

# Dauphin County Library System Helps Bridge the Digital Divide with **Ethernet Services from Comcast Business**

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Scalable, High-performing Internet and WiFi Capabilities Support  
New Technology Initiatives for Eight Libraries Across Central Pennsylvania

## **Regional Library System Brings Literacy and Recreational Programs to Thousands of Local Adults and Children**

Comprised of eight independently operating facilities, the Dauphin County Library System (The Library) serves approximately 270,000 Pennsylvania citizens residing in Harrisburg, Elizabethville, Millersburg, Lykens, Hummelstown and the surrounding areas. The eight libraries saw 695,000 in-person visits and a greater amount of online traffic in 2017. They share a collection of nearly 380,000 items that range from books, movies and music to video and board games, puzzles and digital downloads. The system also owns a state-of-the-art mobile Exploration Station that brings smart TV, digital media, laptops, a WiFi hotspot that provides free wireless Internet access and fun activities to shelters, elder and child care facilities, parks and community events.

In addition to these resources, The Library regularly hosts events for users of all ages. Just a few examples include monthly book clubs, author visits and leisure activities for adults, educational story and playtime sessions for young children, and after-school programs and video clubs for teenagers. All users also have the option of bringing their own laptops or using the library system's complimentary WiFi to browse the Internet, stream online videos, use social media and play games.

## **Reliable Internet and WiFi Services Essential to Both Users and Staff**

The Library depends on its Internet services for virtually every aspect of day-to-day operations. Not only does the network play a critical role in supporting the WiFi services offered to all users, but it also provides the only way for the library system's 150 employees to access its shared catalog of available items.

Seven of these libraries relied on a 50 Megabits-per-second (Mbps) coaxial cable Internet connection that was linked to their flagship location in Harrisburg via a virtual private network and a hub-and-spoke VPN. With only 300 Megabits-per-second (Mbps) of network capacity at its eighth location, however, it was becoming increasingly difficult to support the growing number of users, especially since this same Internet connection was shared by both library employees and users.

### **Situation**

- Collection of eight connected libraries across Dauphin County, Pennsylvania
- One of the largest library systems in the state
- Comprised of 150 staff serving 270,000+ residents

### **Challenge**

- Slow Internet connection impeded staff's ability to access library catalog
- Poor WiFi service prevented libraries from hosting larger events

### **Solution**

- Comcast Business
- Ethernet Network Service
- Comcast Business Ethernet Dedicated Internet

### **Results**

- Reliable Internet connection ensures faster access to critical assets
- Robust WiFi services can support numerous devices at once
- Libraries now have ability to scale as their needs grow

"We needed a network that was reliable enough to support the steady stream of Internet traffic generated by our staff and users during regular library hours, as well as during special events like Video Game Club," said IT Director, Jason Wickard. "At the same time, we also needed to think about the future and plan for growth. This meant that scalability was an equally important consideration for us."

## **Comcast Business Helps Nonprofit Future-proof its Networks**

The Library was looking for stability, overall performance and scalability to support public and staff needs. Since several of its connected libraries are in the more rural parts of the state, they knew it needed a communications provider with a network footprint that could reach various locations.

The Library turned to Comcast Business for assistance, and the service provider installed a high-speed, 100 Mbps Ethernet Network Service that connected all eight libraries to each other. Comcast Business also added a 500 Mbps Ethernet Dedicated Internet connection at the East Shore Area and Kline Libraries, which are both located in downtown Harrisburg and are responsible for providing the Internet for all other locations within the system. This has particularly helped the more rural locations, which are now enjoying double the network capacity than what they had before.

With new Ethernet services from Comcast Business, The Library and its users can now enjoy a better in-person and digital experience. Employees are able to access the system's online catalog and cloud-based collaboration tools more quickly, which allows them to serve users more efficiently. The Community Relations Department, which is responsible for all in-house design functions, can now transfer streaming videos and large digital files between locations and its public website with ease. The Library is also looking forward to hosting several highly-publicized Video Game Club onsite events that are expected to draw more than 50 people.

"The performance has been fantastic. Comcast Business has given us a robust Internet and WiFi connection that can easily handle tons of users on our network at any given time, with ample room to grow," concluded Interim Executive Director, Karen Cullings. "Our eight libraries are seamlessly integrated so our employees can work together as if they were sitting next to each other instead of multiple miles away, and our users can learn, play and develop new skills by having all the tools they need right at their fingertips."

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