Action Item 1: Change to DVD Limits

# History:

In May of 2013, the PINES Executive Committee voted to limit the number of audiovisual materials checked out to an account to 15 (of each type) at any one time. Prior to this decision, PINES had no limits on audiovisual materials other than the total 50 item limit. Some libraries had developed local policies to limit the concurrent checkouts of DVDs, but the PINES Executive Committee policy decision superseded those local limits and the current DVD checkout limit stands at 15.

# Proposal :

Proposal submitted by Delana Hickman, Director of the Sara Hightower Regional Library:

"I would like to propose a change in the current PINES policy to limit the number of DVDs a patron may check out at a time from 15 to 8. All other AV formats would remain at their current limits. The current number of 15 creates a hardship for many libraries across the state. Funding cuts have reduced the amount of materials that libraries can purchase and the number of staff it takes to service the patron."

# Survey Results:

The following summary is based on survey results from 57 PINES Subcommittees and Directors representing 37 library systems. Some additional comments were emailed after voting took place and added to the comments below.

**Responses from Subcommittee Members:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Should the current PINES policy be changed to limit the number of DVDs that can be checked out on an account from 15 to 8? | **Responses** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 17 | 55% |
| No | 8 | 26% |
| Undecided | 6 | 19% |

**Responses from Directors who are not Subcommittee Members:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Should the current PINES policy be changed to limit the number of DVDs that can be checked out on an account from 15 to 8? | **Responses** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 16 | 62% |
| No | 9 | 35% |
| Undecided | 1 | 4% |

# Comments:

**Comments From People Against the Change:**

* 15 works very well for our system.
* A feature once given should not be taken away, especially when the new option is more constricting.
* But what about 10? That's our (PRLS) limit on ebooks.
* Changing the limit to 8 does not seem right to those libraries that have a large collection of DVD's. If the policy could be changed to allow a lower limit within each system that has a problem with the 15 check outs that would be a better solution.
* Is it possible to have a local system choice? I would do nothing to decrease circulation! And this definitely would not only decrease circulation but also be very unpopular with our patrons.
* So a family with 3 kids and parent who prefers to limit the household cards to hers only is penalized. Give the library system the choice and not make it a system wide policy so those wanting to limit to 8 can do so. And there are exceptions to the circ policy already so this would be just another exception.
* The current limit of fifteen is working out well for our system, even with reductions in staff. Now that patrons are accustomed to checking out 15 dvds, a limit of 8 would be too restrictive.
* This creates a hardship for our patrons; while it might be nice to politicize equality of access, adjusting the limit on DVD checkouts per card down to 8 will not accomplish that for our system. That adjustment, in fact, punishes our families that circulate the most AV items. Patrons who make steady, responsible use of resources should not be limited in order to perpetrate an erroneous belief that limited access automatically equals fair access. Problems created by internal circulation processes should not be a factor in PINES-wide decision making; our system has streamlined the circulation of DVDs so that very little "additional" staff time is required. If there is a demand for DVDs that is currently being un-met by a PINES library system and there are processes that make the circulation of any material cumbersome and staff-intensive at that system, it is perhaps the onus of that system to evaluate their collection development funding and their circulation workflow.
* We are already asking systems who did not limit the number of DVDs to place restrictions on their patrons. I think cutting the number in half again would negatively affect those systems without providing the relief needed for those wishing to reduce the number. I would be in favor of allowing this issue to be a system by system decision.
* We have had numerous complaints from patrons when we changed from a checkout limit of 50 to a checkout limit of 15. The patrons are now used to that limit, but to reduce it again would cause another wave of complaints.
* We have numerous patrons who check out 15 DVDs per week. I think it’s a good limit. Because AV cannot be shipped outside a system, I do not believe that the burden can be so enormous. Plus I don’t think checking out 15 DVDs takes any more time or staff than checking out 15 audio-books. It’s *boggling* that the suggestion comes from such a big library that is generally considered better off than most in terms of staffing and collection size.

