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Enhanced Management and Benchmarking Tool Equips 21st-Century Public Libraries to Elevate Their Community Leadership Role

The Urban Libraries Council's Edge 2.0 platform empowers public libraries to assess and leverage their strengths to better serve the evolving needs of their communities.

WASHINGTON — The Urban Libraries Council has launched Edge 2.0, a new version of its renowned benchmarking and management system for public libraries. Over 2,600 libraries of all sizes across the U.S. and Canada have used the previous version of Edge to assess their programs and services, identify areas for improvement and elevate their role in advancing community priorities, with a special focus on public access technology. Edge 2.0 revises and extends the scope of the system's benchmarks to incorporate a broader focus on the library's capacity to advance community digital inclusion priorities, including digital awareness, literacy and mastery.

Edge 2.0 introduces a wide range of new and enhanced features to help subscribers continually strengthen their digital inclusion outcomes and community leadership role, including:

- A **new online benchmarking platform** that offers intuitive and robust tools for Edge libraries to create, store, reference and utilize key performance indicator data.
- **Dynamic comparison reports** that equip libraries to contextualize their Edge Assessment results using data from similarly sized libraries, as well as custom-generated comparisons based on the regions, states/provinces and operating revenues of other North American libraries.
- A **completely updated website**, libraryedge.org, that provides a modernized interface and a dynamic new tool for users to explore success stories of Edge libraries.

The new version of Edge marks the first major update to the tool since its initial public launch in 2014. Edge is led by the Urban Libraries Council and was developed by a national coalition of leading library and local government organizations with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The launch of Edge 2.0 follows over a year of development that included input from leaders in the library field, expert data analysts and more than 200 libraries that participated in a representative sample cohort to inform the system's baseline comparison data.

“Edge empowers libraries to not only keep pace with the rapid evolution of our world today, but to actively lead 21st-century communities forward using data-driven planning, activities and partnerships,” said ULC President and CEO Susan Benton. “Edge 2.0 equips libraries of all sizes – from major urban systems serving millions, to small rural libraries with limited resources – to achieve an even more impactful, visible and connected role in advancing community outcomes.”

Subscribers to the new system include both individual library systems and entire states and provinces. As of its launch, Edge 2.0 subscribers include the California State Library, State Library of Oregon, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Missouri State Library, State Library of North Carolina, Texas State Library and Archives Commission and Ontario Public Libraries, representing over 1,600 libraries. Additional information about Edge 2.0’s development, features and subscription options can be found at libraryedge.org.

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About the Urban Libraries Council

The Urban Libraries Council, founded in 1971, is the voice for public libraries and the force that inspires them to evolve. ULC creates the tools, techniques and ideas to make ongoing improvements and upgrades in services and technology. ULC also speaks loudly and clearly about the value public libraries bring to communities, and secures funding for research that results in the development of new programs and services. And by serving as a forum for library leadership, ULC produces innovative ideas and best practices that ensure community impact.

About Edge

Edge is a management tool that helps libraries align their technology resources to community priorities. Edge guides libraries to set measurable, strategic goals for digital inclusion and to engage government and community leaders in meaningful discussion about technology needs and plans. Edge is led by the Urban Libraries Council and was developed by a national coalition of leading library and local government organizations with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Public libraries of all sizes are successfully using Edge to strengthen and improve their technology services.