To: Library Board
Fr: Abby Bussen, Children's Library Supervisor
June 17, 2026
Re: Library Agency Trust Funding Support Request: SimplyPrint 3D Printer Cloud Management Software

Purpose/Need

Funding for 2026 to support the integration of the 3D printers with the iPads.

Background

When we selected iPads for our programming technology, we did so because of their functionality with both the robotics pieces we had selected (the Dash robots, the Finch robots, and the LEGO robotics kids) and the user-friendly Bambu Labs A1 3D printers. Compared to Chromebooks or standard laptops, iPads worked with every piece we wanted to bring into our programming. At the time, I identified Pikaslice as a free 3D print slicer that worked with the iPads and our printers, just with some ads you had to endure unless you subscribed. I figured, let's just endure ads – it's ok if we have to wait during ads, right? Waiting is a great skill to build! The other benefit of this method was it allowed us to keep the 3D printers OFF the public WIFI, a necessity if we don't want the public to be able to find and push prints randomly to those printers without our permission. I, a librarian who is definitely not an IT person, was so proud of myself! What could go wrong??

It turns out… something went wrong. When we had completed our iPad setup and installed our first 3D printer, I discovered Pikaslice is now entirely subscription based. My initial good idea to keep our printers off the WIFI network by using the iPads to slice and move .gcode directly to microSD cards that kids could then place immediately into the 3D printers, select their prints, and completely bypass any need for networking the printers was suddenly dead in the water unless I wanted to spend $32.99 per iPad (we have 31 of them! $1,022.69 not including tax!) annually.

So I turned to the internet in search of solutions. I scoured Reddit library and educator forums looking for makerspace coordinator advice, I researched like "Research" is my middle name," and I found that while there are a lot of 3D printer management solutions that 3D print farms use, many of those 3D printer management solutions don't work for libraries or education. A lot of them work great if you have a closed network… but we have an open public network, something I would have to devise a solution to. A lot of them are cheap if you have one user… but we have at least five librarians who will be teaching classes to at least 30 kids, hopefully more teens and adults as we understand our capacity. Others just didn't have an option that worked with iPads.

After researching, I identified SimplyPrint, a cloud management software that specializes in education and libraries. I met with them and they showed me how their backend functionality would allow us to more easily enact the print limitations we had set up in our 3D printer policy, track use and maintenance of our 3D printers, and remotely monitor use of our 3D printers. Their website also included information for educators on how to use a Raspberry Pi to create a WIFI hotspot exclusively for our 3D printers. Paired with an old laptop (shared generously with us by the City's IT department) that connects simultaneously to the public WIFI network *and* the Raspberry Pi's 3D printer network, we were able to establish a seamless solution for our iPads, now loaded with the SimplyPrint app ready to slice their 3D CAD designs, to send prints to the printer queue. Librarians are able to start the queue, which then keeps going with our support. I, a librarian who is *maybe an IT person??*, am really thrilled with how this system works. I reviewed this with Assistant Director Robert Trunley, and he agrees that this is the best option.

We are requesting 2026 funding from the Library Agency Trust for SimplyPrint and will build the ongoing cost for it into our 2027 operating budget.

Project Costs

	Individual cost	Items Needed	Cost
SimplyPrint	$720	1	$720
Project total:	**$720**		

Recommendation

A motion for the Library Board to approve the request for funding SimplyPrint.