

Through DPI funding and support, WiLS is conducting a research project on the potential impacts of COVID-19 on digital collection usage, specifically in relation to the immediate impacts of facility closures on metrics like checkouts, holds, and number of users. This project involves two parts: 1) a quantitative analysis of data from WPLC's and WSDLC's OverDrive accounts and 2) a patron survey to learn about patrons' use of electronic collection resources and any ways the pandemic might have influenced their motivations or behavior. The OverDrive data analysis component has already begun and includes both trend data going back two years to look for seasonal fluctuation, as well as a curated look at data from February 2020 through September 2020 for an in-depth look at the start of the health pandemic in March 2020 and any immediate effects on digital collection use. The patron survey will conclude in November 2020 and results will be used to provide additional insights into the OverDrive data.

Spoiler alert: it does appear from preliminary data analysis that there were significant impacts to digital collection usage (see teaser chart below)! Results of this project will highlight the role of libraries' digital collections during an unforeseen event that involved unexpected closures as well as concerns about safety in public spaces and will provide information on checkout trends, hold trends, eBook versus audiobook usage, new users, and unique users.

WPLC Two-Year Checkouts Trend

