

## DiscoverStation® for Libraries

# Gates Grants Get Public Computing Started



*“One of our biggest challenges was significant staff reductions... We needed new public computers, but most importantly, we needed something that provided top of the line service with little or no work from our staff.”*

– Monique le Conge, Director,  
Richmond Public Library,  
California

In 1996 the Richmond Public Library, along with many other libraries across California, used generous grants from the Gates Foundation to purchase public computers for the library. Their public computers were an immediate hit and were well used and appreciated by patrons. As the computers aged and as security issues on the Internet increased, the public computers became an increasing burden on library staff. Patches, upgrades, updates, viruses, spyware and routine maintenance began to eat into staff time. During the same period the municipality implemented major funding cuts. New projects were put on hold and library staff limped along with their existing solutions.

### Big Expectations, Limited Resources

When Monique le Conge joined the library as Director in the fall of 2004, she began rebuilding the library's programs

and policies. Surveying the library's situation, she noted: “One of our biggest challenges was significant staff reductions. As a result we had very limited staff time to devote to implementing new solutions for the library. We needed new public computers, but most importantly, we needed something that provided top of the line service with little or no work from our staff.” Ms le Conge needed a technology partner. She did her homework motivated, as she put it, by a need to “get the best bang for her buck.”

### Best Short and Long Term Solution

Ms le Conge turned to Userful's DiscoverStation. It offered all the public computing features she sought: session timing, locked down desktops, privacy protection along with features she knew her patrons would want: multiple languages, a complete office suite, and floppy drive and USB key support. Best of all, DiscoverStation is a hands free solution: no more daily maintenance, no more virus, adware or spyware worries, and should they ever have problems: a toll free support number to call. Her conclusion: “In terms of everything we looked at DiscoverStation was the easiest and most cost-effective solution both in the short and long term.”

### DiscoverStation Delivers

“We used to have a library tech who spent most mornings working on the PCs,” Ms le Conge recalls. “Now we can have him doing other things. In this example alone, DiscoverStation saved us 5 to 10 hours a week.” Equally important, the patrons

took to the system as well.

“It's not difficult to use,” explains Ms le Conge. “We've had a lot of success in terms of getting patrons on it. The only complaints have been around operational processes concerning introducing time limits and that sort of thing. Linux has not been an issue at all.”

In fact, Ms le Conge has come to see Linux as aligning very well with the missions of public libraries. “It's all about free access to information. It fits very well with what librarians are trying to do. I'm considering starting a program for librarians to dispel any misgivings they might have about using Linux, because there's really nothing to be afraid of.”

### The Future

With DiscoverStation in place Richmond now has time to focus on other services: their new ILS is up and running, and the library is planning to extend its hours of operation. Current projects include providing more services for young adults and implementing patron self-check and self-registration systems. Whatever challenges lie ahead, thanks to their partnership with Userful, their public computing program is taken care of.

**Learn more about DiscoverStation on page 2, or visit [www.userful.com](http://www.userful.com) today!**





# DiscoverStation®

DiscoverStation is the world's leading solution for public computing

Join the many organizations making their public computing programs more efficient with DiscoverStation, a comprehensive solution that saves both IT time and costs.

**DiscoverStation is**

**Affordable** – Organizations using DiscoverStation report average total cost savings of 54%<sup>1</sup>

**Simple** – Requires little to no IT expertise and time to maintain.

**Turnkey** – Includes hardware, software and support integrated into a single system.

**Worry Free** – Secure, private, and automatically updated.



DiscoverStation includes all the software applications and management tools required to provide up to 10 world-class public computing workstations from a single computer box using standard 10 monitors, mice and keyboards. By simply adding additional DiscoverStations

**DiscoverStation features a complete suite of Internet access software and a locked-down public computing environment to minimize IT costs.**

as needed, the solution and savings scale to hundreds or even thousands of stations.

Contact us today to see how DiscoverStation will improve your public computing offerings while

reducing your total cost of ownership dramatically.

1. Fall 2004 customer survey, results available at <http://userful.com>

**F**ounded in 1999, Userful has been transforming the world of public computing since the launch of DiscoverStation in 2002.

DiscoverStation has garnered rave reviews throughout the public computing industry, generating consistent time, energy and money savings for customers across North America.

Listed year after year among the 50 fastest growing companies in Alberta, Canada, Userful's success is a direct result of its focus on libraries, its commitment to service and its track record of happy customers.

Feel free to contact us to discuss how our products and services can enhance your public computing offerings.



