Digital Literacy Programming Expansion

Vicky Tourkolias, Senior Manager, Children's Services (She/Her)

Ab. Velasco, Manager, Innovation (He/Him)

tpl toronto public library

Broadening Toronto's Digital Access and Inclusion

Through our services and programs, Toronto Public Library seeks to expand the opportunity for everyone to access technology and develop the skills to use it to thrive in the digital world.

Learning Centres

- 21 Learning Centres deliver classes for beginners to advanced users.
- Topics include: Computers for Beginners, Seniors Digital Literacy, and Microsoft Office.

Digital Innovation Hubs

- 10 Digital Innovation Hubs deliver programs on specialized equipment, including 3D design and printing, digital content creation; plus, an Innovator in Residence program.

Pop-Up Learning Labs

- 6 Pop-Up Learning Labs travel to monthly host branches to deliver specialized digital programs to communities without Digital Innovation Hub.

Let’s Learn Tech

- Offers introductory to intermediate level online tech courses for Torontonians looking to upskill, change careers, or enter the IT field.

AI, Digital Privacy and Safety

- Programs that build literacies on emerging technology and concepts, including AI, privacy, mis-disinformation, open data.

Youth Hubs

- Welcoming after-school drop-in spaces for teens with access to technology, including laptops, iPads, gaming and audio equipment.

Service Expansion

- In 2022 to 2023, **Neighbourhood Tech Kits (NTKs)** and **Play & Learn STEM Kits (PLSKs)** were expanded to 59 and 97 locations respectively.

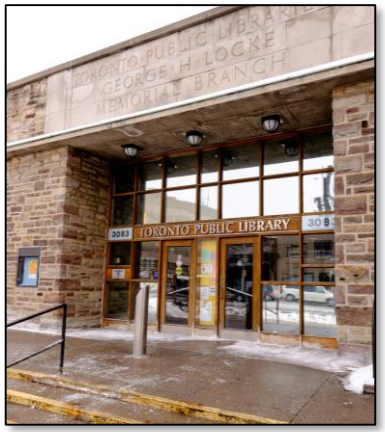
- Service expansion significantly increased TPL's ability to deliver digital literacy programming to communities – from children to older adults.

What is an NTK?

STEAMLabs Program at Morningside Branch.

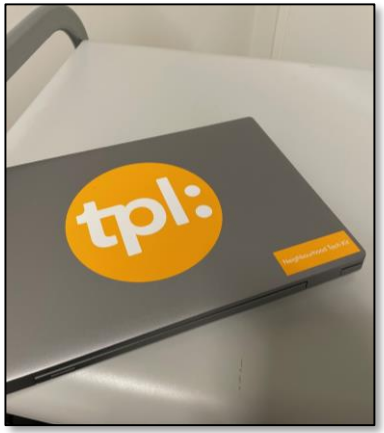
- Neighbourhood Tech Kits support digital literacy programming in locations without a Digital Innovation Hub, Learning Centre, or Youth Hub.

NTK Service Expansion



46

locations added



506

laptops rolled out

110

staff trained

tpl:

