



Statement on Equitable Access to E-Books

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Public libraries play an essential role as a dynamic place for innovation, equity and opportunity. As digital technologies become increasingly inseparable from the ways that people learn, work and interact, public libraries' abilities to afford access to e-books, e-audiobooks and other e-content like streaming movies are more important than ever.

While some publishers have models and pricing that are sustainable for libraries, major publishers have placed severe restrictions on e-content lending models. This includes unreasonably high prices that far exceed the print equivalent, time-limits on titles purchased, and issues with providers unexpectedly removing purchased content.

At the same time, there is a significant, rising e-content usage, including a [34 percent increase](#) in digital book borrowing alone since 2019. Without changes to how libraries build their e-content collections, taxpayer funded library budgets cannot adequately meet the growing demand and provide equitable access for all.

Libraries act as on-ramps for information, skill building, economic opportunity and education. Publishers need to provide libraries with stable lending models and fair pricing for e-content, like those in place for print books.

We affirm the need to support and uphold the capacity of public libraries to:

- Provide equal access for individuals to gain knowledge and become proficient with digital tools, regardless of their income, physical abilities, language of choice, gender, sexual orientation, race, citizenship status or religion.
- Advance digital literacy, economic opportunity and lifelong learning and foster empathy, curiosity, civic engagement and a love of reading among community members.
- Educate community members about the rights, responsibilities and implications of their lives online, including data privacy risks when accessing online learning resources and digital content.
- Expand the love of reading, build literacy skills, and increase discovery of authors and genres through affordable public library access.

Libraries level the playing field and strengthen the foundation of our communities. Our communities are strongest when all individuals have the same opportunities to further their personal, educational and professional goals.

We stand with all who are urging major e-book and e-audiobook publishers and streaming services to institute fair, transparent and flexible licensing models for public libraries.