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# Gates Grants and Turnkey Public Computing

Leveraging Gates funding to deliver exceptional service to patrons

## Introduction

The Gates Foundation's 2006 Hardware Upgrade Grants offer libraries a unique opportunity to enhance their public computing programs. This year, the foundation is injecting an estimated \$28.7 million<sup>1</sup> into libraries across the United States, allowing state and local officials to decide how to invest it. Unlike previous rounds of funding, this latitude opens up many options, including turnkey and managed solutions, which are better suited to meet the challenges of public computing than traditional PCs.

The University of Washington's research<sup>2,3</sup> into previous rounds of Gates Grants made it clear that the grants were instrumental to providing the backbone of community-based public computing access. However, the researchers also noted several ongoing challenges.

## Ongoing Public Computing Challenges

Computers purchased with the grants broke down barriers to Internet access and enhanced public perceptions of libraries in a very short time, but the computers also created a considerable management burden for libraries. Nearly half of the respondents to the University of Washington survey "said they will need more staff training, more tech support, and more staff hours" to maintain their public computer commitments. Ongoing technical support, on-site expertise, training and sustainability were major concerns for libraries across the U.S.<sup>4</sup>

Deploying a turnkey, fully supported solution that includes hardware, software and ongoing support is the surest way to address the challenges noted by the University of Washington's reports. Turnkey solutions offer a partnership model that ensures libraries can provide an exceptional public computing service, satisfy patron demands, and receive expert support while freeing staff for other duties. Turnkey solutions save libraries time, energy and headaches, while providing long term cost and vendor stability.

## A Better Integrated Solution

Userful's DiscoverStation® provides libraries with a comprehensive public computing solution. Userful guarantees and supports all the hardware and software required to provide public computers. Software patches and updates are automatically deployed to DiscoverStation computers over the Internet, without manual intervention. All the software on the system is 100% guaranteed and no deployed DiscoverStation has ever suffered from a virus, adware, spyware or any other security issue in the product's history.

DiscoverStation is unique in the turnkey public computing market in that it also addresses computer desktop management issues that libraries with Gates Grant software had noted<sup>5</sup>. DiscoverStation includes full multi-lingual support<sup>6</sup> as well as a locked down and tamper proof desktop that provides easy access to removable storage (USB keys, floppy drives, digital cameras and MP3 players), productivity applications (including a complete office suite), and multimedia applications for audio and video playback.

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The cost of DiscoverStation, and its comprehensive support package, is in line with the cost of deploying traditional PCs and well within reach of Gates Grant recipients. The fact that Userful's software allows up to ten users to work from a single PC creates significant total cost of ownership savings. In a 2004 survey, libraries using DiscoverStation reported average total cost savings of 54%.<sup>7</sup> These TCO savings are compelling for libraries concerned about both sustainability and expansion, as so many Gates Grant recipients have been. Because Userful has structured an entire public computing solution under one controlled and predictable cost, with little to no on-site IT staff required, DiscoverStation allows libraries to keep pace with increasing demand for public access.


### Conclusions

In a *Library Journal* article summing up the findings of the University of Washington study, the authors noted: "Library administrators and development people are searching for creative solutions to this sharply increased use and public demand [for public computers], not to mention the technical aspects of maintenance and upgrade requirements for the machinery."<sup>8</sup>

Complete turnkey solutions such as DiscoverStation are the creative solution libraries are seeking: Complete solutions offer a comprehensive answer to the challenges of public computing, a solution that is sustainable, cost effective and ensures long term patron satisfaction.

### Notes

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<p><b>F</b>ounded in 1999, Userful has been transforming the world of public computing since the launch of DiscoverStation in 2002.</p> <p>DiscoverStation has garnered rave reviews throughout the library industry, generating consistent time, energy and money savings for both academic and public libraries across North America.</p>	<p>Listed year after year among the 50 fastest growing companies in Alberta, Canada, Userful's success is a direct result of its focus on libraries, its commitment to service and its track record of happy customers.</p> <p>Feel free to contact us to discuss how our products and services can help you. We would also be happy to connect you with a library like yours which is already using DiscoverStation.</p>	 <p>www.userful.com 1-866-USERFUL (873-7385)</p> <p><b>Head Office</b> <b>direct:</b> 403.289.2177 2nd Floor, 928 – 6th Ave. SW Calgary AB, T2P 0V5, Canada</p> <p><b>Victoria Office</b> <b>direct:</b> 250.592.5378 1063 Chamberlain St. Victoria BC, V8S 4C1, Canada</p>
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