Program and Service Outcomes

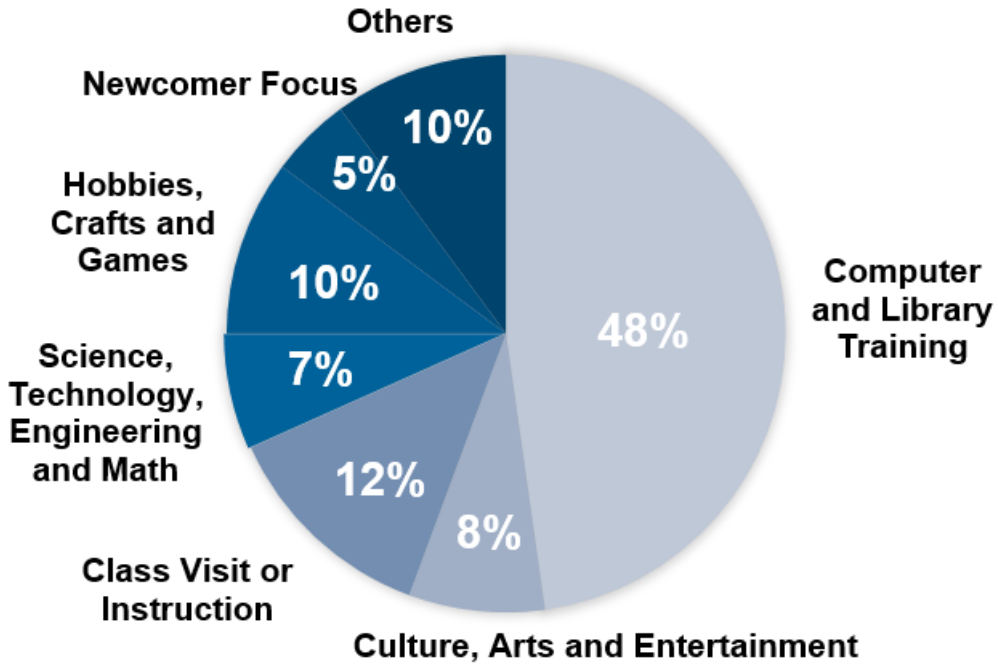
Program participant at New Toronto

940 Programs

10,421 Participants

Program and Service Outcomes

Breakdown by Program Category



Customer Outcomes

Program participants at Davenport

99% Satisfaction Rate

98% Gained New Knowledge

1/3 First-Time Visitors

Customer Outcomes

Customers are excited to participate in NTK programs.

"Thank you very much for offering computer classes. It really helped me to continue to be a life long learner."

Victoria Village

Program participants at Main Street.

Staff Outcomes

Effective Teaching Skills Staff Training at Toronto Reference Library

73 Staff trained in digital literacy teaching skills

85% Agreed NTKs boost staff capacity

Staff Outcomes

Branch staff are appreciative to receive the NTKs.

"NTKs make a huge difference to community branches! Staff are better able to attend trainings/meetings & plan/deliver programs that incorporate technology."

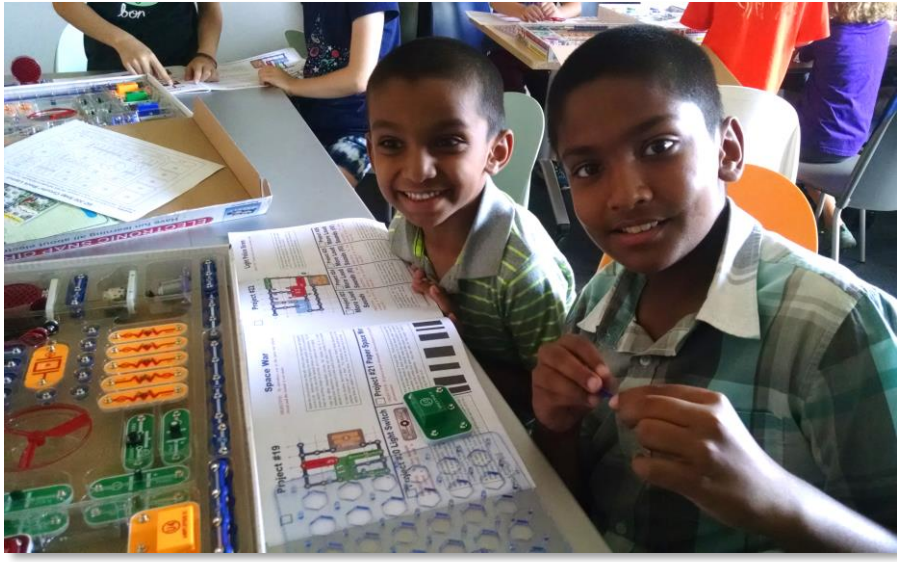
Locke

Branch Experience Training with Pleasant View and Hillcrest Staff

Play and Learn STEM Kits

In 2023…

- PLSKs expanded to **97** branches
- **989** PLSK programs and outreach were delivered to **14,239** learners



Snap Circuits workshop at Pape/Danforth

What is a PLSK?

What are PLSKs and who are they for?

