

Green Mountain Library Consortium

Annual Report

May 2023

During the last twelve months much of the focus of our activities was on the implementation of the ARPA Grant of \$218,050 that we received in April of 2022 from VTLIB. The purpose of this grant was to fund several initiatives focused on upgrading access to GMLC e-resources. Specifically, to support libraries to move from GMLC's legacy system (EZproxy) to either SIP2 or User Login Manager; to assist and pay for libraries to migrate to ASPEN; and to reduce holds that built up during the Covid years by buying more copies of heavily circulated titles.

To summarize the results:

1. Upgrade of access to GMLC e-resources

This portion of the grant covered the migration of all the GMLC libraries off the EZproxy software and onto SIP2 authentication for Overdrive's User Login Manager. This migration aimed to improve patron account security, streamline patron account maintenance for librarians, and for GMLC, and reduce GMLC expenses. In total, 71 libraries were migrated during the project. Many of you worked with Chris Kirby and Andy Burkins to facilitate this migration.

2. Move all VOKAL Libraries to Aspen

The ARPA grant was requested to move VOKAL libraries to Aspen, a discovery layer that makes it easier for patrons to discover eContent as well as physical content. Eight additional libraries were moved onto Aspen. We also implemented a temporary server to facilitate the moving of the new libraries to the system without impacting the current libraries. This was very successful.

With this change, 47 of the 62 VOKAL libraries are now using Aspen, providing patrons with an enhanced interface to the collections.

While it is difficult to break out the new libraries' numbers, in the last year we have seen 4415 Overdrive checkouts directly from Aspen as well as 2,346 checkouts from Hoopla. This means patrons discovered electronic copies by using Aspen and were able to obtain the item right from the interface. We believe that

having all a library's assets discoverable offers up new opportunities for patrons to know everything the library has to offer.

3. Purchase \$200,000 worth of materials to lessen holds in ListenUp!Vermont (LUV) Digital Collection.

The ARPA Grant funds had a dramatic impact on the day-to-day use of the ListenUp!Vermont (LUV) digital book and digital audiobook collection. The average daily usage rose by 15% or 190 patrons, going from 1,244 to 1,434 unique users. This activity raised LUV's checkouts by approximately 7,000 checkouts per month. July and August were off the charts with an increase of more than 10,000 circulations each month. The grant created heavy usage because of the Cost-Per-Circ lending model and the influx of new titles that were available for lending. Thanks go to Hannah Peacock, Chair of the GMLC Selection Committee, and our other incredible volunteer Selectors, Lisa Milchman, and Susanna Kahn.

As always, we are proud of our work and appreciate the endless hours of our many volunteers. Our mission is *"To provide Vermont's libraries with access to goods and services otherwise unattainable through the power of partnerships and collective purchasing.* This is summed up in the consortium's tagline: **Vermont Libraries, Working Together.**

Here are the reports on our various projects:

LUV

Our statistics show that from April 30, 2022, to May 1, 2023, LUV patrons checked out 640,504 total digital items consisting of 243,532 eBooks and 393,705 audio books from our collection of 55,422 items. This represents an increase of 19% over last year's circulation. As of May 2023, there are 28,226 Vermonters who use our digital library, an increase of nearly 5000 users (or 20%) from the previous year. It is clear that Vermonters enjoy their digital library collection more and more each year.

Overdrive Advantage

There are 82 GMLC libraries that subscribe to the Overdrive Advantage service which allows them to buy digital books for their own patrons only. GMLC has asked Overdrive Advantage members to buy extra copies of books when their own patrons holds exceed 4. We appreciate OA libraries for their subscription to this

service which provides more access to popular titles for their patrons and for our entire library community. Overdrive Advantage libraries spent \$172,082 from June 2022 to May 2023 and 3828 items were purchased.

Mango Languages

There are currently 26 GMLC libraries enrolled in the Mango Languages service. From April 2022 to May 2023, there were 4761 sessions. Of these, 58% were web sessions and 42% were on mobile devices.

