Helping Non-digital Natives Navigate Technology

Reasons Why People Use Library Computers
- Can't afford computer
- Can't afford software
- Don't need to use a computer regularly
- Limited home Internet access
- Need to use a printer, copier, or scanner
- Lack of computer skills

Required Tech Skills for Library Staff

Library Computer Functions
- Be familiar with error messages from library management software
- Be able to use printer/copier/scanner
- Pretend you are a user and test stuff out

Email
- New account, but no cell phone? Try these:
  - Gmail---may require phone verification. Try clearing browsing data
  - Mail.com or Gmx.com
  - Protonmail.com---password recovery only available with alternate email
- Make sure patron can log in after initial set-up
- Patron should write down username & password
- Password Problems?
  - Check caps lock & number lock keys
  - Give it 1-2 tries (if they haven't)
  - Go through password recovery steps
    - Try to do this on a "familiar" device first
    - Might be easier to change password in mobile app
  - Go to Support Page to see if there are other options
  - May not be fixable

Fraud/Phishing/Scams
- Be able to identify
- Alert patrons to potential issues

How to Use a Web Browser

Saving Files
- Options for those without a flash drive

Job Applications
- Know what causes errors and how to fix them

Library Apps
- Know how to use any apps your library offers
- Need to be able to troubleshoot common problems.
- Know where to refer patrons if they have username/password/checkout issues

Touch Screens
- ask permission before touching.

Printing from Web Browser
1. Look for a print icon on the site (not in the browser menu)
2. Highlight selection & use "Print" menu to print selection.
3. Use "Snipping Tool" to copy & paste into Word.

Basic Troubleshooting
- Web Browser
    - Make sure web address is right
    - Make sure you are clicking on the right icon
    - Clear browsing data
    - Try a different web browser
    - Restart computer/switch to a new one
    - Sometimes the problem is on the other end!
- Computer Problems/Software frozen
    - Use Control/Alt/Delete to end program (if possible)
    - Turn it off and on again
- Monitor Goes Black
    - Is the computer on?
    - Is the monitor on?
    - Check cables
- Printer
    - Bad Prints
        - Check the image on the user's end
        - Check toner levels
        - Print a <u>test page</u>
    - Won't Print
        - Check paper levels
        - Check for jams
        - Check toner levels
        - Cancel the job
        - Turn it off/on or unplug

Security
- Know how secure library computers are
- How would you protect your data if you used a library computer?

Teaching Skills for Library Staff

Don't make assumptions about their abilities

Use Reference Interview to assess what they need and can do

Assess the user through observation---Let the patron "drive"

Learning Styles
- Auditory
- Visual
- Kinesthetic/Tactile

Tips
- Have realistic expectations
- Different priorities/goals for "newbies" vs. regulars
- Not everyone learns at the same speed
- Break down large projects into smaller chunks
- Repetition=Retention
- Stick to one way of doing a task. Only try a new approach if it isn't working.
- It's ok to refer people to classes.

Staff Need to Have Empathy for Patrons

Technophobia
- Reassure patrons they aren't going to "break" it
- Everybody had to learn at some point---that doesn't make you stupid.
- Offer assistance as necessary

Anxiety/Stress
- If easily agitated---Keep calm
- If forgetful or disorganized---Repeat things as necessary
- If unable to focus---Be patient
- If pessimistic---Reassure as necessary

Tablet/Smartphone User using PC for First Time
- Point out similarities
- Teach mouse/keyboard skills as needed

Illiteracy/Low Literacy
- 17% of American adults scored at level 1 or below on PIAAC Literacy Scale
- 36 million Americans are deemed to read at or below 3rd grade level
- Signs of illiteracy:
  - Patron "forgot" glasses
  - Needs help spelling simple words
  - Immediately know what to do after you read exactly what's on the screen
  - Ask basic questions about simple directions on the screen
  - Can sometimes tell by spelling/grammar on applications, etc.
- They are often great at hiding this.
- If suspected:
  - Start narrating exactly what you are doing.
  - Focus on the location or physical description of what you are clicking on.
  - Act as if you are simply pointing out where stuff is on the screen.

Other Issues
- Language Barriers
- Physical Disabilities
- Intellectual Disabilities
- Dementia

Staff Should Demonstrate Patience

Strategies to help when you are losing patience
- Trade off with a co-worker
- Take a strategic break (without completely abandoning the patron)

Further Reading

Beckstrom, M. (2015). *Protecting patron privacy: Safe practices for public computers*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.

Curtis, J. A. (2017). The importance of teaching adult services librarians to teach. *Public Libraries, 56*(4), 31-33.

Holt, L.E., & Holt, G.E. (2010). *Public library services for the poor: Doing all we can*. Chicago: American Library Association.

West, J. (2011). *Without a net: Librarians bridging the digital divide*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.