

Wisconsin Public Library Consortium
Annual Membership and Board Meeting Notes
April 26, 2023, at 1:00 pm

The Best Western Premier, 1 N Main St, Oshkosh, WI 54901, and via Zoom
[Recording](#)

ANNUAL MEETING ATTENDEES: Jean Anderson (SCLS), Kristen Anderson (WRLS), Shawn Carlson (Waukesha PL), Jeff Gilderson-Duwe (WLS), Riti Grover (MLS), Steve Hesel (MCLFS), Karol Kennedy (BLS), Clare Kindt (Brown County PL), Joshua Klingbeil (WVLS), David Kranz (SWLS), Mellanie Mercier (BLS), Rachel Metzler (WVLS), Ben Miller (DPI), Katelyn Noack (IFLS), Steve Ohs (PLLS), Steve Platteter (PLLS), Gina Rae (NWLS), Gerard Saylor (Lake Mills PL), Rebecca Scherer (MCLS), Bruce Smith (DPI), Clairellyn Sommersmith (WLS), Bradley Shipps (OWLS), Beth Tomer (DPI), Vicki Teal Lovely (SCLS), Tracy Vreeke (NFLS), Molly Warren (Madison PL)

PROJECT MANAGERS: Jennifer Chamberlain, Melody Clark, Sara Gold

Meeting was called to order at 1:01 pm

1. Welcome and Introductions

S. Hesel, WPLC Board Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed the group, both those in person and those joining via Zoom.

2. Annual Membership Meeting Presentation of Information

a. Welcome

Topics for the meeting were reviewed.

b. Wisconsin's Digital Library Data Review

It was noted at the annual meeting, there is typically a review of Wisconsin's Digital Library's data from the previous year. This year, because the consortium and Board are looking at future growth, we wanted to do a multi-year review of the Digital Library. This first slide shows the growth of Wisconsin's Digital Library in checkouts from 2014-2022. The library has seen an average increase each year of 13%.

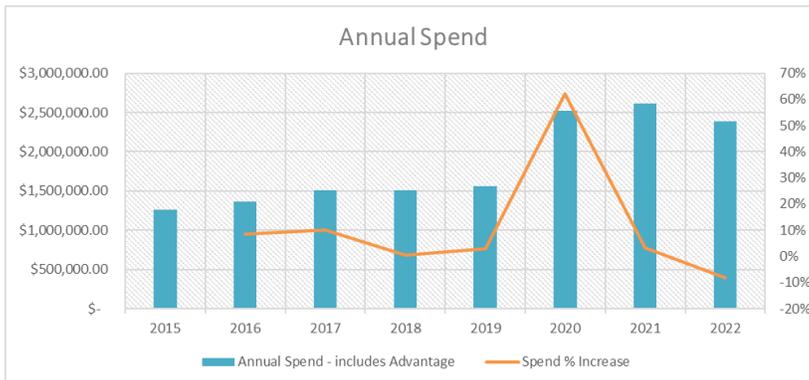


The next slide shows the growth in collection size. This does include Advantage copies. The average increase per year for the collection is 10%. However, that number is a bit skewed. Between 2019 and 2020, the collection saw an increase in size of almost 30%. That was due to

DPI allocating LSTA funds to the consortium as well as Advantage accounts spending more than double in 2020 than what they had spent in 2019. (\$572,015 in 2019 to \$1,115,308 in 2020).



The next chart shows the spend of the consortium from 2015 - 2022. This includes Advantage as well. Here too, we can see a large increase from 2019 to 2022. That year alone, we saw a 62% increase in spend due to the LSTA funds from DPI and the increase from Advantage accounts. Funding was also provided from DPI, LSTA funds in 2021, and that year also saw a large amount of funds from Advantage as well. In 2022 we saw a decrease in Advantage funding as well as no additional LSTA funds.



The last graph combines the data elements we just looked at but with one addition, cost per circ. Because of its high usage, the digital library has a relatively low cost per circ. The average cost per circ from 2014 - 2022 is \$.33. The IMLS did a report in 2018 (this is the most recent data available) that shows the national median average cost per circ for all library materials is \$.68, the median for physical is \$.63, and the median for electronic was \$.83. WDL is well below that. Even though this data is from 2018, in 2018, WDL cost per circ was still lower, at \$.30.



c. Technology Operations Committee Project Update

One of the newer projects in the WPLC is the Technology Collaboration. Started in 2021, two committees were formed to help identify and guide potential shared technology solutions across interested WPLC partners. The overall structure is that the operations committee, comprised primarily of System IT professionals, serves as the project idea generator/incubator. The steering committee, comprised of System directors and a WPLC board liaison, is tasked with decision-making, including prioritizing projects and developing project budgets and funding models. Because membership in the operations committee is open to any system IT professional, and participation can change depending on a system’s interest in a particular project, the committee took steps this year to widen the call for participation. Invites for their quarterly committee meetings are going out to a broader audience, not just to current committee members but to all systems and through the WPLC announcements list. As with all WPLC committees, agendas and notes are always published on the WPLC website.

