

## Your Library, Technology, and You

In a previous article, we touched briefly on how libraries provide services to the community electronically. This article seeks to expand on that subject, as it is an important part of the value that public libraries provide to anyone seeking access to technology resources. When we think of how patrons use the library for technology, the first and most obvious thing that comes to mind is computer use. It's true that many people nationwide rely on their public libraries for access to the Internet. Studies conducted by the Gates Foundation and the American Library Association have confirmed this. But when it comes to electronic resources, our public library offers so much more.

In addition to providing computers for use in the library, there are myriad resources available online that people can use 24/7. Our New Glarus library, via our membership in the South Central Library System, offers numerous databases providing free information on every subject under the sun. Patrons wanting genealogical information can access Heritage Quest and Ancestry Library. Students needing help with homework can connect with actual teachers via Tutor.com. If you want to learn a new language, you can do it for free via Livemocha. And our subscription to Overdrive means that library users can check out ebooks and audiobooks wherever they are. Maybe your hobby is automotive repair, simply access the database Chilton Library and have step-by-step diagrams outlining bulletins/recalls, repairs or maintenance information for vehicles dating back to 1940.

Studies also show that library patrons rely on their local librarians for help in locating and using information electronically. For example, many job applications are now submitted online. Librarians offer essential help to many job seekers in many ways: everything from how to use a computer and printer, to finding resources in their chosen field. Every single day, our librarians provide library users with help not only with computers and the Internet, but with electronic resources in all forms.

We all know how our libraries provide real monetary benefit to the community by providing free books and other print materials, but we might not realize how much we save per year by having access to all the things our library offers. A fun way to see how much value you get with your library card is here: <http://www.scls.info/pr/calculator/>

Sources:

New Glarus Public Library staff

<http://www.ilovelibraries.org/getinformed/technology>

<http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/01/22/part-4-what-people-want-from-their-libraries/>

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