UTAH STATE LIBRARY

**Library Services and Technology Act
Five-Year Plan, 2003-2007**

Evaluation Report

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I. Library Services in Utah: The Impact of IMLS Funding

For nearly a decade, IMLS funding through the *Library Services and Technology Act* (LSTA) has been a driving force in the progressive transformation of Utah libraries and the services librarians provide to Utah's citizens. The impact of LSTA dollars on library services is seen clearly in three essential areas of activity: 1) LSTA dollars have increased the capacity of people to serve; 2) they have helped to build the information technology infrastructure supporting Utah's libraries; and 3) they have been used to create, organize, and make accessible quality information resources for people.

Competent People

The key to effective and efficient library services lies in people. Since IMLS was established in 1996, some of Utah's LSTA dollars have been used to support programs that increase the knowledge level, expertise, and capacity of Utah's librarians and library trustees to provide responsive library service. For years, the Utah Public Library Institute for Training (UPLIFT) has provided basic certification training for librarians in four basic areas of librarianship; advanced training workshops; and training workshops for library trustees. The Utah State Library has made UPLIFT training grants available to individuals and to groups whose training needs are more specialized than those met in the regular UPLIFT training. The majority of Utah's librarians and library staff have benefited directly and repeatedly from LSTA dollars through these programs.

The immediate beneficiaries of knowledgeable and committed librarians are, of course, satisfied library patrons. In addition to the formal training provided through UPLIFT, the State Library has organized and supported programs to train librarians in specialized areas of activity that relate directly to library patrons in a very personal way. The Services for Spanish-Speakers Program has provided focused training to increase the ability of librarians to serve their Hispanic patrons. Hispanic patrons of the participating libraries have seen an important difference, and they are using their libraries. (See Section III below.) The State Library has partnered with three large public libraries through the *Utah Kids Ready to Read!* Program to provide resources and training to librarians statewide as they teach and encourage their patron parents to teach the six skills of emergent (early) literacy to their very young children. The results of this training will be seen most clearly and accurately in the future. Ultimately, LSTA dollars have had an immediate and direct impact in making this diversified training program possible.

Information Technology

As is the case with libraries in every state, in little more than a decade's time Utah's libraries have left behind the 19th Century, passed through the 20th Century, and are now energetically pursuing the possibilities made available through the information

technology of the 21st Century. The progressive and rapid evolution of the technology infrastructure supporting Utah libraries is shown dramatically in a few facts. In 1996, many Utah libraries were still using dial access to the Internet. Today, almost all of Utah's libraries are operating on T1 line speeds, or better. The number of Internet workstations in Utah's public libraries was not even published in the Utah State Library's annual report before 2000, in which year 639 workstations were reported. By 2005, this number had more than doubled to1,379. Several libraries have now implemented wireless access to the Internet through personal computers owned by library patrons and used in the library. Over the last fifteen years, Utah libraries have moved from manual card catalogs to integrated library systems that provide access to a library's holdings and services over the World-Wide-Web. LSTA dollars have been an important source of funding for this dramatic extension of library information technology.

Information Resources

Competent librarians and staff using today's information technology have made it possible for library patrons to access expanding resources of quality information and services over the Internet.   Bibliographic access to library holdings has been greatly enhanced in Utah by an LSTA-funded cataloging support program that assures the use of quality MARC records in the automated library catalogs of more than thirty smaller to mid-sized public libraries. Online access to the holdings of several of Utah's larger public libraries is provided through an LSTA-funded virtual union catalog project. These uses of LSTA dollars to increase bibliographic access to library holdings are clearly increasing the information that people throughout the state are able to use. From 2000 to 2005, Utah's population increased by nine-percent. During that same period, there was a 38 percent increase in the number of books circulated annually by Utah's public libraries, and a 41 percent increase in the number of Internet users.   Resource-sharing statistics for the same period reflect an increase of 56 percent in the number of items loaned by Utah libraries to other libraries, and a 14 percent increase in the number of items borrowed. Online access to priority information resources such as historic newspaper files, and collections of historic photographs, have been provided through LSTA-funded digitization projects, which have been organized and governed by statewide standards. Irreplaceable—and deteriorating—information resources have been electronically preserved and opened to the world through digitization.   Without question, the single most important source of information available over the Internet to Utah's citizens is *PIONEER, Utah's Online Library,* which provides access to proprietary databases, as well as free Internet resources. Now in its eleventh year, *Public PIONEER*, which is organized and maintained by the Utah State Library and is funded with LSTA dollars, has "leveled the playing field for libraries of all sizes."

Conclusion

The last decade has seen dramatic growth in the services provided by libraries to Utah's citizens. It is accurate to say that without LSTA dollars as administered by IMLS, and the latitude to use those dollars creatively to meet local needs, this remarkable growth could not have taken place. LSTA funds have enriched the people of Utah.

II. Utah's LSTA Five-Year Plan, 2003-2007: Overall Report of Results in Achieving Goals and Objectives

Utah has six primary goals in its LSTA Five-Year Plan to govern the use of LSTA dollars. Progress toward achieving each goal is reviewed and evaluated below.