In addition to broadening the call for participation, the committee felt that to do their work most effectively, they need to understand the various priorities and project interests across the systems. The committee created a form to learn what systems are currently interested in exploring, or what problems they are facing in the hopes of identifying viable shared projects. This form is shared on the front end of any upcoming operations committee, so systems not represented in the meeting still have an opportunity to share what they are working on. So far, the committee has explored three shared projects which fall into one of two categories: either a cooperative purchase, leveraging buying power to deepen discounts, or a shared project of some kind. The current project gaining the most traction is a data dashboard exploration.

The committee has created a spec sheet that describes the desired features and functionality a shared dashboard should contain, and they are in conversations with DPI technology folks on how they may be able to offer support for the project. The timing of this project is great as it aligns with some of the findings from the recently completed data landscape study report. This is still very much in a preliminary, exploratory stage.

d. **Wisconsin's Digital Library Initiatives**

The Collection Development Committee Recommendations are going to the Digital Steering Committee for final approval at their May 18th meeting. In 2022, the Board voted to move the recommendations from an annual to a two-year process.

Wisconsin's Digital Library saw an increase in circs of over 400K from 2021 to 2022, with a record-setting 7.6 million checkouts in 2022, these figures definitely support the need for sustained funding for the collections. The recommendation for a 5% annual increase in the buying pool amount for 2024 and 2025 is combined with the task of assisting the Advocacy Workgroup in planning efforts with an eye toward additional statewide funding for the WDL

The changes that have been introduced to Libby and Marketplace in 2023 are creating an influx of questions and requests for support assistance. Activities to support front-line library staff include: promoting the WPLC Support Course documentation and utilizing marketing through "did you know" posts on social media. In addition, areas of increased support and training around specific topics, such as Advantage accounts, to support new features such as shelf talkers and the Notify Me feature for patrons. Continued work on deepening the inclusion of diverse author voices and experiences is recommended, as well as continued support for selectors and organizing and promoting OverDrive-facilitated workshops for libraries.

Management of the digital library's collection and how to distribute funds most effectively is an important and ongoing project. Activities related to research and using data for improvements include reviewing Review Peer Activity Reports (PARs) from other consortia to understand their approach to collection management, investigating ways to hear more specifically from patrons who are moving from OverDrive to Libby (via skip logic in the patron survey, or through a short, targeted survey) about what's easier, and what's more difficult or missing, from Libby. Finally, working with OverDrive to obtain usage reports for 2021 and 2022 in the genre areas of WDL to use this data to inform a promotion/awareness campaign incorporating WPLC Social Media Committee.

Communication for the purpose of awareness building will remain an essential piece of supporting Wisconsin's Digital Library. Suggested activities include the following:

- Creating a two-year communication plan to promote young adult and juvenile collections to both staff and patrons. This continues the work of previous years of spending additional funds to enhance these collections.
- Build a communication plan to help patrons access and use WDL with Libby. The emphasis should be on older patrons.
- Utilize in-app messaging to share "Did you know" tips with app users.
- Promote Digital Magazines to patrons.
- Use results from genre usage research projects to inform areas for promotion.
- Establish a monthly email to WPLC committee members with highlights and updates from OverDrive and spotlighting "Did You Knows" to build awareness and communication between the various committees.

Wisconsin's Digital Library has grown significantly since its inception in 2006. There is an ongoing need to assess, evaluate, and implement new processes for how the collection is managed and

maintained. Project managers will undertake and oversee several tasks to make sure the WPLC and Wisconsin's Digital Library is kept neat and tidy.

e. **Magazine Usage and Renewal Discussion**

It was shared that the board would like to discuss the renewal of the magazine collection in Wisconsin's Digital Library. To do so, information on the collection was prepared and shared.

A background of the collection was given. The collection was added by a cooperative purchase of a few systems and libraries in February of 2021. In April 2021, the Digital Library Steering Committee recommended that the collection be renewed by the consortium using funds outside of the buying pool.

