

Rotherham Library and Information Service

ICT Policy and Plan 2009-2014

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ICT Policy and Plan

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1. Introduction

Developments in ICT have resulted in great changes in people's lives – for work, learning and leisure. These developments have changed the demands being made on Rotherham Library and Information Service (LIS) in terms of expectations of our customers, staff and skill sets, the national and local policy agendas within which we operate, and the means by which we can deliver services.

This document will help to address these demands, offers a vision of the library service for the future, and a framework for embedding the developments into the core services we offer.

There has been much debate as to how public library services need to develop their ICT-based services over the next 5 years, discussed most recently in the [MLA's Action Plan for Public Libraries – Towards 2013](#) which states that

individuals and communities are entitled to excellent public libraries that are integrated with other local services and responsive to local needs; offering books, information and learning resources on the high street and online for everyone at all times.

This ethos is evident in other official policies and priorities: we are now more than half way through the Government's 10 Year Strategy for Libraries ([Framework for the Future](#)) which provides a long term modern mission for libraries, with a strong emphasis on the promotion of reading and informal learning; access to digital skills and services; and building community identity.

All of these themes can be addressed by the continued development of Rotherham's ICT provision, not only in terms of what services we provide to the customer, but also in how ICT can be used to develop and support our greatest resource of all - the staff.

Rotherham LIS already has a strong ICT-based foundation to build on, most notably with the impact of the People's Network and, most recently, the implementation of the new Library Management System. The challenge over the next 5 years will be to 'develop' these services rather than just 'provide' them.

2. Purpose of the Policy and Plan

- To provide direction as to how ICT will be used to enable and enhance the delivery of Rotherham Library and Information Service
- To provide a framework of ICT developments in Rotherham Library and Information Service over the next five years, with direction on how these objectives can be achieved
- To determine how the library service can deliver on national and local policies and priorities
- This document will be reviewed regularly, revised as appropriate and clearly dated so that it remains relevant to both advances in ICT and customer expectations

3. Context – Why is it Important?

The following key national, regional and local priorities will be used to support the strategic development of ICT services in the LIS. At the same time, however, it is important to state that e-Library Services holds to the principle that ICT should be the means to an end rather than the end in itself.

Working from the service requirement, ICT may or may not help to deliver the solution, rather than an ICT solution being applied regardless of other possible solutions and the service need. The emphasis is on information and communication rather than technology.

ICT should enable staff to deliver a better, more efficient service, thereby releasing them to engage in more proactive, personal interaction with members of the communities they serve.

Key Policies and Documents

RMBC Policies and Priorities

[Cultural Strategy Action Plan \(Future Perfect\)](#)

Key objectives:

- To improve the potential of Rotherham People by assisting them to develop through the provision of lifelong learning opportunities
- To increase the economic vitality of the Borough, specifically the town centre and disadvantaged communities through targeted investment in cultural initiatives
- To improve the quality of life and levels of health and well being for all people in Rotherham by increasing and widening participation in cultural activities

- To contribute to safer neighbourhoods and better environments, through the active engagement of priority communities in cultural activity and targeting resources to improve priority sites
- To increase levels of civic pride and citizen involvement through the provision of inclusive cultural services and opportunities for voluntary and community sector involvement
- To embed sustainable development into all Service Plans and frontline delivery
- To strive to ensure that everybody has equal access to the full range of our services, irrespective of gender, age, race, sexuality or religion, through appropriate communication, monitoring of usage, satisfaction ratings and complaints and equality training
- To achieve excellence in cultural services provision through effective performance management, community engagement and partnership working

[Customer Access Strategy 2008-2011](#)

This strategy describes the Council's vision for how citizens will be able to access a range of consistent, quality council services and provides an initial timetable of when things will happen. It focuses on four access 'channels'

- Face to Face
- Telephone
- Web, e-mail, text messaging
- Self Service

[ICT Strategy 2008-2011](#)

The ICT Strategy underpins the delivery of many corporate and Directorate services and projects and the investment that the Council is putting into this area underlines its strategic importance. The ICT Strategy is organised around 7 key themes:

- Information Management
- Customer Focus
- Member Focus
- Staff Focus
- Partnership Focus
- Business Continuity through Information Assurance
- Learning Development and Training

[The Community Strategy](#)

The Community Strategy sets out the 2020 vision for the borough and key priorities and targets. It also includes an action plan identifying the things that partners in Rotherham will do to make progress on the priorities and deliver the targets.