GOAL ONE—Technology Infrastructure: "Enable Utah's libraries to maintain an up-to-date and robust technology infrastructure in order to assure that Utahns can access networked information efficiently and effectively through their libraries."

Progress Toward the Goal
____   Surpassed this Goal
_X_   Met this Goal
____   Made progress toward this Goal
____   Did not work toward this Goal

Objective: To provide funding for library technology infrastructure, including 1) workstations, software, related equipment for Internet access; 2) telecommunications upgrades; 3) integrated system upgrades; 4) web-based catalogs; 5) basic technology (Internet access, circulation and catalog systems) for newly certified public libraries; and 6) a Utah-owned server to support online access to government information.

Based on priorities established by the Utah LSTA Advisory Council, this Objective (to provide funding for library technology infrastructure) was met. From October 2002 through April 2006, 143 LSTA competitive grants totaling $1,682,679 were awarded to Utah libraries for library technology infrastructure.

Output Target: 25% increase in the number of Internet workstations per capita in public libraries from 2003-2007.

The number of library Internet workstations increased from a total of 998 in 2002, to 1379 in 2006, a 38 % increase in the number of workstations, and a 26% increase in Internet workstations per capita. During this time period, 378 Internet workstations were purchased with LSTA dollars administered through competitive grants.

Output Target: 100% increase in the number of web-accessible catalogs from 2003-2007.

This Output target was not met. The number of web-accessible catalogs in Utah libraries increased from a total of 30 in 2003, to 36 in 2006, a 20 % increase.

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Outcome Target**:** One year after receiving a grant for web-based catalog software, 100% of libraries will report that library users are taking advantage of the software to access library services.

Over the period covered, fourteen libraries received LSTA grants for web-based catalog software. All report that library users are now enthusiastically accessing library holdings and services.

Outcome Target: 90% of libraries will report an increased ability for users to efficiently and effectively access networked information in 2007 compared to 2003.

Data from 2003, which would allow statistical comparison with 2007, were not collected. However, the formal evaluation study conducted in 2006 reflected overwhelming support for the proposition that library users now have an increased ability to efficiently and effectively access networked information.

IMPACT*: Using the strategy of competitive grants to distribute federal dollars for information technology infrastructure has worked a revolution in Utah libraries, from the largest urban libraries to the smallest and most remote rural libraries. Library users statewide now benefit from cutting-edge technology in gaining access to the information and services they need, and they have come to rely upon it. The rapid growth in library technology has out-stripped the ability of local libraries to maintain and service their IT systems. It is likely that the Utah LSTA Five-Year Plan, 2008-2012, will need to address this growing problem, which was highlighted in the formal evaluation study.*

GOAL TWO—Continuing Education and Training: *"Meet the need of Utah's library staff and public library trustees for ongoing training so they may provide dynamic, professional library service."*

Progress Toward the Goal
- ___ Surpassed this Goal
- _X_ Met this Goal
- ___ Made progress toward this Goal
- ___ Did not work toward this Goal

Objective: "To continue to offer basic certification training for public library directors and senior staff through the Utah Public Library Institute for Training (UPLIFT)."

Output Target: UPLIFT will offer public library directors and senior staff at least two Basic Certification courses annually.

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This output target has been met. While UPLIFT Basic Certification courses were initially offered only annually (thereby requiring four years to complete the certification requirement), over the course of the 2003-2007 LSTA plan, two courses have been offered annually. Librarians can now complete the requirements in two years. All of Utah's public librarians who do not have an MLS have completed, or are in process of completing, UPLIFT Basic Certification. USL staff members have also inaugurated the concept of a class, "Introduction to Public Library Work," which was presented as pre-UPLIFT training. This effort has evolved into a meeting with all new library directors within 90 days of their appointment to provide one-on-one orientation sessions (5-6 have been held annually). USL staff developed a supporting web publication, "Orientation Manual for New Library Directors."

Outcome Target: 90% of librarians attending UPLIFT Basic Certification training will report that training improved their library management skills.

During this five-year plan period, participant evaluations have been consistently requested and received in all of the State Library's training activities. This Outcome target has been met, as 100% of participants have reported that training improved their library management skills.

Objective: "To create curricula for advanced training opportunities for public library directors and senior staff who have completed the UPLIFT Basic Certification Training."

Output Target: Annually, at least two UPLIFT Advanced Certification classes will be offered regionally.

The formal program designation of "UPLIFT Advanced Certification" has not been established, but classes intended for UPLIFT graduates and others with advanced needs have been consistently offered, though not always twice annually. State Library Staff have conscientiously worked to schedule training events both in the Salt Lake City area, and regionally.

Outcome Target: 90% of librarians attending UPLIFT Advanced Certification classes will report that they have acquired new knowledge that improved their library management skills.

Again, participant evaluations have been consistently requested and received in all of the State Library's training activities. This Outcome target has been met, as 100% of class participants report that they have acquired new knowledge that improved their library management skills.

Objective: "To provide orientation and biennial training for the trustees of public libraries."

> Output Target: Annually at least five library boards will attend a trustee orientation, and biennially statewide training will be offered to all public library trustees.

