REPORT TO THE LIBRARY BOARD
MEETING DATE: SEPTEMBER 20, 2012

Session:	Public Session
Subject:	Patron Authentication on the Wireless Network: Status Report
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Purpose of Report:	For Receipt ☑

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that this report be received.

ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY

In November 2011, the Library Board received a report from administration on the introduction of "patron authentication" on the LPL wireless network and the timelines for the implementation process.   (A further report was received in December 2011, providing additional information on the wireless network management.)

The implementation was targeted for March 1, 2012 and a report to the Library Board on the impact of patron authentication with regards to the use of the wireless network was scheduled for September 2012.

BACKGROUND & REVIEW

<u>Implementation</u>

Patron authentication implementation occurred from December 2011 to March 2012 and included the following steps:

- Purchase, install and test upgrade to wireless network and connection with the Innovative Interfaces Inc. Integrated Library System;
- Develop and launch communication with the public regarding change in procedures;
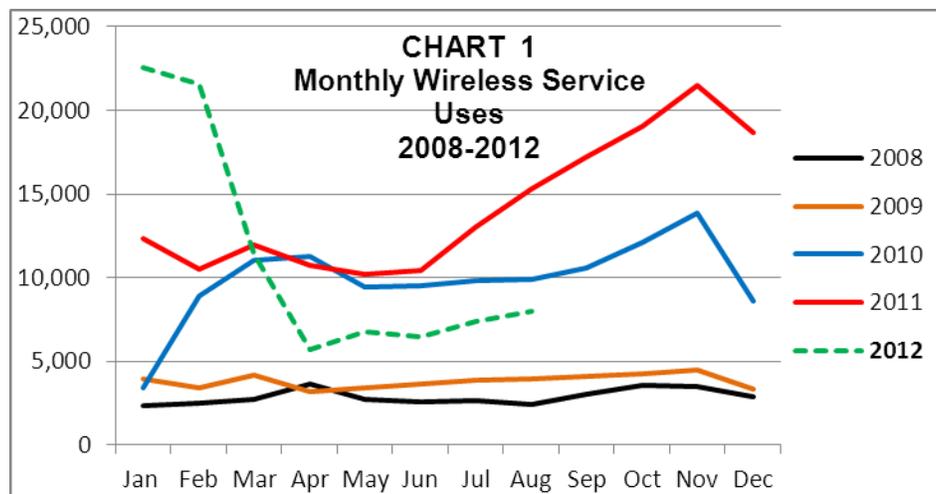
- Implement monitoring processes to assess impact of changes;
- Update policy and procedure documentation;
- Complete staff training; and
- Introduce authentication on public wireless network, system-wide.

As of March 2012, wireless users in all locations were required to have a library card and PIN. This change was well communicated in advance to encourage patrons to obtain and/or update cards. Revised Lending Services procedures allowed those with fines on their cards to continue to use wireless as long as their cards were current; when the cards are updated annually, patrons would have to clear fines. Procedures were established to allow those attending meetings or events to access wireless with or without personal authentication.

All locations were up and running by mid-March.

Statistical Analysis

Chart 1 shows the month-by-month uses of the wireless network system from 2008 to August 2012.

The introduction of patron authentication had an initial negative impact on usage during the early months of the service change. A sharp decline in usage occurred in April 2012. Possible influencing factors include:

- Response to patron log-in and PIN procedures

  Locations reported few issues and very few comments from the public. Patrons who expressed concern felt that having to input a card number and PIN was inconvenient, bothersome, and not very user-friendly. Despite consistent communications with patrons prior to and during the initial month of the change and easier card registration procedures, lack of awareness and confusion about the change may have contributed to the dip in usage.
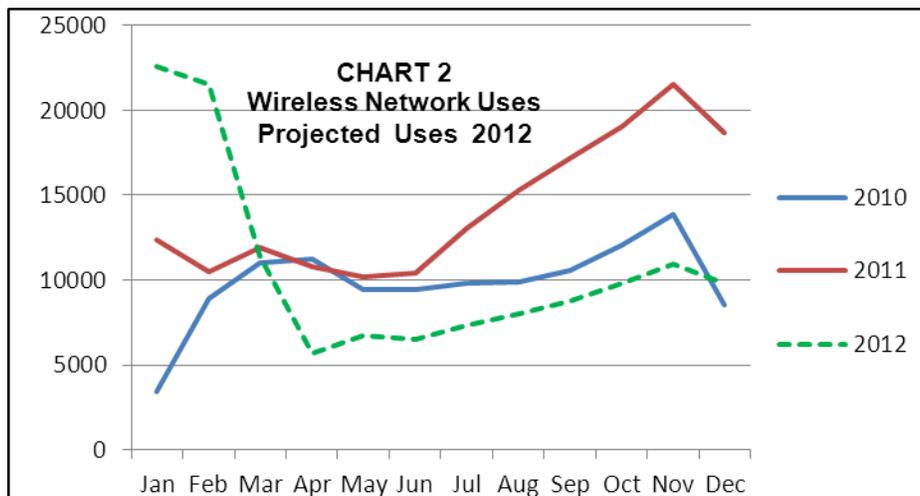
- Annual second quarter trend

  Students are heavy users of the internet wireless service. The change to the service was introduced in the second quarter when typically there is a variation in the usage due to lower student use as post-secondary courses end. Staff observed fewer patrons using wireless devices in the second quarter.

- Use of multiple internet devices

  Prior to the change, a patron could access the internet through wireless on multiple devices at the same time. With patron authentication, a patron is limited to the use of a single device at any time.

Trends & Projections

Chart 2 includes a projection of 2012 (green) based on the continuing upward trend of usage continuing to the end of the year. There has been an overall rebound of 40 % in monthly usage since April 2012. If this trend continues, the projected usage for 2012 will be 129,100. While this is lower than the annual usage in 2011 (170,871), the indications are that usage will continue to track upwards in 2013.

CHART 2
Wireless Network Uses
Projected Uses 2012

NEXT STEPS

The Library will promote the availability of the wireless service during its Library card registration drives at Western University and Fanshawe College this fall.

Now that the wireless service is fully operationalized, ongoing reporting on the use of the wireless network will continue through the Balanced Score Card quarterly reports.

In November 2012, the Board requested further information on adding filtering capabilities to the LPL Internet wireless service. This information will be included in the annual Internet Services Policy report presented to the Board in November 2012.