

Virginia's largest public library system offers what users want to hear—24/7

NetLibrary eAudiobooks provide more choices and no waiting list for tech-savvy community



Situation

Fairfax County Public Library receives a lot of traffic through its doors and over the Internet—8.7 million visits in 2005 alone. Supporting a community that includes the largest suburb of Washington, D.C., the library is constantly looking for new ways to better serve its 680,000 cardholders. That includes providing 24/7 library services to a community where 90 percent of the households have personal computers.

“We try to be proactive by staying abreast of the latest technologies,” says Julie Pringle, Collection Management and Acquisitions Coordinator. To support its tech-savvy users, the library added NetLibrary eBooks in 2000 and has added other eContent over the years. Sometimes though, the demands of users outpace what the library can offer. “Almost from the moment that downloadable audiobooks hit the consumer market **people were asking us for them,**” she says.

Solution

Being a long-time NetLibrary user, Pringle was delighted when OCLC announced the availability of eAudiobooks. “It’s a good and balanced collection,” says Pringle. “It has the Modern Scholar, the perennial best-seller, the Bible, popular fiction and more.”

She also likes that no one has to wait for a title. “You see the title. If you want it, you get it. It’s **instant gratification for the user.**” “And,” she adds, “**the entire collection is open to users.** So everything that’s in the collection, or that gets added regularly, is available.”

While users benefit from the large selection and availability, there’s another benefit that librarians can appreciate, says

AT A GLANCE

- Fairfax County is home of the largest Washington, D.C. suburb
- 8.7 million visits to library branches and Web site in fiscal year 2005
- 680,000 cardholders
- 21 branches
- 1,200 NetLibrary eAudiobooks downloaded per month

“We’ve had the eAudiobooks for 18 months now and the numbers keep getting better and better.”

Pringle. Busy libraries like hers can provide the service without much administration time. “It’s something we don’t need to worry about.”

Results

During the library’s 2005 fiscal year, **NetLibrary eAudiobook usage rose 360 percent.** Today, the average circulation is about 1,200 titles a month. “We’ve had the eAudiobooks for 18 months now and the numbers get better and better,” says Pringle.

A big part of the success is the **active promotion of the service.** Lois Kirkpatrick, Marketing and Public Relations Manager, spearheads an awareness program that includes press releases, e-mail and print newsletters, Web site announcements and promotional materials in the library. “We maintain an active dialogue with our users, which offers us many effective ways to get the word out,” she explains.

Virginia's largest public library system offers what users want to hear—24/7

Continued



Another impact NetLibrary eAudiobooks has on the library is that the service is helping influence the shift to more electronic resources. Currently, 10 percent of the usage of library materials is via the Internet and growing. NetLibrary eAudiobooks is part of the library's ongoing effort to serve a largely wired user base around the clock with relevant resources they want.

.....
For more information about NetLibrary, visit

www.oclc.org/NetLibrary/, call 1-800-848-5878, ext. 6251

or send e-mail to libservices@oclc.org.