PLP Innovation and Technology Opportunity Grant Program Application

Retro Tech Redux: Building on the Success of Self-Service Preservation

1. One paragraph project summary

San José Public Library (SJPL) proposes replicating and evolving Santa Clara City Library's (SCCL) successful 16/17 PLP Innovation Grant, "Retro Tech – Bringing 20th Century Media into the 21st Century." Our project will add a collection of obsolete media equipment into the California Room (SJPL's history room). Patrons will make two-hour appointments where, instructed by staff and volunteers, they will learn how to digitize photos, recordings, and ephemera, preserving their analog histories for the digital future. In addition to standard marketing strategies through library branches and publications, staff will take equipment to outreach events at local high schools, colleges, archives and historical groups. At these events we will provide demonstrations of the equipment and information on the value and methods of preservation.

2. Explain how this project fits with the library's strategic directions

SJPL has adopted five strategic priorities to ensure the library's continued growth and relevance. The Retro Tech Redux project supports each of these strategic priorities.

SJPL Strategic Priority #1: Enhance access to library services, resources, and programs.
San José Public Library is committed to the growth of the California Room. In 2017, the San José City Council approved SJPL's budget proposal for a full-time clerk for the California Room; this position has enabled additional open hours and more robust outreach, as well as greater focus on patrons and their research needs. Moving forward, we strive to make the California room the hub for cultural heritage institutions throughout Silicon Valley. By creating an opportunity for members of the SJPL community to preserve their memories, Retro Tech Redux will further increase the California Room's utility and personalize the value it provides, all while affirming the library's commitment to the cultural heritage of our community.

SJPL Strategic Priority #2: Connect the community to high-quality opportunities and tools for learning.
California Room staff routinely speaks to community groups about preservation and conservation. By implementing Retro Tech Redux, staff will be able to provide hands-on preservation experience to groups and individuals. Not only will volunteers and program participants learn how to use these tools, but they will teach others to do the same, creating a broadening circle of knowledge that will engender a greater appreciation for history both personal and cultural and result in an increased number of materials preserved for the future.

SJPL Strategic Priority #3: Engage volunteers, staff, communities, and partners to strengthen services.

One of the major successes of Santa Clara City Library's original grant was the significant number of volunteers and community members who wanted to learn more about the technology used. The Retro Tech Redux project will not only provide the community access to equipment that they may not be able to afford or otherwise use, but also provide expansive opportunities for volunteer engagement.

SJPL Strategic Priority #4: Ensure libraries and services are safe, connected, efficient, and welcoming.

This project will help foster a more welcoming library environment by engaging patrons on an intimate level, intertwining the mission of the library with their own personal histories. Through Retro Tech Redux, patrons will increase their connectivity to heritage, family, and community.

SJPL Strategic Priority #5: Boost awareness of library resources, services, and value.

Through outreach, programming, and volunteer recruitment, we will ensure the community is aware of the preservation opportunities and technologies available at SJPL, as well as the cost-savings and learning opportunities that make the Retro Tech Redux program a superior alternative to commercial digitization services.

3. A detailed description of the proposed project including the population served and the demographics of that population

Note: We spoke with Rachel Schmidt of Santa Clara City Library at PLP's "Preparing Libraries for the Virtual Future" conference, as well as by phone. We discussed with her the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from SCCL's implementation of the grant, and we have adjusted our proposal accordingly. In cases where, based on the lessons learned from SJCC, we have decided to make changes to the program, we have noted those changes throughout the remainder of this section.

Population and Demographics

The median age of San José residents is 36.5, with 37% of residents age 44 or older. With lifetimes that straddle the divide between analog and digital technologies, Silicon Valley residents are seeking to preserve memories captured on obsolete media. Santa Clara City Library found that many of their patrons using the Retro Tech were baby boomers, and we believe our user demographics will be similar.

When equipment to transfer memories from obsolete formats can be found, it is often cost-prohibitive. According to the American Fact Finder website, San Jose's percentage of individuals living below the poverty level is 10.9%. There is little, if any, disposable income for these

families to preserve their memories. A survey of five digitization companies in the South Bay showed that costs for these services are out of reach for a significant number of SJPL patrons. The average costs of a photo or slide digitization are $0.80 per item, with a minimum order ranging from $25-$100. VHS and Super 8 digital conversion average $19 per tape or reel. Albums and cassettes average $25 per item.

Engaging users
SJPL will offer appointments for community members to digitize their items at no cost. We will provide outreach and partner with other cultural heritage institutions to bring this technology to a wider audience. Through "Retro Tech Parties" - outreach and in-library events hosted by staff and volunteers - we will encourage the community to bring small amounts of memorabilia for digitization and share with them the many treasures the California Room and SJPL have to offer.

Privacy Concerns
One of the planned outputs of Santa Clara City's grant was an ambitious number of documents shared with the Local History Room. Ultimately, however, few patrons chose to share their digitized items, often citing privacy concerns. Ergo, we have removed this output from our proposal.