This year French, Spanish/Latin American and German were the most popular languages, followed by Italian, Japanese and Korean.

Mango Languages provides a wide variety of courses for many different languages and learning levels. More information about Mango Languages is available on the GMLC website. www.gmlc.org.

VOKAL

We continue to grow! Including branches VOKAL now consists of 66 libraries. We are thrilled to be adding 3-4 additional libraries in the coming year.

With the advent of Aspen we were able to utilize a development we sponsored for local hold groups which allows groups of libraries to set parameters for their patrons to place holds on items at other libraries within the group. This has been very popular with the HomeCard group within Koha.

We look forward to adding in new libraries, reports training and more features in the next release of Koha.

GMLC- Listen UP VT spending 2022-2023

Total Budget: \$164,060.00

\$41,015.00 per quarter

Audio \$98,436.00- 60% of budget

eBooks \$65,624.00- 40% of budget

Total amount spent: \$149,008.40.

As of 5/18/23

Budget divided up as follows:

	60%	40%
15% Youth- Hannah	\$14,765.40	\$9,843.60
30% Adult Fic- Lisa M.	\$29,530.80	\$19,687.20
10% Non-fic- Hannah	\$9,843.60	\$6,562.40
10% Extra copies- Lisa	\$9,843.60	\$6,562.40
15% Expired Content- Susanna	\$14,765.40	\$9,843.60
20% Patron requests- Hannah	\$19,687.20	\$13,124.80
	\$98,436.00	\$65,624.00

Expenditures: \$158,482.25 of \$164,060.00 (as 5/18/23)

Selector	AUDIO	EBOOKS	AMOUNT	
			SPENT	BUDGET
15% Youth- Hannah	\$14,934.65	\$9,661.20	\$24,595.85	\$24,609.00
30% Adult Fic- Lisa M.	\$29,520.51	\$19,694.83	\$49,215.34	\$49,218.00
10% Non-fic- Hannah	\$9,815.44	\$6,589.73	\$16,405.17	\$16,406.00
10% Extra copies- Lisa	\$6,638.01	\$6,559.39	\$13,197.40	\$16,406.00
15% Expired Content- Susanna	\$9,135.80	\$13,141.71	\$22,277.51	\$24,609.00
20% Patron requests- Hannah	\$19,609.86	\$13,181.12	\$32,790.98	\$32,812.00
	\$89,654.27	\$68,827.98	\$158,482.25	\$164,060.00
			+/-	-5,577.75

Number of copies bought with regular budget.

Selector	AUDIO # of copies	EBOOKS # of copies
Youth- Hannah	1464	371
Adult Fic- Lisa M.	1503	531
Non-fic-Hannah	150	156
Extra copies- Lisa	846	659
Expired Content- Susanna	1042	518
Patron requests- Hannah	968	339
TOTALS	5973	2574

ADDITIONAL MONIES

ARPA GRANT

\$200,000.00

Full report submitted in December 2022

Summary of purchases chosen by selectors.

# of Audiobook units	# of eBook units	Total # of units	Cost of Audiobooks	Cost of eBooks	TOTAL COST
1915	700	2615	\$47,260.46	\$24,385.05	\$71,645.51

Summary of Cost per Circ (CPC) purchases.

# of Audiobook checkouts	# of eBook checkouts	Total # of checkouts	Cost of Audiobook	Cost of eBook checkouts	TOTAL COST of CPCs
11693	9954	21647	\$79,663.90	\$49,709.14	\$129,373.04

Vermont Humanities Council for copies of VT Reads:

