

WPLC Collection Development Committee Initiative

Wisconsin's Digital Library Recommendations

2026-2027

Drafted October 2024

With input from the WPLC Board, Digital Library Steering Committee, and the Selection Committee, the WPLC Collection Development Committee began work on the initiative recommendation process in September of 2024. Once accepted and approved by the Digital Library Steering Committee in Spring of 2025, the recommendations will take effect through the end of 2027.

The following areas of focus have been identified:

- Increase buying pool amount by 5% for 2026 and 2027.
- Conduct a thorough review and redesign of the WPLC website.
- Develop a collection plan that will include selection responsibilities for the shared collection and system Advantage accounts. This could include a restructuring of the Selection committee.
- Develop ways to additionally support system Advantage selecting.

I. Increase buying pool amount by 5% for 2026 and 2027.

From January 2024 through September 2024, 9,324 titles and a total of 234,628 copies were purchased by the consortium and added into the collection and in that same time period, 7,553 titles were purchased and 79,881 copies were purchased by Advantage accounts. \$1,112,200 was spent by the consortium and \$1,078,928 by Advantage accounts during this period for a total of \$2,191,128.

Within Wisconsin's Digital Library there are a total of 119,3300 unique titles and 373,441 copies (as of October 2024). While this is a sizable collection, there are 832,534 holds. In addition to the demand we see with the holds, checkouts continue to increase as well. So far in 2024 (January - September), **there have been 7,167,649 checkouts, which is a 13.7% increase over the same time period last year.** (January - September 2023 total checkouts were 6,302,776.) **Approximately 70% of the collection is continuously checked out.**

Wisconsin's Digital Library does continue to grow, but the demand far exceeds the collection size and support. In an OverDrive Partner Analysis review, OverDrive compared Wisconsin's Digital Library to that of five similar sized consortium libraries. Of those peers,

the average spends 20.4% of their total collection budget on their digital library. WPLC spends about 10%.

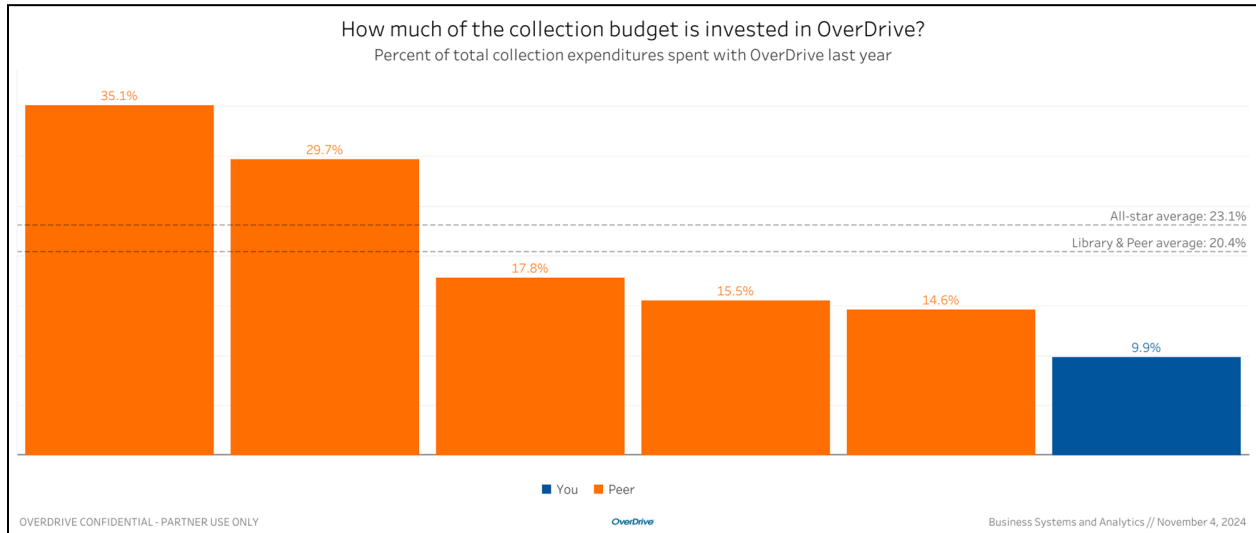


Figure A. OverDrive PAR Report collection budget comparison.

