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A REVOLUTION OF RANGEVIEW LIBRARIES

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Anythink leading community access to technology
Customers can check out laptops, photography equipment, and receive hands-on training on how to use the latest digital tools

THORNTON, Colo.–Oct. 25, 2018–Libraries are at the forefront of expanding digital literacy in the community. At Anythink, library customers have the ability to access a number of technology tools – from 3D printers to virtual reality equipment – and can even check out items like laptops, wifi hotspots, drawing tablets and photography equipment to take home. This free access provides a vital pathway to technology skills learning, especially for those community members otherwise unable to afford such devices. According to the 2017 report "The Digital Edge: Middle-Skill Workers and Careers," 82 percent of middle-skill jobs require digital skills – and those jobs are more likely to provide career pathways that lead to higher salaries. For Adams County residents, the library is the go-to place for acquiring such digital skills.

Anythink provides hands-on training on how to use technology resources to achieve personal and professional goals. Anythink's participatory approach to learning, where staff and community experts meet an individual where they're at in their learning journey, is ideal in taking accessibility to technology a step further. A Sept. 2018 article in Fortune Magazine, "Millennials vs. Boomers: How Flexible Learning is Bridging the Technology Gap," reflects on this approach by posing the question: "But does your willingness to welcome new technology really depend on when you were born – or is it more a matter of how you're trained to use it?"

"Whether an individual is using the library's resources to access the internet, or to learn the full Adobe Creative Suite for their small business, Anythink provides opportunities for engagement for every learning path," says Anythink Director of Innovations and Brand Strategy Stacie Ledden. "For many, this may be their first point of access – or their only point of access. We use technology as a way to connect people with the world and each other; we have gone beyond 'nice to have' – technology is now critical to how we live, work, and communicate."

The Studio at Anythink Wright Farms is guided by the philosophy that customers of all ages thrive when they discover and follow their passions, collaborate with others, and become creators. Supported by mentors – artists in residence – and staff, The Studio

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encompasses everything from formal programs to informal learning opportunities. In 2018, The Studio embarked on a new project – Ad Agency Boot Camp – aimed at helping adults develop 21st century marketing skills like graphic design and videography with real use-case examples. This eight-week series focused on developing skills to produce high-quality agency work for a local non-profit, Food for Hope. Meeting weekly on Saturdays, participants were able to fit this career development opportunity into busy work schedules and use them as an opportunity to gain promotions or explore new careers.

Libraries across the country have changed dramatically in recent years into spaces for innovation, creativity and technology. Libraries like Anythink now serve as community hubs, where access to ideas and information take new forms – from facilitating the learning of 21st-century skills and equipment like 3D printing and videography to providing resources for entrepreneurs and job-seekers to explore career paths. As part of Anythink's Strategic Plan 2018-2022, the library strives to be the catalyst for innovation in the community.

Current items available for check-out at Anythink and The Studio
- Laptops
- Mobile wifi hotspots
- Wacom drawing tablets
- Photography and videography kits

Tools available for use at Anythink and The Studio
- 3D printers
- Oculus Virtual Reality headsets
- Adobe Creative Suite
- Sewing machines
- Large format printer
- GameCapture software and hardware
- Cricut machines

Related articles and research
Digital Readiness Gaps, Pew Research Center
Millennials vs. Boomers: How Flexible Learning is Bridging the Technology Gap," Fortune.com
"Technology Access Gap Leaves Millions of Students Struggling to Keep Up," Truthout.org
"Beyond Books: Libraries Reach Out to the Public" / The Atlantic
"The Studio at Anythink is helping artists sharpen their digital media skills for free" / 303 Magazine
"Rethink the library: Next gen becomes resource for tech, entrepreneurs" / The Denver Post
"Why public libraries are still essential in 2018" / Vox

About Anythink™
Anythink is a new style of library – a place of unlimited imagination, where play inspires creativity and lifelong learning. Anythink serves the residents of Adams County, Colo., with seven libraries and a bookmobile. With a focus on innovation, Anythink's award-

winning approach to library service is recognized by industry leaders and organizations across the globe. For more information, visit *anythinklibraries.org*.

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