

YOUmedia's Out-of-School Digital Learning Software Guide

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This tool, developed by Chicago Public Library's (CPL) Teen Services department, offers a range of software that out-of-school time educators can incorporate into their digital learning programs to support youth to move from consumers to producers of technology.

In large organizations with staff located across various locations and with varying levels of technical expertise, it can be challenging to provide comprehensive training and professional development. At Chicago Public Library, staff come to their work with varying backgrounds and expertise. Some library staff function as teaching artists and some library staff begin their work at CPL with little or no technical digital media skills.

In order to support staff across multiple locations, Chicago Public Library's (CPL) Teen Services department developed [a tool to help encourage individual self-paced learning](#) around potential technologies that teen librarians could incorporate into their branches.

As new laptops for teens were rolled out at the library, this Airtable resource was created to not only inform staff of the software available, but also to spark learning. This list of software includes descriptions, curated resources and an eventual list of programs with associated contacts that can be used by staff to help spark individual professional development and to develop new programs based on best practices. We chose Airtable, a cloud-based database tool, as the platform for this resource because it allowed us to create an intuitive, shareable and easy to update format for our information.





This tool is organized in four sections.

- Software: Descriptions of software available for teen use
- Resources: The best guides we've found on how to get started with the software available
- Programs: Program descriptions of how CPL teen librarians and mentors have used these software tools in teen programming at the library
- Contacts: A list of CPL teen librarians and mentors who have added information to this resource

All of the software on this list was selected because it supported various current program offerings and most importantly because it was open source and free. We wanted teens to be exposed to software that was analogous to professional-level software, but we also wanted teens to be able to be familiar with software that they could access at home or away from the library.

For staff who are brand new to digital media, the software and resource list is designed to provide broad familiarity with available software. For the more advanced staff, the resource list and the program areas are a way for staff to share their expertise with the CPL Teen staff community. This tool is designed to be a living document. CPL Teen staff are encouraged to submit new content to the Resource and Program sections so the tool can grow along with the growing expertise of our staff.

A truncated version of this resource has also been created to share with teen library patrons so they also have access to the full list of software available to them at their local library. In combination with other professional development opportunities, this tool is a way to foster new learning and to strengthen the Chicago Public Library's teen staff community of practice.

Access the Chicago Public Library, Teen Services, Laptop Software Guide tool [here](#).