

Local Government Library Technology

PRESS RELEASE

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Local Government Library Technology website launched as Government releases its policy statement on the future of public libraries.¹

The Local Government Library Technology '**LGLibTech**' website (<http://lglibtech.wikispaces.com/>) is formally launched today. It provides a community resource not only about specific technologies in use in public libraries but also the major technology related issues libraries face such as shared services, outsourcing, electronic books, open source software and social media/Web 2.0. No other resource has the same up-to-date coverage and such an inclusive approach to contributions. The **LGLibTech** wiki provides a platform to keep track of the systems and technologies in use in every UK library authority. It also provides valuable up-to-date content and resources on topics of interest and concern.

The government clearly acknowledges that one of the key drivers for change is technology. Some commentators² recognise that the Internet based networked information economy touches the very 'stuff' of libraries. What other service run by local government faces such dramatic competition from the web? For many Amazon is their 'library catalogue' and Google and/or Wikipedia answer their reference enquiries. In its mission statement Google defines itself clearly as a library company³ and has already digitised and made available more books than most public libraries hold. The government acknowledges the continuing and vital contribution libraries make to their communities and the role technology will have in transforming services.

LGLibTech lists all 200+ library authorities throughout the UK and the systems they use. All libraries make extensive use of IT to manage back office functions and important front line services. Many public libraries were pioneers in delivery of services over the web and are now embracing technologies such as RFID (Radio Frequency ID) and electronic books to enhance the service they provide to their customers. Several public libraries make use of social media tools such as blogs, wikis and social networking sites such as Facebook as new ways to engage with the public. Local Government puts considerable investment into technology in libraries and is looking to IT to enable efficiencies and to transform local services. This is putting increasing pressure on the systems used in libraries. **LGLibTech** provides a community space to contribute to the better use of Local Government Library Technology.

¹ 'Modernisation Review of Public Libraries: A Policy Statement at' DCMS March 2010. Cm 7821. ISBN: 9780101782128 http://www.dcms.gov.uk/reference_library/consultations/6752.aspx.

² For example Yochai Benkler. The wealth of Networks' http://www.benkler.org/Benkler_Wealth_Of_Networks.pdf

³ 'Google's mission is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.' <http://www.google.com/corporate/facts.html>

LGLibTech fully embraces the 'web 2.0' approach and is the product of a genuine community effort. It is a wiki and is open to all. This approach enables advantage to be taken of expertise wherever it may be found. The nature of a wiki means it is never 'finished' but already **LGLibTech** contains a wealth of useful, up-to-date information on issues around library technology in local authorities. Anyone can sign up to contribute and Laurie Edmonds from Ken Chad Consulting has the role of 'WikiMaster' to help and encourage the community of contributors.

Ken Chad, CEO of Ken Chad Consulting commented: 'The library technology landscape is changing rapidly and it is difficult to keep pace with what is going on. In this harsh economic climate libraries should be looking hard at how to get more from their investment in technology. The issues confronting local authorities regarding library technologies are often complex and good up-to-date information is important to decision making. **LGLibTech** is therefore a very timely and valuable resource. I'm impressed by the variety of people from a range of organisations have already got involved'

For more information go to <http://lglibtech.wikispaces.com/> or contact:-

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NOTE: LGLibTech a resource for anyone interested in public libraries and the technologies they use. Anyone can sign up and make contributions. These can take the form of new articles or changes (correction, additions etc) to existing content. There is also a discussion feature. The site is hosted by Wikispaces and uses their software. [Ken Chad Consulting](#) set up the site and has taken on the role of 'WikiMaster' to encourage contributions, help contributors and protect the site from any malicious activity.