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KANSAS CITY, KANSAS PUBLIC LIBRARY TO PILOT AUTOMATED TEXT-TO-CHECK OUT PROGRAM

KANSAS CITY, Kan. – Checking out a physical book with a SMS text message from micro libraries located throughout the Kansas City, Kan. community could soon be a reality. The Kansas City, Kansas Public Library (KCKPL) – in partnership with New York-based Capira Technologies and Twilio and Twilio.org, which are headquartered in San Francisco – has developed the automated Text-to-Check Out Program. KCKPL staff members will present on the new program at the COSUGI (Customers of SirsiDynix Users Group, Inc.) conference on May 25 in Indianapolis.

“This is a huge leap forward in both how we can deliver and checkout items for our patrons,” KCKPL Assistant Library Director David Hanson said. “It is also a platform paradigm shift where libraries don’t just talk about being a part of a patron’s cell phone activity but to become useful, convenient and fun on the fastest-growing and most important content platform today.”

The new automated version of the program is being piloted with the KCKPL micro library located at the A.R. Dykes Library at the KU Medical Center. An earlier version of the program started at the A.R. Dykes Library of Information Services in June 2015.

“The KCKPL partnership has been fantastic,” said Jameson Watkins, Director of A.R. Dykes Library of Information Services. “They’ve curated a small collection of books just for our patrons’ unique interests, expanding our service to them while allowing us to focus our energy and budgets toward our core health sciences mission. The text-to-checkout method of delivery is a perfect fit for both our millennial student population and layering in over our existing library checkout processes.”

The Text-to-Check Out Program allows people to use their cell phones’ text messaging service, which generally is a standard feature with most cell phones and cell phone plans, to check out the physical books from micro libraries. People do not have to be registered users with KCKPL and there are no fines associated with this program. To check a book out or back in, a patron would text a nine-digit code associated with an item to a special phone number. In a matter of moments, patrons should then receive a text back confirming an item is checked out to them.

Kansas City, Kansas Public Library staff members worked with Capira Technologies to establish the program. Capira Lead Software Engineer and Managing Member Michael Berse developed code that integrated Twilio's cloud SMS texting service with KCKPL's database used to manage and track materials. "We wanted to help the library meet this specialized project requirement as best we could, and in the most efficient way possible," Berse said. "Getting technical and system integration requirements completed was both challenging and rewarding throughout the project. It was great to partner with a library who loves experimenting with new ideas for its community."

About Kansas City, Kansas Public Library KCKPL was formed in 1895. In 1899, it came under the authority of the Kansas City, Kansas Public School District Board of Education and remains there today. It serves a population of about 160,000 in Kansas City, Kansas, and Wyandotte County. The mission of KCKPL is to connect members of a dynamic community with information, tools, resources, and welcoming spaces to enrich lives in Wyandotte County. The library can be found online at kckpl.org

About Capira Technologies LLC Founded in 2012 by former library employees, Capira Technologies provides mobile applications for libraries, customized for an optimal patron experience, including state-of-the-art functionality and services, such as digital library cards, self-checkout, remote renewal capabilities, iBeacons, and more. Capira Technologies serves 14 Library Conferences and over 500 libraries, including the Somerset County Library System, Minuteman Library Network, Black Gold Library Cooperative. Visit Capira Technologies website at <http://www.capiratech.com/> or email info@capiratech.com for more information.

About Twilio Twilio makes communications easy and powerful. With Twilio's platform, businesses can make communications relevant and contextual by embedding real-time communication and authentication capabilities directly into their software applications. Founded in 2008, Twilio is privately-held and has over 400 employees, with headquarters in San Francisco and other offices in Bogotá, Dublin, Hong Kong, London, Mountain View, Munich, New York City, Singapore, and Tallinn.