The strategic priorities are framed around five strategic themes:

- Rotherham Achieving
- Rotherham Alive
- Rotherham Learning
- Rotherham Proud
- Rotherham Safe

and underpinned by two cross-cutting themes:

- Fairness
- Sustainable Development

[The Corporate Plan](#)

The Corporate Plan outlines the Council's priorities and makes clear why the Council exists and how it works. The plan directly supports the vision and overall objectives of the Community Strategy for Rotherham. The plan aims to shape and improve service delivery and performance.

[Library and Information Service Team Plan](#)

Vision for the Service:

- Everyone who lives, learns and works and plays in Rotherham can enjoy using the Library Service which is right for them – wherever, however and whenever they need
- All our staff are proud to work for a Service which gives them the tools, skills and confidence they need to enjoy doing their job well. Their vital role in developing and delivering the vision is understood and recognised
- Our partners and stake holders are proud to work with a Service which is seen as a leader in its field and which recognises and values the contribution it makes to their respective and joint targets

[Town Centre Regeneration and RMBC Accommodation Strategy](#)

- Increasing expectations of being 'connected' wherever you are, whenever you wish
- Expectations of high-speed, secure, resilient Internet access across the Borough (including public access in libraries, schools, public buildings, local businesses, voluntary sector); mobile access for staff (Council and Partners) to enable the Council's Worksmart Programme to deliver business transformation.

National Policies and Priorities

[Comprehensive Area Assessment \(CAA\)](#)

CAA looks at how well local services are working together to improve the quality of life for local people. It will make straightforward independent

information available to people about their local services, helping them make informed choices and influence decisions. CAA is:

- A catalyst for improved local services and better value for money
- A source of independent information and assurance for citizens, service users and taxpayers
- An independent evidence base for central government on progress against national priorities

[CIPFA – Public Library Service Standards](#)

A set of 10 public library standards on which Libraries are assessed every year as a benchmarking process, includes the following ICT-related standards:

- Number of libraries open for more than 10 hours a week that have internet and online catalogues
- Number of electronic workstations available to users per 10,000 population

[Delivering Digital Inclusion](#)

This Communities and Local Government Action Plan outlines the key issues relating to the use of digital technology and argues why digital exclusion is an increasingly urgent social problem.

In summary:

- Digital technologies pervade every aspect of modern society. However these opportunities are not enjoyed by the whole of the UK population - for example, 17 million people in the UK still do not use computers and the Internet and there is a strong correlation between digital exclusion and social exclusion
- There are significant and untapped opportunities to use technology better on behalf of citizens and communities. These include improved service planning, design and delivery, particularly to address the needs of disadvantaged groups and individuals

[Framework for the Future: Libraries, Learning and Information in the Next Decade - 10-year strategy document for libraries](#)

(also linked to [MLA's Action Plan for Public Libraries – Towards 2013](#))

The Government's long-term strategic vision for the role of public libraries. Its purpose is to help local and library authorities agree on the key objectives for the public library service with central government and local communities.

The following themes should be at the heart of libraries' modernisation mission:

- Books, reading and informal learning
- Building capacity to deliver transformation
- Community and civic values
- Improving and delivering customer service
- Digital citizenship

[Library Service Modernisation Review](#)

In 2008, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport announced the Library Service Modernisation Review, which would build on the Framework for the Future to define the Government's vision for a modern, world-class public library service. The review will set out some of the necessary steps to achieve this vision and has focused on 5 areas with the following objectives:

