Recommendations of the Steering Committee Digital Collections Workgroup -- DRAFT FOR WORKGROUP CONSIDERATION

The Digital Collections Workgroup met on April 4 to consider a list of topics and to create recommendations for the 2017 buying pool.

Files supplied to the workgroup are available on the WPLC website here. The "Summary for Collection Workgroup" document gathers information from these files in a summary and may be a good place to start if interested in further reading.

Different ebook products and models
The group discussed the information presented about different ebook products and models, and felt that, while these products could provide supplemental material to the existing collection, they will not help with the most pressing issue for the collection, which is the high number of holds.

The information collected for the workgroup suggests that we do have a growing issue with holds.

Our average waiting period is higher than other users of OverDrive with similar population and collection expenditures. The bar on the left is WPLC. While our goal is to have a 5:1 holds ratio, we aren't meeting that goal. Our average waiting period is 25.7 days. The other bars are our peers in OverDrive. As you can see, all of them have a lower wait time and they are also meeting the holds ratio indicated in the chart.
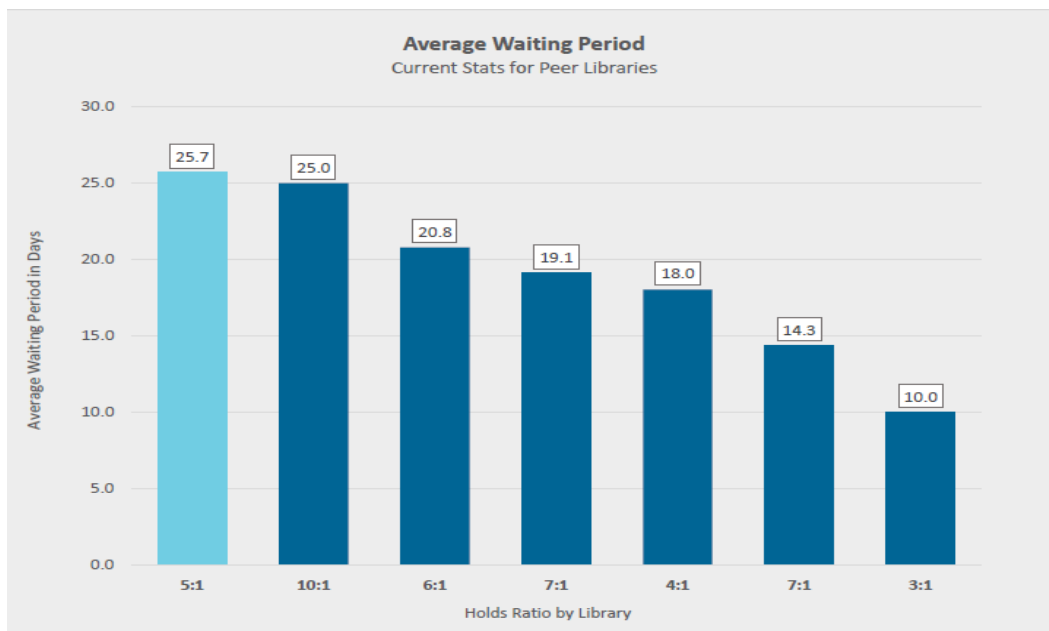
In the patron survey, fewer respondents indicated that they would place a hold on a title, and more indicated that they would consider their options before placing a hold than did in 2015:

Answer Choices	2016 Responses	2015 Responses	2016 % Change
I would place a hold.	42.08% (805)	48.08% (1,315)	-6.00%
I may place a hold, depending on how many copies are in the library.	21.48% (411)	21.02% (575)	0.46%
I may place a hold, depending on the other options available to me.	26.08% (499)	22.41% (613)	3.67%
I would never place a hold.	8.05% (154)	6.54% (179)	1.51%
None of the above.	2.30% (44)	1.94% (53)	0.36%
Total Responses	1,913	2,735	

In addition, more respondents expressed dissatisfaction with hold times:

Holds / wait time to checkout ebook	2016 Response Percent	2015 Response Percent	2016 Response Count	2015 Response Count	2016 Percent Change
Very satisfied	11.77%	14.73%	75	311	-2.96%
Somewhat satisfied	37.21%	35.95%	237	759	1.26%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12.24%	18.10%	78	382	-5.86%
Somewhat dissatisfied	28.10%	24.54%	179	518	3.56%
Very dissatisfied	10.68%	6.68%	68	141	4.00%
Total Response Count			637	2111	

The conversation of the workgroup focused on strategies for dealing with the holds. One option could be to add funds to the buying pool to help with reducing the holds ratio for ebooks. To get a sense of what amount of investment would be needed to impact the holds ratios, with our current number of holds, it would take the following amount of funds to bring down the CURRENT holds ratio to the following amounts:

Holds ratio*	Amount required
10-to-1	$134,102
7-to-1	$297,984
5-to-1	$536,131

*Does not include holds on pre-order titles

Given the likely increase in use and, therefore, in holds over time, this investment alone would most likely not sustain a 10-to-1 ratio over time and different purchasing practices (see below) would also need to be employed to have a long-term impact on the amount of holds.

