

2021 Collection Development Committee Recommendations

Revised March 15, 2021

In October of 2020 the Collection Development Committee began work on their annual recommendation process, meeting and discussing known issues and concerns. The COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on usage of the Wisconsin's Digital Library had a significant impact on the discussion and recommendations for this year.

The following areas of focus have been identified for 2021-22:

- Explore enhancing Juvenile/YA collection development
- Explore improving the collection's accessibility and diversity
- Increase buying pool amount as recommended last year

1. Enhance Juvenile/YA collection development

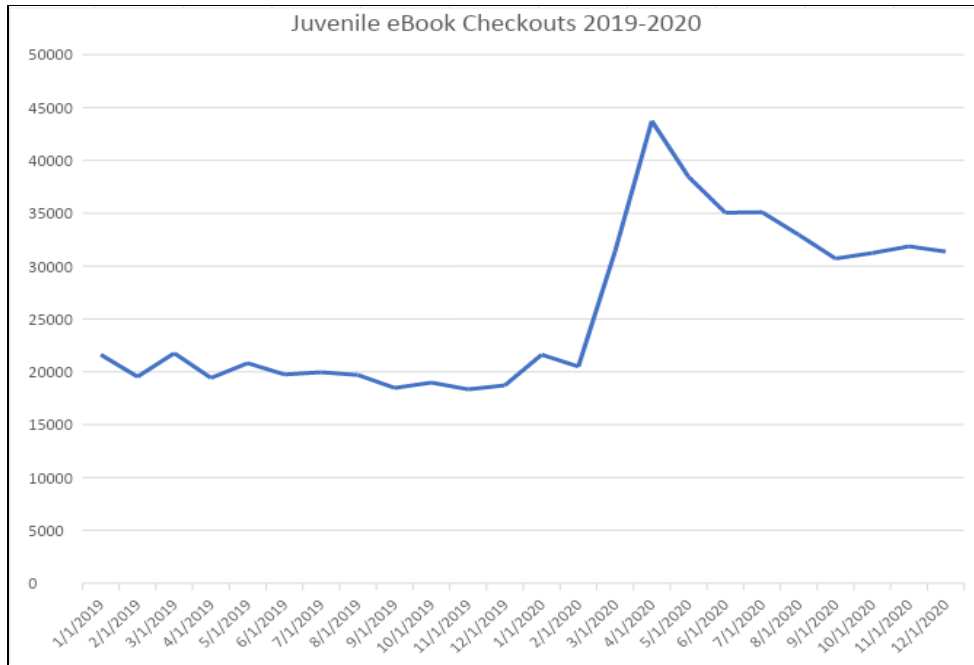
Demand for juvenile and YA materials seems to be increasing in the Wisconsin Digital Library, presumably due to the development of widespread remote learning for many school districts in response to COVID-19.

The Collection Development Committee recommends further review of usage data from the Juvenile and Young Adult (YA) ebook and audiobook collections to see if adjustments in the collection budget amounts in these areas are warranted based on use.

Currently the annual budget for the Juvenile and Young Adult collections is \$20,000 in total or \$1666 per month. There are several genres with assigned selectors. Each genre area is allocated \$208 per month. It is recommended that additional copies be ordered in the following areas through weekly holds managers:

- Emerging Readers
- LGBT Fiction and Non-fiction Interest
- Graphic Novels
- Multicultural Fiction and Non-Fiction Interest
- Mystery/Thriller
- Sci-Fi/Fantasy
- Romance
- Series
- Spanish Language

The chart below shows a spike in usage of Juvenile ebooks in March of 2020. It fell slightly but has held at a higher rate than the years before. Juvenile ebook usage has increased year over year by 62% and juvenile audiobook usage by 24%.