1. **Digital Services and Information Literacy:** to explore and make recommendations on the digital services required to enable public libraries to meet the current and future needs of their local communities 24/7; assess the skills, technology, content, service structures, licensing issues and partnerships necessary to develop those services; and consider the associated information literacy needs, and how they might be addressed in the delivery of those services
2. **A Skilled and Responsive Workforce:** to review and make recommendations on the skills mix required to deliver a 21st century library service and entry routes into the profession; the ways in which the public library workforce can be locally empowered and become more diverse; and on the local and national leadership and entrepreneurial culture needed to develop this workforce
3. **Capturing Impact:** to consider and made recommendations on the local and national data necessary to capture the impact of libraries on their local communities, which will be effective in securing the support and engagement of partners; to identify and make better use of sources of information, especially from consumers and from across government; to consider and make recommendations on the need for a new national definition of a minimum service standard
4. **A Community-led Service:** to explore and make recommendations on innovative models of service delivery that integrate libraries with other local services; that make libraries increasingly responsive to the needs of their communities and that involve users in their design and delivery
5. **Funding Innovation:** to review and make recommendations on innovative partnership and funding models that can release additional capital and revenue funding streams to enable service modernisation and improve delivery.

The review should be published in September 2009.

Transformational Government Agenda

A continuation of the e-government agenda, the transformational government (t-gov) strategy identifies three core elements:

- Services enabled by IT must be designed around the citizen or business – not the provider – and be provided through modern, co-ordinated delivery channels
- Government must move to a shared services culture – in the front-office, back-office, in information and in infrastructure – and release efficiencies by standardisation, simplification and sharing
- There must be broadening and deepening of government's professionalism in terms of the planning, delivery, management, skills and governance of IT enabled change

Other Factors

In addition to these key policy documents, traditional library services are also under pressure to develop from other 'added value' online services which are challenging the position of libraries as an information service.

We are moving towards an age of customer-empowerment: libraries are losing the traditional role of mediating between users and the information resources they require. The question is being asked as to whether the librarian and the information role of the library are now becoming a thing of the past, as web users find for themselves the information they need.

Added to this there is the incredible rise of Google to the status of a household word. This search engine dominates the field and has given rise to quotations such as "Google is disintermediating the library" ([in OCLC Report, Pattern Recognition, 2003](#))

Customers, especially children and young people, are more likely to use community sites to such as [Yahoo Answers](#) and [Wikipedia](#) to get answers to their questions, rather than asking at the enquiry desk or using a traditional reference resource – they trust the opinions and knowledge of their peers more than any official source.¹ This places the LIS role as information provider in a precarious position.

Libraries do not want to simply be used as glorified internet cafés. We need to develop innovative online services so that these customers actually choose to use us, setting libraries as an integral part of their lives for leisure and learning.

¹ This is being somewhat addressed by [Enquire](#) the national online 'ask a librarian' service, who are now Yahoo Answers Knowledge Partners. Enquire staff have answered a total of 539 Yahoo questions, with 418 being cited as 'best answer' (as of 15/06/09) – therefore raising the profile of library staff as quality information providers and signposted Yahoo Answers users to their own local libraries and/or quality online resources.

4. Current Position - Where Are We Now?

Public Provision

The national Government New Opportunities Fund enabled the Library & Information Service to greatly extend its provision of public ICT services when the People's Network was implemented in 2002.

Every static library site was equipped with computers, printers and scanners. A high capacity network infrastructure (100MB) was installed and free internet access offered to all, compared with the previous service of less than 25 computers offering internet access charged at £1.50 per hour.

Library customers currently have access to 173 computers across 16 static sites which provide the following services:

- Access to Microsoft Office software, photo-editing software, scanning and printing facilities
- Free internet access for up to 3 hours a day
- Accessible hardware and software - every library has at least one computer equipped with screen magnification and text to speech software for visually impaired users, along with various adaptive mice and keyboards²
- Access to online subscription resources, web based content and online learning
- Signposting and access to quality information
- Access to online e-government services via 'Council Connect' desktop
- Access to the online public catalogue -Talis Prism - which allows customers to search for, request and renew library items.
- Online transactions/self-service options - netloan PC booking system, netloan kiosk in the Central Library for PC booking and print management and Talis Prism

Anti-virus software is installed on all public access and staff PCs. All electrical equipment is PAT tested and fully maintained.

Public internet access is filtered using Bess Software.

