

Discussion Items

PINES Executive Committee

February 2010

All Subcommittee comments can be found at <http://forums.georgialibraries.org>

DI1. Circulating Handheld Devices (such as Kindles)

We have several PINES libraries inquiring about circulating handheld devices such as the Kindle. The following is a preliminary list of issues related to implementing this service. This requires no voting action at this time, but will serve as an opening for initial discussion.

We will be pursuing the cataloging issues in much greater detail within the PINES Cataloging Subcommittee Forum after the PINES Executive meeting next week.

PINES Policy

1. Circ modifier called “handheld device” with the same loan period and renewal as the circ modifier of book - 14 days, 2 renewals, \$.10 fine?
2. Holds limited to item owning library system/facility?
3. Handheld devices must be returned to the item owning library and not via courier?
4. Circulation count? - Likely scenario is for one record per device with MARC fields for individual titles to allow retrieval in author or title searches. Evergreen would count one circulation for the device. Would it be a local decision to separately count each title loaded on the device as a circulation? Or a PINES decision how to count the circulation?
5. Cataloging issues? - One bib record with local holdings indicating the titles on the devices within the 700 or 246? Multiple hand held devices with multiple titles? For example, Kindle 1 and Kindle 2 with local holdings under those titles?
6. Stat issues? – depending on how it is cataloged and how individual titles are checked out or circulated. PINES policy or local decision?

Local Policy

1. Legal responsibility needs to be at a local level since there are different media and a variety of sources this media is coming from. For example, the Kindle may have a limit of 6 devices for one single book purchase whereas another device may have a different limitation.
2. Release form with library receiving it including this in a notes field, patron stat cat, or survey? What should be on the release form?
3. Deposit?
4. Limit number of checkouts?
5. Security such as registration, download, and then de-register accounts?
6. Collection development; planned install of x number of e-books on x number of devices, patron install, on demand install, budget, and collection policy
7. Damaged items or misplaced items such as chargers and ongoing maintenance and repair

Subcommittee Comments:

“The Twin Lakes Library System presently have no plans to circulate handheld devices as we don't circulate gaming systems or laptops due to patron negligence and the issues that arise with such materials. I am, however, glad that there are others who would like to do so. Maybe, if there is enough bite to any policies that are set forth from this discussion we too may follow suit.”

“Instead of handheld device, how about calling it an e-paper device? Handheld device could be any number of household items. As for the details, it would be nice to get a specific proposal from a library that has done the research and plans to implement. I assume this will be a deposit item and will have the characteristics usually associated with deposit loans.”

“I was talking to the library director who proposes circulating hand held devices. I think that there is a distinction that needs to be made. Jeff told me he is exploring the circulation of electronic books on the hand held device. What would be checked out are the ebooks on the device.... not the device itself. Jeff gave the example that a patron comes into the library and wants to check out *Gone with the Wind* and *Scarlet* on a Kindle. The Library would load both titles on a Kindle (or whatever electronic book the library has purchased) and then check out two titles to the patron. The reading device, actually, is not what is checked out.

Then when the patron returns the Kindle, the two books are checked into PINES, the Kindle is erased, and the staff places the next request of titles on the Kindle for the next patron.

I, on the otherhand, being the greedy circulation count person that I am, want to also have a circ count for the Kindle (or whatever brand ebook) as well.

This brings a whole new perspective to the discussion. Should we look at a hand held device as an item in itself or consider the content of the device -- which can be changed from time to time?”

DI2. Longoverdue Workflow and Specifications

****See the following documents:**

- Email from Elizabeth McKinney PINES Library Directors and Subcommittee Members
- Longoverdue Workflow
- Email from Rob Klaus at Unique
- George Tuttle Longoverdue Workflow
- Flowchart for Overdue, Lost, and LongOverDue items 5 Feb 2010 by Jim
- Overdue Workflow.png by NCLS

It has come to our attention that we need to provide Equinox with a more detailed specification of how we want Longoverdue to behave especially regarding handling overdue bills. Therefore, we need a workflow from you on how the software marking an item as Longoverdue should

function.

Currently, we know that the system should change an item that is overdue for 180 days to a status of Longoverdue and to bill the patron for the cost of that item as well as any processing fee. However, if we do that there are still the remaining overdue bills.

How should overdue bills be handled by the system and by staff? PINES policy is to not charge the patron for overdues when we charge them for the cost of the item. However, there are instances when the item is returned and then the overdue bills need to be replaced. What is the best workflow for this along with development needs to make this possible? Anything else needed?

Subcommittee Comments:

“The proposed workflow reflected in Elizabeth McKinney's message of 2/2/10 presents a serious problem for libraries using a collection agency.

We MUST add processing charges to accounts as we send them to collections. If we do not do this then the collection agency cannot report to the patron an accurate amount that they owe the library. If processing charges are added to these accounts at 180 days patrons who have been sent to collections will have double processing charges on their accounts. It would be nearly impossible for us to isolate those affected accounts and remove the double charges.

Can this particular action in the process be an opt-in or opt-out option of some sort?”

“LONGOVERDUE and LOST should not be rolled into one thing. It makes for billing problems with those libraries who use collection agencies for one thing. LONGOVERDUE should be a step in the process, not the final destination. What is being proposed is simply a substitution of longoverdue for lost.