> *This Output target has not been fully met. Individual library board orientations have been inconsistently and sporadically held over the past four years. The State Library has, however, been consistent in presenting biennial statewide training activities for library trustees, which have been well attended. These workshops have addressed such topics as fund-raising and advocacy, library construction, and the legal requirements and responsibilities of library trustees. Furthermore, a new Library Trustee Manual (2006) was developed and mounted on the State Library's website where it can be consulted and printed, as desired. To ensure maximum utilization of this Trustee Manual the State Library printed 600 copies, one of which will be sent to each current public library trustee and public library director along with an invitation to trustee training that is part of the 2007 Utah Library Association Conference.*

Objective: "To provide Utah's librarians (academic, public, school and special) with the means to satisfy their ongoing need for information on a myriad of topics through special institutes, teleconferences, exchange/clearinghouse information, mini-workshops, and micro-grants to individuals and organizations to support continuing education opportunities."

> Output Target: Offer at least five customized training events for the full library community each year.

> *This Output target has been met. State Library staff members have exercised creativity in structuring a diversity of approaches to meet the needs of public, academic, and school librarians including formal state-level workshops, mini-workshops, online Internet-based training, video-conferences, special institutes, exchange/clearinghouse information, and micro-grants to individuals and organizations to support specialized continuing education opportunities.*

> Outcome Target: 90% of librarians participating in customized training events will report an improvement in their professional library skills.

> *This Outcome target has been met, as 100% of participant librarians have reported an improvement in their professional library skills.*

> IMPACT*: Continuing education and training has been a major commitment of the Utah State Library for two decades, strongly reinforced and supported over the last five years with LSTA funding. These*

continuing education and training efforts sustained over years have substantially increased the ability of Utah's librarians—particularly those in smaller libraries—to provide effective and efficient library services to Utah's citizens.

GOAL THREE—Networked Information: "Support the acquisition, development and use of Internet-based full text/full image electronic content for Utah libraries and their users so that Utahns can use a rich diversity of digital materials from their libraries and homes."

Progress Toward the Goal
- _X_ Surpassed this Goal
- ___ Met this Goal
- ___ Made progress toward this Goal
- ___ Did not work toward this Goal

Objective**:** "To provide funding for the digitization of unique Utah-related library resources."

Output Target: 200% growth in the number of materials digitized with LSTA funds from 2003-2007.

This Output target has been met and surpassed. Digitization of unique Utah-related library resources has more than doubled since 2003, with 20 LSTA grants totaling $584,134 awarded to Utah libraries to digitize historic newspapers (136,000 pages), documents, and photographs (glass plates). Particular care was taken to assure that the digitization of these resources was accomplished effectively and efficiently, through collaboration with the Mountain West Digital Library (http://www.lib.utah.edu/digital/collections/mwdl/) , a service of the Utah Academic Library Consortium.

Outcome Target: 200% increase in the number of uses/ accesses of images digitized with LSTA funds from 2003-2007.

Given the fact that there were so few resources digitized with LSTA funds prior to 2003, this Outcome target has been surpassed as a matter of course. Tracking, collecting, and publicizing usage figures of digitized resources is a task that is essential in demonstrating the value and on-going impact of this activity. It will require thoughtful planning and consistent action in the future to meet this need. We can report that monthly uses made of the Mountain West Digital Library, which includes the bulk of those resources digitized with LSTA dollars, are now running at 1,100 visits per month, in addition to visits made through individual library websites.

Objective**:** "To provide statewide services for *PIONEER* database development, including 1) representation for public libraries and state agencies in the multi-type *PIONEER* Consortium; 2) development and maintenance of the *Public PIONEER* website; 3) funding for public library participation in *PIONEER* database agreements; 4) funding / coordination for public libraries in the public awareness activities developed by the *PIONEER* Consortium; 5) development of, and support for, remote patron access and authentication; 6) provision of *PIONEER* training for public libraries and state agencies; 7) provision of specialized training on software and techniques for assisting visually impaired users; 8) provision of diagnostic assistance to public libraries experiencing difficulty in using *PIONEER* products; 9) facilitation of information exchange among local library technical support personnel.

This complex Objective defines the full range of on-going activities required by the Utah State Library to maintain and extend the benefits of Public PIONEER *to library patrons statewide. The State Library's efforts to show the results of this major statewide initiative are evolving, and are described in Section IV below.*

Output Target: Annually, 50% of public libraries are provided *PIONEER* training; 25% of state agencies are provided *PIONEER* training.

This Output target has been met. Outreach training on the use of Public PIONEER *has been a central commitment of the Utah State Library. Training formats range from one-on-one, on-site training at individual libraries, to state-level training sessions held at the Utah State Library, to regional* PIONEER *Database Festivals at which school, public, and academic librarians and staff participate.   Since 2002, PIONEER training has been provided to at least 50% of Utah's public libraries each year. The annual Database Festivals train librarians from an average of 25 different libraries, and the monthly workshops public on-site training teach librarians from another 15 libraries per year. Since 2002,* PIONEER *training has been provided to 17 different State agencies. This represents about 22% of the State's 75 major divisions.*

Outcome Target**:** 50% increase in the number of *Public PIONEER* database searches from 2003-2007.