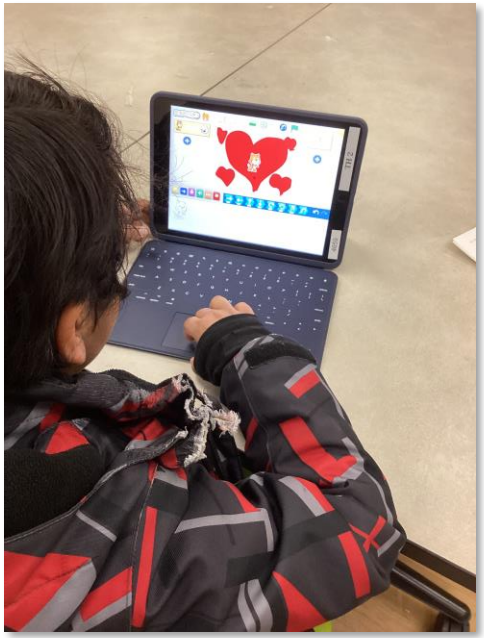
- Robotics and circuitry kits that teach digital literacy skills development to children, ages 6-12

What's in a PLSK?

- 11x Sphero robots
- 11x Dash & Dot robots with accessories
- 10x Snap Circuits
- 11x Apple iPads with keyboard cases
- 1x Copernicus Tech Tub Trolley
- 1x Lightning to HDMI Adapter
- 1x 10-port USB charger

PLSK Programs

Coding with Dash, Dot and Sphero At Albert Campbell



Coding art hearts at Thorncliffe

Sphero Bowling at York Woods

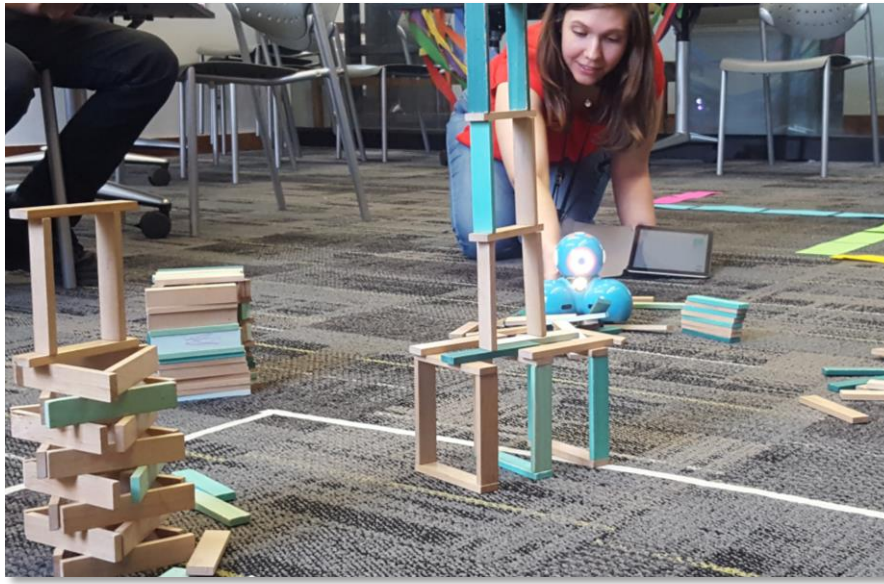
The Journey

The Journey:

- 2017: 18 branches
- 2019: +7 branches
- 2023: +72 branches

2023 Service Expansion:

- 4000+ equipment
- 27 hours training
- 150+ staff



Staff Demo of a Dash & Dot Workshop

Outcomes

“The PLSK equipment is extremely popular with kids, AND parents, caregivers and educators that visit us here at Thorncliffe. Parents in our community are seeking out opportunities for their children to have access to technology that will help with school and beyond. Being "future ready" is a hot topic.”

“My experience running PLSK programs has been completely satisfying. PLSK-based programs are guaranteed to keep participants engaged and stimulate curiosity for the entire duration. At Flemingdon Park, parents and children generally gravitate towards and request STEM programs.”

Outcomes

"I studied electrical engineering in college; I didn't think there were kids toys like Snap Circuits that would introduce my child to my field of study in such a fun and engaging way!"