Magazines were added to Wisconsin's Digital Library in the middle of February 2021. In order to look at a full year of checkouts, we are looking at a year span of March through February. The first full year of magazines showed a total checkout of 271,789 checkouts. On average, this is about 22,649 per month. The following year, the WPLC saw a 34.4% increase in magazine usage, with a total of 365,088 circulations, an average of 30,424 per month.

In the annual patron survey, of those that took the survey (5,769 total responses), 19% responded that they checked out magazines. When asked in the last six months how many magazines they checked out from Wisconsin's Digital Library compared to their local public library, survey respondents stated they typically check out more magazines from Wisconsin's Digital Library than their local public library. 94% of patrons that checked out magazines responded that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the selection of magazines.

In the patron survey, respondents were asked if they have any additional comments they would like to share. We pulled out anything that contained the word magazines. The majority of the comments were very positive. There were a couple of notes about issues finding or reading titles, and a couple wanted expanding offerings. A couple noted they like the magazines and would also like to see newspapers as an offering.

The top 20 magazines from the previous year were shown. One thing to note is that The Economist is no longer available via the collection. The publisher pulled that title last fall. The review was presented to the Digital Library Steering Committee at their April 13th meeting, and one thing that was noted there was that we should ask for a replacement title or a discount for renewal due to the removal of this title.

Cost per circulation for magazine titles for 2022 is \$.22 per circ, which is lower than our total collection average of \$.33 per circ.

The collection has increased from ~3,000 titles to 4,482 titles. The nice thing about the package is OverDrive just adds titles as they acquire them with no cost increase to us. They are all simultaneous use with no limits, no wait times, and no holds

As noted previously, at the last meeting of the Digital Library Steering Committee on April 13th, the committee discussed the magazine review and completed an informal poll that asked if they were in favor of the WPLC renewing magazines for the next two years. 100% of the respondents said yes.

It was asked if there are any questions or comments about any of the information presented.

C. Sommersmith asked if the \$100K allocated for magazines might be better used to fill holds on ebooks and audiobooks. It was noted that the amount needed to make an impact on the holds is much greater than \$100,000. S. Hesper shared his support of magazines and the need to have materials that are always available because that increases patron satisfaction.

R. Grover asked what are demographics of magazine users. It was noted that we cannot obtain that type of information unless it is volunteered via a patron survey. C. Kindt asked if there is a way to track the number of patrons that use the notification for new magazine issues, to track interest in magazines. Project managers will need to work with OverDrive to see if this is possible.

It was shared that some libraries have users who would like to print articles, and it is impossible to do that from Libby. It was noted that patrons could take screenshots and print those. B. Miller shared that The Economist is available as text only in Badgerlink and wondered if there is a way to cross-promote the two platforms.

No major concerns about a renewal of magazines were shared.

f. **Statewide Delivery Network Update (DPI)**

Ben Miller provided an update on statewide delivery. Based on PLSR conversations, DPI thinks it makes the most sense to run delivery management through the WPLC. It was shared that a proposal to create an ongoing statewide delivery steering committee through the WPLC is in the works. This proposal will go before the WPLC Board at their August meeting. The proposal will include a budget and a timeline. K. Anderson asked if project management costs will be factored into the proposal. It was noted that project managers should also be able to have that information prepared for the August meeting.

B. Miller emphasized the collaborative nature of the WPLC and its shared governance model, noting that it is an ideal body to manage this process. B. Miller confirmed that DPI has LSTA funding to support Delivery for 2023-2024. He hopes to have this process moved to WPLC for 2024-25, as LSTA funding will be phased out for delivery.

g. **Planning for a WPLC Visioning Session**

S. Hesper shared an idea for a visioning session to bring stakeholders to the table, similar to the WPLC Roundtable that was held in 2019. Topics suggested were 501c3 discussion, the progress of the technology collaboration, and sustained funding for the WDL. Everyone is in favor of convening this with a possible date in October. Project managers will send out a poll with a variety of dates.

h. **Q&A and general discussion time**

R. Metzler asked if WDL circs would ever be not counted towards county funding as physical circs are. B. Shipps mentioned that OWLS includes Overdrive circs in total circs, but noted that including digital circs doesn't necessarily equal an increase in funding. She emphasized that

physical circs and county funding are not linear. She also stated that she works with each of her library directors to make sure they understand how county funding is determined. K. Kennedy also noted that Bridges includes digital circs as well.

3. Break

The Annual Membership meeting ended at 2:27 pm, and the group took a short break before convening the Board.