This Outcome target has been met. In 2002, there were 292,259 database searches; in 2005 there were 445,741 searches. These figures represent a 53% increase in that time period.

Outcome Target: 50% increase in the number of *Public PIONEER* website visits from 2003-2007.

This Outcome target was not met. In 2003, there were 310,960 visitors to the Public PIONEER *website; in 2005 there were 277,721 visitors. These*

*figures represent a 10% decrease over that time period. This decrease of
website visitors is attributable to the fact that many more users of
PIONEER databases were using their own public library's website to
access the databases, thus skirting the* Public PIONEER *website
maintained by the State Library.*

IMPACT: *In the years covered by the 2003-2007 Plan, usage of* Public
PIONEER *has increased. One reason for this increased usage is
increased marketing, promotion, and training across the state. The State
Library has worked with local libraries to provide their own portals for
access to the databases, and with smaller public libraries to provide easy
home access. The service has been marketed aggressively through radio,
television, and print media. A second reason for increased usage is an
enhanced selection of databases provided through the negotiation of
statewide contracts with new vendors. While the number of* Public
PIONEER *databases has not changed, content from new vendors has
added value and appeal. In 2007, more Utahns are obtaining more of the
information they want and need through* Public PIONEER.

GOAL FOUR—Resource Sharing: "Develop and support resource-sharing programs
to encourage and enable Utah's libraries to make their collections accessible to all Utah
residents."

Progress Toward the Goal
  ___   Surpassed this Goal
  _X_   Met this Goal
  ___   Made progress toward this Goal
  ___   Did not work toward this Goal

Objective**:** "To provide financial support to Utah libraries that lend material to
other Utah libraries via interlibrary loan (Lender Support Program)."

*The State Library does provide funding to Utah libraries that loan their materials
without charge to other Utah libraries.*

Objective**:** "To coordinate small library participation in a cataloging project
aimed at equalizing quality and ease of cataloging."

*In 2002, the State Library initiated a demonstration project with five libraries to
test the effectiveness of using OCLC's CatExpress as a primary source for copy
cataloging. CatExpress participation has grown from the initial five libraries to
thirty libraries in 2006. These libraries represent 51% of the eligible libraries
(54 total eligible by OCLC criteria). Two state agencies use CatExpress.*

Objective**:** "To initiate a formal planning process to establish the feasibility of
implementing a statewide virtual catalog."

A union catalog concept involving rural libraries was investigated and eventually tabled as infeasible due to cost / benefit considerations for a small population; cost for updating and achieving compatibility among multiple automation systems in a region; and lukewarm reception from small libraries to cross-jurisdictional reciprocal borrowing. Ten of the state's large urban libraries (having 80% of the state's population) are connected through Utah Multi-Cat Search, which uses KVK software. The Multi-Cat Search is one of the State Library's most popular and heavily used web pages.

Objective**:** "To fund the membership of Utah libraries in a multi-state cooperative (BCR) that allows them to participate in interlibrary loan, cataloging, training, and discounts on library-related products and databases, and gives Utah libraries a voice in governance of BCR and OCLC."

The Utah State Library has funded a statewide membership to the Bibliographical Center for Research (BCR) for many years.

> Output Target: Assuming adoption of a statewide virtual catalog program, 60% of libraries with web-based catalogs will be searchable through statewide virtual catalog by 2007.
>
> *A statewide virtual catalog program was not adopted. See explanation above.*
>
> Outcome Target: Materials loaned from Utah libraries to other Utah libraries (interlibrary loan) will increase 33% from 2003 to 2007.
>
> *This Outcome target was not met. Items loaned in 2002 totaled 38,376, while items loaned in 2005 totaled 41,432, a 5% increase.*

IMPACT: *Public and academic libraries in Utah continue to provide no-charge lending to other Utah libraries because of the Lender Support Program funds. Several surveys of these libraries have shown that they would discontinue or severely limit lending if this Lender Support funding were curtailed. Several individual smaller libraries are substantially increasing their lending. CatExpress user satisfaction surveys were conducted in 2002, at the end of the pilot project, and again in 2005, with a significantly larger user group. Users were highly satisfied with CatExpress because of its ease of use, accurate catalog records, time-savings for staff, faster processing of materials to better serve patrons, and cost effectiveness due to financial support supplied by the State Library   Ultimately, library patrons statewide are benefiting from the increased availability of library materials made possible by these programs.*

GOAL FIVE—Enhanced Access to Library Services: "Serve targeted populations in Utah that require customized assistance in accessing library and information services by assisting Utah's libraries to acquire special equipment, hardware and/or software, to build collections in customized formats or in languages other than English, or to offer customized training opportunities in-house or outreach programs."

Progress Toward the Goal
_X_   Surpassed this Goal
___   Met this Goal
___   Made progress toward this Goal
___   Did not work toward this Goal

Objective: "To provide funding for customized projects for the following populations: 1) individuals with visual or learning disabilities; 2) individuals who are institutionalized; 3) individuals whose primary language is not English; 4) individuals with limited literacy; 5) other specialized populations (infant, pre-school, home schooled, after school groups, immigrants, ethnic groups, and seniors, etc.)."

