

## *In this era of technology, do we still need libraries?*

Our Library's annual circulation is now over 1.6 million items — an increase of 6 percent in the last year. What public libraries really provide is free and equal access to information. As technology proliferates, the library is truly the only place where everyone can use these information resources, regardless of cost or technical expertise.

In the age of the Internet and the wide availability of iPods and Kindles, we continue to attract more than 2,000 people who visit our libraries every day to read newspapers in their native language, pick up books they ordered from another library, research a school project, browse the DVDs available, and use the free, public access computers provided by the libraries.

In addition to providing the technology itself, the library provides something just as important — training and information about how to use it. While a wealth of information is available online, people still need to learn how to find information and assess its credibility. Our libraries will be able to offer classes using computers to demonstrate how to access the online databases, interpret Google results, or show the best way to learn a language using online or offline materials.

## *How will our new libraries use new technologies?*

Our library website offers blogs, specialized e-newsletters, online reviews, online holds, inter-library borrowing, e-books, and dozens of informational databases to anyone with a Palo Alto library card, 24 hours a day.

In the library itself, there are catalog search computers, Internet access computers, loaner laptops, free wi-fi, and self-check out stations.

Our new libraries will have technology built in — information kiosks will be available throughout the buildings, along with specialized stations for early learners, and download stations that provide library-only free-access to electronic versions of books and music to personal devices. We'll also install RFID automated handling systems to quickly and easily sort returned items.

The new conference and meeting rooms will be equipped with ceiling mounted projectors, electronic whiteboards with USB access, and web-conferencing equipment. These displays will allow entrepreneurs to explain their concepts, students to illustrate their projects, and community members to share knowledge.

The Palo Alto Library is committed to providing and using new technology. Our new library facilities will make that possible and are designed to flexibly accommodate the next several waves of technology.

