

OHIONET Strategic Plan

2008-2011



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OHIONET Mission

Mission Statement

As a membership organization, OHIONET provides value to libraries and information centers through innovative technology solutions, programs, products, training and consulting. We respond to member needs with experience, knowledge and creativity to support effective resource management.

OHIONET Vision

Vision Statement

OHIONET assists members in acquiring, implementing and using technology solutions to manage operations and resources to meet end user needs.

OHIONET Tagline

Tagline

Transforming Through Technology.

Executive Summary

Once described as a single industry, the term “libraries” more accurately refers to a diverse array of organizations providing information through a wide variety of delivery mechanisms, both physical and virtual. With Ohio’s recent fiscal downturn, the economic promise of libraries is extraordinary. While Ohio has experienced successive years of budget cuts, with no relief in sight, opportunities abound for organizations interested in pooling resources through a collaborative model. OHIONET’s strategic direction continues to focus on such collaborations.

A Strong Foundation

OHIONET can foster collaboration amongst libraries because of the strong base upon which it was built. Beginning in the early 1980’s, OHIONET recognized the importance of a long-term commitment to library innovation and from that the first seeds of collaboration were sewn. To facilitate and further strengthen such a commitment, OHIONET worked to wed its strategic direction with the direction of the libraries it served. These member libraries were given a voice to provide direct input to OHIONET through its Board of Trustees, through its advisory council system, and now through standard electronic communication and Web 2.0 tools.

This communication model and the advisory council system have been especially beneficial to OHIONET’s continuing education program. Topics for training

sessions come directly from feedback from advisory council members, as well as direct communication from past attendees and the OHIONET membership at large. The role of the advisory council is especially helpful for spotting future trends and library issues in a timely manner. It remains our goal to provide quality continuing education activities and to develop new services that do not duplicate the efforts of our partners.

Because Ohio is blessed with one of the most progressive library communities in the country, OHIONET has always had to think outside of the box. This thinking requires constant planning, adjustments, and a willingness to communicate openly and effectively—traits that other library membership organizations just don’t share. This is why OHIONET has been successful for over 30 years.

A Highly Competitive Marketplace Worldwide

Even in the 21st Century, libraries continue to play an important role not only as education centers for communities, but also as providers of access to new technologies. This is especially true in times of economic downturn.

As a cost-saving measure, many Ohio libraries have joined various consortia to consolidate their buying power and explore resource-sharing opportunities based on the individual library’s various needs. OHIONET recognizes that this may pose some challenges or impact OHIONET’s services. Because OHIONET is committed to not duplicating services it looks for ways to collaborate with the various consortia. Currently, OHIONET’s consortial partners include:

- OhioLINK – (Academic libraries)
- OPLIN – (Public libraries)
- INFOhio – (K-12 libraries)

In terms of that collaboration, OHIONET continues to seek opportunities to aid in the development of library products based on members' need. In the past, OHIONET led the product development that resulted in CatExpress, first for INFOhio and later for all libraries. OHIONET also works with the various consortia to identify training needs that they cannot or will not provide, instead turning to us for guidance and instruction.

Vision and Leadership

Another by-product of a tough economic climate is increased statewide competition as various organizations fight for an increasing smaller piece of the pie. Maintaining OHIONET's current position will require a strong vision, tight organizational planning, savvy targeted marketing, and prudent use of resources. This plan will only serve to strengthen our ties to the library community which OHIONET serves, as well as demonstrate why OHIONET is such a value to its members.

The current strategic plan, as well as the expertise of OHIONET's current directorial and managerial team, serves to provide a clear direction for the organization. It will also serve as a guiding tool as OHIONET continues to provide the high level of customer service our member libraries demand. One new way of providing such customer service is to revamp our current web site. With the addition of Web 2.0 technologies such as blogs and integrated instant messaging modules, OHIONET will be able to solicit timelier feedback from its members, which in turn will allow those needs to be met more quickly.