Since 2003, Enhanced Access to Library Services has been supported through 33 competitive grants having an aggregate total of $343,561. Grant monies were expended on specialized book collections (materials in foreign languages, especially Spanish), audio books for at-risk students, English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) materials, and assistive technology. Grants were awarded to a diversity of library organizations ranging from public, academic, and school libraries, to the Utah State Prison libraries, the Central Utah Correctional Facility library, and the Utah State Hospital patient library.

As an example of the impact of competitive dollar grants, we cite the Washington County Library, which used an LSTA grant to provide Spanish Computer Literacy Training. The target audience served included 107 Spanish students. Sixty-eight percent of these students reported an increased ability to access information in the library. After completion of the course, 98% indicated that the course helped them to use computers better; 87% indicated the course helped them to gain confidence; 92% indicate they would take another course at the Library, if offered; and 100% indicated that they wanted the Library to continue developing the Computer Literacy Program.

Over and beyond competitive grants, the Utah State Library organized three different projects that had an important impact on access to library services for specialized populations. The Services for Spanish-Speakers Project extended services to Hispanics statewide through their local libraries (see Section III below); the Teens Read! Project extended services to teenagers and young adults in three youth correctional facilities; finally the Utah Kids Ready to Read! Project extended literacy services and training to very young children and their parents statewide.

Objective: "To provide services through the Library for the Blind, Visually, and Physically Impaired to individuals in Utah with qualifying visual and physical disabilities. Services to include 1) circulation of cassettes, large print, Braille, descriptive video and other special formats; 2) an online catalog accessible to patrons over the Internet; 3) radio reading service; 4) Children's Summer Reading Program; 5) adaptive technology available at the library; 6) an intensive volunteer program; and 7) annual outreach and public information activities."

The Library for the Blind, Visually, and Physically Impaired, is a long-established and highly productive Program of the Utah State Library Division. The activities described in the Objective above represent a substantial enhancement of established services to the blind community, several through the use of technology. A specially designed web-page gives patrons Internet access to the Library's catalog and other library services. Of considerable importance for the future was the conversion from analog to digital technology of the book recording studios located at the State Library and the Utah State Prison. Significantly, the new digital technology is able to convert existing analog master records of books into digital format. All of the activities given in the Objective above have been fully accomplished in the period 2003-2007.

Outcome Target: One year after receiving a grant for customized services, 100% of libraries will report that users have increased their use of grant-funded resources and services.

This Outcome target was met, as stated. It is important to note, however, that the continuing use of customized services by special needs patrons is ultimately contingent on the organizational commitment to that service by the library over time after the grant dollars have been expended.

Output Target: 10% annual increase in the number of qualifying individuals served.

While the annual increase in the number of patrons served by the Library for the Blind did not equal the 10% figure established in the Output target, the number of patrons served did increase from 14,527 in 2002 to 16,961 in 2006, a 17% increase.

Outcome Target: 95% of patrons surveyed will report satisfaction with the library service received.

This Outcome target was easily met. Patron satisfaction surveys are made annually, with the percentage of satisfied patrons always approaching 100%.

IMPACT: *LSTA dollars have been used in diverse and creative ways to support and enhance library services for special needs populations throughout the state.*

State Library consulting services coupled with dollars have built foundations upon which on-going services to minority populations are now being built. Technology has extended current services to the blind and disabled, and is building potential for the future. By converting the recording of books to digital technology, the State Library is now in-step with the national program of the Library of Congress, National Library Service.

GOAL SIX—Planning, Evaluation, and Library Development: "Support statewide planning, evaluation, and library development projects to enable the Utah State Library and the Utah library community to effectively utilize LSTA funding to meet current and future challenges."

<u>Progress Toward the Goal</u>
- ___ Surpassed this Goal
- ___ Met this Goal
- _X_ Made progress toward this Goal
- ___ Did not work toward this Goal

Objective**:** "To provide leadership and organizational impetus and support to address outstanding planning, evaluation, and library development issues within the Utah library community."

As a result of Utah's LSTA Five-Year Plan (1998-2002) Evaluation, each of the planning, evaluation, or library development issues listed below was identified as an area that requires further study and action. The target of Goal VI is to organize a focused, formally defined study process in each area, and to produce appropriate responses defined by the study.

<u>Planning Initiatives</u>
        Assuring needed local technical support for public libraries
        Defining the role of LSTA in helping school libraries
        Providing library services to the Spanish-speaking

Of the three proposed planning initiatives listed above, only the third, providing library services to the Spanish-speaking, received focused attention statewide that resulted in effective and sustained action to address the problem. The result is the State Library's Services for Spanish-Speakers Project, which is evaluated in depth in Section III below. While there has been useful discussion on occasion about the role of LSTA in assuring needed local technical support for public libraries, and for helping school libraries, such discussion has not risen to the level of a "planning initiative," and much remains to be done. State Library staff members, working with representatives from the public library community, have reviewed and updated Utah's standards for public library service. This represents an important commitment and accomplishment that was not identified in the Five-Year Plan, 2003-2007.

