PA Library Association Joins Call for Equitable Digital Lending for Libraries and Readers

The Pennsylvania Library Association joins the American Library Association and other state library associations across the country in condemning restrictive digital lending models for libraries and calling for publishers to work together with libraries to provide equitable access to eBooks, digital audiobooks, digital journals and research materials for all library users.

As a statewide organization dedicated to supporting libraries of all types across the Commonwealth, the Pennsylvania Library Association believes that publishers and libraries are strong partners in fostering a culture of reading and learning. This relationship is beneficial to vendors, publishers, authors and to libraries and their communities. Making materials broadly and equitably available to users of libraries through flexible lending models should be the shared goal of all parties involved. While recent attention has focused on lending terms that disadvantage public libraries, the Association recognizes that publisher restrictions have long been an issue for school and academic libraries as well.

“This is an issue that impacts all libraries,” says Christi Buker, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Library Association. “Regardless of whether it is an academic or school library serving students, or a public library serving the community, publishers should provide access to materials in a way that benefits everyone.”

While the Association recognizes that publishing is a business, one size fits all lending models are a poor fit for Pennsylvania’s diverse libraries. By working with libraries and the American Library Association, publishers could develop flexible lending options which enhance service to patrons, drive additional sales for publishers, and expose authors to new audiences through discovery and promotion in libraries.

“We believe that the goals of libraries and publishers aren’t mutually exclusive,” says Denise Sticha, 2019 Pennsylvania Library Association President. “Better digital lending options for libraries will benefit everyone involved in providing and promoting these resources.”

The Pennsylvania Library Association encourages members to take action on this issue by continuing the conversation about equitable access with library staff, patrons, and with the vendors and publishers you have relationships with.

This statement was approved by the 2019 Board of Directors, Denise Sticha, President.