The group also developed a list of possible practices to help reduce holds without the need for additional funding:

1. *Focus selection on dealing with the issue:* While we want to continue to grow the number of titles in the collection, it is critical for us to balance that with the need to reasonably meet demand for popular titles. Like the recommendation from 2016 to shift more funds to audiobook purchasing, this practice would result in shifting more of the buying pool dollars to purchasing additional copies in an organized way, as many of the other practices below suggest.

2. *Provide Advantage systems with more specific information on what to buy:* By working together and coordinating the efforts of Advantage collections, we may be able to reduce holds more effectively.   Providing lists of titles or other information on targeted purchasing will assist in this effort.

3. *Purchase additional copies earlier for titles we know will be popular:* Create a list of authors that we will consistently purchase additional copies earlier in the ordering process to help meet early demand for a title.

4. *Purchase additional copies of titles with a 10-to-1 or greater holds ratio and a cost of less than $20.* If titles are inexpensive but have a high holds ratio, holds can be reduced economically by purchasing additional titles.

5. *Suppress titles no longer available for purchase with a higher than 15-to-1 holds ratio so additional holds cannot be placed on these titles*: Due to changes in publisher rights, there are titles that we can no longer acquire but that are still available to place holds. Some of these have significant numbers of holds, and by suppressing them until the holds ratio for the title is 5-to-1 or less, it will reduce patron wait time and frustration.

6. *On a monthly basis, purchase titles on a current waiting list with 100 or more holds AND with a publication date in the last two years or pre-publication within a month of release to a 20-to-1 ratio.*

7. *Add pre-publication titles as soon as possible:* By adding pre-publication titles as soon as possible, we will have a better sense of demand prior to the title being available. This knowledge can help inform Advantage purchasing and could also help to inform the relationship of the ideal number of copies in print compared to the ideal number of digital copies.

8. *Modify the maximum checkout period for all titles with a 10-to-1 or higher holds ratio to 14 days*: We currently change the checkout period for the 15 most popular titles to 14 days on a monthly basis. Instead of limiting this to the top 15 titles, we would instead have all titles with a

10-to-1 or higher holds ratio limited to a 14 day maximum checkout period.

9. *Review use of holds manager and determine if alternate strategies may be more effective:* We recently learned that the holds manager functions in a way that may not be ideal for our needs. It begins with the title with the highest holds ratio and purchases as many copies as needed (within our limit of maximum copies to purchase) to drop the holds ratio below the title with the next highest holds ratio. This process is repeated until the all funds have been spent. As such, titles that have lower holds ratios but still above 5:1 may not have additional copies purchased.

10. *Work with OverDrive to explore different models for purchase or use of titles*: There may be opportunities to explore options for other models rather than one-to-one to help reduce holds. For example, each copy of a title may be available for only 26 checkouts before an additional copy needs to be purchased. Because it is a single copy, it can still only check out to one person at a time. Perhaps a publisher would be willing to consider having more of the 26 checkouts available at one time.

The workgroup is recommending a combination of strategies to deal with the holds issue.

Recommendation:

1. Institute the practices outlined above immediately to help deal with the holds issue.

2. Increase the buying pool by $150,000 to buy additional copies of titles with high holds.

3. Revisit products with other models once this issue has been addressed.

Magazines
During 2015, three different magazine products were used by various systems in the state:

- Flipster (from EBSCO): Bridges Library System, Manitowoc Calumet Library System, South Central Library System, Winnefox Library System
- OverDrive Periodicals: Statewide
- Zinio (from Recorded Books): Appleton Public Library, Brookfield Public Library, Brown County Library, Eastern Shores Library System, Kenosha Public Library, Mid-Wisconsin Federated Library System, Middleton Public Library, Milwaukee County Federated Library System

We have learned a number of things about magazine products as a result of all three products being available throughout the state:

There is interest among patrons in magazines.