4. Board Meeting Call to Order

BOARD MEETING ATTENDEES: Katelyn Noack (IFLS), Steve Hesel (MCFLS), Riti Grover (Monarch), Tracy Vreeke (Nicolet), Gina Rae (NWLS), Bradley Shipps (OWLS), Steven Platteter (PLLS/ALS), Steve Ohs (PLLS/LLS), Jean Anderson (SCLS), David Kranz (SWLS), Kristen Anderson (WRLS), Jeff Gilderson-Duwe (Winnefox), Rachel Metzler (WVLS)

PROXIES: Karol Kennedy (BLS) for Mellanie Mercier

GUESTS: Ben Miller (DPI), Gerard Saylor (BLS), Clairellyn Sommersmith (WLS), Beth Tomer (DPI), Vicki Teal Lovely (SCLS)

ABSENT: Steve Ohs (LLS/PLLS), Rob Nunez (Kenosha), Rebecca Scherer (MCLS)

PROJECT MANAGERS: Jennifer Chamberlain, Melody Clark, Sara Gold

5. Welcome, Proxy Announcements, and Introductions

Chair S. Hesel called the meeting to order at 2:35 pm, welcomed the group, thanked those who participated in the annual meeting, and asked for proxy announcements.

6. Consent Agenda

- a. Review agenda
- b. Approval of minutes from [February 20, 2023](#)
- c. Acceptance of Digital Library Steering Committee minutes from [February 16, 2023](#)
- d. Acceptance of Technology Backup Steering Committee Meeting notes from [March 9, 2023](#)
- e. Acceptance of Digital Archives Backup Steering Committee Meeting notes from [March 14, 2023](#)
- f. [YTD Budget](#)

R. Grover Moved approval of the consent agenda. J. Gilderson-Duwe Seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Committee and Project Updates

a. Advocacy Group Update

S. Hesel noted that the Advocacy workgroup has met a few times and consists of T. Vreeke, R. Grover, and assistance from OWLS and MCFLS staff. The Advocacy group is investigating funding from private sources rather than public sources. The group is discussing guidelines for accepting donations, a toolkit to use with donors, and the sustainability of funding rather than one-time donors. A consultant might be folded in to reach out to donors. J. Gilderson-Duwe suggested

working towards an amount to build an endowment rather than a focus on sustained funding from specific donors.

8. Discussion and Action Items

a. Discussion and Potential Action: Debrief from annual meeting topics.

The group debriefed from the annual meeting and discussed the next steps for a magazine renewal, including potential budget formulas. The formulas will be shared out with the notes, and a decision will be made at the next Board meeting.

A motion was made by J. Gilderson-Duwe to authorize extending the magazine collection for an additional two years at \$100,000 annually. The motion was seconded by T. Vreeke. Motion passed unanimously.

b. Discussion: 2024 & 2025 Draft Budget

The Budget Committee has drafted the [2024](#) & [2025](#) budgets. Project managers presented the two budgets. They were reminded that they would not take action on the budgets, but were reviewing to get feedback for the budget committee. S. Hesper shared that the budget committee wants to move WILS up to a more equitable rate for project management so there is an increase each year in the project management costs. The group was reminded that the budget will be approved annually but will be drafted in two-year cycles. The Board will be approving the 2024 budget at their June meeting.

c. Discussion and Potential Action: 501c Workgroup

A workgroup was formed to discuss further options, benefits, and drawbacks for assigning the WPLC as a 501c. T. Vreeke asked if the board was ok with waiting on this until after she returns from leave, and the board agreed.

d. Discussion and Action: Backup Technology Five-Year Plan

The Technology Backup and Digital Archives Backup Steering Committees have drafted a five-year plan as requested by DPI. V. Teal Lovely and C. Sommersmith presented and reviewed the [plan](#).

B. Shipps asked if OWLS/NFLS are counted together for budgeting purposes, and they are not. B. Miller noted DPI has sparsity funds for 2023, and he asked about flexibility around payment of maintenance fees to Dell. V. Teal Lovely noted there is flexibility.

J. Gilderson-Duwe made the motion to approve the Backup Technology Five-Year Plan. J. Anderson seconded. Motion passed.

9. Information Sharing from Partners

Questions to consider:

- What are potential opportunities for collaboration?
- What's new happening at your system?
- What issues are you facing?

J. Gilderson-Duwe shared that Winnefox Library System Board is considering ending the shared directorship of WLS and Oshkosh Public Library and J. Gilderson-Duwe is recommending to the

WLS Board that Clairellyn Sommersmith be appointed as WLS Director. M. Clark thanked Jeff Glderson-Duwe for his 20+ years of service with the WPLC.

10. Adjourn

The next meeting of the Board is on June 12, 2023, at 2:00 pm.

R. Metzler moved to adjourn the meeting. K. Noack seconded. Meeting ended at 3:29 pm.