



## WAUKESHA PUBLIC LIBRARY

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### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** ITAC Committee  
**FROM:** Grant Lynch  
**DATE:** 7/17/13  
**SUBJECT:** CIP – IT Requests for 2014

#### 1) Book Drop/Sorting System

The Waukesha Public Library (WPL) circulates nearly 1.4 million items per year, or around 350% of the materials collection. Due to this high and rising constant demand for materials, staff-based item processing and machine-based automation is beyond our capacity. This often creates a circulation backlog for library patrons, causing several issues:

**It greatly slows the time it takes for materials to be checked in and out of the facility.** As the Resource Library for Waukesha County, this affects not only citizens, but the other 15 public libraries in the system as well: as WPL is the central hub for cataloging and inter-library loaning (ILL), we are responsible for maintaining quick and efficient turnaround of materials to all. A more efficient system is the only way to keep up with this new growth.

Due to the high volume of materials handling, some items are inevitably damaged as a result. The current automated book return was not designed to handle 1.4 million circulating items and it often breaks down. This presents many unnecessary costs: damaged materials, ongoing maintenance, parts, staff time to address problems—which can be in the middle of the night or during holidays—and staff involvement in inevitable customer service complaints about accrued fines. When this system breaks down, the materials may sit past the due date due to the resultant staff backlog and we must bridge the gap by manually manipulating our catalog system to make up for the loss. This is incredibly inefficient and creates unnecessary costs.

A modern book drop/sorting system exists to help to repurpose staff by outsourcing much of the human-based work to machine-based automation. Currently, circulation staff at WPL are pulled off of other essential duties in order to perform sorting tasks. The processing, handling, scanning, sorting, and maintenance-related tasks that our staff attends to are in addition to their duties of collection management and customer service. In fact, it is not uncommon for circulation staff to call



personnel to help with overage multiple times per year. This, again, is terribly inefficient and should all be handled by machinery and not human resources.

The current book drop/sorting system at WPL is nearly ten years old and has outlived its originally intended operating life. Additionally, some parts of the machine are no longer being manufactured, so we run the risk of a total system failure when they wear out.

### **Solutions:**

We respectfully request **up to \$200,000** for a Capital Improvement Project request from the City of Waukesha Common Council. It should be noted that this request is not specific due to a custom-built machine, high potential for negotiation with the vendor, and elimination of "standard" features unnecessary for our specific needs. The money will allow us to achieve the following:

Purchase a TechLogic UltraSort Smart Bin Book Placer System for installation in our facility. This item will eliminate all of the issues outlined above as well as to add new functionality to further minimize backlog and overage.

This system will communicate with the library catalog, and it will check in materials as they enter the building. This feature alone will alleviate unnecessary staff burden and help us to stay well on top of materials processing for local and regional patrons.

An "item placer system" that is included with modern-day book drops scans materials and sorts them according to placement in the facility. Staff interaction is only needed to remove full carts and begin the re-shelving process; this is an incredibly efficient way to eliminate unnecessary overhead by minimizing human involvement in the process.

WPL is setting up to establish RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) tagging to materials in 2015-2016. A new book drop/sorting system like the one described above works for both traditional barcode scanning (currently in use) and RFID scanning. Therefore, this new machinery will require limited updates to keep up with new technology over the next 10 years.

Please consult this page for more details:

<http://www.tech-logic.com/solutions/ast/ultrasort.asp>

Unfortunately, the reality of the situation is that the current book drop (note that it does not have a sorting system) is failing. Repairing and replacing parts on this particular machine is not a good solution, as this is costly and does not buy much time before it completely fails and brings our operation to a halt. A public library our size cannot operate without a book drop/sorting system.

**Total Request for CIP FY2014: No more than \$200,000.**

## **2) SelfCheck Machines**

Nearly 65% of Waukesha Public Library's 1.4 million annual circulations occur through the Library's six selfcheck stations. Our reliance on selfcheck allows Library staff to be reallocated to public contact/service duties and has eliminated requests for additional staffing from the Circulation Department since the Library began using selfchecks in 1996. The volume of checkouts handled by the selfcheck machines is the equivalent of 2 FTE.

The Library currently uses 3M brand selfcheck machines, four of which are 7210s and two are 7420 V-series machines. The first three 7210s were implemented in 2003 and a fourth in 2004 whereas the 7420s came into the Library in 2008 and 2010.

There are several reasons why the Library should replace the older 7210 units with up-to-date 7420 units:

- The older 7210 selfchecks are essentially ten years old.
- 3M is discontinuing support on the 7210 selfchecks.
- Annual maintenance on six V-series units is cheaper than the maintenance on four 7210s (\$11,748 versus \$13,160).
- Through April of 2013 there have been ten service calls on the Library's selfchecks.

At the same time, we should also upgrade the existing 7420 selfchecks so that all six machines will run on Windows 7 and incorporate a wider monitor. Since the library is already using 3M selfchecks we would see a minimum of downtime when installing new machines.

The cost of replacing the four 7210s with 7420s is: \$68,864 (a savings of \$8,145/unit)

The cost to upgrade the Library's existing 7420s is: \$6,394

**Total Request for CIP FY2014: \$75,258**