From October – December 2015, there were almost 91,000 uses of magazines from all products. The breakdown of use is as follows:

Product	Use
OverDrive Periodicals	45,360
Zinio	25,706
Flipster	19,925
Total	**90,991**

Of the patrons surveyed, 29% have used magazines. For comparison purposes, 50% of the same group of respondents have used audiobooks, which seems to indicate substantial interest in magazines among patrons.

There is interest in dedicating a portion of the buying pool to magazines.

The library survey asked what percentage of the buying pool respondents would like to dedicate to various formats. 90% of respondents wanted to dedicate at least some buying pool funds to magazines:

Percentage of buying pool	Percentage of respondents
0%	10%
1-10% (approximately $1-$100,000)	55%
11-20% (approximately $100,001-$200,000)	26%
21-30% (approximately $200,001-$300,000)	8%
Above 30% (more than $300,000)	1%

The majority of respondents (55%) wanted to spend between 1 and 10%, or somewhere between $1 and $100,000.

### Each product has its own strengths and weaknesses

By having all three products available to patrons, we have a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each product for a statewide project. The table below outlines these strengths and weaknesses:

Product	Strengths	Weaknesses
Flipster	• Has browser-based reading option • Back issues available (up to 2 years) • Time Warner and Consumer Reports titles are available • Syncs seamlessly across devices • Highest satisfaction response from patrons (see below)	• Statistics are not available at the library level • Does not do ILS-based authentication each time. • No notification of next issue availability • Not the same platform as used for ebooks/audiobooks • Patrons cannot keep downloaded issues forever (if magazine is dropped, issues disappear) • Highest price
OverDrive Periodicals	• Lowest price • Individual library statistics • ILS-based authentication • Integrated into digital library, so more visible and familiar to patrons • Patrons can keep downloaded issues forever	• Back issues are not available • Requires Nook App: no browser-based reading option • No Time Warner titles/Consumer Reports • No notification of next issue availability • Lowest satisfaction response from patrons (see below)
Zinio	• Back issues available (1 year plus time subscribed) • Individual library statistics • Notification of next issue availability	• Does not do ILS-based authentication each time. • Not the same platform as used for ebooks/audiobooks • No Time Warner titles/Consumer Reports

A survey of patrons asked how satisfied they were with the magazine products they used. While significantly fewer respondents are using Flipster, they were the most satisfied with the product, while those using OverDrive Periodicals were least satisfied:

Product	Number of respondents	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Flipster	26	61.54% (16)	30.77% (8)
OverDrive Periodicals	127	57.48% (73)	19.69% (25)
Zinio	105	53.33% (56)	29.52% (31)

The graph below shows the total percentage of respondents that indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with each product:
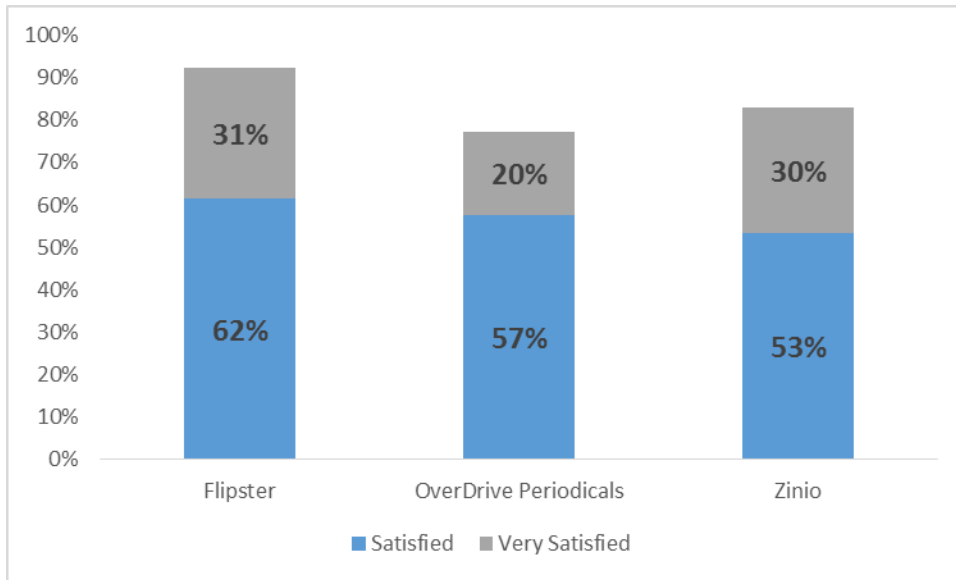
When asked about specific issues that may be concerns, OverDrive Periodicals users agreed with some statements that explain why they may be less satisfied than the users of the other products:

