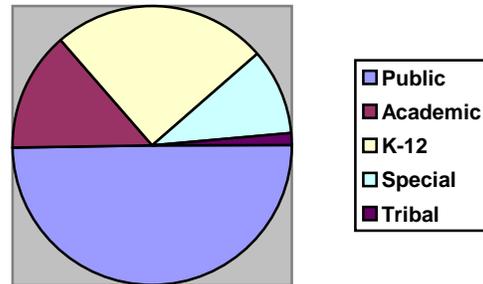


Off the Page: WSL Downloadable Audiobooks Survey Report

The Washington State Library ran a survey on the web using SurveyMonkey to determine the amount of interest in a statewide downloadable audiobooks project in different types of libraries. The survey ran from March 24 2008 until May 15 2008 and received 356 usable responses.

Approximately 50% of these responses came from public libraries of varying sizes, though participation was good throughout the different types of libraries. Totals include 177 responses from public libraries, 49 from academic libraries, 89 from K-12 libraries, 36 from special libraries, and 5 from tribal libraries. Some libraries had multiple respondents.



Totals

Very few libraries are already offering downloadable audiobooks to their patrons, only about 15% of total respondents. Most of these are public libraries, of which about 25% have a current downloadable audiobooks program. Of the remaining libraries that do not have a current program, 36% plan on offering one within the next 1-2 years. Again these are mostly public libraries, though the K-12 libraries also showed a strong interest.

Over 80% of the total libraries responded that they would be interested in participating in a statewide downloadable audiobooks project. Public and tribal libraries were the most interested, while only 2 out of every 5 special libraries showed interest.

Libraries not planning on offering their own downloadable audiobooks program listed their top reasons as the service was too expensive, or that their users had not expressed any interest. Those libraries not interested in a statewide program most often put lack of user interest as their reason, though lack of relevance to their type of library and insufficient technological infrastructure also ranked as top reasons.

Public Libraries (177)

Public libraries appear to be the most interested in a downloadable audiobooks service. 25% of public libraries already have some sort of program in place, mostly in the larger libraries, while an additional 45% are planning on offering a service within the next 1-2 years. Furthermore, 90% of public libraries expressed interest in participating in a statewide audiobooks program. Public libraries who were not planning on offering their own program claimed most often that it would be too expensive, while those few smaller libraries who were not interested in a statewide program claimed expense, technology, staff-time, and lack of user interest as their main reasons.

Academic Libraries (49)

Only 6% of academic libraries are currently offering a downloadable audiobooks service, mostly within the 4-year public institutions. An additional 22% are planning on offering a service within the next 1-2 years. Academic libraries were very evenly distributed, with about 70% expressing interest in a statewide audiobooks program. Academic libraries not planning on offering their own program cited lack of user interest and insufficient technological infrastructure as their main reasons. Those not interested in a statewide program cited lack of user interest and lack of relevance most often.

K-12 Libraries (89)

Very few K-12 libraries are currently offering downloadable audiobooks, only 5%. Nearly 40% plan on offering downloadable audiobooks in the next 1-2 years, though, and over 85% are interested in participating in a statewide program. Expense was the most popular concern in offering their own audiobooks programs. Of those not interested in a statewide project, lack of user interest, lack of technological infrastructure, and insufficient staff time were the main reasons.

Special Libraries (36)

Comprised mainly of hospital and government libraries, none of the reporting special libraries are currently offering a downloadable audiobooks service, and very few of them are planning on offering a service within the next 1-2 years (14%). About 40%, however, claim interest in a statewide program. Lack of user interest and relevance were the most common reasons these libraries were not interested in downloadable audiobooks.

Tribal Libraries (5)

Of the five (5) libraries that responded, none are currently offering a downloadable audiobooks service, though 2 claim they are planning to within the next 1-2 years, and all of them expressed interest in a statewide program. Of those 3 libraries not planning their own services, all claim expense as a concern, while 2 claim lack of technology and staff as additional reasons.

