

PRESS RELEASE

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Library fights to protect eBook access for all Launches new dedicated web page resource

COLUMBUS—Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML) has teamed up with the American Library Association (ALA) in an effort to prevent newly proposed publisher restrictions on eBook purchasing from going into effect.

Beginning Nov. 1, Macmillan (one of the “Big 5” publishers) will allow libraries to purchase **only one copy** of each new eBook title for the first eight weeks after its release. This means there will be fewer copies of many titles so wait times will be longer.

Public libraries, which already pay more for an eBook than does the average consumer, used to be able to purchase an eBook and own it forever. Macmillan’s new policy announcement comes as all of the Big 5 publishers (Hachette, HarperCollins, Macmillan, Penguin Random House and Simon & Schuster) have recently changed their purchasing models for libraries, forcing them to repurchase eBook titles after a certain period of time or after a certain number of checkouts.

CML CEO Patrick Losinski [spoke out](#) against these restrictions at an ALA press conference in Nashville earlier this month. He and other library leaders from across the country announced the #eBooksForAll campaign, which aims to curb Macmillan’s policy and any further restrictions that might result from it.

“At Columbus Metropolitan Library, one of our most core professional principles is equality of access,” says Losinski. “By limiting the number of copies libraries can purchase and delaying the timeliness of our purchases, publishers like Macmillan are allowing only a certain segment of our society to access digital content in a timely manner – those who can pay for it themselves. And that’s unacceptable in a democratic society.”

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In a [July statement](#), Macmillan CEO John Sargent accused public libraries of “cannibalizing” publishers’ sales. CML leaders, along with those from ALA and public libraries across the country, disagree.

“Public libraries are the best marketing tools publishers have at their disposal,” Losinski says. “We provide suggestions to browsers, we refer customers to bookstores, we host author visits (often for substantial fees), assist new writers with publishing aspirations and market books by displaying them in highly visual ways.”

In response to Macmillan’s policy announcement – and as part of the #eBooksForAll campaign – CML has launched a dedicated webpage, columbuslibrary.org/ebook-access. Included is additional information about the issue, as well as a link to an [ALA petition](#) to send a message to Macmillan and the other publishers to start treating public libraries like collaborators rather than competitors.

In 2018, CML customers downloaded 2 million digital items – with numbers trending upward in 2019.

Columbus Metropolitan Library has served the people of Franklin County, Ohio since 1873. With its Main Library and 22 branches, CML is well known for signature services and programs like Homework Help, Reading Buddies, Summer Reading Challenge and Ready for Kindergarten. The library’s Strategic Plan supports the vision of “a thriving community where wisdom prevails,” which positions CML to respond to areas of urgent need: kids unprepared for kindergarten, third grade reading proficiency, high school graduation, college and career readiness and employment resources.

CML was named a 2011 National Medal Winner by the Institute for Museum and Library Services for work in community service, the highest honor for libraries and museums. CML was also named 2010 Library of the Year by Library Journal.