<u>Evaluation Initiatives</u>
Establishing indicator data for new LSTA goals

No consistent action was taken to organize an "evaluation initiative" to establish indicator data for new LSTA goals.

<u>Library Development Initiatives</u>
State Library financial, logistical, and consulting support for the Summer Reading Program

The commitment of the Utah State Library to the statewide (national) Summer Reading Program has been sustained and supported at a modest level. An important expansion of that commitment has been the use of the program's resources for children and youth who are blind or visually impaired, but no state-level Library Development Initiative to further discuss and develop financial, logistical, and consulting support for the Program has been organized.

IMPACT: *The actions and commitment implied by the term "planning initiative," as given in the objectives under Goal Six above, are great. An organization should not undertake too many such commitments. It is most likely true that the list of initiatives established in Utah's LSTA Five-Year Plan (2003-2007) was too long. The Evaluation Initiative intended to establish indicators for the new goals of the five-year plan was not dealt with in a systematic way; such an effort must be made with the next five-year plan, and is now in process.   Solid progress has been made in establishing a foundation upon which library services for the Spanish-speaking, and other minorities can be built. The first-listed planning initiative above, "assuring needed local technical support for public libraries," was a high priority in 2002; in 2007 it continues to be a major concern of public librarians statewide, particularly in those smaller libraries remote from urban areas. While the information technology infrastructure of Utah's libraries has become progressively more impressive over the last five years, the concerns for technology support services remain, and need to be addressed in the next five-year plan.*

III. Services for Spanish-Speakers Project: An In-Depth Evaluation

<u>The Project: Filling a Need</u>

Demographic projections by the US Census Bureau show a progressively—and substantially—growing population of Spanish-speakers in Utah over the next several decades, as is the case in numerous states nationwide. In 2003, Utah State Library staff surveyed public library jurisdictions statewide to identify the presence of substantial groupings of Spanish-speaking residents, and to appraise the public library services that were available to them. They found important concentrations of Spanish-speakers, not

only in urban Wasatch Front communities, but also in numerous rural communities scattered across the state.   Library services available to such Spanish-speakers were found to be very limited, if not non-existent.

In response to these findings, Utah State Library staff members formulated a multi-faceted project to address the library needs of Utah's Spanish-speaking population. It was determined that the project would be funded with LSTA dollars, under Goal 5 (Enhanced Access to Library Services) of Utah's LSTA Five-Year Plan, 2003-2007. The project has several components including on-site preparation and training of local librarians and staff in cultural awareness and receptivity to the needs of a minority population; state-level and regional training workshops; selection, acquisition, and cataloging of Spanish-language library resources; and multi-year funding through grants to the participant libraries for the purchase of Spanish-language library materials. The Project has now been in place for three years, with six new libraries joining each year, for a total of eighteen currently participating libraries. It is projected that as many as thirty public libraries statewide will ultimately participate.

Project Evaluation

State Library staff members, working with the director of each participating library, have made an annual evaluation of progress in the library in meeting the goals of the project during that year (2005, 2006).   Site visits have been made to the majority of the libraries in these evaluations; all of the libraries have received and responded to annual email questionnaires. Areas covered by the questionnaires included 1) the Collection—its content and usage, 2) Services, 3) Marketing and Awareness, 4) Staff / Board Development, 5) Patron Feedback, and 6) Staff Feedback. The findings of the annual evaluations could not be stated in statistical terms, but rather gave substantive guidance to the project participants as they worked to get something going where previously there had been little or no service.

The Services for Spanish-Speakers Project was selected for an in-depth evaluation within the context of the formal study of Utah's Five-Year LSTA Plan, 2003-2007. A team of two Spanish-speaking personnel from the Department of Instructional Technology, Utah State University, conducted personal interviews with Spanish-speaking patrons of public libraries that are participating in the project. The interviews were intended to provide information concerning the feelings and attitudes of library patrons surrounding the issues and impact associated with the project. The analysis of the interview responses was intended to discover trends and issues among the people interviewed. A total of 21 interviews were conducted during October and November, 2006, at ten locations throughout the state.

Evaluation Findings

The evaluation interviews raised several points that directly correlate to the level of success at any given participating library.

- Country of origin variability – Although the great majority of Hispanics/Latinos in Utah come from Mexico, each Utah community experiences a different level of cultural diversity, with people from Argentina, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Peru, among other Hispanic countries. This variable has a direct impact on how well some of the library collection selections may be received, especially in the areas of fiction and music. The classic collection development recommendation stands true: "To select the right materials, you have to know your community."

- Usually when we think of new library users who speak Spanish, we think of new immigrants. Although this may be the case in some communities, 86% of the interviewees said they've lived in the community for three years or more but 53% have used the library for 3 years or less. The implication here is that not all of our efforts should go toward new immigrants; we must recognize that some of our Spanish-speaking patrons have been in our communities for some time.

- 78% of the interviewees reported visiting the library every week with 44% of those going more than once a week.

- As expected, interviewees reported that access to computers and audiovisual materials is an important component of library service.