Satisfaction with wait times and holds in Wisconsin's Digital library is on a decline). In the Wisconsin's Digital Library Patron Survey, over 6,500 Wisconsin public library patrons responded to the survey. Compared to when the survey was last administered in 2022, satisfaction in wait times for both ebooks and audiobooks is declining (see figures B and C.)

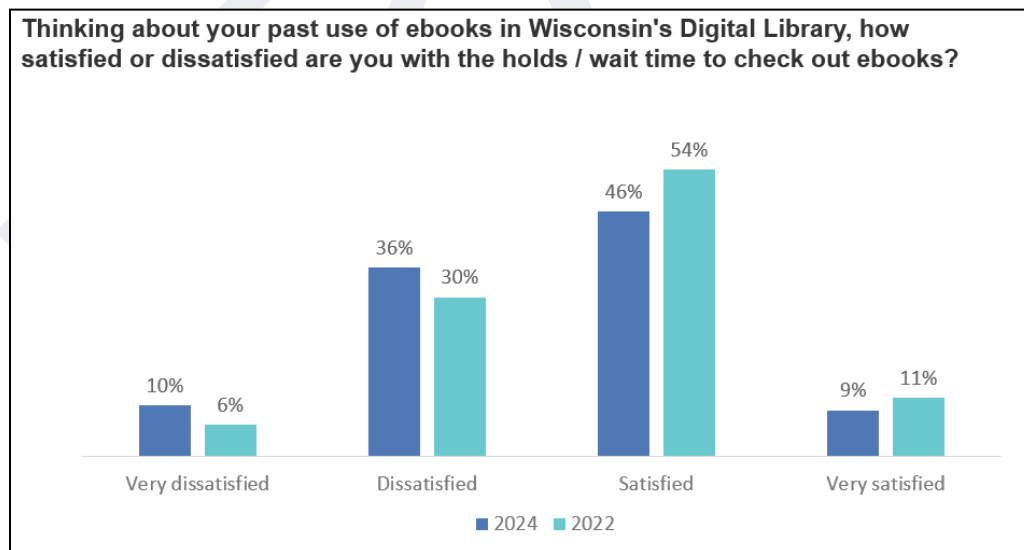


Figure B. eBook satisfaction results from 2024 Patron Survey.

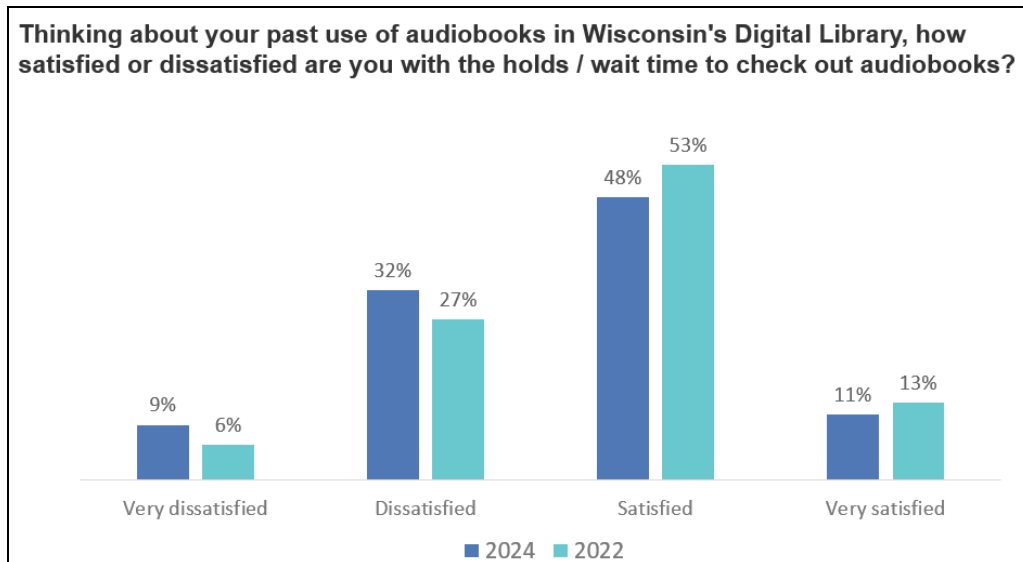


Figure C. Audiobook satisfaction results from 2024 Patron Survey.

The WPLC continues to see a year over year increase. Over the past eight years, it has seen on average a circulation increase of almost 13% each year (see figure D).

