

Publisher to restrict libraries' access to eBooks

By Jill Fuller

Wisconsin sure loves to read.

In 2018, Wisconsin's libraries joined Overdrive's Million Checkout Club after Wisconsin residents checked out over 5 million digital materials (eBooks and digital audiobooks) in 2018. 5 million! Wisconsin's Digital Library is a statewide library collection shared by Wisconsin libraries and

library systems, and facilitated by the Wisconsin Public Library Consortium. Anyone with a library card in the state of Wisconsin has access to this collection of eBooks and digital audiobooks through a free app called Libby. While our libraries knew digital



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library materials were popular, the 2018 numbers mean Wisconsin's libraries had the second-highest checkout rate of a library or library system in the country, beating out other states like Ohio, Tennessee, and Utah. What can we say? Wisconsin loves its eBooks!

However, libraries across the country and in your community are about to face a huge eBook roadblock that will hurt readers and library patrons directly. Macmillan Publishers, a major publishing firm, has announced that starting Nov. 1, they are restricting the amount of eBook copies libraries can purchase from them. Under the new policy, libraries will be able to purchase only one copy of each new book and then must wait eight weeks before purchasing another copy. I'll repeat that: Libraries are being blocked from purchasing eBooks to offer to their patrons. Macmillan argues that libraries are hurting sales, but the truth is that publishers charge libraries up to four times more per eBook than they do to individual customers. When purchasing eBooks for Wisconsin's Digital Library, it costs us anywhere from \$55-\$85 per copy. We pay these prices so we can meet the demand for digital materials, which has grown as more people choose to read on their devices. The mission of public libraries and librarians has always centered on ensuring equal access to knowledge and information. When we are restricted from purchasing books

for our communities, we are limited in our ability to fulfill that mission.

While Macmillan's new policy certainly makes things difficult for libraries, it hurts readers and library patrons the most as fewer eBooks are made available to the public. Fewer circulating eBooks means patrons will have to wait longer to read the books they want, while authors who rely on libraries to offer exposure to their work will suffer from this change as well. Finally, this pronouncement sets a precedent that other publishers may follow. If so, libraries will continue to face significant challenges to their right to purchase materials for their communities.

You can do something about this. If you're a reader or library supporter, I urge you to sign the American Library Association's petition opposing Macmillan's new policy, which you can find at www.ebooksforall.org. You can also follow that link to find more information about the policy, as well as ways to share this information with your friends and families. Access to books in any format should not be denied. Whether the book is on a screen or printed on paper, the need for equal, open access to words and knowledge is imperative. I hope you will join your public library in advocating for #eBooksForAll.

(Jill Fuller is the coordinator of marketing & communications for the Bridges Library System.)

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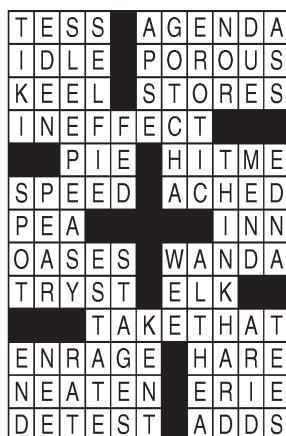
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 46 Kind of question
1 Dyeing technique

DOWN 1 Port spot
6 College study
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12 Game spot
13 Saudi Arabia neighbor
14 Poet Shelley
15 Partner
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22 Maximum amount
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2 Lincoln nickname
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5 English county
6 Atlas page
7 Partial floor cover
8 "Great Balls of Fire" singer
9 Formerly
10 Tampa

18 Knee protectors
19 Stepped down
21 Poet Khayyám
23 Part to play
24 "Do — others ..."
25 Wild guess
27 Enthusia
33 Sculpting medium
34 Shortly, in
35 Poet Van Duyn
37 Sailor's call
39 Secret agent
41 Great



Yesterday's answer