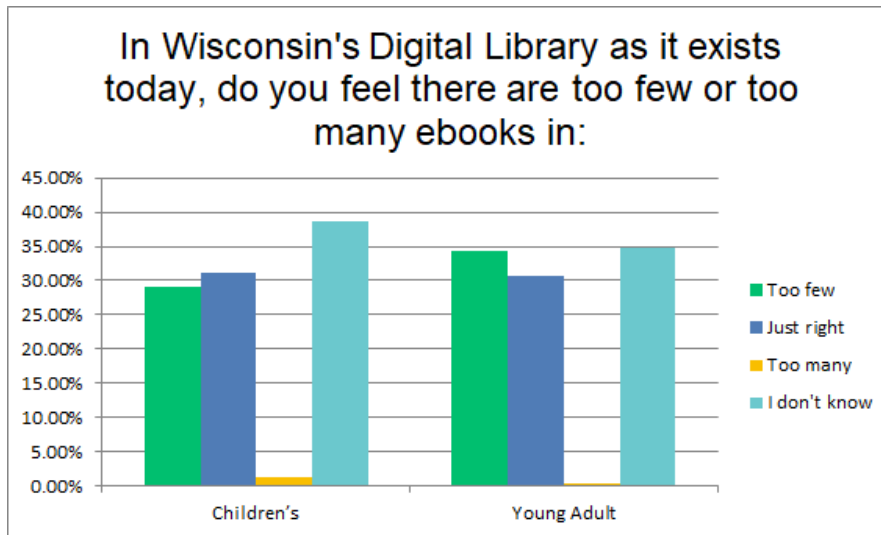


Additionally, anecdotal information from the library staff survey sent out in December 2020 indicates that there is room for growth in the juvenile and YA collections.

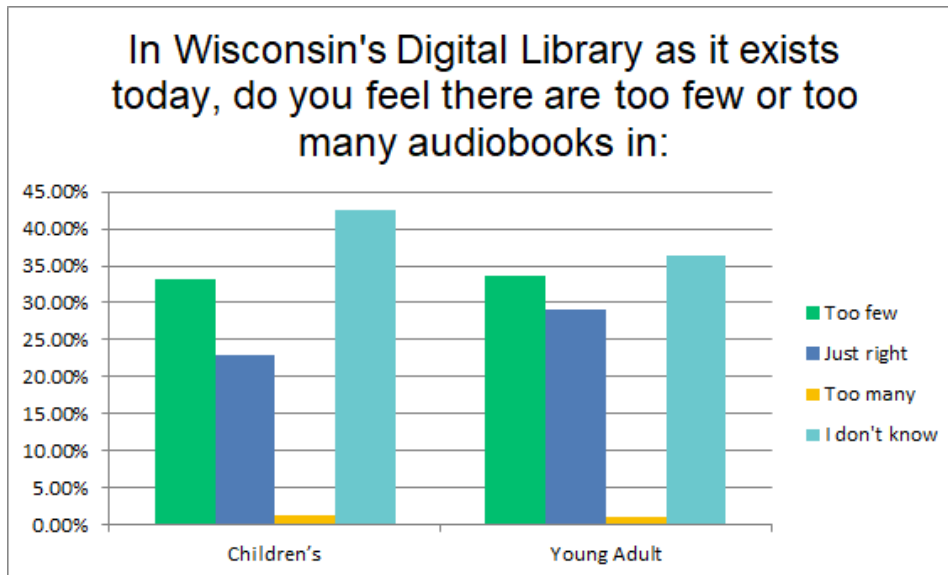
Some highlights:

- “Children’s materials are woefully underrepresented in the WCPL’s digital collection. With many children learning virtually, our ebooks/e-audio holdings should also increase.”
- “The children’s collection in particular needs to be strengthened. The overall selection & quality could be improved and more copies made available, especially for quality and popular titles. For all audiences there could be improvements in inclusive representation in collection offerings, particularly noticeable in children & teen purchasing, though true across the board.”
- “...newer Young Adult materials that are popular but haven’t been ordered for our system.”

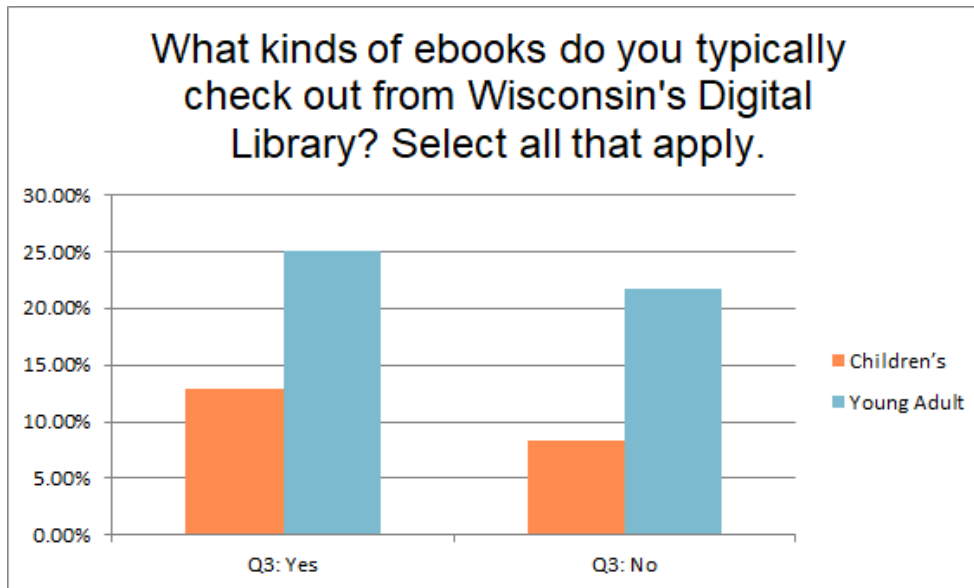
29.05% of library survey respondents felt that there are too few Children’s ebooks, while 34.3% felt there were too few Young Adult ebooks in the collection currently.