Volunteers Are Key
Ms. Schmidt noted that SCCL's program was most successful in gaining and maintaining volunteers. Though SCCL's grant proposal indicated that "staff, interns, and volunteers will orient patrons," they ultimately engaged an amount of volunteers large enough that patron orientations could be wholly volunteer-run. We have added an output that will measure the number of volunteers and volunteer hours spent with the Retro Tech. Furthermore, we believe this program is an excellent opportunity to create intergenerational programming. To this end we will actively recruit *teen* volunteers to assist with the program. We will measure the number of teen volunteers we recruit, as well as their hours.

In-Library Usage of VHS Convertor
SCCL found that the "real-time" digital conversion of VHS tapes was a challenge, especially if there were no other technology stations available for concurrent use. SCCL's solution was to mount the conversion station on a mobile cart and allow the station to be circulated in-house. As we are planning on beginning implementation of Retro Tech at the King Library, it's unclear if this solution is feasible. We are planning on evaluating simultaneous patron demand for converting VHS tapes.

4. **Goals and objectives of the project**
   - Preserve and digitize local history before the equipment is obsolete or unavailable and before the format has degraded completely.
   - Assist patrons with personal historical research and documentation.
   - Provide casual users with a free resource and training to preserve documents.
   - Provide education and skill building on digitization and preservation.
   - Provide intergenerational programming, with teens serving as teachers.
   - Increase number of volunteers, especially teen volunteers.

Fulfillment of goals shall be measured using the following performance metrics:

For patrons:
   - Number of patrons participating
   - Number of patron trainings and research assistance appointments
   - Number of patron hours spent using equipment
   - Number of materials digitized
   - Survey of patron satisfaction implemented for each participant at the conclusion of their participation

For volunteers:
   - Number of total volunteers
   - Number of teen volunteers
   - Number of total volunteer hours
   - Number of teen volunteer hours
   - Survey of volunteer satisfaction at mid-year and end of the year

5. **Project timeline (activities).**

Activity	2019											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Purchase equipment	X											
Install appropriate software	X											
Recruit volunteers		X	X						X	X		
Train staff		X										
Train volunteers		X	X	X					X	X	X	
Promote/Market events			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Host information events				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Evaluation						X						X

6. Evaluation of the project

As mentioned in the goals and objectives section, SJPL believes this program will provide a valuable community service as well as an opportunity to meaningfully engage volunteers. We will consider ourselves successful if we meet the following goals:

- Number of total volunteers (Goal: 25)
- Number of teen volunteers (Goal: 10)
- Number of total volunteer hours (Goal: 500)
- Number of teen volunteer hours (Goal: 250)
- At least 75% of volunteers surveyed rate their experience as "very good" or "exceptional".
- At least 75% of volunteers surveyed agree with the statement "I learned something new."
- At least 75% of patrons who received training rate the training as "very good" or "exceptional".
- At least 75% of patrons who received research assistance rate the assistance as "very good" or "exceptional".
- At least 200 digitization opportunities will be offered during the grant year.
- At least 1500 community items will be digitized by the end of the grant year.

7. Project budget (Indirect costs are not allowed)

The majority of the grant funds will be used for digitization equipment. We will endeavor to purchase technology that is easy to use and does not require intensive training. Because one of the goals is to make the technology mobile, we will purchase laptops for several patrons to be able to use the digitization equipment simultaneously.

Staff will be used to recruit and train volunteers, as well as hosting "Retro Tech Parties." Mirroring SCCL's events, we will invite the public to bring small amounts of photos or recordings to digitize. The budgeted staff time will allow training and programming.

Equipment	Cost
Pacific Image PowerSlide X Automated 35mm Slide Scanner	1,199.99
Wolverine Data Film2Digital MovieMaker-PRO 8mm and Super 8 converter	399.99
Audio-Technica AT-LP120BK-USB Direct Drive Professional Turntable (USB&Analog)	299.00
Epson Workforce DS-6500 Document Scanner	849.00
Epson Perfection V800 Photo Scanner	715.25

Elgato Systems USB Analog Video Capture Device	79.90
Emerson EWV404 4-Head Video Cassette Recorder with On-Screen Programming Display	300.00

Equipment	Cost
ION Tape Express Plus Cassette Player and Tape to Digital Converter with USB & 1/8" Out	39.99
3 Laptops @$2000 each	6,000.00
H. Wilson Presentation Station (locking a/v cart)	589.99
Power strips	75.00
Miscellaneous cables, storage media, containers	100.00
Equipment Subtotal	**10,648.11**
Tax	984.95
Shipping	250.00
Total Equipment Cost	**11,883.06**
Marketing & Promotion	500.00
Personnel 70 hours @$30/hour	2,100.00
GRAND TOTAL	**14,483.06**

8. Sustainability analysis

As the grant will largely be used for equipment, the Retro Tech Redux project is eminently sustainable. The California Room has 3.5 FTE staff members, and recently added an additional day to its open hours. SJPL's successful "Volunteer Away Your Fines" initiative, as well as our close ties to 14 school districts, will ensure an ongoing pool of volunteers. SJPL is dedicated to raising awareness of the California Room and its many treasures, and we believe that the Retro Tech Redux project will enhance the relevance and utility of the California Room by creating opportunities for our patrons to actively engage with history.