

Green Mountain Library Consortium

Annual Report

May 2020

We prepare this report of our activities during the last 12 months amid the Covid-19 crisis – a time when libraries have closed their buildings and are serving their patrons in very different ways. GMLC’s digital audio and book collection (LUV) has become the solution for many readers all over the State as you will see from the remarkable increase in use as detailed in this report.

We thank our members for their trust in us and for their belief in the efficacy of our consortium model. At this moment it is abundantly clear that what we do together is appreciated by so many Vermonters.

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

GMLC's ListenUpVermont library has added 2,268 new Vermonters since March 15th. This is a 200% increase from GMLC's already robust growth of 23 patrons a day. Our Unique Users, which measures the number of patrons that use the digital library daily, have increased from 872 to 1,124. This means more of our patrons are becoming 'Frequent' users of LUV. LUV's checkouts in April jumped 38%, moving from 1,132 the two weeks before brick and mortar libraries shutdown (March 1 - March 14), to 1,563 in the month of April. The 'Holds' in LUV have increased by more than 400%, moving from just under 600/month to more than 3,158/month.

In general terms our statistics show that from April 30, 2019 to May 1, 2020 LUV patrons checked out 444,578 total digital items consisting of 189,615 ebooks and 254,963 audio books from our collection of 48,250 unique titles and 52,425 copies. Our collection added a large collection of copyright free books for our users in a special collection of Classics and the Gutenberg Library. In addition, with grants from the Samara Fund, Ben and Jerry’s Foundation, the Vermont Humanities Council and IMLS/VTLIB we have been able to add many new titles and special collections. You can see more details in the ListenUp! Vermont Spending section of this report.

This shows a 28% increase in ebooks and a 33% increase in audiobooks circulation. The total increase in circulation of digital materials from last year is 31%. The number of unique patrons around the state using LUV is 22,910, which is a 31% increase over the year before.

Overdrive Advantage

Overdrive Advantage had another strong year as participating libraries have collectively spent over \$117,000 to expand specific Advantage collections. These expenditures added 2,484 titles at our 41 participating Advantage libraries and provided an additional wealth of resources to the consortium’s general collection. The expenditures were up 33% from the \$87,800 spent during the 2019 fiscal year. The number of items purchased rose 25% from the 1,975 items purchased in the 2019 fiscal year. The rise in numbers was in part because of the coronavirus’s closure of brick and mortar libraries. During the last two weeks of March and the first two weeks of April, \$58,000 was spent on Advantage titles. The coronavirus library closures were also the impetus for 9 libraries to become new Advantage members, bringing our total Advantage libraries to 50.

GMLC- Listen UP VT spending 2019-2020

TOTAL REGULAR ALLOTTED BUDGET OF \$115,000.00 (\$28,750.00 per quarter)

Divided up as follows:

	60%	40%	
	AUDIO	EBOOKS	TOTAL
20% Youth- Hannah	\$13,800.00	\$9,200.00	\$23,000.00
30% Adult Fic- Lisa M.	\$20,700.00	\$13,800.00	\$34,500.00
10% Non-fic- Loona	\$6,900.00	\$4,600.00	\$11,500.00
10% Extra copies- Lisa	\$6,900.00	\$4,600.00	\$11,500.00
10% Expired Content- Hannah	\$6,900.00	\$4,600.00	\$11,500.00
20% Patron requests- Hannah	\$13,800.00	\$9,200.00	\$23,000.00
TOTAL	\$69,000.00	\$46,000.00	\$115,000.00

Expenditures through 4/30/2020 [\$14,455.78 remaining to spend]

The remaining funds will be spent by the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2020

Selector	AUDIO	EBOOKS	AMOUNT SPENT	BUDGET
20% Youth- Hannah	\$10,801.61	\$8,777.01	\$19,578.62	\$23,000.00
30% Adult Fic- Lisa M.	\$19,370.19	\$13,931.83	\$33,302.02	\$34,500.00
10% Non-fic- Loona	\$6,501.16	\$4,513.43	\$11,014.59	\$11,500.00

10% Extra copies- Lisa	\$6,463.04	\$3,460.22	\$9,923.26	\$11,500.00
10% Expired Content- Hannah	\$2,523.86	\$5,618.54	\$8,142.40	\$11,500.00
20% Patron requests- Hannah	\$9,572.76	\$9,010.57	\$18,583.33	\$23,000.00
	\$55,232.62	\$45,311.60	\$100,544.22	\$115,000.00

ADDITIONAL MONIES

**Additional Budget of \$5,000.00 from GMLC Board
Allotted in March 2020. Spent as follows:**

EXTRA FUNDS MARCH 2020	AUDIO	eBOOKS	SPENT	BUDGET
	\$2,423.25	\$2,604.96	\$5,028.21	\$5,000.00

Ben & Jerry's Grant for STEAM titles

Ben & Jerry's MARCH 2020	AUDIO	eBOOKS	TOTAL	BUDGET
Money spent	\$50.00	\$647.28	\$697.28	\$700.00
# of copies	2	25	27	