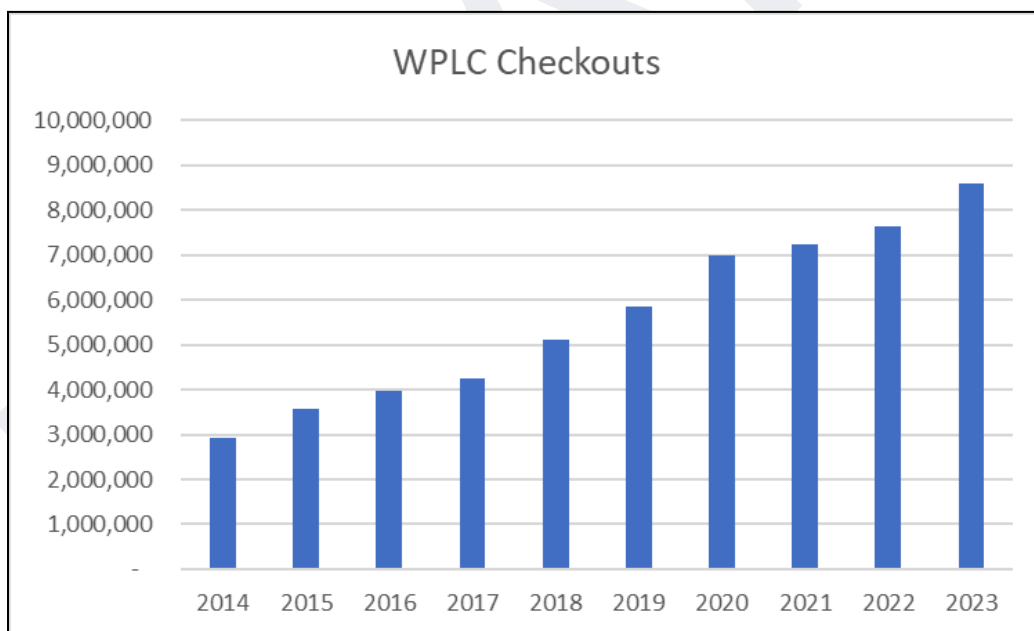


Figure D. Wisconsin's Digital Library total checkouts from 2014 through 2023.

Although Wisconsin's Digital Library continues to see growth in checkouts and demand, the Collection Development Committee recognizes that Wisconsin public library budgets are not increasing at the same rate and many are experiencing stagnant budgets and even cuts for 2025.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Increase the 2026 and 2027 buying pools by 5% each year. It is worthwhile noting that the CDC supports a larger buying pool budget increase that better responds to the double-digit percent circulation increases year over year, however, the committee's recommendation recognizes the budget constraints of WPLC member libraries.
 - A 5% increase for 2026 would be: \$77,055 for a total of \$1,618,165
 - A 5% increase for 2027 would be: \$80,908 for a total of \$1,699,073

II. Conduct a thorough review and redesign of the WPLC website

The WPLC's website is currently hosted by Winnefox Library System and uses an outdated version of Drupal that can no longer be updated. Winnefox has been working on moving all of their library sites to an updated version and has agreed to work on a new version for the WPLC, with the guidance of the WPLC in the Spring/Summer of 2025. As this project is an activity that has implications for the WPLC more broadly, the CDC would like to suggest that this be a priority activity when the WPLC makes decisions about what to prioritize in the WPLC strategic plan activation and assessment phase.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Involve CDC representation on any website redesign committee to ensure WDL interests are considered in the redesign process.
- Wisconsin's Digital Library elements for consideration in the new site:
 - A talking points page to help convey to patrons the budgetary and resource investment side of the WDL.
 - Budget section so current and past budgets are clearly discoverable.
 - Retaining the following:
 - A patron-focused section on the WPLC page with information or links for patrons, particularly in light of the recent patron survey responses indicating high patron understanding of how to find support
 - Information on the system-run OverDrive/Libby Support Course.
 - Patron support request form.
 - Governance and historical information (suggest keeping current plus one year of meeting information).
 - Definitions of lending models and selector support materials.
 - Consideration of an archive of the social media posts.

III. Develop a collection plan that will include selection responsibilities for the shared collection and system Advantage accounts. This could include a restructuring of the Selection committee.

