, identify key ideas, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information, and develop personal conclusions.

WHY IS INFOHIO IMPORTANT? *INFOhio serves and supports all Ohio schools.*

To function in this increasingly electronic world of information, students need to know how to interact with computers, databases and software; how to access and retrieve data; how to interpret, sort and analyze information; and how to use the content effectively. In addition, they still need to recognize the value of traditional print materials and how to access them easily.

WHAT IS INFOHIO? *INFOhio is the state's virtual library and information network for all PreK-12 public and nonpublic schools.*

- INFOhio offers a wide range of electronic databases, instructional resources, standardized software and technical support.
- INFOhio is available anytime, anywhere – 24/7 from any Internet-accessible computer at school or at home. The INFOhio library is never closed.
- INFOhio's online access to millions of educational resources ensures equity of access and helps to assure that no Ohio child is left on the have-not side of the Digital Divide.

WHAT ADDED VALUE DOES INFOHIO PROVIDE? *Equity. Effectiveness. Efficiency.*

- ***Equity.*** INFOhio provides equitable access to information regardless of school size, location or fiscal resources.
- ***Effectiveness.*** INFOhio saves taxpayers money. It makes use of existing agencies, networks and infrastructure to provide services; negotiates statewide licensing agreements for products at substantial discounts; and champions resource sharing to maximize impact and purchasing power to minimize duplication.
- ***Efficiency.*** INFOhio's statewide purchasing program and partnerships also save taxpayers money and provide better, standardized and equitable products and services to all schools. In addition, INFOhio efficiently delivers support and training to customers through a core group of existing, experienced library media professionals and technical staff, who work as a team to assist individual school districts and building personnel.

*The Ohio Educational Library Media Association (OELMA) commissioned the study conducted by Dr. Ross J. Todd and Dr. Carol C. Kuhlthau of Rutgers University < <http://www.oelma.org/studentlearning.htm> >.

WHAT ARE THE KEY SERVICES OFFERED BY INFOHIO?

Library Automation: *INFOhio cost-effectively provides a statewide, standardized library automation system.*

- INFOhio converts out-dated print card catalogs to online catalogs so that students and educators can access the materials they need, including books and other resources from their own school library or any other automated library across the state.
- Automation is very important to school libraries. Moving schools to a Web-based catalog makes it possible for students and teachers to access a variety of materials not just from the school library, but from any Internet-accessible computer – in the classroom, computer lab or at home – 24/7.
- Currently, more than 1.1 million students using more than 2,400 school libraries across the state benefit from this service. However, over 1,200 libraries remain either not automated or underautomated.

Electronic Resources: *INFOhio provides age-appropriate, curriculum-related, librarian-tested and teacher-approved resources.*

- As a statewide content provider, INFOhio makes it possible for students to retrieve useful and accurate information instead of “surfing the Web” and finding large quantities of unverified information.
- The rich array of available databases includes 6,000 journals, newspapers, magazines and encyclopedias; statistical and biographical materials in text and graphic formats; plus professional resources for educators.
- Year after year, statewide use of INFOhio's Electronic Resources increases. Since 2001, usage of these resources has increased by 635%, and last year alone more than 9.9 million articles were retrieved and printed by students, educators and parents.

HOW DOES INFOHIO PROVIDE ITS SERVICES STATEWIDE?

- INFOhio uses the existing school telecommunications infrastructure to deliver its services. The State allocates 95 cents per student for operation expenses through line 426 of the Ohio Education Computer Network section of the Ohio Department of Education budget. In addition, INFOhio receives centralized funding of 45 cents per student to provide the electronic resources.
- The Information Technology Centers' (ITCs) staff maintains the central servers for the library automation program and provides hands-on support to schools so library media staff can devote more time to students and teachers and less time to technical tasks.
- INFOhio purchases the Core Collection of Electronic Resources cooperatively through Libraries Connect Ohio – a consortium that includes INFOhio, OhioLINK and OPLIN, the academic and public library networks, and the State Library of Ohio. As a result of this arrangement, K-12 achieves substantial savings. The resources cost 45 **cents** per student compared to 45 **dollars** per student, if individual schools purchased only a fraction of these resources.