Also, when the item is returned, the service charge (if marked lost) is NOT the overdue fine. Service charges, for most of us, are NONREFUNDABLE and are NOT overdue fines, those are additional.”

“Whatever is done, the patron record should show the title and author of each item along with the cost of the item and the processing fee. Otherwise it is difficult to explain to an irate patron and they usually leave without paying for the items.

I would suggest that overdue fines not be voided. Leave this information in place and let the local library handle the situation. Should the patron return the items, then the overdue fines are already sitting there. If the patron pays for the items, then the local library can void the overdue fines.

When a patron pays for a lost item, we note the overdue fine that was voided. Then if they return

the item, we return the cost of the item minus the processing fee and minus the overdue fines. Without knowing what the overdue fines were, we are losing out on the refund to the patron.”

“We do have a question, however. If an item is placed in LONGOVERDUE status, paid for, and then returned in less than a year and in good condition, do we have to return the money as we do in LOST? When an item placed in LOST status, we have interacted with patron to declare this item LOST. Whereas in a LONGOVERDUE status, we would have had no interaction with the patron in six months about the item, and the item has already been unavailable for circulation for at least 6 months.”

“Since we use a collection agency following is our current workflow (I hope). It doesn't appear that workflow changes would be necessary due to the implementation of the batch change to longoverdue. In fact, it would be a great worksaver for us if at 180 days items could be marked "longoverdue" and the patron charged or billed for the price of the item. Also, it appears that this activity should not interfere with patrons who have been sent to collections and still have outstanding bills. All other nuances of this issue appear to have been discussed. Thanks!”

DI3 Holds Abuse

A library director requested a discussion on the following along with a confirmation from the PINES Executive Committee that the handling of holds abuse is a local policy.

There has been much discussion and concern over patrons abusing holds. PINES libraries would like to know how other PINES libraries are handling this.

1. What do staff consider as holds abuse?
2. What are staff currently doing, if anything, to handle or discourage holds abuse.
3. Is there a local library policy on this and if so, what is the policy?

Subcommittee Comments:

1. An excessive number of holds per patron. For example, more than 10.
2. Staff does not encourage or overly promote multiple holds being placed by patrons. We also have a request form that patrons may fill out and turn in to us if they prefer staff place the hold on their behalf.
3. There is presently no local policy addressing the number of holds for our patrons. We defer to PINES policies.

1. More than 10 holds at one time. Routine cancelling of holds or not picking up holds in the designated time period after the material arrives through the courier system.
2. We do not encourage multiple holds. We also place a notice on a patron's record if they either cancel more than 3 holds or just don't pick them up. Patrons may fill out a holds card at the front desk if they prefer for staff to put holds on for them.
3. We use PINES policy.

1. We consider repeated non-pickup (is that a word?) or cancelling of holds to be abuse. Having a lot of holds isn't abusing the system, it is using the system.
2. Patron notification and warning.
3. Our policy is that if a hold is not picked up after notification, or is cancelled at notification, a notation is placed in the patron record. After two, the patron is warned. After three the patron is not allowed to place holds for 3 months and all current holds are cancelled. (Special circumstances such as illness are of course taken into consideration). If the patron cancels the hold at notification due to late arrival (i.e. no longer needed) that also is taken into consideration.

Some patrons place holds on materials, review the materials when they come in, and then do not check them out. Depending upon circumstance, this can become "abuse" of the hold system. Sometimes, books just aren't what we think they are going to be -- you can't tell until you look at them. However, continued and repeated -- well, our policy is on a case-by-case basis. But the process is the same: gentle reminder, not-so-gentle reminder, blocking holds for a period of time.

We have several patrons who use the "50" limit and of all of our patrons they are the ones who are some of our best supporters. Rarely, for us, are the abusers the ones who really stretch the system. Ours are the ones who place 4 or 5 holds on a particular author or topic and then just can't be bothered to come in and get the books when they arrive. Rarely have we had to block the hold ability of a patron; almost always the reminders do the trick.

- 1a. User not picking up holds.
- 1b. User putting so many items on hold that they cannot use them all when they arrive.
- 1c. User putting items on hold and then rejecting them when they come in. "Oh, I've already read this," is a common response.
- 1d. User placing holds on multiple entries of the same item. If there are multiple entries for the same title, they will place a hold on each of them.
- 1e. User having more than 10 holds.

Yes, we know that 50 holds is the maximum amount per PINES Policy. However, during the last major discussion about holds, about 2 years ago, statistics were presented that showed only 1% of PINES borrowers had more than 10 items on hold. When 99% of all PINES borrowers need less than 10 items on hold, why is PINES still using 50 holds as the maximum? Go figure!

2. For most abuse we do some variation of the following: When items are not picked up a note is added to the patron registration. After three notes are placed on the registration, the PIN is changed and an alert is placed on the registration: "Failure to pick up holds may result in loss of hold privilege." Next time the user attempts to check out items they are informed about the alert. The alert is removed, but the notes stay on the record. So far we have not had to remove anyone's holds privilege. The alert message is enough to change their behavior.

For users placing hold on multiple entries of the same item we usually delete the additional holds when they come to our attention. Then we add an alert as mentioned above.