RAILS Report

RSC FY2021 Goal 1: Increase a Statewide Culture of Resource Sharing

Databases, Deals, and Discounts

ConsortiaManager Update

ConsortiaManager (CM) is an online resource designed specifically for consortia that will help RAILS increase efficiency, capacity, and member communications related to our group purchases. RAILS staff continue to build the content and supporting documents needed to create a robust site for those managing and participating in RAILS discount offerings.

Our CM vendor made several modifications to accommodate the complexity of the RAILS environment, including increasing processing speed, adding various filtering options and metadata fields, and reordering workflows to better reflect RAILS procedures. The build/customize process will continue through the spring.

RAILS Deals and Discounts News

Legal GPS Discount

RAILS negotiated advantageous pricing for Legal GPS, an online resource that helps new and existing businesses "do legal" without having to hire a lawyer. Rural librarians describe it as a convenient way for entrepreneurs not living in large metropolitan areas to get legal help. Members can register for an instant free trial.

EBSCO Deals, Trials, and Webinars

RAILS offers significantly discounted pricing for a variety of EBSCO products. Members can access trials and recordings of demos for K-12 and public libraries on the Deals & Discounts web page. The deadline for new sign-ups and renewals for all RAILS packages is June 10.

Available products include:
- EBSCO packages for public libraries and EBSCO packages for K-12 libraries include a variety of core databases and additional choices from a list of options.
- Ethnic Diversity Source with Diversity and Ethnic Studies E-Book Subscription combines the full text of magazines, newspapers, primary source documents, and video content with thousands of e-books.
- LibraryAware/NextReads includes templates and tools to create newsletters, bookmarks, shelf talkers, flyers, and more for promoting library resources.
- Learning Express provides support to students and professionals for academic skill-building, standardized test prep, career certification test prep, and more.
- Prenda Code Club helps libraries engage the "Coding-in-Libraries" movement through self-paced learn-to-code software for kids ages 8-18 and training and support for library staff to start code clubs.

Checkers Library TV Discounted Pricing

Checkers Library TV is partnering with RAILS to offer deeply discounted pricing for "The Reading Road Trip," a fun and educational program created as online and in-person programming exclusively for libraries. There is a choice of two eight-episode series, "Off-Road Adventures" or "Deep Sea Readers," that align with popular 2022 Summer Reading Themes. The subscription includes related downloadable activity sheets and crafts.

Career Online High School (COHS) Update

Career Online High School is an 18-credit, vocation-based high school completion program. RAILS subsidizes the cost of the platform.

The following table provides the latest information on the program as of April 6, 2022.

Scholarships Awarded	Total Graduates	Current Number of Students in Program	RAILS Graduation Rate/National Rate
302	143	68	61%/53%

E-books and E-Content

eRead Illinois News

Anna Behm, E-Content Specialist, hosted a March webinar presented by Baker & Taylor (our eRead Illinois vendor) about the new interactive dashboard feature in Axis 360. About 25 people attended and a recording is available on the RAILS YouTube site.

Anna Behm also met with the new director and assistant at Toluca Public Library in early April to provide an overview of eRead Illinois Axis 360 and to discuss other RAILS programs/services.

RAILS continues to plan for the upcoming eRead Illinois Axis 360 renewal period. We sent initial renewal emails to library participants on April 11. Libraries interested in joining eRead Illinois will be able to do so without incurring a fee for the remainder of the current fiscal year (until July 1, 2022).

Inkie.org Update

Anna Behm gave a virtual presentation about inkie.org for Cherry Valley Public Library on March 29. Five library patrons attended. Anna is also planning a presentation about Inkie.org for Bloomington Public Library in the coming months.

Use of RAILS E-Resources

The following tables show the use of eRead Illinois for FY 2022 thus far:

eRead Illinois Axis 360 Checkouts

Time Period	E-Books	Audiobooks	Total
March 2022	24,299	16,327	40,626
Fiscal Year to Date	217,255	138,938	356,193

Inkie.org Library Views

Time Period	Number of Views
March 2022	922
Fiscal Year to Date	10,680

Explore More Illinois

RAILS is running a contest to encourage libraries to suggest attractions for Explore More Illinois. Libraries can submit attraction suggestions through May 31. For every suggestion that results in an additional Explore More attraction by August 15, the library will receive one entry into a raffle for lunch for library staff. The Quipu Group, the Explore More software vendor, is sponsoring the contest.

We added our first two minor-league baseball teams in March. This month, we reached 41 attractions, the most attractions Explore More Illinois has ever had at one time. See complete list of attractions.

Illinois Central College (ICC) is working with RAILS on our community college pilot program. ICC has started marketing the program to students and staff. We also met with ICC's performing arts center director and art gallery director to discuss adding them as attractions to Explore More Illinois.

As of April 6, Illinois libraries participate in the program (323 RAILS and 84 IHLS member libraries).

RSC FY2021 Goal 2: Improve Awareness of Resource Sharing

Find More Illinois News for 2022
Find More Illinois connects participating standalone and shared online catalogs. Library patrons can quickly search all these catalogs in a single search. All Illinois libraries are eligible to participate, regardless of their size, type, or library software. For libraries that join before March 2023, all setup fees are waived. No annual fees will be billed until July 1, 2023.