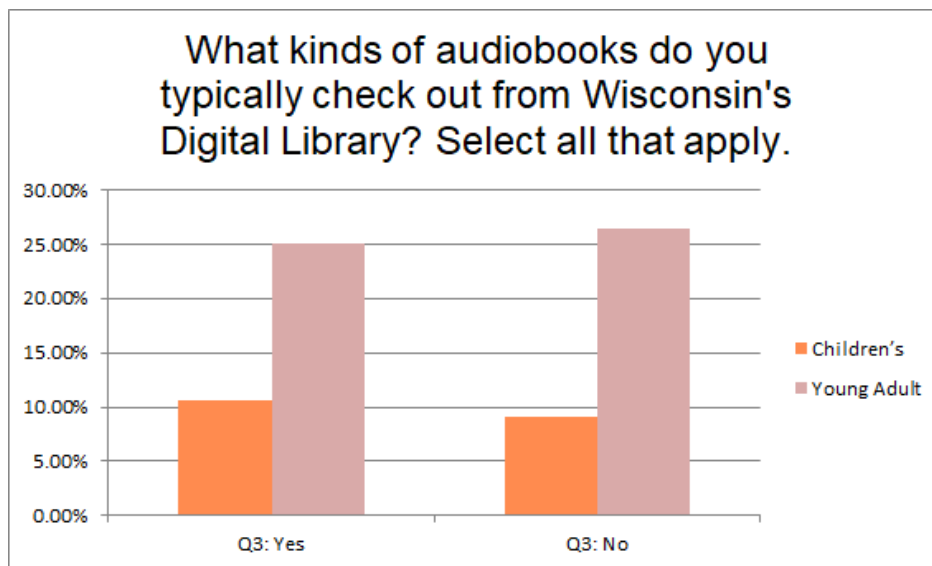
33.18% of library survey respondents to this question about audiobooks currently in the collection felt that there are too few Children's audiobooks; 33.63% felt that there were too few Young Adult audiobooks.



In the patron survey, sent out to Wisconsin's Digital Library users in November 2020, out of ebook users who identified themselves as having used WPLC / OverDrive for the first time in the past year, 12.94% said that they typically check out Children's ebooks, while 25.12% said they typically check out Young Adult ebooks. Out of respondents who identified themselves as having used WPLC / OverDrive prior to the past year, 8.36% said that they typically check out Children's ebooks, while 21.66% said that they typically check out Young Adult ebooks.



In the patron survey, out of audiobook users who identified themselves as having used WPLC / OverDrive for the first time in the past year, 10.8% said that they typically check out Children's audiobooks, while 25% said they typically check out Young Adult audiobooks. Out of respondents who identified themselves as having used WPLC / OverDrive prior to the past year, 9.04% said that they typically check out Children's audiobooks, while 26.44% said that they typically check out Young Adult audiobooks.



Comments from the patron survey:

- “More audio books available please for children”
- “My kids use Libby nearly daily. I would love to see more Christian fiction books for adults and kids.”
- “I love the digital library, and it was a lifesaver for us to be able to borrow endless numbers of books for the kids. While Covid has increased the number of e-books I have borrowed, it has decreased the number of audiobooks I borrow because I am no longer

commuting. I expect to return to a more even division of books when things begin to normalize again.”

- “More options for kids books (picture books) and more ways to search for kids books.”
- “I absolutely love this service. I wish it could work on my daughter's kindle fire, and in general wish there was an easy way for my 7 year old to browse and download audiobooks so mom and dad didn't have to be involved. Audible she can navigate solo. And in general kids books seems [sic] to have a long wait time.”

