

APPENDIX G

Instructions to Site Libraries

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May 20, 1997

Ms. _____
Participating Library
Address
City, PA ZIP

Dear:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our site visits for the OnLine PA project evaluation. I enjoyed speaking with you last week about our forthcoming visit to _____ on June 5, 1997. The purpose of this letter is to describe the nature of the visit in a bit more detail, provide additional information that may help you to organize the visit, and to ask for some logistical information to help us get there.

As I indicated on the phone, there are four main parts to the site visit. Let me briefly describe each one so that you will know what to expect.

1: Meeting with the Director

We would like to spend the first session with you, say from 9:00 AM- 10:15 AM. The objectives of this session are to obtain an administrative overview of your library's role in the project; review costs, benefits, and issues related to your involvement; identify specific impacts from involvement on the library, library staff, and the local community from involvement; and discuss the library's next steps in both the project and in providing public access to the Internet.

We are especially interested in your views on the costs and benefits from participating in the project. Would you do it again if asked? Has participation really affected the community and how? Has the OnLine PA connection increased visibility and use of the library? Will you leverage this initial Internet connection and Internet services and expand them in the future?

2: Meeting with Library Staff

This meeting typically would go from 10:30 until 11:45 AM. Please invite ALL library staff (and volunteers if appropriate) who have been involved in the OnLine PA project at the library. By involved, we mean anyone that has received training, anyone who has provided instruction or training to users; or anyone who has operated or used the OnLine PA connection. During this session, the topics we would like to discuss are:

- How would you describe the users and types of uses being made of the public access Internet connection?
- What kind of training does the library provide to users?
- To what degree do you (library staff) use the OnLine PA connection and for what do you use it?
- Please describe some of the most important “successes” and “failures” you have seen in using the OnLine PA connection?
- What are the most important benefits and impacts that have resulted to you, the library, and the community from having the OnLine PA connection?

The meeting should be held in a meeting room or at a conference area in the library where we will not disturb anyone else. If we need to meet with them individually in order to operate services points during this time, such is fine. We hope that you will also attend this meeting but will encourage others to talk and offer *their* views since we will have already met with you!

3: Meeting with Local Librarians

Please invite up to 7 librarians in neighboring communities to meet with us for lunch and discussion. The librarians should also be participants in the OnLine PA project. The librarians can be directors or staff -- as long as they have some experience with OnLine PA and provision of the Internet services in their library.

If appropriate please make reservations for all of us -- John and I plus however many agree to participate. We should probably all meet directly at the designated restaurant rather than at the library to save on time. The closer, quicker, and easier the restaurant is to get into and out of, the better! Tell everyone that the lunch is on us. We would expect to have lunch and return to the library by 1:45.

The same general topics that we listed for discussion with the staff will also be the topics that we will raise during lunch. So if they want to know the topics in advance, please feel free to provide them with the topics listed in item 2 above. It may be useful to remind them about the meeting and its location a couple of days prior to the time.

4: Meeting with Local Users

This meeting is *very important* as a prime objective of the evaluation is to talk to users of the OnLine PA public access connections. If we schedule the meeting for 2:00 we should finish by 3:30 PM. Again, the meeting should be held in a meeting room or at a conference area in the library where we will not disturb anyone else. We will ask that the library director introduce the meeting and then leave.

We would suggest that you start NOW to arrange for users to attend this focus group session. We hope that you will be able to identify regular users of the OnLine PA Internet connection, that they are knowledgeable about the use of the connection, and willing to share their experiences with us. It is fine if they use the Internet from their home *as long as they are users of the connection at the library too!* Users can be young or old, students, whatever -- as long as they have used the library's OnLine PA connection and are willing to discuss their experiences. In fact, users of the Online PA project, but from other libraries in the area, are also welcome to participate in the session if possible.

There are a number of strategies to use in organizing this session. One is to have an announcement of the meeting, at the computer, asking users to participate in a discussion about their use of the On-line PA Internet connection. Indicate that those interested should come to the reference desk to sign-up. Then get their name and phone number as confirmation. You should probably get about 15 users to agree to attend in advance as that usually results in about 9 that actually come.

In conjunction with the above approach it is usually better to personalize the invitation by going to those using the Internet connection (especially users that you or the staff know) and asking them directly to participate. Then get their name and phone number as confirmation. Two-three days before the meeting, please give them all a reminder call letting them know we are looking forward to seeing them at the discussion session. Bribe them with the high quality cookies we will bring!

Please stress to these users the importance of their participation as it is essential to document their views on the use and impact of providing this new Internet service. Indicate that information from the study will help the library plan for future Internet services and possibly help the library and the state obtain additional funding to support such services. Typical topics we will discuss with the users are:

- How did they learn of the OnLine PA Internet connection?
- How often do they use the connection and what types of information resources and services do they use?
- Do they use it for professional, personal, or recreational reasons -- can they provide examples of specific uses and how those sources helped (or did not help) them?
- What have been the impacts and benefits of using the library's OnLine PA connection?
- Did they encounter any difficulties in using the workstation or the software?
- How might the OnLine PA Internet connection and services be improved?
- How have they learned to use the OnLine PA Internet connection?
- What do you recommend the library do to continue to improve this service?
- Do you think the local community would be willing to support the public access Internet connectivity *directly*?

This is a general flavor of the types of topics we will explore with them -- others may come up depending on their knowledge and interest. At 3:30 PM we will end the meeting and thank them very much!

In Preparation

Prior to our coming to the library I would greatly appreciate it if you would send me information on the following:

- Although we have some basic statistical information about your library, we would appreciate it very much if you would send me a “care package” of any information about the library that you think would be useful for us to know. This could include a budget (especially any cost items specifically related to the project), brochures related to the OnLine PA project, promotional information or news clippings about the project, user logs or sign-up sheets, etc.
- Map with directions on how to find your library and where to park if it is not obvious.
- Your recommendation for a hotel/motel (with phone number) where we might stay for the night.

Please fax me information on hotels/motels and a map at (fax no.). Please send the care package to me at (address).

* * * * *

I think the above about covers the information we need to provide you. If you have any questions you can call me at my office (phone no.) where I also have voice mail or fax me (phone no.). We *really* appreciate your help with participating in the site visit. THANKS, and we are looking forward to meeting you at 9:00 AM on June Xth.

Sincerely,

Chuck McClure

cc: John Bertot
Barbara Cole
Jim Fogarty