

Western Illinois Digital Access Conference

Friday, April 12, 2024 | Western Illinois University Multicultural Center
9111 W. Murray Street, Macomb, IL 61455

Welcome, Introductions, and Recognition of Grant Recipient Libraries

9:00-9:30 a.m.
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Chris Merrett, Ph.D., Dean for Innovation and Economic Development, Director of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Western Illinois University

Josh Averbeck, Ph.D., Professor, Social Media Lab Director, Western Illinois University

Monica Harris, Executive Director, Reaching Across Illinois Library System

Dan Bostrom, Director of Marketing & Communications, Reaching Across Illinois Library System

Keynote: Why Broadband is Critical to Illinois Libraries

9:30-10:00 a.m.
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Troy Brown, IT Director,
Illinois Heartland Library System

WIU Libraries: Outreach & Partnerships

10:00-10:30 a.m.
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Héctor J. Maymí-Sugrañes, Ph.D., Dean of Libraries, Western Illinois University

Michelle H. Simmons, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Libraries, Western Illinois University

Social Media Literacy & Outreach

10:30-11:00 a.m.
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Josh Averbeck, Ph.D., Professor, Social Media Lab Director, Western Illinois University

Table Talks

11:00 a.m.-12 p.m.
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Self-directed conversations related to digital access and libraries. Topics include: social media, ebooks/audiobooks, Chromebook/hotspot lending, and other activities to bridge the digital divide.

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Lunch

12:00-1:00 p.m.
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Free lunch will be provided for all attendees.

Chromebook/Hotspot Lending Spotlight

1:00-1:30 p.m.
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Representatives from the following 2023 Western Illinois Chromebook Lending Grant libraries: **Quincy Public Library, Macomb Public Library, Rushville Public Library**

The Future of Broadband in Illinois

1:30-2:00 p.m.
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Hillary Rains, Community Engagement Manager, Office of Broadband, Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

Libraries, Economic Development, and the Importance of Broadband to Western Illinois

2:00-2:30 p.m.
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Chris Merrett, Ph.D., Dean for Innovation and Economic Development, Director of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Western Illinois University

Large Group Discussion, Next Steps, and Thank Yous

2:30-3:00 p.m.