Conclusion

The amount of interest in a statewide downloadable audiobooks program is high among all except special libraries. The Washington State Library should move forward to analyze products that will fit the needs of public, academic, k-12, and tribal libraries. Preliminary discussion with vendors suggests that at least one (Overdrive) may be resistant to cross-type library deals. Separate programs for public libraries (including tribal), academic libraries, and K-12 libraries might offer the best solution, assuming a single consortial deal turns out to be impractical.

Appendix A: Survey Results

Type of library	Number of libraries responding	Decision-making			Currently offers downloadable audio		Planning to offer		Interested in Participating?	
		yes	some	no	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Public -- over 100k	58	18	30	8	29	26	14	9	49	0
Public -- 25 - 100k	41	15	16	10	9	32	19	13	39	1
Public -- under 25k	78	38	22	18	7	70	25	45	70	6
TOTAL PUBLICS	177	71	68	36	45	128	58	67	158	7
Academic -- public 4yr	15	6	7	2	2	13	3	10	11	3
Academic -- private 4yr	7	2	5	0	0	7	1	6	5	2
Academic -- 2yr	27	15	11	1	1	24	6	18	19	4
Academic -- other	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
TOTAL ACADEMICS	49	23	23	3	3	44	10	34	35	9
K-12 -- Elementary	35	20	12	3	1	34	9	25	28	7
K-12 -- Middle	21	12	9	0	0	21	8	13	18	2
K-12 -- High	27	15	10	2	3	24	11	13	25	2
K-12 -- Other	6	3	3	0	0	6	4	2	6	0
TOTAL K-12	89	50	34	5	4	85	32	53	77	11
Hospitals	19	5	13	1	0	19	2	17	8	11
Law / Legal	2	0	1	1	0	2	0	2	0	2
Government	15	3	8	4	0	15	3	12	7	7
Total Special / Other	36	8	22	6	0	36	5	31	15	20
Tribal	5	3	2	0	0	5	2	3	5	0
TOTALS	356	155	149	50	52	298	107	188	290	47
Percent of total		43.5%	41.9%	14.0%	14.6%	83.7%	30.1%	52.8%	81.5%	13.2%

Appendix B: Survey Questions

1. In what type of library do you work?
 - a. Public library
 - b. Academic library
 - c. Tribal library
 - d. K-12 library
 - e. Special of other type of library
2. What is the size of the population served by your library?
 - a. Large (over 100,000)
 - b. Medium (25,001 – 100,000)
 - c. Small (25,000 or less)
3. What type of academic library to do work in?
 - a. Public 4-year academic
 - b. Private 4-year academic
 - c. 2-year academic
 - d. Other (please specify)
4. What type of K-12 library do you work in?
 - a. Elementary
 - b. Middle School
 - c. High School
 - d. Other (please specify)
5. Which of these choices describes your library?
 - a. Non-profit
 - b. For-profit
 - c. Government
6. Please describe your type of organization:
 - a. Medical/Hospital
 - b. History/Genealogical/Museum
 - c. Other (please specify)
7. Please describe your type of organization:
 - a. Business/Corporate
 - b. Law/Legal
 - c. Other (please specify)
8. Please select the appropriate government level for your organization and library:
 - a. Federal
 - b. State
 - c. Local (county or city, etc.)
9. Which of the following best describes your role in library technology purchasing and expenditures? (We are interested in your views, regardless of your purchasing role.)
 - a. I am a decision maker with the authority to make technology purchasing and expenditure decisions.
 - b. I influence and make recommendations that affect technology purchasing and expenditures, but do not make the final decisions.
 - c. I have no significant role in technology purchasing and expenditure decisions.
10. Does your library currently offer downloadable audiobooks to its patrons?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
11. Is your library planning to offer downloadable audiobooks within the next 12-24 months?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
12. What are the reasons for not offering downloadable audiobooks to your library patrons? (Check all that apply)
13. Is your library interesting in participating in a statewide downloadable audiobooks project?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
14. Please indicate the reasons why your library is not interested in participating in a statewide project for downloadable audiobooks (Check all that apply):
15. Please provide any comments or suggestions you have regarding this project and its implementation.