Welcome to these libraries that recently joined Find More Illinois: Antioch Public Library District, DeKalb Public Library, Helen Plum Library (Lombard), Highwood Public Library, Knoxville Community Unit School District 200, Ohio Public Library District, Skokie Public Library, and Wheaton Public Library. In addition, the six libraries in the Pinnacle Library Cooperative are joining together: Fountaindale Public Library District, Joliet Public Library, Lemont Public Library District, Plainfield Public Library District, Shorewood-Troy Public Library District, Waukegan Public Library, and White Oak Library District.

RAILS Launches Materials Challenges Pulse Page

RAILS has a new [Materials Challenges](#) Pulse Page on our website to help libraries respond to the growing number of challenges to materials in their collections. The page includes:

- AISLE statement against censorship in school libraries and details on AISLE's webinar series on material challenges in schools
- RAILS events on materials challenges, including the April 5 webinar on censorship
- Online resources from the Illinois Library Association, American Library Association, and other organizations providing best practices and guidance on how to handle censorship attempts
- Links to upcoming and recorded CE events

While many resources may be specific to school libraries, this pulse page will be of value to any library type looking for guidance on material challenges. RAILS staff will continually update the page and RAILS members are invited to add suggestions for resources via the Comments field at the bottom of the page.

RAILS Engages School Library Staff at IDEAcon Conference

Nicole Zimmermann, Marketing & Public Relations Specialist, and Anna Behm, E-Content Specialist, staffed the RAILS booth at the [IDEAcon](#) (Illinois Digital Educators Alliance Conference) in Schaumburg in February. They engaged with approximately 120 visitors, including teachers and technology staff who were very interested to learn more about RAILS and who promised to bring the information back to their school librarian.

RAILS Presence at Kane County Institute Day

Dan Bostrom, RAILS Member Engagement Manager, staffed a table at the March 4 Kane County Institute Day. The one-day teacher training event is run by the Kane County Regional Office of Education and provided an opportunity for RAILS to connect with teachers, principals, librarians, and other school staff about eRead Illinois, Inkie.org, continuing education, grants, and more.

Visit the RAILS Booth at Reaching Forward

RAILS will have a booth at the May 6 [Reaching Forward](#) professional development conference for library staff in Rosemont. Please encourage anyone you know who is attending Reaching Forward to stop by the RAILS booth to learn more about the programs and services we offer for all levels of staff at all types and sizes of libraries.

Go-To Data Resources Online Roundtable

On April 7, RAILS hosted the Go-To Data Resources Online Roundtable; 55 people registered and 20 attended live. Grant Halter, RAILS Data Analysis Manager, discussed publicly-available resources for libraries and how they might incorporate them into their advocacy activities. A [recording is available](#) on the RAILS YouTube page.

More Volunteers Needed to Record Specialized Library Spotlights

The Specialized Library Spotlight videos RAILS produces in conjunction with our My Library Is… campaign have become very popular. In addition to receiving many views, several of the featured libraries have told us they appreciate this opportunity to highlight the services their library offers and to make others more aware of the value of specialized libraries in general.

We are looking for more specialized libraries to interview to keep this successful venture going. Please encourage any RAILS specialized staff members you know to contact the RAILS Communications Team (communications@railslibraries.info) to schedule their spotlight recording.

Measuring the Impact of RAILS Continuing Education

The RAILS CE team is using two new post-event surveys to gather meaningful feedback about our CE events. Working with RAILS Data Analysis Manager Grant Halter, our post-event survey asks questions specific to the CE category (HR, EDI, marketing, etc.) to identify the potential impacts of the training content. We are sending a second follow-up survey to willing participants approximately 3-4 weeks later to capture their recall of the event and to determine what tangible outcomes have occurred as a result of what they learned.

AISLE Partnership

RAILS staff meet monthly with representatives from the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE), Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS), and the Illinois Library Association (ILA) to discuss ways we can work collaboratively to support school libraries. Gwen Harrison, Network Consultant at the Illinois State Library, also joined us for the April meeting.

Topics discussed included:

- Materials challenges (ongoing)
    - Update on [AISLE's CE events](#)
    - [House Committee Discussion on Book Bans and Academic Censorship](#)
- Ongoing discussion about efforts to gather better data about school libraries
- ILA Legislative update
    - [Follett Reverses Course on Parental Controls](#)

The next meeting of the group is Tuesday, May 3 at 4 p.m.

RSC FY2021 Goal 3: Provide Services for the Unserved

Universal Service/Unserved

Expanded Cards for Kids Act Passes Both Houses

Illinois Senate Bill 3497 (expanded Cards for Kids Act): Amends the Illinois Local Library Act and Public Library District Act of 1991. Provides that a library board may adopt regulations waiving the nonresident fee for persons under the age of 18. Removes language in the Illinois Local Library Act providing that nothing in the Section requires a public library to participate in the non-resident card reciprocal borrowing program of a regional library system.

Both of these bills await the governor's signature. The Illinois State Library will craft administrative rules to guide implementation in libraries.

Several other bills (including Illinois Library Association priorities HB4758 expanding access to Broadband and HB4470 on creating equitable access to e-books) are still being monitored as they move through the legislative process.