

Library Suspends Purchase of Macmillan Publishers' eBooks Due to Embargo

Effective immediately, Washington-Centerville Public Library, in conjunction with Digital Downloads Collaboration (DDC) partners, is joining other large library systems across the country in the decision to no longer purchase newly released eBooks from Macmillan Publishers. Macmillan is one of five major publishers in the United States. This decision comes after months of discussion and advocacy to urge Macmillan to reconsider instituting a library eBook embargo. The embargo dictates that public libraries and consortiums of all sizes will be restricted to purchasing only one copy of a newly released eBook for the first eight weeks after publication. Visit Macmillan's website for a [list of new release eBooks](#).

DDC was the 10th highest circulating entity in the world in 2018, with a total circulation of 3.44 million items. The DDC has strived to minimize wait times for popular eBook titles by purchasing an adequate number of copies. If libraries are limited to one digital copy for each new title, and then have to wait eight weeks before being able to purchase more, library patrons could conceivably wait several months, rather than weeks, for their eBook.

To continue to ensure reasonable wait times for newly released eBooks, Washington-Centerville Public Library and other partner libraries will divert their eBook budget dollars to publishers who are willing to sell without a purchasing embargo. The Library will continue to purchase Macmillan titles that are not embargoed, including print materials, eAudiobooks and older copies of best-selling eBooks.

The Library has offered eBooks and eAudiobooks for nearly 15 years, long before it was as popular as it is today. Since that time, patrons have come to embrace this format with more than 170,000 eBooks and 95,000 eAudiobooks borrowed in 2018. In just the past three years, usage of eBooks and eAudiobooks has increased by 20% and eAudiobooks checked out four times as often as CD books. Demand for digital content continues to trend upward.

"Equal access to information is the cornerstone of public library service. Publishers and libraries have had a long standing, mutually beneficial partnership and we are disheartened by Macmillan's decision to limit access to eBooks with this embargo," comments Liz Fultz, Library Director.