**Comments From People In Favor of the Change:**

* Absolutely, a reduction in the number a patron can check out at one time. Anywhere from 5-10 is OK with us; maybe the “8”  was as close as they could come to half of 15.
* At the same time, I would also vote yes on any other limit under 15. However, I would make all AV have the same limit; it's easier to remember. (On a different note: If Evergreen could handle it, I still wish libraries could decide locally if they want to limit AV or not. We have 1 and 2 wk checkouts already, so why not have a choice for limits too, i.e. no limits or a set limit like 8.)
* Due to the hardship created by the 15 DVD checkouts at a time, 8 checkouts at a time does seem to be more reasonable for the smaller library systems.
* Even lower would be better.
* From the perspective of a library system with a limited number of DVDs, and a small staff with which to serve patrons, I support a reduction in the number of DVDs that can be checked out.
* I agree that the limit is too high for DVD check out.  I think that we should reconsider and lower the number to a more agreeable amount.  Our selection of DVD’s is small and if we had ten patrons in a week come in and check-out 15 each, that would significantly reduce our available DVD selection.  Not to mention that just because they are due in two weeks doesn’t mean they will return them in two weeks (our fine system for DVD’s is still below the level that Block Buster and other vendors of movies use to charge so many people ignore the fine to keep the movie as long as they want).  Most of us cannot afford to have two or more copies of each movie so this would create problems with patrons who wanted to watch a movie that was checked out and overdue.  Issue number two with the large amount of DVD’s that can be checked out is the cost of replacement due to damages or loss.  While the patron is responsible, that doesn’t mean that they will pay.  Meanwhile, we’re out a DVD that we need to replace IF we can.
* I agree with reducing the number of DVDs a patron can check out at a time.  I’m not sure where the #8 came from.
* I agree with the cut, but would be ok if the figure was as many as 10.
* I think 8 DVD's at one time is more than enough for one check-out.
* I think 8 is a much more realistic number, but I also think that it should be looked at on a system by system basis. DVDs do not travel outside of the region so why not let the regions decide on the appropriate limits. For Northeast Georgia with smaller libraries and smaller collections, 5 would be appropriate for us...but that number may be too low for libraries in Hall county. 8 is MUCH more sensible though.
* I think 10 would be a better number, but I could go for 8.
* If someone has time to watch 15 dvds in 7 days or 14 days (dvd-long), they have time to return to the library and swap the first 8 for 8 new ones.
* It hasn't been a hardship for us but it sounds like we may have a larger DVD collection than libraries that are similar in size. If it is a hardship for them, then the limit should go down. If there are multiple family members, they can all check out DVDs.
* Like the idea of limiting to 8 DVDs. Patrons have gotten use to the 15 but I believe the limit will work better for smaller collections.
* Our DVD collection is the first thing that gets checked out and never returned. Letting patrons take out 15 per card is wiping out our collection. We would prefer the lesser number.
* Our limit before last year's change was always 5. It had been that way since we first started processing DVD's years ago. Having a limited collection of DVDs, the current policy of 15 keeps our collection depleted.
* Our staff would prefer to allow 10 items
* Rather it be 10 - an easy number to remember.
* Since the policy states at this time that a patron can have a total of 15 DVDs on the card at any given time and that all 15 items can be checked out at once - meaning during a single checkout transaction session - then YES the amount of 15 DVDs allowed in a single transaction needs to be lowered. As a Circulation Supervisor, I can safely say that eight (8) would be a fair change. Our System circulates an extensive DVD collection of over 3000 DVD sets. Our current filing storage system exhibits the highest theft prevention methods at the lowest monetary cost but at the highest manpower – the discs are filed separately from the cases. Before current policy the amount of DVD sets checking out in a single checkout transaction session varied which did at times call for in-house procedures (not policy) of limiting the number of DVD sets per checkout. The patron could still check out more but would need to go to the back of the line and wait an additional turn. The overall limit of 15 DVDs on a single account has been proven to be a wonderful policy protecting patrons and library collections but the allowance of all 15 in a single transaction has been a hindrance. Our System would benefit greatly with the policy change in procedures lowering the amount from 15 to 8 DVD sets allowed during a single checkout session not to exceed a total maximum of 15 DVD sets on a single account.
* The current limit creates a hardship on the library collection of DVDs, with a smaller limit it will allow more patrons to access this particular library resource.
* The current limit of 15 has been a hardship to those of us with limited collections.
* The staff were overwhelmingly in favor of reducing the number of DVD checkouts.
* This proposal received unanimous endorsement from my staff -- with the procedures that we have in place for securing our DVDs, even 8 items is a stretch in terms of convenience to the staff and wait-time for the patron, but it's a LOT better than 15.
* We are strongly for the lower limits -- in fact would prefer it be 5.  It would be interesting to take a look at the folks that now have high fines and/or overdue materials because I'm seeing here that it is quite often because the person has a number of DVD's overdue.  If 15 DVD's are checked out on a card, it only takes 2 days before that patron is barred since he would have $15 in overdues at that point. The 7-day check-out period is often forgotten (even though patrons here are reminded whenever they check out their DVD's of shorter time period), and at times from a patron viewpoint it seems that we are "out to get him" by hitting him with these high fees ($.50/item/day).  And yes, I agree, it is his responsibility to note the due date and return everything on time, but around here (out in the sticks), they just don't do that.  It's hard to balance adherence to the PINES rules (and I'm a pretty strict interpreter) with patron wants and also with the need to serve the most people possible by having a strong collection available for checkout.
* We understand that the DVD limit is a compromise for libraries having both small and large collections. Though voting yes, we would prefer if the checkout limit decision is a local decision based on a libraries' collection, rather than a PINES decision.
* When I was in South Georgia we had a limit of 5 DVDs for one week at a time.   We were the ONLY place within an hour’s drive where you could get DVDS  (not even any rental places nearby) and literally the only budget we had was the little we got from the state and donations from local rotary groups.  So there was no way to allow people to take out large numbers of DVDs.  It would wipe us out too quickly.  Luckily in a small location, it was fairly easy to enforce without PINES having to do it for us.  But I do wonder why this couldn’t be a local option, much like the way different libraries can set up different check out periods for AV materials.