The Collection Development Committee recommends the following activities:

- **Engage in in-depth collection analysis and identify gaps in the collection.**
- **Explore reallocating collection dollars.**
- **Prioritize reducing hold times for youth materials.**
- **Raise public library awareness of the existence of local school digital e-book and audio collections and tools available for public librarians to better understand collection.**
- **Run a quarterly data review of usage of Juv/YA materials to help understand usage and any needed collection allocation changes.**

2. Improving the existing collection’s accessibility and diversity

In response to the need for greater depiction of underrepresented stories and voices, taking a closer look at existing diversity in the collection is timely and important. Accessibility concerns continue to be of paramount importance, as we advocate for expanded tools to enable use by readers of all abilities. We strive to create a collection that is timely, relevant, and easy for patrons to search and utilize.

In response to the Black Lives Matter movement, OverDrive worked with publishers to obtain a simultaneous-use format of some diverse titles. Five titles were added to Wisconsin’s Digital Library and those titles were checked out a total of 19,325 times in 2020. One of the titles, *So You Want To Talk About Race*, was the sixth highest circulating title of 2020. In addition 22 titles were added in June in the Cost Per Circ (CPC) format. These 22 titles circulated 26,707 times in just four months. Total cost for the CPC checkouts was \$133,706.90.

In both the patron and library surveys sent out by the Collection Development Committee in 2020, respondents mentioned improving the collections diversity and accessibility.

Some comments from the library staff survey:

- “I appreciate that there are some non-English titles available, but I feel the collection needs to be significantly larger. I would like to [promote it] but I'd feel embarrassed promoting it when there's not much there to really be worth offering it [to] someone who needs it.”
- “I would like to see more options for beginning chapter books (intermediate reading level) that include more diverse characters.”

Some patrons also offered additional feedback regarding more diversity and accessibility via the patron survey:

- “The reason I said the library should spend more of its budget on new titles is because I think reading diversely is incredibly important. Most often the books that the library doesn't own any copies of are books written by BIPOC. It's disappointing to me when I can't get these books, especially because I almost exclusively rely on the library for any books I want to read.”
- “I would love to see more titles by BIPOC authors. Those are the titles that seemingly are not in the collection or have few copies available (and long wait lists).”
- “Keep up the good work! And please get more titles from BIPOC authors.”
- “I'd like to see more books written by people of color.”
- “I love the option of ebooks! I don't mind the wait at all, but have come across several books not in the collection-- usually stuff by people of color(fiction) or related to health and nutrition(nonfiction).”

As stated previously,, there is a recognized representation gap in both publishing and library collections in terms of author voices and experiences. Educator Rudine Sims Bishop commented in 1990 that books and literature can function as windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors for their readers¹ and that view can help us frame the urgency of this recommendation. In addition, these resources can offer background information with regard to diversity in publishing and in library collections and could be used for selector training and as checkpoints for the collection:

- Cooperative Children’s Book Center resources about diversity in juvenile materials: <https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/literature-resources/ccbc-diversity-statistics/books-by-and-or-about-poc-2018/>
- ALA interpretation of Library Bill of Rights regarding diverse collections: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/diversecollections>
- DPI’s Wisconsin Library Inclusive Services Assessment Guide: https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/pld/pdf/Inclusive_Services_Assessment_and_Guide_for_Wisconsin_Public_Libraries_2019_updated_Sept.pdf This guide may offer action items and places to check ourselves and may be used in work on this recommendation.

The Collection Development Committee is recommending the following activities:

- **Identify quality, key resources / tools to use in selector training and as checkpoints going forward. Some libraries and systems around the state are developing this type of training and best practices. The WPLC may be able to utilize these or build upon them.**
- **Develop training for selectors related to collecting and maintaining a diverse collection.**
- **Consider practices when engaging in weeding the collection.**
- **Conduct a diversity audit.**
- **Consider activities designed to solicit more content from underrepresented voices.**

¹Language Arts, Vol. 85, No. 2, November 2007. <https://library.ncte.org/journals/LA/issues/v85-2/6175>

- **Develop mechanism or forum for sharing selector and other local reviews of emerging authors.**
- **Develop a timeline and process for weeding the collection on a more frequent basis.**

3. Increase buying pool amount for 2022

As mentioned previously, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the discussions around these recommendations. There were two important factors that were discussed and considered for this recommendation:

- The effect of the pandemic on library and system budgets and future funding - will libraries and systems see budget cuts due to the pandemic?
- The increased use of digital collections due to the pandemic.