**Vermont Humanities Council \$ for additional copies of VT Reads 2020: *The Hate You Give*
5 Ebook copies, 8 audiobook copies**

VHC VT Reads APRIL 2020	AUDIO	eBOOKS	SPENT
	\$519.84	\$94.95	\$614.79

**STILL TO SPEND- by JULY 20, 2020:
\$17,000 from IMLS VTLIB matched by \$3000 from GMLC.**

Total Number of Copies Purchased from July 2019- April 30, 2020

	# OF AUDIO	# OF EBOOKS	TOTAL
REGULAR BUDGET of \$115,000.00	854	1255	2109
EXTRA \$5,000	33	57	90
GRAND TOTAL:	887	1312	2199

Total Number of Copies with Extra Monies

	# OF AUDIO	# OF EBOOKS	TOTAL
Ben & Jerry's Grant for STEAM	2	25	27
VHC Money for VT Reads	8	5	13
GRAND TOTAL:	10	30	40

Lisa Milchman – ADULT FICTION

As I write this it is hard to remember that there was a time before Covid-19, when the considerations around collection development appeared simpler, and perhaps based more on traditional collection development concerns – maintaining a balanced, interesting, and diverse collection. While I think that LUV had robust usage and was experiencing yearly growth, I have certainly noted the explosion of digital borrowing secondary to lack of access to physical items both in my library and statewide. While it is possible that this may recede somewhat as Vermont libraries return to physical item lending, I believe that we have now gained many new fans who will continue to look toward digital borrowing as a safer, more convenient, (and due to the tech help they get from their librarians - YAY librarians!), and more feasible option in this new world. This new reality will obviously require more collection dollars to sustain itself and to grow. I do not believe that our current budget comes close to meeting future needs, in terms of our fiction collection.

With this increase in usage, has come an explosion of holds. I have appreciated the ease with which Overdrive makes statistics and reports available and have followed with interest the hold numbers, which this spring regularly track at upwards of 25,000 on any given day. The good news is, that although holds have increased, the average wait time for holds has decreased to 35-37 days. I believe that this improvement in wait times is due to both that more libraries are participating in Advantage and to the new lending models developed and implemented by some publishers.

Those vendors (particularly Penguin) who have provided a more tiered ordering structure allow for buying less expensive/shorter time licenses that create a more nimble and flexible collection which gives us more bang for the buck. This is especially true for bestsellers for which we need multiple copies. This year, pre-Covid-19, I had already moved further in the direction of buying bestsellers/popular fiction, to keep within budget and take into consideration most requests made by patrons. In Covid-19 ordering, I take full advantage of these cheaper models. However, giving patrons better access to new bestsellers comes at the expense of being able to buy more non-mainstream titles – award winners and genre and sub-genre fiction devoted to diverse groups. It may be, that to buy diverse titles in an economically constrained environment, we look more to grant opportunities like the Samara grant for LGBTQAI+ content and the Ben & Jerry's STEAM

grant. Libraries who have Advantage collections may also want to consider adding more diverse titles geared to the interests of their community populations.

In terms of striking a format balance, I think that this year's audiobook/ebook budget allocation (skewed toward audiobooks) appears to be hitting closer to the mark. Even with some of the new publisher lending models which make audiobooks somewhat more affordable, many bestselling audiobooks are still expensive – now running over \$100 for one license for a Stephen King or similar-caliber author. This spring there appears to be less of these expensive titles, which may be more of a reflection of who is getting published now because of Covid-19.

I really enjoy ordering fiction for the LUV collection, and as always, I love to hear from my colleagues – whether with comments, questions, or purchase suggestions. You can reach me at lisa.milchman@norwichlibrary.org

Hannah Peacock- YOUTH & REQUESTS

My purchasing philosophy has changed drastically since the closure of our physical libraries, so this narrative will reflect both the current situation, and the budget year from July 2019-Spring 2020, as well as my goals for the remainder of the year.

Normally, I order for Listen up VT! based on number of requests, number of holds, and expected interest. I purchase based on reviews, what is popular at my own library, what may supplement our physical collections and what will help us and maintain a well-balanced collection for the whole Consortium.

I believe strongly that the 60% audio versus 40% eBook is still the right decision. Audiobooks are significantly more expensive and even more popular than eBooks. As you can see from the numbers above, we are still able to buy many more copies of eBooks than audiobooks with a smaller portion of the budget. A quick look at the stats shows that between July 1, 2019 and April 30, 2020, there were almost 215,000 checkouts of audiobooks compared to about 160,000 for eBooks.

Ordering for adults and children is quite different. Adults are more likely to place holds and to make requests. This makes adult ordering both easier and harder as you cannot order everything they ask for. There is pre-selected list of requested titles to choose from but there are more titles than we could ever afford to purchase. As there are always so many more adults holds & requests, I tend not use a lot of the allotted money for requests on books for children. Children and teens tend not be place holds or make requests, but as this is a strong area of knowledge for me, I am able to pick and choose appropriate titles without too much trouble, being sure to take into consideration reviews, award winners and projected interest.

