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STAFF REPORT
INFORMATION ONLY

Digital Literacy Day Recap

Date:	June 18, 2018
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	Vickery Bowles, City Librarian

SUMMARY

The following report provides a summary of the development and implementation of the inaugural Digital Literacy Day, which took place on May 31, 2018.

Toronto Public Library (TPL) partnered with the City of Toronto to develop and implement Digital Literacy Day. The day was created as an opportunity to showcase the leadership role that Toronto plays in the field of technology, the organizations that lead this work, and the importance of digital literacy as a critical skill to maintain the city's prosperity and livability.

Partnering on Digital Literacy Day was an opportunity for the Library to showcase the breadth and depth of our technology services and the diverse ways that library services and staff support the development of digital literacy skills on an ongoing basis.

The Library hosted nearly 80 programs at 50 branches – as well as outreach and online activities. Library programs included those led by partner organizations, including Cisco, George Brown, Oracle Academy, PWC, and Ryerson.

Digital Literacy Day was a success, garnering enthusiastic engagement from over 35 partner organizations and positive feedback from program attendees of all ages. The Library looks forward to working with the City to lead the growth of Digital Literacy Day for future years.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There was no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

The Director, Finance and Treasurer has reviewed the financial impact statement and is in agreement with it.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

TPL's participation in Digital Literacy Day strongly supported the Library's strategic priority to expand access to technology and training, and to break down barriers to access.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Digital Literacy Day further allows the Library to provide a positive impact on equity seeking groups, by broadening access to digital and technology resources and the training to support the use of these technologies.

DECISION HISTORY

Declaring a Digital Literacy Day was approved at the City's Economic Development Committee in September 2017 and made possible through a motion in May 2017 by Councillor Michelle Holland, the city's chief innovation advocate.

Starting in Fall 2017, a Digital Literacy Day Working Group led by City and TPL staff and comprised of public and private sector partners met regularly to plan Digital Literacy Day.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

TPL plays a leadership role in the city in driving digital inclusion and bridging the digital divide by providing access to computers, internet and other technologies – as well as programs and classes that help Torontonians build the critical digital literacies they need to use these technologies for academic, creative, entrepreneurial, and social pursuits.

Collaborating with the City on Digital Literacy Day provided TPL with an opportunity to showcase the breadth and depth of the Library's technology resources, including Digital Innovation Hubs, Pop-Up Learning Labs, Computer Learning Centres, Youth Hubs, children's STEM programs, services for older adults, eResources and digital collections, plus new initiatives like the Let's Learn Tech partnership with Cisco Networking Academy and George Brown.

The day also allowed library staff to shine and to showcase their knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm for facilitating and leading digital and technology-focused programs.

COMMENTS

TPL Programs and Events
The inaugural Digital Literacy Day featured 145 events across the city, of which nearly 80 events took place at 50 Toronto Public Library branches.

Library staff and partners organized a diverse lineup of programs for users of all ages and skills levels – ranging from beginner level classes focused on building basic computer and internet skills all the way to intermediate and advanced topics such as 3D design and

printing, graphic design, video production and editing, robotics, electronics, circuitry, coding, app development, and digital privacy.

The Library helped plan and host the City's kickoff event at Toronto Reference Library on the morning of May 31. Over 100 people, including executive-level staff from partner organizations and students from Toronto District School Board, attended the event. VIPs included: Rola Dagher, President, Cisco Canada; Dr. Rick Huijbregts, VP, Strategy and Innovation, George Brown College; Patricia Walcott, General Manager, Toronto Employment and Social Services; Mike Williams, General Manager, City of Toronto, Economic Development and Culture.

Formal speeches were given by City Librarian Vickery Bowles, Councillor Michelle Holland, and Grade 8 student Shakthi Singh from Mary Shadd Public School in Scarborough, who spoke about the importance of digital literacy in her life. Mayor John Tory provided a video greeting, which included a proclamation of May 31 as Digital Literacy Day in Toronto. Guests then enjoyed different technology exhibits organized by library staff and partner staff from Canada Learning Code, Ontario Science Centre, Ryerson, STEAMLabs, and TDSB.

Promotion and Awareness Raising

The Library worked closely with City staff to develop the marketing plan for Digital Literacy Day. The Library's Communications, Programming and Customer Engagement team created the brand for Digital Literacy Day and helped develop the key messages for the program.

Library staff also participated in outreach activities, including at City Hall Members Lounge, which hosted digital literacy programs for City Councillors and staff. City Librarian Vickery Bowles joined Rob Miekle, Chief Information Officer and Michael Kolm, Chief Transformation Officer, on a lunchtime panel discussion about digital literacy opportunities and issues from a City perspective. Later that day, library staff conducted a workshop to demo TPL's eResources to City staff.

Elsewhere at Yonge and Bloor Station, staff from the Library's Collections Development team activated a lunch time subway pop-up to promote the Library's eResources through iPad demos. Nearly 350 postcards were handed out over two hours and staff reported positive interactions with commuters.

The Library also created a Digital Literacy Day web page to promote the day's programs and the Library's technology services and programs. Staff also blogged about the Library's technology services. The social media team amplified the day's messaging by using the #DLDayTO hashtag. A short video documentary of the day was produced by the Library's Communications, Programming and Customer Engagement team.

Innovative Partnerships

Among the nearly 80 library programs were those delivered in partnership with academic, corporate and technology organizations.

One significant partnership that was showcased was the recently-launched Let's Learn Tech initiative, a collaboration with **Cisco Net Academy** and **George Brown**. On Digital Literacy Day, the Reference Library hosted an Internet of Things Lab, where participants gained hands on experience working with Raspberry Pi and Arduinos, and learned about career options in the IOT field from program facilitators.

Other partner programs hosted at library branches included:

- **Arts and Science Lab** led a workshop on how to create generative art using the Processing programming language
- **Oracle Academy** led game making workshops for youth using the Java programming language
- **Pricewaterhouse Cooper** volunteers led app development workshops for youth
- **Ryerson University** led a workshop teaching participants how to build a robotic exoskeleton using 3D printing and Arduino
- **Toronto Employment and Social Services** led online skills and job search workshops for older adults.

Looking to the Future

The City's inaugural Digital Literacy Day garnered enthusiastic engagement from over 35 partners in the academic, corporate and technology communities. The response from program participants of all ages was very positive.

Digital Literacy Day allowed TPL to showcase its ongoing work to drive digital inclusion, bridge the digital divide, and foster digital literacy skills through the breadth and depth of our technology services and staff expertise. In reality, every day is Digital Literacy Day at the Library!

The Library looks forward to working with the City to build on the momentum of Digital Literacy Day for future years, including a potential expansion to the provincial level.

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SIGNATURE

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