The computers can be booked in advance either in person, by telephone or online using the netloan PC booking system and are available to all library customers. People's Network are refreshed on a 4 year cycle as part of a new agreement with the Council's corporate partners, RBT.

In addition to the self service options available online, customers and staff at Wickersley and Mowbray Gardens Community Libraries are benefiting from

² This assistive technology was initially funded by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2002. Additional funding was received from Rotherham Federation of Tenants and Residents (RotherFed) in 2007 to upgrade the Supernova software in the Central Library

Self Service Kiosks which allow customers to issue, renew and return their own items. This is a perfect example of how ICT can be used to release staff from certain duties allowing them more time for meaningful interaction with customers by delivering other activities and services.

There are certain limitations as to what the Library Service can offer as a public service and the [Acceptable Use Policy](#) sets out the basis on which the public are offered internet and other ICT facilities through the People's Network.

Public ICT Training

It is recognised that library staff are not generally qualified trainers. However, it is reasonable to expect that staff are able to help customers make the best use of the ICT services offered. As more and more services become available online it is crucial that staff are on hand to help customers make use of new technologies and to help bridge the digital gap faced by certain members of the community.

Apart from general help and troubleshooting associated with ICT use, static library sites also offer public ICT training at various levels.

Work with Adults and Older People

[Passport to Learning](#)

A range of different internet taster sessions introducing customers to some of the useful things that can be done online, such as Family History, Job Searching, Social Networking, Online Resources and Your Life Online (a guide to e-government and local resources/transactions.)

The sessions also cover basic ICT skills, from handling a mouse to sending an email. These sessions are particularly popular with older people.

[Online Learning](#)

Signposting to some of the best online courses available, covering a variety of subjects. Ideal for customers who can't make it to the library sessions or just prefer to work at their own pace.

Work with Children and Young People

Wherever possible we will work closely with young people to encourage their further use of the LIS and to develop their literacy, computer and social skills with activities such as the following:

- [Homework Support](#)
- [Interactive Clubs](#)
- ['Safe Surfing' – Internet safety sessions and guidance](#)

The Children & Young People Services team in LIS will be involved in the development and delivery of such services.

Work with Ethnic Minorities

Every effort will be made to offer services to minority ethnic communities, with provision of materials in minority languages and configuration of computers to accommodate non-English languages.

The Cultural Awareness Officer and staff will be fully involved in the development and delivery of such services, which at the moment includes access to the online citizenship training course 'Life in Britain'.

Where need arises ICT courses may be delivered specifically to groups whose first language is not English, possibly by using volunteer trainers from specific communities.

Work with People with Disabilities

Assistive technology is installed at every library site and services are continuously reviewed in liaison with community and Council services such as the Access Liaison Group and Social Services.

Support is given to groups wishing to arrange visits to libraries to use the ICT facilities. Requirements are identified and visits are initially supported by e-Library Services and staff at the particular site.

Partnerships

The LIS will work with partners (e.g. third party training bodies) to deliver ICT training in areas where we do not currently have the skills or staff capacity. A charge is made to these groups, which have their own sources of funding, for the use of our ICT centres ([link to current charges](#)). This charge contributes to the library's "hidden" costs such as network and software licences, technical support and maintenance and services such as printing.

Staff Provision

General ICT provision, including access to Office software, Internet and Intranet and associated support is provided by the Council's Corporate partner, RBT. Staff computers are currently refreshed on a 3-year cycle.

Staff internet access is filtered using Websense Software.

All staff must adhere to the [Corporate Electronic Communications Policy](#)

Library Management System (LMS)

The implementation of the new Talis LMS in 2007 has perhaps been the most significant ICT development in recent years. Talis underpins the efficient delivery of services ranging through the acquisition of stock, EDI invoicing, maintenance of the library catalogue, stock movement, membership records, charges, cash management, customer loans and requests for items, and management information reports.

All staff are required to be trained in ICT to a minimum of European Computer Driving Licence level and receive full training in the use of the LMS in order to deliver efficient services.