As always, OHIONET will work with any organization that believes in supporting libraries and provides quality products, services, and information resources. OHIONET continues to maintain relationships within the following groups:

- K-12 education
- Private and public universities and colleges
- Public libraries
- Community colleges
- Government agencies
- Large and small companies to invest in information services
- Venture capitalists willing to invest in the future of libraries and information
- Non-profit organizations

In addition to exploring new collaborative possibilities within the above groups, OHIONET is also focused on further cultivating its relationship with the following:

- Libraries (of all types) outside of Ohio's geographical borders
- The Midwest Federation - a collaborative group of regional networks

As always, these strategies require considerable investment of time and resources to achieve their intended outcome. In order to be successful, we need the involvement and action of various partners across Ohio, as well as the country.

Immediate Priorities

The final facet that a downturned economy demands of a membership organization is that it must be especially diligent in terms of its cost-effectiveness. In particular, OHIONET must strive to offer competitive prices for the physical products we offer, as well as the personal

services we provide to our members. OHIONET must be cognizant of the various libraries' budgets while not compromising on the quality and in some cases quantity of the products and services we provide.

We want to continue to be seen as a partner to libraries, not just as a vendor. OHIONET has worked hard to overcome this misconception in the past few years. Now we must take it a step further and look for new ways to collaborate. Through this collaboration, OHIONET will:

- Work with underserved libraries, both in Ohio and in neighboring states
- Expand our membership base through outreach efforts
- Support librarians both new and seasoned with training efforts
- Support new grants and funding opportunities for libraries
- Explore and implement technological solutions for libraries
- Collaborate with other like-minded library networks in the Midwest

In summary, the innovation and drive of Ohio's library community will still be strong, even through tough economic times. OHIONET will be the organization that helps those libraries weather this particular financial storm. We will continue to provide superior products and thoughtful, thorough training sessions and consulting opportunities. OHIONET has a strong legacy of providing such things for over 30 years, and we will continue to do so going forward.

The Strategic Plan

Goals and Objectives

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1. Explore Complementary Services

- a. Improve customer access to online account information.
- b. Identify vendors of core library services and pursue vendor agreements.
 - i. Cataloging Interlibrary Loan, Reference.

2. Explore Knowledge Management Services

- a. Create an online mechanism for staff to share information among themselves and members.
- b. Develop customized database solutions, i.e., membership and special collection databases, and templates for databases.

3. Expand our market/customer base

- a. Investigate additional consortia services.
 - i. Investigate the creation of a Community College consortium.
- b. Expand electronic database program offerings to public libraries.
- c. Grow Special Libraries and other institutional membership as well as non member services.
- d. Continue Advisory Councils as a forum for member input.
- e. Continue Annual Membership Meetings and regional updates.
- f. Distribute OHIONETWORK to public libraries and non-members.

4. Continuously benchmark ourselves against other organizations to identify & ensure best practices

- a. Benchmark OHIONET services against OCLC Networks and other library organizations.
- b. Develop awareness of best practices of other exemplary organizations.

5. Develop an organization that is responsive to technology trends

- a. Explore expansion of third party administration and managerial service for integrated library systems and related services.
- b. Explore technological opportunities for the K-12 market.
- c. Develop programs and services for wireless technology.
- d. Continue to explore emerging technologies such as RFID.
- e. Expand upon the Digital Symposia by offering consulting services to libraries for digital preservation projects.
- f. Align staffing to improve productivity

6. Provide training in response to needs of members

- a. Offer continuing education workshops at library sites statewide.
- b. Continue to develop training on current library trends and issues.
- c. Explore e-learning as a delivery mechanism for selected OCLC Services.
- d. Work with partners to develop statewide training for core competencies.
- e. Provide training on network security.

7. Continue to develop partnership opportunities

- a. Co-sponsor conferences and workshops that meet the information needs of a multi-type audience.
- b. Offer library speakers and programs developed by the Alliance to the Ohio library community.
- c. Partner with other library organizations to bring national conference programs to an Ohio audience.

8. OHIONET staff will develop a plan to accomplish strategic goals

- a. Prioritize goals; assign responsibility; and establish timelines for completion.
- b. Hold quarterly staff meetings to gauge progress toward goals and realign priorities as necessary.
- c. Track library and information trends.
- d. Improve interdepartmental communication.
- e. Develop a process to evaluate and develop new products and services.
- f. All OHIONET staff proactively communicates information regarding products and services and their benefits to customers.
- g. Insure all staff has the training and tools to accomplish their work and to assist customers with additional product and service offerings.