
Administrator's checklist of microcomputer concerns in education libraries

By the EBSS Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Microcomputer Issues
in Education Libraries

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Questions to ask when you are planning microcomputer operations.

Demand for a variety of microcomputer hardware and software is increasing in all types of libraries. Education libraries (including curriculum materials centers) are particularly affected by these demands since they are asked to provide a variety of available hardware and compatible software for educational use, as well as hardware and operational software for their own staffs. The *Administrator's Checklist of Microcomputer Concerns in Education Libraries*, an ACRL section committee project, is a list of questions to consider when planning and implementing microcomputer operations in education libraries.

This checklist was prepared by the Ad hoc Subcommittee on Microcomputer Issues in Education Libraries, a subcommittee of the ACRL/EBSS Curriculum Materials and Problems of Access and Control of Education Materials Committees. Members of the subcommittee are Mary Crimmins, Julie Czisny, Eileen F. Schroeder, Ellen Zyroff, and Ilene F. Rockman and Barbara E. Kemp, co-chairs. Thanks are also due to Ruth E. Bauner and Janice S. Newman for their contributions.

I. Needs assessment

A. What does current library, microcomputer, and educational literature say? What trends and

new technologies are being forecast? In addition to reading, talk with librarians who already offer microcomputer services.

B. What are the levels of interest and types of needs of various target populations, including School of Education students and faculty, and library staff? Conduct interviews and/or surveys of the target populations. Review reference questions and collection development data.

C. Are competing or complementary operations planned or in place on campus? Discuss this issue with library administrators, School of Education faculty, campus planning officials, and administrators of the campus computer facility.

D. Why should a microcomputer center be placed in the library? What purpose will it serve? What services will be offered?

II. General administrative concerns

A. Have clearly identifiable goals and objectives been established for the education library's microcomputer service? Encourage library and School of Education faculty and staff to be involved in establishing goals and objectives.

B. What level of funding is needed to establish and maintain the proposed service? Is additional staff required? Will the education library microcomputer service be a separate budget line within

the overall library budget? What priority is given to the service by the library and university administrators? Will the new service compete with existing services for funding?

Plan a budget, considering initial start-up costs and ongoing costs such as purchase of software, upgrading and maintenance of equipment, and staff development needs.

C. How will the service be publicized? Will publicity be general, directed to target populations, or a combination of both? Use existing channels of campus communication: personal contacts, library orientation, library and departmental newsletters, and campus media. Develop personal contacts with campus media personnel. Follow up general, printed publicity with visits, telephone calls, or letters to key individuals.

D. How will the service be evaluated? Decide what statistics on equipment and software use are needed and how often they should be gathered. Provide brief, written evaluation forms for users, library staff, and education faculty to determine if expectations and information needs are being met and if new or expanded services are desired.

E. Will the education library establish ties to local schools in order to keep current as to the quality and state-of-the-art of the hardware and software and to promote cooperative efforts in areas such as courseware evaluation and teacher training?

F. How will the programs be upgraded (optical discs, laser discs, interactive video)? Who will be responsible for this planning?

III. Hardware/Equipment

A. Will the education library own or simply house the hardware? Consider how this will affect maintenance of the hardware and purchase of peripherals.

B. Should the education library concentrate on just one type or brand of hardware and its compatible software or should a variety be purchased? Is there money and space to expand and diversify? Take into consideration curricular needs for software, available discount purchase agreements, and equipment used in local school districts.

C. Are there adequate facilities to house equipment? Consider requirements for ventilation, wiring, electrical outlets, fire protection, space, and security.

D. Who maintains and repairs the equipment?

E. What peripherals are needed? If printers are purchased, will they be dot-matrix or letter-quality? Will users be charged for paper? Will blank disks be sold?

F. Do work stations (computer tables and chairs) need to be purchased?

G. Who may use the equipment? Is it available for use with library materials only? Is use limited to previewing educational software? Is there a fee to use it? Will it be loaned for classroom use?

IV. Software

A. Will the education library purchase or simply house the software? What types of software will be acquired? Will the education library have only CAI software for K through 12 or will it also provide a variety of programs for college students, faculty, and library staff?

B. Will the education library obtain free and public domain software, including programs developed by students?

C. Is a separate collection development statement for microcomputer software needed? Will the education/curriculum bibliographers or other subject specialists be responsible for collection development of non-instructional software?

D. What level of cataloging will be given to software? Can your bibliographic utility accommodate a software format?

E. Will AACR 2 rules be applied to software?

F. What bibliographic access to software will be made available?

G. Is enhanced subject/title access necessary to provide adequate access to multiple programs on one disk? Is the cataloging unit adequately staffed to create such analytics?

H. How will the software and accompanying documentation be packaged? Will they be kept together or shelved separately?

I. How will archival and back-up copies be handled? Will software be integrated on the shelves or will it be separately stored? Will there be direct patron access?

J. Can reproducible programs be put on hard disks for in-house use? Can they be put on the campus mainframe computer and accessed by regular telephone lines or via a campus-wide or other local area network?

K. Are care and copyright labels attached to each item?

L. Will additional personnel be required to catalog and process the software? What type of library training and microcomputer expertise will be necessary?

V. Circulation

A. Will hardware and/or software circulate outside of the education library? If so, to whom? Is special handling required? What instructions on care and operation will be provided?

B. How long a loan period is needed for hardware? software? documentation? Will software and documentation be allowed to circulate separately?

C. Will material be checked for damage when it is returned? Will fines be levied for lost or damaged items?

D. Will the number of disks which can be loaned at one time be limited?

E. Is it necessary to reserve use of hardware and/or software?

VI. Copyright

A. Will the education library duplicate computer programs for archival or back-up purposes?

B. For which software programs will the education library, the library or the university purchase or attempt to obtain the duplicating rights, licenses, or agreements from the software developer or distributor?

C. How will the education library comply with copyright?

D. How will the education library educate patrons about copyright restrictions?

VII. Services/Training

A. How are patrons and library staff trained to use the hardware and software?

B. Will users have to prove "competency" before being allowed to use hardware? Will some proof of training be required to check out hardware?

C. Will microcomputer services be included in published library instruction aids?

D. What is the role of the librarian in end-user instruction? Will training on commercially available systems be provided?

VIII. Bibliography

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