Talis also enables the LIS to deliver excellent – and innovative – 24/7 customer services, meeting national requirements in terms of online access to information and services:

- Talis Prism (online library catalogue) – library members can search for and reserve items, renew loans and view account information, including loan history
- Talis Message (automated telephone service) – library members can use the automated telephone line to listen to account information, renew items and find out library opening times. Also gives the option to link straight through to a member of staff during Central Library opening times
- SMS Notifications – library members can register to receive free text message notifications re: overdue items and reservations waiting collection
- The Mobile Library uses Talis Mobile for offline issue and discharge of items

Staff ICT Training

Staff are expected to be trained to European Computer Driving Licence, or equivalent level, as a minimum standard of ICT competency³. This is supported by ongoing staff training to maintain ICT skill levels, through focussed sessions on the Library and Information Service's Training Plan, the CPD/PDR process and the Next Step programme.

Staff ICT training and support should be at the heart of any ICT Policy, as highlighted in a recent article:

³ ECDL training for staff was initially funded by the New Opportunities Fund and later through our involvement with the South Yorkshire e-Learning Project. Qualification funding ended in 2007, so now prospective staff are expected to have a Level 2 ICT qualification (or equivalent skills) upon application for a library position.

When we talk about what libraries will look like and how they will operate, we have to think about the future roles of LIS staff, the competencies they will need and how they can be acquired. It is hard to plan ahead in an environment subject to powerful, but unpredictable, political, economic, sociological and technological forces but ... we can look for signals, and spot trends that will help us prepare for whatever is in store

(‘Get Ready to Use your Expertise Creatively’ by Sheila Corral in CILIP Library and Information Gazette 22 May-4 June 2009)

The LIS recognises that the development of ICT-based services will have a significant impact on library staff. Roles will change and new customer relationships will develop. The impact of the new developments will need to be carefully understood and managed, and e-Library Services will make sure that staff skills are continuously updated and deployed so that the new developments have the best chance of succeeding. After all, if staff are comfortable with new technologies and developments, they will be more likely to promote these to customers.

The 24-Hour Library

The LIS currently offers access to the following 24/7 online services:

[The Library Website](#)

e-Library Services maintain the library pages on the corporate website. The site is under continual development to be more user-friendly and attractive. It contains general information about the various library services as well as acting as a portal to other online resources and online transactions.

A new corporate content management system - *Jadu* - is due to be implemented in November 2009 and it is hoped that this will allow the LIS to develop a much more content-rich library site in terms of audio-visual features and interactive options.

Jadu will also replace the corporate Intranet system and will be developed to be a repository for staff information, including meeting notes, work guidelines and training.

[Council Connect](#)

The People’s Network and OPAC computers all have the ‘Council Connect’ website as their home page.

Council Connect has been developed as an access point for local online/transactional services making it easier for citizens to view and access these facilities from one entry point, at a time and place most convenient to them. Improved access to transactional services is an important element of the [Customer Access Strategy 2008-2011](#) and Council Connect contributes well to this vision.

[Online Public Access Catalogue](#)

Talis Prism is the online library catalogue. Library members can search for and reserve items, renew loans and view account information, including loan history.

In 2009/10 the Library Service will be upgrading to Prism 3. Talis Prism 3 is an attractive, modern and flexible OPAC and promises to *increase the success rate of users' searches, thereby increasing use of the library's stock and reducing pressure on library staff*. Enrichments can be added into the catalogue, including book cover images, summaries, tables of contents, reviews, author biographies and awards, and audio-visual material.

See the [Talis Prism website](#) for more information.

[Online Reference](#)

The LIS subscribes to the following online resources which library members can access for free on any library computer:

- Ancestry
- Britannica
- British Standards
- Education City
- Go Citizen
- Grove Art
- Grove Music
- Kompass
- Oxford English Dictionary
- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
- Oxford Reference
- Screen Online
- Theory Test Pro

[Online Enquiry Service](#)

The traditional information-providing role of the Library has been questioned with the widespread growth of access to the internet and the prevalence of Google as a powerful search engine. However, there is still an important role for libraries in the evaluation of web sites to provide meaningful information for the customer, accurately and quickly.