Statement	Percentage that agree or strongly agree
I wish digital magazine issues previous to the current one were available.	65%
The digital magazines I want are not in the collection.	51%
I wish OverDrive digital magazines had information about when the next issue is available.	49%
The digital magazines I want are often checked out.	25%
I've had problems using my NOOK account with OverDrive digital magazines.	17%

Bridges Library System (BLS) and South Central Library System (SCLS) both report statistics that support a greater satisfaction with Flipster than with OverDrive Periodicals. BLS is reporting that usage of Flipster is increasing while use of OverDrive Periodicals is decreasing. SCLS reports that the circulation is better through Flipster for 15 of 22 duplicate titles.

The products vary widely in price.
Just as the products have different strengths and weaknesses, they have different price points.   Below is the cost for a similar collection of "core" titles for each product:

Product	Price
OverDrive Periodicals	$50,000 (includes $12,768.86 to purchase additional copies as needed)
Zinio	$175,000
Flipster	$264,912

Note: The price for Flipster does NOT include any Time Warner titles or Consumer Report titles.

The table in Appendix A shows the list of titles and number of simultaneous users included in this price.

One of the key differences in pricing models is the number of simultaneous users that each title will have available at this price point.   For example, Vanity Fair has the following simultaneous users and prices:

Product	Price	User caps
Flipster	$2,072.71	Unlimited
OverDrive Periodicals	$159.92	500 circs/issue
Zinio	$959.52	3000 circs/issue

Generally, OverDrive Periodicals has the lowest cap for circs per issue and also has the lowest cost. While this means that the price is lower for this content, it also means that we do need to budget funds to purchase additional copies as needed.   As such, we have included some funds to add copies beyond what OverDrive estimates we would need.

It is difficult to make a single recommendation for how to proceed.
If we were to add funds to the buying pool to cover a magazine product for the entire state, we would have three options:

> Option 1: Increase buying pool by $50,000 to subscribe to OverDrive periodicals for statewide access for title list in Appendix A.

> Option 1a: If there is no consensus on funding a statewide collection, systems interested in provided OverDrive periodicals have the option to fund a shared Advantage account collection. The magazine collection would only be available to those systems participating. Total cost to be determined by number of systems participating.

> Option 2:   Increase buying pool by $175,000 to subscribe to Zinio for statewide access for title list in Appendix A.

> Option 3:   Increase buying pool by $265,000 to subscribe to Flipster for statewide access for title list in Appendix A. {Note: This does not include any Time Warner titles or Consumer Reports.}

OverDrive Periodicals has a price point within the amount to spend on magazines specified by 90% of those responding to the library survey. However, there are key features that are missing from the product that decreases patron satisfaction. Most notably, there are no back issues available, there is no browser-based reading option, and the product relies on the Nook App.

Zinio has a price point within the amount to spend on magazines specified by 35% of those responding to the library survey. This product has a higher satisfaction among its users and has some strengths such as back issues not available through the OverDrive Periodicals product.

Flipster, without Time Warner titles and Consumer Reports, has a price point within the amount to spend on magazines specified by only 1% of those responding to the library survey. The product, however, has the highest satisfaction among its users and has some key strengths, including browser-based reading and back issues.

Given the price point, it seems unlikely that there would be the will in the state to fund anything other than OverDrive Periodicals for statewide use.   The recommendation below reflects this expectation of the workgroup.

Recommendation:

Include OverDrive Periodicals in the buying pool for 2017. Increase the buying pool by $50,000 to fund this product.   For 2017, do not use the regular buying pool formula, but instead base the costs on the OverDrive Periodicals circulation to the end of 2015 to make the division of costs more equitable for those systems with another periodicals product.

If there is not the will to support this recommendation, interested systems can explore an Advantage partnership to provide a periodical collection to their patrons.

Other formats: video, comic books/graphic novels, and music
The group briefly discussed video, comic books/graphic novels, and music. Due to the two recommendations above and the most pressing problem of holds, the group did not want to recommend any additional development or products for any of these formats. For video, the amount to develop a robust collection of titles would be very high, and the group is recommending that we revisit the format if and when more popular titles from large studios are available. There was no evidence to support high interest in comic books/graphic novels from patrons or librarians, and the workgroup felt that this format could be tabled. Because of the wide availability of free and low-cost music services and because of the need to expend a fair amount of funds to develop a robust collection, the group tabled music also.