Interviewee comments and concerns expressed in the open-ended questions are very revealing and reflect several general themes:

Materials and Programs

- Lack of variety of materials – While patrons overwhelmingly appreciate the effort to provide materials in Spanish, many noted the wish to have a larger variety of items, particularly of works originally produced in Spanish-speaking countries, not only Spanish translation of English authors. Others expressed an interest in non-fiction items, newspapers or magazines in Spanish.

- Despite the fact that some interviewees reported awareness of library programs, the language barrier discouraged many of them from attending. Others commented that very few programs were designed for Spanish-speaking audiences and these were often story-times for children.

- A few acknowledged they didn't know about library programming but many noted the importance to advertise in Spanish in the community (beyond the library building) the programs and services offered by the library.

Ease of Use and Communication

- The language barrier was the most critical challenge noted in the report. Interviewees expressed their frustration at not being able to communicate with library staff to ask reference questions and solve circulation problems. They

acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the effort some staff put into making communication possible, but also noted the longing for being able to communicate with staff in Spanish.

- Interviewees noted that more signage in Spanish highlighting where materials were located would help in navigating the library. Also, translation of forms and announcements would be very helpful. However, they cautioned that poorly translated forms were just as confusing as the originals in English.

Conclusion

The Services for Spanish-Speakers Project has established a foundation in the relationships between the Utah State Library, individual public libraries, and their Spanish-speaking patrons from which services can now grow and evolve. Beginning in most cases at zero, measurable on-going library service activities for Spanish-speaking patrons have been established in participant libraries. Benchmarks and output / outcome goals can now be identified and evaluated more formally in the future within the context of Outcome-Based Evaluation principles. It is expected that the Services for Spanish-Speakers Project will find a place in the USL's LSTA Five-Year Plan, 2008-2012.

IV. *PIONEER, Utah's Online Library*: Progress in Showing Results of a Major Statewide Library Initiative

In 1996, building on some years of exploratory collaboration in jointly contracting for online access to local newspaper databases, Utah's academic, public, and school library-media centers formally established *PIONEER, Utah's Online Library*. In 2006, librarians from across the state acknowledged the tenth anniversary of *PIONEER* with the celebratory statement, "If I needed the answer to a tough question, I'd ask a ten-year old."

PIONEER, Utah's Online Library is unquestionably the most important statewide library initiative of the last fifteen years in its support for the public's ability to get the information it needs. *PIONEER* is based on unprecedented organizational collaboration over more than a dozen years between the three library constituencies, each of which supports its own *PIONEER* website reflecting the unique needs of its patrons (*Public PIONEER*, *Academic PIONEER*, and *K-12 PIONEER*). The partners jointly contract at the state-level for a common set of databases, which are available through libraries and at homes to everyone statewide, children, parents, and grandparents, young and old, and students from grade school through graduate school. Over these years, *Public PIONEER*, which is developed and maintained by the Utah State Library for the public library community and Utah's citizenry at large, has been substantially funded with LSTA dollars under Goal Three "Networked Information" of Utah's LSTA Five-Year Plan, 2003-2007.

The State Library has made serious and consistent efforts to demonstrate the results of *Public PIONEER*. One consistently maintained measure has been the number

of database searches / results retrieved. This annual figure has been used in conjunction with database cost figures to establish a "dollar cost per item retrieved." The resulting figure is important in establishing usage patterns: a decreased use level results in increased costs per item retrieved; increased usage results in decreased costs. The State Library is able to measure accesses to *Public PIONEER* databases by location, so as to know who is using the databases, i.e., which libraries have patrons who are using *PIONEER*, and which do not. Using these figures, it is then possible to schedule training in areas where people perhaps need to know more of the information resources available to them.

Formal evaluations of *PIONEER* databases take place twice annually. One evaluation is done by a representative group of public librarians who meet and discuss database priorities and preferences. A second evaluation involves staff members from all public libraries in the state, who share their desires and preferences. The results of these public library evaluations are then used to guide decisions and actions on which databases are to be added, and which are to be dropped.

Marketing efforts serve a dual purpose: they get the word out about *Public PIONEER*, and they are used to solicit feedback on the selection and usability of databases. Training in the use of *Public PIONEER* has been consistently—and repeatedly—provided across the state, and serves the same dual purpose, i.e., to get the word out and to solicit feedback.

These approaches to evaluation and planning in the creative maintenance of *Public PIONEER* are in a process of evolution. Ultimately, the assessment of outcomes must focus directly on library patrons and their use of online information resources at their libraries and in their homes. To a small degree, such an assessment was made through the library patron focus group interviews conducted for this five-year evaluation. Individual participants and libraries were quite limited in location and in numbers. For validity, such an effort must be made on a statewide basis. This is perhaps a task for another five-year plan.

V. Lessons Learned

The most positive and practical lesson learned and validated by the Utah State Library over the last five years has been this: <u>collaboration among organizations empowers people and extends resources</u>. No organization has within it all of the expertise, experience, dollars, influence, or authority needed to fully accomplish and excel in its mission. Thoughtful collaboration can create a synergy that reaches people in ways that otherwise would be impossible.