The LIS currently participates in the national Enquire⁴ service – the 24/7 live 'ask a librarian' service, which enables us to signpost customers to quality online resources and showcase our skills as information professionals.

⁴ Enquire is arguably the most successful of the MLA's People's Network Services, which also includes Read (online reading resource and discussion board) and Discover (a collection of resources from libraries, museums and archives with the option of personalised bookmarking)

The subscription to Enquire also includes use of OCLC's QuestionPoint software enabling us to host local chat sessions. To date these have focussed on specific topics such as Homework Help, The Reading Clinic and Internet Safety, rather than being used as an extension to online reference services.

[Safe Surfing – Internet safety sessions and guidance](#)

The LIS has, from the very beginning, been committed to providing information about online safety to children and young people culminating with the development of an interactive Safe Surfing Guide in 2006. This was very favourably received by staff and customers alike, and also led to the e-Library Services team delivering the session to Y5 and Y6 pupils in 17 of Rotherham's primary schools.

The Safe Surfing guide is currently being re-developed to take into account changes in internet use of the past few years, especially new Social Networking trends. This will be launched in September 2009.

[Facebook](#)

Millions of internet users are now creating their own information, building their own content and establishing their own online communities as part of the Web 2.0 revolution. Web 2.0 technologies have led to the development and evolution of web-based communities by facilitating communication, information sharing, user generated content and collaboration. Examples of Web 2.0 services include:

- [Social Networking](#)
- [Video Sharing](#)
- [Picture Sharing](#)
- [Wikis](#)
- [Blogs](#)

(See [Web 2.0 Magazine's Top 100 Web 2.0 Sites](#) for more examples)

Internet users are more likely to go to a community space rather than a corporate or official website, so the Library's Facebook presence enables us to:

- Make ourselves more visible on the web - we need to be where our customers are: on the social web
- Continue to place libraries at the heart of the community - Libraries should be at the heart of the community in real life and online
- Provides us with a less formal way of interacting with customers - social network site users are more likely to share their individual and interest information with us and other users
- Signpost customers to the qualitative resources available on the corporate website and in library sites

5. Aims and Objectives - Where Are We Heading?

The Rotherham Library & Information Service mission is:

*Everyone who lives, learns, works and plays in Rotherham can enjoy using the Library Service which is right for them –
wherever, however and whenever they need*

In terms of 'how we get there', libraries will always be led by the latest policies, strategies and targets in terms of what services we have to offer, but also part of the process is to anticipate what skills and services we might need in the future, and provide *proactive* rather than *reactive* services. The challenge isn't actually to simply move towards offering more e-services, but to stay open to new innovations and maintain the pace of change experienced during the last 5 years.

To this end, the Library Service is committed to develop emerging technologies to extend and enhance library services as outlined below:

2009-2014	
Where are we heading?	How will we get there?
Provide ICT-based Library Services as a standard integrated element of service delivery and not as an additional feature, in particular in terms of developing 'traditional' services.	<p>Provide digital download options for books, music and film.</p> <p>Provide access to library staff expertise by implementing an 'online enquiry desk' service.</p> <p>Develop and promote free access to online subscription resources, including staff awareness of what's available.</p> <p>Implement Talis Prism 3 and the new Corporate CMS with appropriate enhancements, especially those which would enhance the library experience and comparable to the commercial sector; for example, information about authors who write similarly, information about new stock and charts of the most popular titles, reviews of books, reader-to-reader recommendations.</p> <p>Provide clear access to e-government services through the development of 'Council Connect'</p>
Ensure staff are competent and confident in the use of technology and able to assist customers.	Identify immediate priorities for staff training that will have the greatest impact on enhancing public service and staff efficiency (Training Needs Analysis).