During the Pandemic, the push for more libraries to start using Advantage seems to have been remarkably successful. The holds ratio has gone down, yet the interest has gone way up.

Libraries have clearly started using parts of their book budgets to enhance access to digital collections for their own patrons.

Ordering since March has been slightly different. While all the above factors still apply, I am more conscious of trying to order books that will comfort and soothe. A cozy romance novel may win out over a gruesome murder mystery, if a choice must be made.

Lisa Milchman has touched on holds so thoughtfully and completely that there is no need for me to add any additional information.

My goal for the remainder of the fiscal year is to use up the rest of the regular budget carefully and thoughtfully using the above criteria, to spend the grant money, with the help of my co-selectors, following the guidelines provided, to weed more effectively and to notify patrons that their holds are no longer available in a more timely manner.

Hannah Peacock- EXPIRED METERED CONTENT/ WEEDING

There is a fine balance between keeping titles that have only had minimal interest and clogging up the catalog. We want as many titles as possible available for all types of readers, but like a physical collection, we want it to be fresh and clean. It is therefore sometimes necessary to weed titles that have had checkouts and that may still have holds on them. Currently if an expiring/expired title has fewer than 4 holds it may not be repurchased. The hope is always that that number can be lowered as more libraries opt into Advantage, return books early and the budget remains sufficient for the needs of the users. We need to make room for extra copies of those titles with higher number of checkouts and for new titles that we assume will be of interest to a wider variety of our patrons.

The complaint with this system is still that holds remain on titles that have no available copies and it is time consuming to locate these titles, decide about weeding and notify the affected patrons. This seems to be a task that unfortunately slips down on my priority list, but I will make a concerted effort to give this area extra attention as we move forward.

Currently our automatic weeding plan is as follows:

Automatic weeding plan summary

Your plan will automatically weed titles that meet the selected criteria:

- Titles are expired under any Metered Access lending model
- Titles are no longer available for sale
- Titles have no active holds

As we are notified numerous times that a title will expire or run out of copies, the first part of the weeding plan is not problematic. If we have decided not to reorder after the reminders, then it is time for it to be weeded. Should interest increase again, a book can always be re-evaluated and reordered.

Loona Brogan, NON-FICTION

No report submitted this year

Mango Languages

There are currently 18 GMLC libraries enrolled in the Mango Languages service. During the calendar year 2019 there were:

- Total number of sessions: 4223
- Mobile Sessions: 1757

- Average session length: 14 minutes

The most popular language learning sessions were French, Spanish, Latin American, Italian and German, followed by Spanish, Castilian, Japanese and Portuguese.

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

The VOKAL consortium consists of 58 libraries. Libraries requesting membership are considered on a case-by-case basis and may be added at the VOKAL Executive Committee's discretion with a member library as sponsor. This year we are pleased to announce the addition of South Hero Library.

Circulation for the last year was 1.5 million items. The system contains 426,000 unique titles and 1.2 million items. 121,000 patrons are active in the system and the average daily circulation is 4,500 items (outgoing only).

The VOKAL Executive Committee consists of Wendy Hysko (Brownell Library), Kim Peine (Dorothy Alling Library), and Richard Pritsky (Carpenter-Carse Library).

Over the years VOKAL has sponsored and co-sponsored many development requests to improve the VOKAL system and these developments have been included in the standard releases of Koha to benefit libraries around the world. The ability to add an additional guarantor on an account will be in an upcoming version. With the GMLC Delivery Service providing a reduction in postage costs, enhancements to patron initiated holds are also in development, which will allow patrons to place holds at other libraries within their home group. The most recent requests will address being able to set non-priority holds so that patrons are able to renew items that have a hold waiting for something that can wait, such as further cataloging or bindery work and the ability to group item types in circulation rules.

The Circulation Committee chaired by Brownell Library's Alison Pierce continues to develop circulation standards for the consortium. The Cataloging Committee chaired by Dorothy Alling Library's Debbie Roderer continues to train library staff on VOKAL cataloging standards. The Consortium Committee chaired by Wendy Hysko meets prior to each new Koha release to discuss new system preferences. The VOKAL Help Committee assists in answering questions and resolving problems. The committee consists of Wendy Hysko (Brownell Library), Chris Kirby (Ilsley Library), Kim Peine (Dorothy Alling Library), and Richard Pritsky (Carpenter Carse Library).

The VOKAL consortium is proud to be a contributing member of the Koha open source community. We have an excellent partnership with our support vendor Bywater Solutions, who

has been very flexible in accommodating our unique needs that stem from our running the first statewide consortium in a rural state. It continues to be a rewarding cooperative experience to connect libraries through open source technology and to share experience and knowledge throughout Vermont and beyond in the Koha community.

GMLC Board and Staff Contact Information

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