

Digital Books Are a Hit at the Library

Kris Wiley for The News-Review

Roseburg Public Library patrons increasingly are turning to digital platforms to satisfy their recreational reading needs.

Circulation of digital books and audiobooks last fiscal year grew by 8% compared with about a 1% percent increase in circulation of print materials.

Physical books remained the most popular material at the library, comprising 62% of all checkouts. Digital audiobooks (15%), digital books (14%), DVDs (5%), audiobooks on CD (2%) and items not categorized (1%) followed.

The library offers two digital platforms. Libby (OverDrive) has a larger collection and accounted for 80% of digital circulation last year. cloudLibrary, which I recommend for folks who want the newest material faster, made up the other 20%.

The most popular title was the breakout romantasy “Fourth Wing” by Rebecca Yarros, which checked out 65 times. Britney Spears’s memoir, “The Woman in Me,” led nonfiction circulation with 43 checkouts. Other popular books were “The Women,” a Vietnam-era novel by Kristin Hannah, and “Tom Lake,” perennial bestseller Ann Patchett’s latest novel.

Of the 26,000 checkouts through Libby, 73% were adult fiction and 14% adult nonfiction titles. Junior books accounted for 8% of circulation with Rick Riordan’s fantasy books especially popular. Young adult titles made up the rest of the checkouts with Sarah J. Maas’s fantasy books leading the way.

As for this year, we’re off to a great start. In the first quarter of fiscal year 2025, digital circulation increased 10% and print circulation increased 4% over the same period last year.

Particularly for adult books, I consider Libby and cloudLibrary extensions of the library’s print collection. We do not have the space or budget to purchase a physical copy of every patron request. We leverage our membership in consortia to provide two avenues for patrons to access online materials, and Libby and cloudLibrary often fill the gaps in our print collection.

For best results, I encourage patrons to become hybrid readers, a strategy I adopted several years ago with great satisfaction.

I continue to enjoy books in print and utilize both Libby and cloudLibrary on my phone. One of my favorite ways to read books faster is to check out the audiobook and book versions of the same title. I then listen in the car or while I’m walking and read when I am at home.

Library staff is available to help you get started on your digital journey. It takes about 20 minutes to set up the platforms and provide a brief tutorial, so I appreciate folks emailing library@roseburgor.gov or calling 541-492-7051 to schedule an appointment. That said, we are able to help patrons on a walk-in basis most of the time.

Next week's library events

Tuesday, October 8, 6:30 p.m. – Online Book Group (email kwiley@roseburgor.gov for the Zoom link)

Wednesday, October 9, 10:15 a.m. – Storytime with Aurora

Thursday, October 10, 11:15 a.m. – Storytime with Aurora

Thursday, October 10, 4-5 p.m. – Artist Exploration for K-5th graders