

Librarian's Shelf by Jill Owens

Convenience of Self-Check is Available at the Library

We live in a world that has been heading in a self-serve direction at an increasing rate. Just think, at one time phone calls were placed for callers, and gas was routinely pumped at the then called, "service stations." A motorist could get her windows washed and oil checked too; and pay without ever getting out of the car. Now our gas stations are more like little retail stores that happen to sell gas on the side.

There's a time and a place for both kinds of service. Can you imagine the cumbersomeness of calling an operator to reach someone you wish to speak with? I think most of us are happy that telephoning is now self-service.

At the library, we try to give our patrons the option to choose in-person service, or self-serve where possible. To name just one benefit of self-checkout -- if there is a line at the desk during our peak hours, a patron may simply skip the line, use the self-check, and be on his way. Of course, the option still exists to have staff check out your materials if you prefer.

You can also check your account at the self-check. If you'd like a print-out of the titles and due dates on your card, the information is only a card scan and touch away. And even if you don't have them with you, you may also renew eligible items with the self-check kiosk. The only items not qualifying for use on the self-check are DVDs, the cases of which must be unlocked at the circulation desk.

The next time you're in, give our self-check a try. It is located between the front doors and the circulation desk. Simply touch the screen to "wake it up." The moving images show the uninitiated the few simple steps to get started. The user will have the option to print or not print a receipt. Though the system defaults to English, a simple screen touch will change the directions to Spanish.

The public computer lab is also self-serve for patrons whose cards are in good standing. Patrons simply walk in and sit down at the computer of their choice and enter their library or bookmobile card number. If all the computers are in use, patrons may scan their cards into the lab management computer to find out which computer is available next and when. The patron may then choose to make a reservation. Since the upgrade of the public computer lab nearly two years ago, we've never seen longer than a 10 minute wait for a patron to get a turn on a computer. Printing is self-serve as well.

We also offer the ultimate in self-service: 24 hour a day use from home for databases and online renewals, holds placement, and viewing due dates. At our website <http://www.columbusne.us/library>, select E-Services from the menu, then Holds & Renewals. You will find step-by-step directions with images to help you with these tools.

We staff are always available to assist patrons, but those patrons who prefer to do things themselves have many opportunities to self-serve.

The Library Foundation has received two recent memorials. Mr. and Mrs. Bob Snoozy donated in memory of Douglas Milbourn, and Mr. and Mrs. F. Dale Moore memorialized Betty Moore Scheinost.