Over the course of 2024, the Selection Committee began utilizing an OverDrive Content Specialist to help fill holds and expired titles. This process involves running weekly usage reports and then selecting the most cost-efficient way to purchase copies of titles with high holds. Carts are created based on a monthly budget, and a member of the project management team reviews and purchases the carts. This has been a more effective and efficient way of selecting and purchasing for Wisconsin's Digital Library. Since Overdrive began assisting with holds selection in May 2024, the average monthly holds fill rate has increased by 17% over a four month period of time, which is encouraging.

Currently the selection process for the consortium allows for up to two representatives from each of the 15 public library systems in Wisconsin. Not every system has two selectors for the consortium at this time and there are currently a total of 20 selectors of adult, young adult and children's materials. These selectors create carts on a monthly basis for new content in a variety of genres for both audio and ebooks.

In order to maximize the shared collection budget, careful consideration to usage reports of collection areas are reviewed on an annual basis and adjustments are made to genres and the amounts allocated to each collection area. In recent years, genres have been consolidated and this along with a new patron recommendation tool implemented by OverDrive called "Notify Me," has resulted in the need for less manual selection, and thus selectors, at the consortium level. This shift, however, opens up opportunities for additional time and focus on Advantage selecting for the selectors. The Selection Committee has already begun discussing this potential shift, identifying interest in Cost per Circ models (CPC) and Lucky Day collections for their Advantage accounts as well as refining their Advantage selection and spending.

The Selection Committee has expressed the importance of maintaining representation from library systems in the consortium selection process. There is concern that turning over the majority of the WPLC's autonomy and money to a vendor could be problematic. They are in favor of revising the number of consortium selectors based on need and recognize the importance of maintaining active Advantage accounts.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Explore reducing the number of selectors for the consortium while maintaining a consortium selection committee consisting of appointed members from all WI public library systems.
- Create an updated selection plan that reviews and revises areas of collection development and budget allocations. This will be done with data, feedback from current selectors and OverDrive team members.
- Continue with OverDrive assisted selection and curation to take advantage of effectiveness and efficiency of the process and to continue the increase in holds fulfillment.

IV. Develop ways to additionally support system Advantage selecting.

Several systems have acknowledged the need to optimize their advantage selecting. This, coupled with the potential restructuring of the Selection Committee and its focus creates a need for additional selection assistance.

Over the past year, some systems have been working and advocating for OverDrive to implement features that can help libraries better address and mitigate local holds. For several years, the WPLC has struggled to keep up with patron demand for titles in Wisconsin's Digital Library. The source of this problem is thought to be two-fold, one being the disparity between purchasing priorities and amounts dedicated to electronic resources of each system within Wisconsin, and two, some of it is the disparity of purchasing priorities between libraries within the same system. For example, Prairie Lakes Library System has shared that they have some libraries in their system with digital circulation making up less than 5% of their circulation, and some libraries in their system that have digital circulation accounting for close to 25% of their overall circulation.

A potential solution is utilizing and optimizing current reports that could be developed into selection tools that will give libraries/systems lists of titles that are on hold. The lists could include prices and lending models and could potentially calculate out the cost and number of copies needed to improve hold wait times for their patrons. This can then give agency to libraries and systems to be able to meet the demands of their communities.

For those systems that do not have the resources and staff time for selection, a potential option is for those systems to work with OverDrive in selection assistance, similarly to what OverDrive staff are doing for the consortium account.

An additional option is for the selectors and the Digital Library Steering Committee to explore how changing the holds and checkout limits of Wisconsin's Digital Library could affect patron satisfaction. Currently the WDL is set at 10 checkouts and 10 holds per patron. OverDrive provided the checkouts and limits of comparable organizations and consortia:

- Library A: 15 checkouts, 15 holds
- Library B: 10 checkouts, 8 holds
- Library C: 20 checkouts, 30 holds
- Library D: 10 checkouts, 20 holds
- Library E: 10 checkouts, 10 holds

RECOMMENDATION:

- Working with OverDrive, investigate ways to develop additional tools to help optimize Advantage selection.
- For those Advantage accounts that do not have the resources and staff time for selection, encourage them to work with OverDrive for selection and curation assistance.
- Explore creative ways to increase fulfillment and patron satisfaction rates through the use of Lucky Day, Notify Me, curation and reviewing the checkouts and hold limits.