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LIBRARIES WHITESPACE PROJECT WINS IMLS LEADERSHIP GRANT

Will offer sub-grant award opportunities for library-led community projects.

San Jose, CA - San Jose State University's School of Information (iSchool) in partnership with the Gigabit Libraries Network (GLN) announced today they have been awarded a National Leadership Grant of nearly \$250,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to expand the Libraries WhiteSpace Project.

The program will infuse selected libraries with \$15,000 in funds as sub-grant awards to support 5 innovative implementations using TV white space (TVWS) wireless communications technology.

A national consortium, led by SJSU-iSchool and GLN, also includes the Schools, Health and Libraries Broadband Coalition (SHLB), National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) and Information Technology Disaster Resource Center (ITDRC) all joining to create new learning resources and conduct outreach to raise awareness of the capabilities of TVWS.

Libraries are encouraged to initiate partnership projects among neighboring anchor institutions to cooperate in exploring and developing innovative uses for TVWS equipment. The focus will be to support new remote fixed and portable institutional access points at unserved locations in their communities.

"Our project will further explore the role of libraries as community anchors promoting access and inclusion through strategic technology integration. There's a nice intersection between what we're implementing and the concept of community anchors, which has been used by IMLS to describe the role of libraries in providing civic engagement, cultural opportunities, and economic vitality to communities," says project co-director Kristen Rebmann of SJSU.

The sub-grants, due to be awarded in first quarter 2017, will support library-led formation of local/regional collaborations among schools, health clinics or other community anchor institutions (CAIs) who propose innovative and high impact plans for TVWS/Wi-Fi implementations that: (1) improve patron access / digital inclusion and (2) develop structures for multi-organizational collaboration as a component of community crisis/disaster preparation.

“TV white spaces are a new open resource, ideally suited for libraries, schools and other community anchor institutional use to enhance and extend access to public services,” says GLN Director, Don Means. The Libraries WhiteSpace Project is also supported by the leading global manufacturers of TV white space equipment: Adaptrum, Carlson Wireless and 6Harmonics.

The project builds on the work funded by a grant in 2015 from the Knight Foundation to GLN in partnership with the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) to build preliminary analysis and orientation tools for libraries interested in exploring the capabilities of license-free TVWS equipment to expand access to library services and other digital resources.

“As society changes, so does the role of libraries in our communities. The potential extension of a library’s public internet access through low-cost TVWS is a high value addition to local library services,” says NDIA Executive Director, Angela Siefer.

Like Wi-Fi, TVWS equipment uses free public spectrum, requiring no third party carriers, ongoing fees, licenses or other permissions for use in wide area intra-facility digital communication. But unlike Wi-Fi, TVWS has long range and penetrative capabilities that can support broadband connections over miles and through obstructions like trees and buildings.

"Deploying a wireless extension from the library, via TV white spaces spectrum as proposed by GLN/SJSU iSchool, is the next logical step toward the goal of creating a nationwide wireless infrastructure that can connect citizens and public safety officials anytime, anywhere," says SHLB Executive Director, John Windhausen.

Participants in the second phase of the initiative will be asked to incorporate TVWS/Wi-Fi into community disaster planning as a redundant and potentially invaluable new communications resource. Each local project is expected to evaluate how new portable library Wi-Fi access points could be quickly redeployed to create pop-up hotspots at damaged areas in times of crisis.

"The reality is that after a catastrophic event, the public communications infrastructure WILL be down for 2 – 10 days on average, and the community will need temporary connectivity until the public utilities are restored. Libraries and other anchor institutions can help bridge that information and communications gap by using TVWS and traditional Wi-Fi together," says Joe Hillis of ITDRC.

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The **San José State University (SJSU) School of Information (iSchool)** – formerly School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) – prepares individuals for careers as information professionals. Graduates work in diverse areas of the information profession, such as user experience design, digital asset management, information architecture, electronic records management, information governance, digital preservation, and librarianship. <http://ischool.sjsu.edu/about>

Gigabit Libraries Network

The **Gigabit Libraries Network** operates as an open collaboration of tech savvy innovation libraries cooperating as a distributed global testbed/showcase environment for high performance applications and equipment in the service of educational, civic and cultural objectives. <http://giglibraries.net/about>



“The **Institute of Museum and Library Services** is celebrating its 20th Anniversary. IMLS is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. Our mission has been to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. For the past 20 years, our grant making, policy development, and research has helped libraries and

museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit www.imls.gov.