The most far-reaching example of this lesson for the Utah State Library is *PIONEER, Utah's Online Library*, which has been described and explained in Section IV above. Collaboration over the course of a decade at the state-level has established a solid foundation upon which a more diversified, yet still integrated, approach to online

information has been built. Over the years, the dollar savings to Utah's libraries—ultimately Utah's citizens—brought by single state-level contracts with database vendors have been very substantial. Of at least equal importance to the dollar savings to government has been the integration of database planning and services in all of Utah's libraries. Library patrons of all ages can access the same core databases at their school library, at their public library, and at their academic library.

A particularly productive collaboration over this time period involved the Utah State Library, the Utah LSTA Advisory Council, and the Mountain West Digital Library. Procedures were established for LSTA competitive grants for digitization, which included the requirement that grant applicants prior to the submission of their request have their project fully reviewed by the staff of one of four regional digitization centers. That review would look at content criteria, estimated project costs, and would specify organizational procedures and technical standards to be met. This process brought expertise to bear on the problem, supplied information necessary to make decisions on the funding of the grant application, helped to maintain technical standards in the digitization process, and expanded the information available to people worldwide through the Mountain West Digital Library.

Another useful collaboration on a much lower scale, which has been supported, in part, through LSTA dollars, has been the *Utah Kids Ready to Read!* Project. Staff from the Utah State Library, joined by two highly committed public library administrators and seven talented children and youth librarians from three urban public libraries joined together to create and organize resources, to teach librarians statewide the theory and practice of emergent (early) literacy, and to prepare librarians to help their patron parents teach the six skills of emergent literacy to their very young children. The *Utah Kids!* early literacy project has had statewide impact on librarians, on parents, and ultimately on a lot of very young Utah kids. Thanks to the generosity of the three public libraries, which provided the prime commodity of expertise, the costs (personnel time and dollars) of the project borne by any single library have been relatively low; the benefits for Utahns have been great.

A negative lesson learned dealt with the process of the five-year plan itself. One of the biggest problems with the Utah plan has been the fact that too many Output / Outcome targets were established for too many of the Utah State Library's activities. In many cases the targets were defined in such a way that they would obviously be met. In other cases, they were defined in such a way that it was quite burdensome for the organization to collect and maintain the data necessary to make judgments and evaluations on progress over time, comparing one time period with another.   In future, it would be wiser and more productive to be focused and disciplined in identifying objectives within each goal, and in establishing relevant output / outcome targets. The number of objectives and output / outcome targets should be smaller and more focused. Efforts at planning and evaluation should be made in areas of strategic importance to the State Library and the Utah library community. Finally, the processes for collecting the data required to make a useful evaluation of progress must be well thought out, and they must be established early in the planning process.

VI. The Evaluation Process

The formal evaluation study supporting this report was conducted under the authority of the Utah State Library Board. The Utah LSTA Advisory Council exercised oversight for the evaluation process, with administrative support from members of the Utah State Library staff. The primary stakeholders of Utah's LSTA Five-Year Plan, 2003-2007, are Utah's public libraries, academic libraries, and school library media-centers. Library directors, staff, and library trustees from each component of the Utah library community participated centrally in the evaluation process, both through focus group interviews and a statewide personal survey with responses submitted by individuals positioned in each library service constituency. Ultimately, library patrons throughout the state are the direct beneficiaries of LSTA funding for libraries in Utah, and they, too, are represented in the evaluation study through focus group interviews in which library patrons participated.

The Utah State Library (USL) contracted with the Instructional Technology Department of Utah State University (USU) to conduct the formal evaluation of the LSTA Plan, 2003-2007. An initial planning meeting in early June, 2006, was held with the LSTA Advisory Council, the USU professors heading up the study, and USL staff. It was determined that the formal evaluation process would employ three approaches designed to examine achievements and issues related to LSTA: focus group interviews, a statewide survey, and personal interviews with individual Spanish-speaking patrons (see section III above).

Seventeen focus groups were held in September and October, 2006, in locations extending across the state, and involving library directors and staff members from public, academic, and school library-media centers, as well as public library patrons. The focus groups explored selected goals and objectives from the grant recipient's perspective. The statewide survey was administered in December, 2006, and explored the perceptions of the library community about LSTA's impact, and solicited recommendations for future improvements in the grant process, and judgments about priority needs that should be addressed in a new five-year LSTA plan. These methodologies provided evaluative information and data in addition to the statistical and descriptive information provided by LSTA grant recipients in their project evaluation reports. Additionally, the cumulative understandings of State Library staff members, and the statistical information generated by them reflecting the uses of LSTA dollars, both in competitive grants, and in statewide services, have been very important in this evaluation.

Active work on the formal evaluation of Utah's LSTA Five-Year Plan, 2003-2007, extended from the initial planning phase in the spring of 2006 through the statistical analysis of the statewide survey results in January 2007. Costs of the study included $27,322 in contract costs with Utah State University, approximately $3,000 for mileage reimbursements and stipends to focus group / personal interview participants, and approximately $12,000 in USL staff time for an executive secretary, a staff librarian, and a staff administrator who worked to organize the evaluation activities with the library community, and to coordinate activities with the contract partner, Utah State University.