	<p>Develop an ongoing technology training program for staff at all levels, and provide equipment and training in a form that is accessible and effective for Library staff (e.g. online training rather than face-to-face which has implications for staffing sites).</p> <p>Staff training and current awareness briefings will be made more accessible via online training videos, Wiki, blogs and podcasts, meaning that more staff can access these from their own workplace at a time that suits them.</p> <p>Establish standards regarding staff knowledge and ability to use technology, and include them in the annual CPD/PDR process.</p>
<p>Support customer access to formal and informal learning opportunities.</p>	<p>Develop Passport to Learning into a online learning package meaning that more people can access the sessions at a time to suit them.</p> <p>Develop online Homework Help provision (in partnership with the Schools Library Service) to signpost children and young people to quality educational web resources, including the promotion of Education City.</p> <p>Develop connections with partner organisations to provide formal learning opportunities (e.g. UK Online, Adult Community Learning).</p>
<p>Improve the sustainability and reliability of the People's Network facilities in order to support customer access to services.</p>	<p>In 2009 we will embark on a refresh of the out dated People's Network computers following agreement with RBT, with reliable and up-to-date hardware, software and technical support.</p> <p>Once the refresh is complete, we will continue to upgrade and introduce modern technology to meet the needs of our customers based on an agreed plan with RBT.</p> <p>This plan will also be developed to focus on having firm plans in place for the next PN upgrade - based on a 4 year refresh cycle - following a full review and evaluation of the 2009 experience.</p>

<p>Improving staff efficiency through the use of new technology, including self-service systems</p>	<p>Explore the benefits of RFID in terms of speeding up library processes such as self-service and stock management.</p> <p>Roll-out self service units across all new library buildings, and existing sites as appropriate.</p>
<p>Improve provision for ICT services on mobile library vehicle and in community venues where appropriate.</p>	<p>Implement successful wireless solution on the Mobile Library so that staff and customers can have access to live LMS data and are able to use the internet for research or leisure purposes.</p> <p>This development will also help staff undertake more community engagement work as wireless access options means that staff in effect can take the 'library on a laptop' out into a community and target groups who don't currently use us, by introducing them to our services and encouraging them to visit our physical spaces.</p>
<p>Explore how different technologies are being used to access information and produce data in different formats.</p>	<p>Develop podcasting and RSS feeds to keep 'customers-on-the-go' up to date with library news and events, including creating Prism 3 content in XHTML-MP (mobile profile) for viewing on restricted media devices (e.g. smart phones).</p>
<p>Develop a more user-centred, personalised service, responsive to the needs of different communities.</p>	<p>Use Talis data to inform service design for specific usergroups.</p> <p>Use Talis data to collect information about customer's interests and reading preferences in order to inform them about new services and stock .</p> <p>Develop relationships with customers through electronic communication, e.g. Facebook discussion boards and regular newsletters.</p>

6. Strengths, Constraints and Challenges

Key Strengths

- Over 170 public access PCs across 16 library sites
- Adaptive hardware and software available in all libraries
- Software available to support those who are required to take the UK Citizenship Test
- Good range of online reference resources available, including access to the official DVLA Theory Test
- All library staff expected to have a Level 2 ICT qualification - 91.6% of customers who participated in the last e-Plus survey thought that the knowledge of staff was good or very good (2005)
- Fast, reliable network links (100Mb)
- Online PC Booking and Print Management System (netloan)
- Self Service Kiosks in 2 library sites with a view to implementing in 3 more sites during 2009/10, including the Central Library
- In-house resources to support LMS, People's Network and website
- Success of Absolute Beginners and Passport to Learning – libraries provide a non threatening environment where customers can learn at their own pace
- Talis LMS enabling efficient working practices

Key constraints

- No live connection to the Mobile Library or other outreach services for access to the Library Management System or Internet
- Reaching capacity in terms of public use of PCs in some libraries – PCs are currently being used for just 32% of available time across all sites despite being perceived as a popular and well used service (2008/09 figures)
- Dependant on RBT decision making and priorities, which impede or slow progress with certain developments
- Proposed service developments are often hindered by RBT costs for consultancy and/or implementation work

Key challenges

- Maintaining and developing current ICT resources
- Challenging staff perceptions about the relationship between electronic and traditional library services
- Ensuring that the Library Management System can supply reliable performance data we need and is capable of developing to support changes in service delivery
- Developing our website to create an interactive 24/7 Library
- Creating and making available electronic information and learning resources of professional quality

- Increasing take-up of services as a percentage of population, especially with hard to reach communities
- Adequacy of resources – although a PC refresh programme has been agreed with RBT (until 2015), additional hardware and software must be obtained from the core library budget. At this stage, it is also unclear what will happen after 2015 when the corporate partnership RBT is due to end
- Developing staffing and working practices to integrate newly developing electronic resources, both in terms of content and communication with customers and access to e-learning

7. Conclusion

The implementation of major developments - the People's Network, a new Library Management System, Netloan – always raises the question, "What Next?"

