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**MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL, CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY LAUNCH NEW, FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND
WEBSITE, EXPANDED ONLINE OFFERINGS**

User-Friendly, Technologically Advanced Website Will Enhance Patron Experience

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Public Library (CPL) today launched a new online experience for all library patrons, including a redesigned website, an improved library catalog and greater accessibility and convenience. After several months in beta format to complete testing and allow patrons to become accustomed to new features, the new online platform is now live at www.chipublib.org.

“This new online platform by the Chicago Public Library enhances community interaction and engages patrons and residents across the city through the most modern technology. Twenty-first century libraries are not the same brick and mortar institutions they once were and the Chicago Public Library has been at the forefront of successfully leveraging digital tools to enrich library services for our residents,” said Mayor Emanuel. “This new online experience builds on this success, and I am grateful to the Chicago Public Library Foundation for making vital investments that are helping Chicago have the best library system in the nation.”

Funded by a \$1 million grant from the Chicago Public Library Foundation, the new website will serve as the model public library website. CPL has partnered with software company BiblioCommons to re-envision the library's online experience which included the site's development, research, design, and ongoing enhancements that will be rolled out over the next three years. Well known in the field for its library catalog discovery layer, BiblioCommons has created an online experience that integrates with that catalog, showcasing the Library's diverse range of collections, events and services. CPL is the first library system to date to launch this innovative online platform. The new website, catalog, and mobile apps are all “software as a

service” providing the foundation for continuous innovation while reducing the need for costly in-house infrastructure and staff technical expertise.

Users will immediately notice the more customer-friendly features, including the ability to create a unique user name and PIN, keep a history of what they have checked out and a wish list of what they want to borrow in the future. Users can also rate titles, as well as write and read reviews of books, movies and music - visible not only to other CPL patrons, but also to the community of the 200 libraries around the world currently using BiblioCommons’ catalog platform. This website is the first of its kind to fully integrate all aspects of the patron’s online library interactions, and will improve the user experience and accessibility to materials.

The website’s homepage cards, which offer a variety of content including book lists, upcoming events and blog posts by librarians, will help patrons discover all the interesting and innovative collections and services offered by CPL. This information is easily shared on social media so that all Chicagoans can benefit from these offerings. The new website also adapts to any screen size, like smart phones and tablets; the responsive design ensures users have the same experience-- no matter the mobile device. Free apps will also be available for iPhone/iPod Touch and Android.

“Chicago Public Library has been at the forefront of library technology and best practices in library experiences,” says Library Commissioner Brian Bannon. “Our new website enables us to not only stay relevant in today’s digital world, but actually pave the way for other library systems.”

The site lays the groundwork for enhanced community engagement in large-scale Library programs, like One Book, One Chicago, YOUmedia and teen services and the Summer Learning Challenge.

Chicago Public Library Foundation President & CEO Rhona Frazin notes, “The Chicago Public Library Foundation’s Board of Directors and donors have made a significant investment in the re-design of the Library’s website. As the private funding partner to the Library, our role is to make contributions that will enhance the collection access and technology experience for all patrons. The Foundation is extraordinarily grateful to the law firm of Kirkland & Ellis, BMO Harris Bank and our retired Director Dan Hill for their contributions of time and expertise. We are proud to facilitate these new features that will give library users a new level of interaction with the Chicago Public Library.”

“We’re delighted to be working with such an innovative, dynamic library to re-imagine the online library experience,” said Beth Jefferson, co-founder of BiblioCommons. “We look forward to continuing to work with Chicago Public Library over the next 3 years.”

Also included in the launch of the new website are two great new online offerings, Zinio and Hoopla. Zinio offers patrons the opportunity to download more than free 150 digital magazines

from the Library's website – and keep them on their device for as long as they like, no return necessary. Hoopla offers free streaming movies, television, music and audiobook titles which can also be downloaded for later viewing.

Since 1873, the Chicago Public Library has encouraged lifelong learning by welcoming all people and offering equal access to information, entertainment and knowledge through innovative services and programs, as well as cutting-edge technology. Through its 80 locations, the Library provides free access to a rich collection of materials, both physical and digital, and presents the highest quality author discussions, exhibits and programs for children, teens and adults. CPL recently received the Social Innovator Award from Chicago Innovation Awards; is a finalist for a National Medal for Library Services from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, and was ranked number one in the U.S. and third in the world by an international study of major urban libraries conducted by the Heinrich Heine University Dusseldorf in Germany. For more information, visit www.chipublib.org.

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The Chicago Public Library Foundation was founded in 1986 as a true public/private partner with the City of Chicago to ensure the continuing excellence for Chicago's outstanding Library. Through the support of many civic-minded individuals, corporations and foundations, the Foundation provides on-going funding for collections and a variety of community-responsive programs include the Summer Learning Challenge, Teacher in the Library, CyberNavigators, YOUmedia and One Book, One Chicago. In the past 28 years, the Foundation has provided \$55 million in support to the Chicago Public Library. For more information, visit www.cplfoundation.org