**Comments from People Undecided on the Change:**

* For libraries that have large collections of DVDs the 15 limit is no problem, but with libraries that only have a small number one or two patrons can really deplete the choices for others. And since DVDs don't check out through the intralibrary loan in PINEs - those libraries are pretty much on their own.
* I don’t think 15 is much of a hardship, but don’t have a strong objection to 8. We have some regular DVDs users who will be disappointed; they regularly take out the max of 15 and then switch them in for more. It really doesn’t take any longer than a stack of audio books.
* I agree that the limit should be reduced, however my concern is in regards to multiple disc materials. For example if you have a complete season disc set or a collection that is cataloged at one item entry in evergreen; the system sees that as "1" of the limited items. So does that mean that a patron checks out three seasons of "the gilmore girls" totaling "18" discs/dvds, then they have the option of checking out another "5" items?
* I think that Pines should allow this to be set up regionally rather than there being one policy for the whole state.
* I understand the argument of hardship and limited collections. Prior to the limit of 15, our system limited people to 5. However, we also have limited numbers of other genres and formats that we don't limit. The number 15 was a compromise and it's only been in force for a little over a year. I hate to see this number continued to get argued and shifted back and forth.
* I would prefer the decision be a local one. Though limiting to 8 checkouts is better for my system than the current 15.
* I'm not sure that any number will make every library system happy.
* We have a very small DVD collection, something that we just started making availabe in May 2014; thus, our collection is small. For us, a reduction down to 8 is still too many. I'm guessing that for most libraries, DVD collections have been in place for quite some time, so maybe 8 is a better number. But that would still be a hardship for us at this time.
* Why do we really need a "one size fits all" policy? Some systems have larger collections and can shoulder this circulation load. Shouldn't this be TBD by each system individually, or is this not possible?