

# Beyond books

■ No Blu-ray discs at Collier libraries, but it embraces other new technologies

By Lance Shearer

Daily News Correspondent 239-435-3435

Yes, they still have books. But the public library these days also offers an amazing, diverse smorgasbord of new technologies, products and services — and for much of it, you never have to set foot inside a library branch.

With its online electronic services, the Collier County Public Library can teach you a new language, let you browse the content of more than 150 magazines, or hook you up with live, one-on-one tutoring and homework help, 24/7. You can access free, legal, downloadable music and, if you do come into a library, you can borrow one of the 80,000 DVDs to watch at home.

Some of the library's new items are that old standby — the book — but they now come in a variety of formats, electronic and virtual. At its various branches, Collier libraries have 40,000 audio books. The formats include books on disks, such as MP3 files, on Playaway self-contained players that only require earphones; plus downloadable books for the Kindle, Kindle Fire, Nook, Sony, Kobo and Literati Reader, iPad, iPhone and Android devices, as well as traditional desktop and laptop computers.

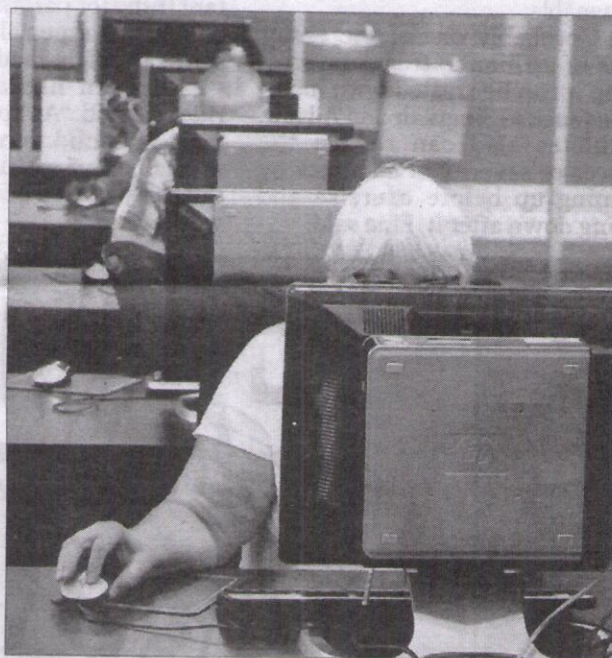
Known collectively as e-books, accessed through the Overdrive reading system, these are some of the newest and fastest growing ways of reaching the library's offerings.

It also can be a little overwhelming.

Realizing this, the library is hosting help sessions to guide library patrons through the new media choices. Next Thursday, Sept. 25, and again Oct. 23, library staff will have an open house at the Headquarters Library on Orange Blossom Drive in North Naples to demonstrate and answer questions on downloading e-books and audiobooks, how to request materials online, and help bring people's 20th century brains into the brave new world of today's media.

Library users who want help with a particular electronic device or reader are encouraged to bring it with them. Marilyn Matthes, director of the Collier library system, said she realizes that as users become more tech-savvy, patrons likely will visit the physical library less and less.

"We get to see you when your card expires," she said,



Library patrons use the computers at the Golden Gate branch. All branches have Wi-Fi available inside and out.

## IF YOU GO LEARN E-RESOURCES @ YOUR LIBRARY

**When:** 2 p.m. Sept. 25 and Oct. 23

**Where:** Headquarters Library, 2385 Orange Blossom Drive, North Naples

**Contact:** 239-593-0177

**When:** 2 p.m. Oct. 3

**Where:** Vanderbilt Beach Branch Library, 788 Vanderbilt Beach Road, North Naples

**Contact:** 239-597-8444

**When:** 2 p.m. Oct. 6

**Where:** South Regional Library, 8065 Lely Cultural Parkway, East Naples

**Contact:** 239-252-7542

**Online:** [www.collierlibrary.org](http://www.collierlibrary.org)

See BOOKS, 5D



## BOOKS from 1D

sitting at her desk in the Headquarters library. "You can reserve and renew online — you don't have to come in. And you can download materials from home."

For people who have difficulty coming to the library, they even offer the Mail a Book program, with books, large print and audiobooks, CDs and DVDs delivered at no charge, with the federal government paying for postage in both directions.

But there is a value to physically visiting the public library. Like impulse buys at the supermarket, one advantage of library programs such as the Learn E-Resources event is bringing people into the building, where they might discover something they didn't know they were looking for.

"We want to encourage people to browse," said Matthes.



LANCE SHEARER/SPECIAL TO THE DAILY NEWS

Thanise Marc, left, and Yolna Louis learn about downloading books to an iPad from LEAP instructor Spencer Sneed, right. The Collier County Public Library is hosting programs on how to use devices to read library books.

Even if the particular days set up to learn e-resources aren't convenient for you, the library staff still wants to help you learn how to navigate their

new media.

A program called LEAP, for Library Electronic Assistance Program, funded by Friends of the Library, pairs up young people

raised in the digital age with those needing assistance, typically decades older. It's sort of like asking your child or your grandchild to program

your DVR for you.

"It's mostly elderly people" using the LEAP service, said LEAP instructor Spencer Sneed at the Golden Gate Branch Library, although an 18-year-old's definition of elderly might differ from those just a little bit older.

"Most people, their kids bought them the reader, now they want to learn how to use it," he said.

Overdrive, said Sneed, has been the most popular service.

"It's pretty cool — you can download books for free. At Amazon, you have to pay."

All of the library's tech services and offerings are free with a valid library card. For those with a computer and Internet access, the first step is to go online to the library's website at [www.collierlibrary.org](http://www.collierlibrary.org).

There you will find links to Overdrive, plus Mango, the language learning instructions — "we have about 60 languages available," said Matthes, Zinio for magazines on any

e-reading device, Tutor.com for study resources and to live chat with tutors, Freegal, with downloadable music and music videos, plus the entire catalog of the library's more than 600,000 lendable items.

You can even pay overdue fines online.

If you don't have web access, the library provides it, with 24-hour Wi-Fi both inside and outside all branches.

After hours, it is not unusual to see people sitting outside and surfing.

But the library is not embracing every form of technology, though. Matthes said they have no plans to acquire and lend out Blu-ray discs, expecting streaming media to render delivery by disc obsolete, as Netflix did to Blockbuster.

And speaking of Netflix, they do not expect to compete with them anytime soon, with delivering movies to library patrons via online streaming. It raises serious cost and copyright issues.