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 test page
  - 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