

PRESS RELEASE

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Ottawa Library celebrates five years of automation

It is hard to believe but five years ago this February 15, the Ottawa Library turned on its automated system and stepped into the unknown. What seemed so scary back then is old hat today.

Now every time a patron checks out a book, he or she uses a shiny, bar-coded library card. Currently, the library has 13, 449 cardholders who checked out a total of 125, 203 items in 2005.

Library staff members are really pleased with the system, which has provided for more staff time, fewer mistakes and quicker service. Rosemary Honn, circulation and reference mentioned, “we love being able to easily tell patrons what they currently have checked out. We don’t have to count cards and statistics are much more painless to track as well.”

Hal Bundy, circulation and reference, points out that, “we used to use one card-punch machine so we could not help patrons simultaneously. Now we have three computer terminals which allow us to serve more people quickly.”

Pam Miller and Terry Schaeffer, catalogers, feel their jobs are so much easier now and they see the benefit for the public as well. “The online public access catalog is so convenient and user-friendly. It’s much better than the old card catalog—less cumbersome and faster. Patrons can place holds, search our catalog, request interlibrary loan materials and renew books all from their living rooms,” according to Pam. Terry adds that, “the system does a lot of background work for us including daily circulation counts, overdue notices and holds lists. Another perk is that we can search the notes of an item record for a particular word or name. We’re no longer limited to just subject, author and title searches.”

In addition, Lori Clayton, circulation, said, “We used to physically add new cards to the catalog and remove those cards that were for discarded or lost books. This was very time consuming and was a waste of paper, too. Now it’s all electronic.”

Please stop by the library next Wednesday, February 15 to celebrate 5 years of successful, automated service to the Ottawa community.