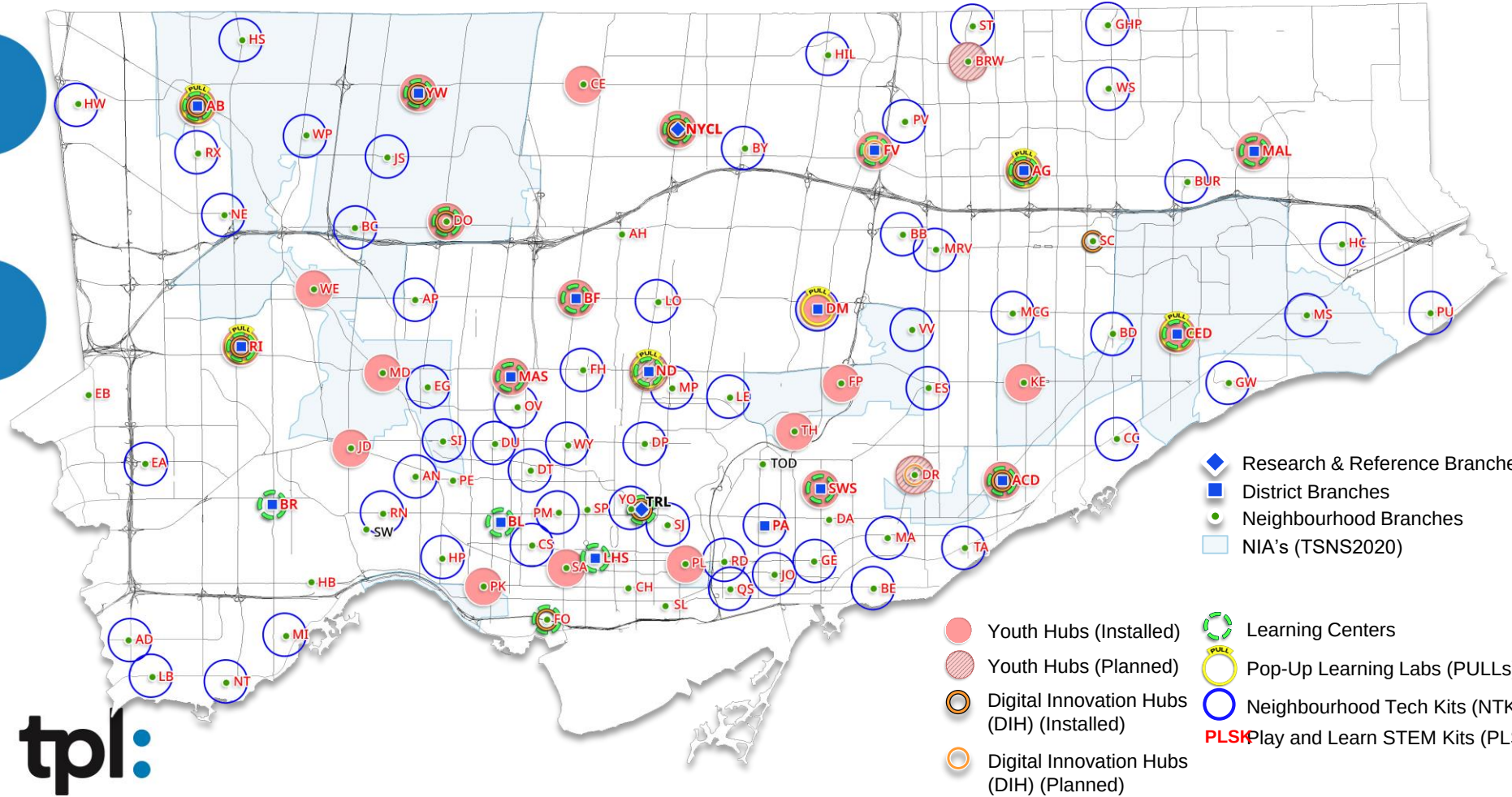
"Thank you for being so great with my son. He has never seen robots like this, or used an iPad; I am so happy that I found this program at your library! We can't wait to come back."

"Is there a program like this [Robotics Club] geared towards pre-school children? My [younger] child keeps saying he can't wait to be 'school age' to participate in Robotics Club like his brother!"

tpl:

Making an Impact
Measuring Our Impact

TPL Digital Literacy Map



2023 Digital Literacy Program Results

3,948 Digital Literacy Programs

33,798 Participants

Why Digital Literacy and Inclusion Matters

“I learned to use the computer here. I was [digitally] illiterate and always asking my daughter how to do this, how to do that. Then TPL was offering a program on how to use a computer, so I took it, and I came here to practice afterwards. It gives you independence, that you can learn how to use these computers and gain knowledge by using them.”

- Martha, 70 years

Thank You!

Questions or Comments?

Vicky Tourkolias (She/Her)
Senior Manager, Children's Services
vtourkoalias@tpl.ca

Ab. Velasco (He/Him)
Manager, Innovation
avelasco@tpl.ca