The WPLC has made great strides in reducing the hold times from 42.79 days in January 2020 to 34 days in January 2021. However, the patron survey shows there are still steps to be made in patron satisfaction:

- “The WDL connects me with borrowing more from the Amazon library than the library. I would expect there to be more copies and more books available to borrow.”
- “The problem with the long wait times for some books is that sometimes by the time you get the book you don't have the time to read it or can't finish it in the allotted time and you won't get it back for months.”
- “More copies of existing titles!”
- “My only issue is that popular books (even old ones) have a very long waiting period -- months and months.”
- “The hold times are too long”
- “My main issue with the digital library is that there are not enough copies of new, popular books.”
- “I check out enough books that I am usually satisfied, but there are occasionally times when I am VERY frustrated about the lack of selection, number of available copies, or wait time.”
- “Since so many books are not available for 6 months or more, I think you should allow 25 holds. I often get frustrated with the long wait times and end up giving up and buying the book. Allowing more holds would enable me to plan my reads better.”
- “long holds, short checkout times, no renewals, embarrassingly small catalog...I check out books occasionally, usually when they're immediately available, because it's faster than going to the library or putting a hold on a physical book. But I never expect to find what I'm looking for in the system, and if I do, I never expect there to be a reasonable estimated time on the hold. So I don't use it much.”

This past year has seen a great increase in usage to the Wisconsin's Digital Library. 2020 total circulation was 6,999,763, which is a 16% increase from 2019. The pandemic also drove many new users to the collection. When comparing the early 2020 low of 5,465 new users in February

to the high of 11,666 in April, there was a 113% increase in new users. Of the over 500 new users who responded to the patron survey, 66% indicated that they accessed the collection for the first time because of library and/or other facility closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Looking forward it is likely that monthly checkouts and unique users will continue in an upward trajectory through at least June 2021.

In addition, 44% of respondents who took the staff survey responded that they felt the current buying pool amount was too low. It should also be noted that 42% reported they didn't know if the current budget was too low or too high.

The Collection Development Committee felt the slight increase proposed and approved last year and the growing usage combined with the continued patron dissatisfaction outweighed the concern over future budget cuts caused by the pandemic.

Last year the Collection Development Committee recommended to increase the budget by a fixed amount based on a 5% increase (\$66,722) each year for 5 years, beginning in 2021 and to start an evaluation of the increase during 2023 to determine the impact and proposal for the next 5 years. This was approved by the Digital Library Steering Committee in May of 2020 and the Board approved the budget increase for 2021 in June of 2020.

The Collection Development Committee is recommending the following activity:

- **Increase the 2022 Buying Pool budget by \$66,722, approximately a 5% increase.**
- **Allocate the majority of the increase to fulfilling consortium holds to help decrease wait times and increase patron satisfaction. If needed, allocate a small portion, (no more than 15% of the increase) to Juv/ya materials after an in-depth collection analysis has been completed, as recommended.**

Below are the approximate buying pool costs for next year, by system, showing a comparison of the current year (2021) and 2022. *(*Note these amounts are approximations. The actual buying pool amounts for each system are calculated each year based on a percentage of previous year's circulation and population. The amount does also not include the annual Partner fees.)*

System	2021	*2022
Arrowhead Library System	\$29,762	\$31,320
Bridges Library System	\$120,297	\$126,596
IFLS Library System	\$113,165	\$119,090
Kenosha County Library System	\$29,865	\$31,429
Lakeshores Library System	\$50,460	\$53,102
Manitowoc-Calumet Library System	\$19,032	\$20,028
Milwaukee Co. Federated Library System	\$140,190	\$147,530

Monarch Library System	\$92,306	\$97,140
Nicolet Federated Library System	\$87,678	\$92,269
Northern Waters Library Service	\$40,224	\$42,330
Outagamie Waupaca Library System	\$55,522	\$58,429
South Central Library System	\$274,348	\$288,714
Southwest Wisconsin Library System	\$27,649	\$29,097
Winding Rivers Library System	\$63,884	\$67,229
Winnefox Library System	\$67,986	\$71,546
Wisconsin Valley Library Service	\$61,856	\$65,095
Total Buying Pool Amount	\$1,274,222	\$1,340,944