

NEAL-SCHUMAN
LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY
COMPANION:

A BASIC GUIDE FOR
LIBRARY STAFF

Third Edition

John J. Burke

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Preface

Technology infuses every aspect of every day in every library, and thus basic technology skills are a prerequisite for everyone who works in a library. I designed the *Neal-Schuman Library Technology Companion: A Basic Guide for Library Staff*, Third Edition, to give colleagues a sound and sensible way to consider, access, and use library technologies to better meet the needs of our users. This book and its companion blog (<http://techcompanion.blogspot.com>) are designed to be a one-stop overview of all technologies used in libraries today.

The pages that follow describe the broad scope of systems, software, and specialized devices available to libraries and show how they are integrated into our institutions' unique processes. The book offers basic definitions, suggests applications and uses, considers adoption issues, and troubleshoots potential problems. All busy professionals need to learn how to evaluate these technologies and assess their usefulness, so the guide provides essential know-how in planning, security, purchasing, and more. Perhaps most important, a solid grounding in the topic will make library staff members more comfortable when speaking with colleagues or interacting with patrons.

This third edition of the guide revises the basics and explains the advances introduced in just the past few years. Library 2.0 technologies have become more central to the work of library staff, open source software is more widely used, and MP3s have further revolutionized the sharing and use of audio content. Two new chapters, 0 and 10, add guidance from the field on the technologies most heavily in use and a closer look at the interactive, mashed-up offerings of Web 2.0. Chapter 2 is fully updated with new sources for tracking down technology information. The world of information technology changes at a

relentless pace and today's library managers, new librarians, support staff members, and students need a simple way to become informed and stay current.

The *Neal-Schuman Library Technology Companion* contains 19 chapters arranged in five parts.

Part I, "Library Technology Basics," explores the basics.

- Chapter 0, "What Folks in the Trenches Know That You Should Too," adds some context to the study of these information technologies and services by revealing the results of a survey of working library staff members and the technologies they regularly use.
- Chapter 1, "The History of Information Technology in Libraries," delivers a historical overview of the technologies that have affected libraries.
- Chapter 2, "How to Find Information on Library Technologies," presents resources for learning more about the latest developments and issues.
- Chapter 3, "Evaluating, Buying, and Implementing Technology," offers a guide for appraising and purchasing equipment and putting systems into operation.

Part II, "Technology Tools for Libraries," examines the apparatus.

- Chapter 4, "Computers in Libraries: Desktops, Laptops, Tablets, Handheld Devices, and Office Applications," shows how the computer has evolved and what its new uses allow.
- Chapter 5, "Computer Networks in Libraries: The Internet, Modems, WiFi, and E-mail," takes on the wired—and now wireless—world.
- Chapter 6, "Whither the Library Catalog? Library Systems, Discover Layers, and Open Source Options," reveals the vast growth in computer access products.
- Chapter 7, "Storage Devices in Libraries: Paper, Microfilm, DVDs, MP3s, and Flash Drives," explains various techniques to record, retrieve, and access information.
- Chapter 8, "Library Databases and Electronic Resources: Full-text Periodicals, E-books, and E-reference Collections," addresses this important and growing body of materials.

- Chapter 9, “The Internet’s Impact on Finding Information: A Is for Amazon, G Is for Google,” explores both the technical and societal changes brought on by the Internet.
- Chapter 10, “Web 2.0: Social Networking, Second Life, and Skype,” marks the advent of new communication tools and technologies for interacting with our patrons.

Part III, “How Libraries Put Technology to Work,” takes the information from the previous chapters and incorporates it into the day-to-day workflow.

- Chapter 11, “Meeting and Supporting Patron Technology Needs: Universal Design and Adaptive/Assistive Technology,” helps ensure that your technologies meet and serve the needs of your wide range of users.
- Chapter 12, “Library 2.0 and the Library: Virtual Reference, Blogs, and Usability,” emphasizes the importance of creating an Internet presence for your library with unique services for patrons.
- Chapter 13, “How Library Staff Learn and Teach: Screencasts, Distance Learning, and Course Management Systems,” demonstrates how technology can aid in staff development and training.

Part IV, “Building and Maintaining the Technology Environment in Libraries,” explores how to intelligently employ technology in everyday situations.

- Chapter 14, “Protecting Technology and Technology Users: Spam, Spyware, and Security Strips,” presents guidance for protecting the library and its patrons from the dangers of the cyberworld.
- Chapter 15, “When Things Fall Apart: Troubleshooting Tips for Every Technology User,” assesses typical problems and suggests ways to handle them as they arise.
- Chapter 16, “Building the Technology Environment: Ergonomics, Infrastructure, and Gaming,” will help make any facility comfortable and accessible.

Part V, “Where Library Technology Is Going and How to Get There,” concludes the book.

- Chapter 17, “Writing a Technology Plan,” addresses the important issues of long-range planning and offers steps to start your planning process.
- Chapter 18, “Our Technological Future: Ranganathan Meets Googlezon,” looks ahead to how technology will continue to impact our tradition of service.

A glossary of useful terms is located at the end of the book. Terms found in the glossary appear in boldface within the text.

There is a great deal of information within these pages, but there is even more information to discuss. Visit the companion blog for updated resources and materials, as well as an opportunity to comment on the book. The blog is located at <http://techcompanion.blogspot.com>. (Not sure what a blog is? See Chapter 9 or the Glossary). You may also reach me with your questions and comments at techcompanion@gmail.com.