

# RAILS Report

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## E-books

### BiblioBoard

The RAILS BiblioBoard platform now includes hundreds of e-books from two educational publishers. The ABDO module includes fiction and nonfiction titles for K–12 students, including graphic novel adaptations of classic stories and books about science, the humanities, art, and more. The Time for Kids module includes nonfiction readers and teacher-created materials, with a focus on science, math, and social studies. The addition of this content was based on feedback RAILS received during the AISLE (Association of Illinois Library School Educators) conference in November 2018. The RAILS [BiblioBoard content](#) is available for free to anyone within Illinois; no library card is required.

### Axis 360

Baker & Taylor (B&T) redesigned the eRead Illinois Axis 360 website in November 2018 and has since refined the design in response to RAILS and library feedback. Anna Behm, Deirdre Brennan, and Jane Plass met with B&T staff during the ALA Midwinter meeting in January 2019 to discuss other potential improvements to Axis 360.

On January 2, 2019, RAILS changed the Axis 360 item loan period from 21 to 14 days and the hold pickup period from three to two days. Participating libraries were informed in advance. Reducing the checkout and hold periods helps us to maintain a low holds ratio (RAILS orders an additional copy for every four holds on an item), while continuing to add new content. Patrons will get their holds faster, libraries can provide more popular content to users, and RAILS can maximize the use of eRead Illinois collection development funds. Fees paid by libraries participating in the Axis 360 shared collection are all used for collection development.

### SimplyE for Consortia

[SimplyE](#) is an e-reader app that makes it possible for patrons to access all of a library's e-books in a consolidated place, even when the library uses multiple e-book vendors. It is an open source application developed by the New York Public Library (NYPL).

Shared e-book collections, such as the eRead Illinois Axis 360 collection, pose additional challenges. RAILS is a partner in the SimplyE for Consortia grant project, which is led by Minitex (a library consortium in Minnesota) and funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). One goal of the grant to deploy consortial versions of SimplyE in Minnesota, Illinois, and Massachusetts. (Massachusetts Library System is also a grant partner.) Pinnacle Library Cooperative has agreed to participate in the Illinois deployment. Implementation is currently in progress, with Minitex handling the server environment and technical setup.

### Explore More Illinois

Explore More Illinois is a new online program to allow cardholders from participating RAILS public libraries to reserve free passes, discount admission, and other incentives from cultural attractions in Illinois, such as museums, cultural centers, zoos, aquariums, gardens, historical societies, etc.

RAILS will do a soft launch on April 1. As of February 28, 2019, we have 18 confirmed attractions and are in talks with several more. Four Springfield attractions have agreed to participate. At least 70 libraries will participate from the outset. There is no fee for libraries or attractions to participate, so we anticipate this program growing as word spreads.

SWAN has some special authentication and legal requirements. RAILS is working with SWAN and our vendor, Quipu, to address these so that SWAN libraries will be able to join in the near future.

## Find More Illinois

Seven more libraries went live on [Find More Illinois](#) in February:

- Andalusia Township Library (PrairieCat)
- Colona District Public Library (PrairieCat)
- Deerfield Public Library (Standalone Sierra integrated library system)
- Eureka Public Library District (RSA)
- Milledgeville Public Library (Standalone TinyCat system)
- Pearl City Public Library District (PrairieCat)
- Polo Public Library District (PrairieCat)

Five more libraries are in the last stages of implementation and are expected to go live in March.

Libraries can now join Find More Illinois at any time; RAILS staff will work with each library to develop a customized implementation schedule.

On January 28, the RAILS Communications team launched a six-week Find More Illinois Scavenger Hunt on Facebook, with weekly challenges to find items on a specific topic. The goal is to make people aware of all of the resources discoverable through Find More Illinois and to get them interested in potential membership.

## Shared Catalog Consortia

Cooperative Computer Services (CCS), Pinnacle Library Cooperative, and Rock River Library Consortium are now RAILS LLSAPs (Local Library System Automation Programs), in addition to PrairieCat, RSA, and SWAN. The primary benefit for the three new LLSAPs in FY2019 is eligibility for RAILS LLSAP membership grants to potential new LLSAP members. RAILS financial support to the new LLSAPs will begin in FY2020.

The [RAILS membership grants](#) have enabled RAILS shared catalog consortia to grow. So far in FY2019, RAILS has awarded \$257,630.10 total in grants for the following projects:

- The eight libraries in the Northern Illinois Cooperative (NIC) will go live in PrairieCat in mid-May 2019. NIC libraries include Cherry Valley Public Library District, Harvard Diggins Library, Howard Colman Library of Rockford University, Ida Public Library (Belvidere), Nippersink Public Library District (Richmond), North Suburban Library District (Loves Park, Machesney Park, and Roscoe), Talcott Free Public Library District (Rockton), and Woodstock Public Library.
- Morton Grove Public Library went live in CCS in January 2019.
- Green Hills Public Library District went live in SWAN in January 2019.

CCS has also approved membership for Indian Trails Public Library District (Wheeling), with an anticipated go-live date in fall 2019.

The second and final application deadline for FY2019 LLSAP membership grants is April 17, 2019.

### **Statewide Delivery Study**

In the past, both RAILS and Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS) have worked with the Laboratory for Applied Spatial Analysis (LASA) at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. Following meetings between the Illinois State Library, RAILS, IHLS, and LASA, the Illinois State Library contracted with LASA for a statewide delivery analysis that includes both RAILS and IHLS data. LASA looked at optimal locations for the transfer hub (where materials get exchanged between RAILS and IHLS) based on the current system delivery hubs and on varying numbers of potential delivery hub locations. LASA is now doing additional work to incorporate more detailed delivery information.

The LASA analysis will help the systems and Illinois State Library to develop a long-term plan to improve delivery efficiency and reduce costs.

### **RAILS Staffing Update**

RAILS is making progress on filling its open positions. We expect to have the new position of Data Coordinator and Research Analyst filled by April 8, 2019. Second interviews for the Consulting and Continuing Education Specialist (two positions) and the Library Resources and Programs Manager will be held in mid-March.