The Last Night at the Telegraph Club by Malinda Lo

Purchased by Hannah Peacock in April 2023

7 audio books at \$37.50 for 12 months will be purchased in July 2023

VHC	\$ spent	# of copies
AUDIO	\$75.00	1
eBOOKS	\$360.00	8
TOTALS	\$435.00	9

Total Number of Units Purchased Budget Year 2022-2023

	# OF AUDIO	# OF EBOOKS	TOTAL
REGULAR BUDGET \$164,060.00	5973	2574	8547
ARPA GRANT 2022 \$200,000			
Copies	1915	700	2615
Cost per Circ Checkouts	11693	9954	21647
VHC VT Reads \$435.00	1	8	9
GRAND TOTAL:	19582	13236	32818

REPORTS FROM SELECTORS

Lisa Milchman, Norwich Public Library
Selector for adult fiction and extra copies of popular titles

How fast turns the circle of seasons. I feel like I was just writing this report and here it comes around again! Three years have passed since writing my first report of the COVID-19 era in May 2020, and I think it is fair to say that we have, in terms of digital appetite, reached a robust new normal. While it is impossible to know the magnitude of the effect of the pandemic, nevertheless, it is clear whether the pandemic is the cause or just a contributing factor, the patrons of Vermont want more!

This appetite for digital content is evidenced not only by the number of holds (the fulfillment of which has been a challenge for many years) but now also by a significant trend upwards in recommendations and requests, especially for more sub-genre specific titles (especially in the genres of romance and science fiction and fantasy) which may have been receiving short shrift in favor of more commercially popular titles. We may also be drawing a new readership demographic - one that reads more diversely and requests more liberally. Back catalog is increasingly requested, as new and/or prolific authors get discovered or become popular (we see you, Colleen Hoover!) In addition, the nature of metered models, especially prevalent for audio, leads to expiration of back catalog with the subsequent need to re-purchase more often. Striking an ordering balance of requests for older titles with high holds for new titles, is a relatively new concern amongst the many factors considered in getting maximum bang for the GMLC buck. Susanna and I have developed some rough guidelines in our respective buying areas (expired content vs. extra copies), mostly regarding the publication date of the request, but going forward an adjustment in the balance or amounts of budget dollars for these similar but different considerations may be warranted.

Two other happenings of note this past year, with potential or actual impact on high holds, was the ARPA grant and the introduction of Palace by VTLIB as a source of added content statewide. The ARPA funding had a profound impact on hold ratios and wait times, decreasing wait times from 70+ days before ARPA to a low of 37 days after all monies were spent. The fact that ARPA funds made such a profound difference, and that wait times are now rebounding into the mid-50s going into the usually busy summer season, appears to indicate that LUV “extra copies” funding is not/will not be sufficient to keep wait times down especially for popular literary bestsellers, and now, in addition, older titles. As to Palace, it appears to have both unique and duplicate content to LUV. It seems that many libraries may not yet be using Palace, so it is hard to assess what the impact may be for demand for GMLC purchased content. Anecdotally in my own library, our patrons much prefer the Libby app interface, and this appears to be driving greater use of LUV. Any impact of Palace on LUV will remain to be seen, perhaps as more Vermont libraries sign on.

One thing that never changes, pandemic or not, is that I never have any difficulty in spending out my budget! As is true in all areas of our daily lives, there are significant inflationary pressures in purchasing content. Audio content for some of the most popular authors are as high as \$129 for a One Copy/One User title. Obviously purchasing multiple copies of these titles eats up a budget quickly.

Utilizing the ‘100 concurrent user’ option for very popular titles is a cost-effective strategy, but it is only available through a couple of publishers. High hold ratios aside, however, I feel that we continue to curate an excellent collection within our budget constraints, which meets the need of a slowly diversifying readership. The improvement over time in the Overdrive marketplace platform to point to holes and provide suggestions, has been helpful as a tool in maintaining a well-rounded collection, balancing popular reading with titles that support diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is gratifying to see these two concerns have increasing intersection!