The speed of developments in the field of Information and Communication Technology and the evolving role of the public library service are such that the only thing appearing certain is that change is here to stay. While people want access to information, at whatever level, the Library Service will continue to adapt both its services and its policies.

But along with this flexibility we will need discernment so that we are not swept along by every new idea or new technology: at every stage we should ask 'what is best for the library service?' and, more importantly, 'what is best for the library user?'

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8. References and Links

Links to **documents** referred to in this ICT Policy and Plan. All sites accessed on 24/08/09.

Acceptable Use Policy (Rotherham Library and Information Service, 2009)	http://tinyurl.com/notfxo
CIPFA – Public Library Service Standards (Department of Culture, Sport, Media and Leisure, 2009)	http://tinyurl.com/lqp452
The Community Strategy (Rotherham Partnership, 2008)	http://tinyurl.com/n7vgsa
Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) (Audit Commission, 2009)	http://tinyurl.com/nfa3l4
Corporate Electronic Communications Policy (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, 2008)	http://tinyurl.com/n5qcrm <i>intranet link</i>
The Corporate Plan (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, 2008)	http://tinyurl.com/lxt6sv
Cultural Strategy Action Plan (Future Perfect) (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, 2006)	http://tinyurl.com/ll55jc <i>intranet link</i>
Customer Access Strategy (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, 2008)	http://tinyurl.com/l3dsku
Delivering Digital Inclusion (Communities and Local Government, 2008)	http://tinyurl.com/5o2j pz
Framework for the Future: Libraries, Learning and Information in the Next Decade (Department of Culture, Sport, Media and Leisure, 2003)	http://tinyurl.com/mbzzkq
ICT Strategy (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, 2008)	http://tinyurl.com/kq7de3
Library and Information Service Team Plan (Rotherham Library and Information Service, 2009)	http://tinyurl.com/ncgxma <i>intranet link</i>
Library Service Modernisation Review (Department of Culture, Sport, Media and Leisure, 2008)	http://tinyurl.com/6o8hum
MLA’s Action Plan for Public Libraries – Towards 2013 (Museums, Archives and Libraries Council, 2008)	http://tinyurl.com/ktmrng
OCLC Report: Pattern Recognition (Online Computer Library Centre, 2003)	http://tinyurl.com/nucmdf
Transformational Government Agenda (Improvement Network, 2005)	http://tinyurl.com/ncl9ku

Links to **websites** referred to in this ICT Policy and Plan. All sites accessed on 24/08/09.

Blog Example	www.eblogger.com
Council Connect	www.rotherhamonline.info/contactcentre2.htm
Enquire	www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk
Facebook	www.facebook.com
Homework Support	www.rotherhamonline.info/homeworkhelp.htm
ICT Hire Charges	http://tinyurl.com/mm74m6
Interactive Clubs	http://tinyurl.com/ntst33
Library Facebook Page	www.tiny.cc/rotherham
Library Service Website	www.rotherham.gov.uk/libraries
Online Learning Links	http://tinyurl.com/ne725w
Online Reference Resources	http://tinyurl.com/mko4b2
Passport to Learning	http://tinyurl.com/nr4q9g
Picture Sharing Example	www.flickr.com
Safe Surfing Guide	www.rotherhamonline.info/safe%20surfing/title.htm
Talis Prism	http://library.rotherham.gov.uk/TalisPrism/
Video Sharing Example	www.youtube.com
Web 2.0 Magazine's Top 100 Web 2.0 Sites	http://tinyurl.com/y8xmto
Wikipedia	www.wikipedia.org
Yahoo Answers	http://answers.yahoo.com/