OWL Background

The original purpose of the Online With Libraries (OWL) program was to help libraries afford better bandwidth, install a training network in public libraries so that Library Development and others could provide training to the public and library staff, refresh library computer equipment, and to create jobs in small towns as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The history of OWL provided below can be found on the program's webpage:

The OWL program began in 2011 as the OWL project with federal funds provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and administered through the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) of the U.S. Department of Commerce, as well as Rasmuson Foundation and Alaska State Library grant funds. During the project phase of OWL, four services were offered:
- Broadband subsidy to get libraries enough bandwidth for videoconferencing and to support better internet access for patrons
- Videoconference equipment and videoconference network support to host a robust slate of training events
- Training for IT support staff at the libraries and funding to pay these support staff
- Computer equipment and peripherals for libraries

In 2013, the OWL project became State of Alaska funded and was renamed the Alaska Online With Libraries (OWL) program. The OWL program has continued to offer libraries the broadband subsidy and support for the videoconference network.

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