It continues to be my pleasure to be your fiction selector and I love to hear from colleagues especially as it relates to all things fiction. Send me your comments, questions, and purchase suggestions at lisa.milchman@norwichlibrary.org

Susanna Kahn, Charlotte Public Library
Manages Expired Metered Content/High Holds

Expired Content/ High Holds

As in the past, a disproportionate part of this budget was spent on ebooks because ebooks are more often purchased with the Metered Access (MA) model while audiobooks are offered through the One Copy/One User model and do not expire. During the pandemic, many publishers began offering a choice of 24-month or 12-month lending period for half the price. Purchasing more copies of titles for 12 months resulted in a high volume of expired holds. To repurchase an expired title, it generally must have 10 or more holds. Funds were also spent on high holds in both categories.

Weeding Plan

There is a backlog of 880 expired titles with at least one hold.

There is an automatic weeding plan that weeds any expired titles if there are no holds, and it is not owned by an Advantage account (including Advantage Plus shared copies). Advantage copies can only be weeded by the Advantage account. This results greatly reduces the number expired titles that get weeded. Currently 660 of the 880 expired titles have Advantage copies with 11 of those titles shared.

Patrons can put holds on expired titles if they are not weeded from the collection, so as the expired titles remain in the collection the holds begin to add up again.

Figuring out a plan for this would reduce holds and give patrons a better user experience.

Some possible solutions:

- Libraries weed their Advantage copies when they expire.
- Advantage members share their copies through Advantage Plus (their patrons continue to have priority), particularly if the consortium no longer has a copy and the demand is low at their library.
- Create guidelines around weeding titles with holds (it is so hard to weed titles with holds, but we can't purchase them all): How many holds? How long do we keep expired titles with holds? etc.
 - Overdrive can help us with weeding and deleting the holds (otherwise each hold must be deleted manually, or it remains on the patron's account). They assisted with weeding over 200 titles earlier in the year.

Hannah Peacock, Burnham Memorial Library

Selector for youth content, patron requests and non-fiction

The beginning of the purchasing year was all about spending the generous ARPA funds, with the hope of reducing the overwhelming number of holds. Lisa, Susanna, and I met numerous times to figure out the best strategy for spending the money. We settled on a combination of lending models including many "100 concurrent users", and in the end almost 2/3 of our budget was spent on the "cost per circ" model.

The numbers in the report are a little like comparing apples and oranges. A "cost per circ" checkout does not really compare to a "one copy, one user" model that costs around \$79.00, but that we own for as long as we would like. Hopefully the numbers represent the variety of options we were able to explore and offer to our users.

We did manage to reduce the holds down to 30 odd days, but as the ARPA titles expire and there is no more cost per circ, the holds have risen again. Currently they are at 54.25 days.

The only change we made to the regular budget this year was to increase the % allotted for high holds & expired content by 5%. We took that amount away from youth books. Adult books check out significantly more than youth and adults place many more holds. Youth books do well, but kids just don't place holds. Every time I would go in to order requests, I would be shocked and amazed by just how many people requested books- of course, the new and popular titles, but also so many holds and requests for older books!

Due to an unforeseen vacancy, I once again took on the non-fiction purchasing. It may have simply been too much for me this year, as I always felt that I was playing catch-up.

It may be time to get some extra help, and we do have someone waiting in the wings.

As always, my job is to spend the money allotted fairly amongst all the options available to us. How long do we estimate that a title will be popular? Do we need an eBook and an audiobook? How many requests make this a must purchase? When do we need an extra copy? These answers change regularly, and I believe that all 3 of us now have a good sense of how to navigate the different models and the increasingly high demand for digital.

We look forward to receiving the 2023-2024 budget so that we can start the process all over again! Susanna and Lisa continue to be the most wonderful and knowledgeable collaborators. We will all meet soon to discuss our plan for the upcoming year.

Please get in touch if you have any questions about this report or our purchasing decisions: hpeacock@colchestervt.gov

Annual Report respectfully submitted by:

GMLC Board:

Wendy Hysko, President

Kim Peine, Treasurer

Owen McDermott, Secretary

Chris Kirby

Mara Siegel

Richard Pritsky

Lisa von Kann, Administrative Coordinator