WHAT IS INFOHIO'S VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY?

For Students:

INFOhio's vision for students will become a reality when *SchoolRooms*[®] – a Web-based portal with a single, Google-like search capability – is introduced in schools automated through INFOhio. *SchoolRooms* was jointly developed with SirsiDynix, INFOhio's automation vendor. This new multimedia online portal will retrieve not only the materials in a student's local school library, but also will list and link to relevant materials in other libraries within the district, the local public library; all relevant INFOhio electronic databases AND search a “safe database” of more than 25,000 Web sites. Significantly, these Web sites were selected by teams of Ohio teachers and librarians and match Ohio's Academic Content Standards. As a result, students will no longer get millions of Web sites, many commercial, providing inaccurate information. INFOhio recently conducted a successful pilot of *SchoolRooms*, and a statewide rollout is planned for next fall.

For Teachers:

We know that teachers don't need an infinite amount of information – they need the right information in the right format at the right time to ensure students' success. That is the goal of INFOhio. And that is why INFOhio is working with the State Department of Education and other K-12 agencies on the statewide initiative, Data Driven Decisions for Academic Achievement (D3A2). This collaborative project will make it easier for teachers and administrators to access timely data – such as test results and student information – which not only is linked to lesson plans, resources, and assessments, but also aligned to Ohio's Academic Content Standards.

Teachers, as well as library media specialists and administrators, need a full-range of in-service training to help them understand the importance of information literacy, learn how to harness the power of technology to transform ordinary classrooms into multi-dimensional learning experiences, and promote the value of life long learning. Consequently, INFOhio offers a full range of support materials, onsite training, Web-based tutorials, Interactive Video Distance Learning (IVDL) workshops to assist in using INFOhio resources in the classroom.

For Parents:

INFOhio recognizes the need to reach K-12 parents so they, in turn, can help their children. Thanks to a grant from the Reinberger Foundation, INFOhio conducted focus groups with parents to better understand parents' needs. As a result, INFOhio initiated The INFOhio Parent Project – an ongoing campaign to show parents how to access and use the powerful INFOhio resources with and for their children.

For School Libraries:

School libraries can provide the environment for the entire breadth of student abilities to grow and develop. They can be so much bigger than the physical space of the past. That's why automating school libraries is so important. INFOhio's efforts so far have had major positive impacts on K-12 education in Ohio. And, with the introduction of *SchoolRooms* next fall, we will take a giant leap into the 21st century, expanding and improving student access to the information they need to be successful both in school and in life.

In addition, INFOhio is transforming its Union e-catalog that currently holds more than 1.3 million resources from Ohio's automated libraries and educational media centers into a Web-based Curriculum Resource Catalog that will link users all around the state to resources aligned with Academic Content Standards. In addition, it will include records for collection development and downloading of metadata into the school library automation system.

INFOhio also is automating regional media centers to facilitate delivering traditional as well as new digital content so teachers from anywhere in the state can simply point and click to locate the multi-media resources they need, when they need them. Today, the collections of almost 40 agencies are online via Medianet, the statewide media booking and tracking software package. INFOhio, in partnership with the Ohio Area Instructional Media Centers, currently offers a growing digital video collection of more than 500 titles, which are licensed at the state level and delivered to the desktop.

CONCLUSION

The future of education requires blending traditional school resources with the power of technology and the electronic tools of the information age. Nowhere is this marriage of old and new more critical than in our school libraries. School libraries are the critical link to preparing learners for their future. They build the foundation for students who pursue higher education to be knowledgeable users of academic and research libraries. And, they prepare individuals to take advantage of public libraries and be lifelong learners. INFOhio provides resources, tools and training to help Ohio school libraries fulfill their mission, while serving all Ohio PreK-12 students, educators and parents.

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