

Council Memorandum

Date:	April 8, 2025
To:	Committee of the Whole
From:	Councillor Joyce
Re:	Ontario Digital Public Library

Recommendation

That the Memorandum from Councillor Joyce, **regarding an Ontario Digital Public Library**, be received;

That the City of Kawartha Lakes encourage the Province of Ontario to support the creation of an Ontario Digital Public Library, in line with the recommendation from the Ontario Federation of Public Libraries (FOPL);

That a copy of this recommendation, as generally outlined in the draft letter attached to this Memorandum, be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, the MPP for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, the Executive Director of the Ontario Federation of Public Libraries and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; and

That this recommendation be forwarded to Council for consideration at the next Regular Council Meeting.

Rationale

The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) is looking for support from Councils and local government agencies for the creation of the Ontario Digital Public Library (ODPL).



In recognition of the ever increasing reliance on digital media as well as the library's responsibility to offer high quality materials in all formats required by our community, this advocacy campaign urges our government representatives to support the request of the Ontario Government to support the creation of the ODPL.

Public libraries in Ontario are critical infrastructure for successful, thriving communities. Millions of Ontarians rely on their local public libraries: to work, to learn to connect to community and government services, to find and train for a job, and to develop and grow small businesses.

Our public libraries are essential for bridging the digital divide in our smaller and rural communities. Over the past several years, the Ontario Government has recognized the crucial importance of the role public libraries play in bridging this divide. These infrastructure and connectivity investments made by the Ontario Government have built the necessary foundation to take the next step to empower all Ontarians with the online resources they need to succeed, no matter where they live in the province.

Providing equitable access to digital resources through public libraries is a logical next step in bridging the digital divide in Ontario. Ontario's public libraries are proposing the creation of the ODPL. By leveraging the province's purchasing power, Ontario can give all residents access to a universal set of high-quality e-learning and digital tools through their local public library.

The ODPL, through volume purchasing, can provide digital resources at a cost savings of up to 40% when compared to a direct subscription by an average Ontario public library. All Ontarians would be able to access these digital resources and tools directly through their local public library, whether in a branch, at home or on the go.

A provincial investment in the ODPL would save costs for all public libraries and help improve consistency of service delivery. This is an investment directly in the quality of supports that libraries can deliver – with the overwhelming majority of the investment going directly into digital resources.



April __, 2025

The Honourable Doug Ford

Premier of Ontario

RE: MOTION OF SUPPORT OF THE ONTARIO DIGITAL PUBLIC LIBRARY

Dear Premier Ford:

WHEREAS Ontario's public libraries are essential to equitable, reliable access to broadband internet and computers;

AND WHEREAS the Ontario government has already committed to recognizing the importance of public libraries to broadband connectivity, including the "Building a Digital Ontario" initiative whereby \$4.8 million in investments were provided for broadband upgrades to over 100 rural public libraries across the province;

AND WHEREAS people rely on local public libraries for access to digital resources, including for job and career skills training, language learning, tutoring, health information and virtual appointments, and accessibility services;

AND WHEREAS the Kawartha Lakes Public Library provides critical access to digital resources for many residents;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Province of Ontario support the creation of an Ontario Digital Public Library, in line with the attached recommendation from the Ontario Federation of Public Libraries, (FOPL);

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this motion be sent to

Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming
Dina Stevens, Executive Director, FOPL
Hon. Laurie Scott, MPP
Association of Municipalities of Ontario