

FCC Adds \$2 Billion for Wi-Fi to E-Rate

On July 11, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted on FCC chair Tom Wheeler’s E-Rate program proposal—released July 1—to redirect \$5 billion over the next five years toward high-speed Wi-Fi in schools and public libraries.

(The E-Rate program is also known as the Schools and Libraries Program of the Universal Service Fund [USF] implemented by the FCC, its purpose to provide “discounted telecommunications, Internet access, and internal connections to eligible schools and libraries, funded by the USF.” The majority of libraries and schools depend on E-Rate funding for access to the Internet and equipment. According to figures from the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences, 90 percent of U.S. libraries have used E-Rate at some point, and in FY12 the number of libraries that participated stood at 16,536.)

The order as passed maintains E-Rate’s current budget of \$2.4 billion and makes available an additional \$2 billion to support Wi-Fi over the next two years. For the following three years, the program will target

\$1 billion annually to Wi-Fi by phasing out support for nonbroadband services, such as pagers and phones, and increasing efficiencies. The plan is to increase Wi-Fi funding by 75 percent for rural schools and 60 percent for urban schools over the next five years, delivering Wi-Fi to an additional ten million students in 2015.

Wheeler’s proposal raised outcry on several accounts, including from library directors in cities nationwide who argued that the proposal to award E-Rate money at the rate of \$1 per square foot of library space would shortchange urban libraries, which serve more customers in smaller spaces.

Matthew Poland, chief executive officer of Hartford Public Library, CT, stated in his letter:

“I believe that using square footage is unfair to urban libraries, and to our customers who are disproportionately low-income, unemployed, or underemployed. [The plan would send money to more] “space-abundant, uncrowded suburban libraries, and less money to smaller, crowded urban libraries whose customers have no other practical way to obtain access to the Internet for seeking employment, education, or participation in society.”

Interview

Ruben Castaneda

In his memoir, *S Street Rising* (Bloomsbury USA), Ruben Castaneda recounts his experiences as a crack cocaine user and recovering addict while working at the *Washington Post* as a crime reporter in the late 1980s and 1990s.



as a crime reporter in the late 1980s and 1990s.

How has Washington, DC, changed since the events portrayed in this book?

Neighborhoods that were combat zones ruled by drug dealers are, for the most part, peaceful. The flip side to that is that longtime residents feel like they have been squeezed out due to higher property taxes and rising rents.

You’ve also written about issues of police brutality in neighboring Maryland. What’s the situation there?

It appears that the canine police unit no longer routinely brutalizes people with police dogs. There are still abuses that occur with patrol officers.

How were your reporting work and your recovery connected?

For many of the years after my giving up drugs, I think I got a lot of excitement from covering the police beat in DC and the court beat in Prince George’s County.

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Poland suggested, instead, funding based on the number of daily visitors versus the square footage—at “\$150 per average daily visitor (a formula proposed for schools).”

Universal Wi-Fi access has been a topic of national conversation ever since President Obama spoke about it in last year’s State of the Union address and launched his \$200 million ConnectEd Initiative to “connect 99 percent of America’s students to the Internet through high-speed broadband and high-speed wireless within five years.” The FCC was “tasked with connecting more than 20 million students in 15,000 schools to this technology over the next two years” and has been under the gun to reform its outdated E-Rate program and structure to carry out the initiative. (Schools and teacher unions have voiced their own protests over aspects of Wheeler’s proposal, such as his plan to award Wi-Fi funding to schools on a per student basis.

The American Library Association (ALA) has been working closely with the FCC to come up with an adequate formula for funding distribution, and Marijke Visser, ALA’s assistant head of IT policy, said, “I do not think it is entirely accurate to claim that square footage is a direct correlation to wealth of the county/district. There are small urban neighborhood branches, but usually the main branch is quite large as you can imagine thinking of [the New York Public Library] or Chicago Public, for example.”

The approved version represents several tweaks compared to Wheeler’s proposed version, which were necessary to obtain enough yes votes. In particular addressing the concerns raised by libraries and schools, it increased the per square foot allocation for libraries to \$2.30, raised the school and library floor, and adjusted the discount for Category Two services to 85 percent for the highest-level poverty schools. Nonetheless, several members of the commission issued statements that called for more thoroughgoing reform, increased funding, and a different metric altogether. The FCC is still seeking comments on alternative methodologies for allocating support for library Wi-Fi connectivity.

Library Simplified Aims at Three-Click Ebook Access

Library ebook transactions remain too lengthy and complicated for patrons, especially in comparison with consumer ebook transactions. This was the conclusion stated by James English, product manager for the Library Simplified project at the New York Public Library (NYPL), at his “EPUB: Walled Gardens and the Readium Foundation” presentation at the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) Book Industry Study Group (BISG) Eighth Annual Forum, held June 27 in conjunction with the American Library Association (ALA) 2014 annual conference.

“Believe it or not, but to get an

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ebook from NYPL takes about 19 steps,” English said. “When you think about a Kindle book...it’s probably two clicks at the most.”

Launched in December 2013 with a \$500,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), Library Simplified is a two-year effort by a coalition of ten libraries led by NYPL that aims to make ebooks and other digital content easier to access.

One specific goal of Library Simplified, English explained, is to reduce the number of clicks needed to access a library ebook to three or less. One click to discover, one click to check out or download, and one click to read an ebook, he said. In order to do this, the group has aligned its strategies with Radium, an independent nonprofit agency focused on accelerating the publishing industry’s adoption of the International Digital Publishing Forum’s (IDPF) open EPUB 3 standard.

Building on the groundwork laid by Radium made sense. In March

2013, Radium announced the Radium SDK (software development kit) project. Seeded with a substantial donation of code from the Kobo ereader, Radium SDK aims to develop an open source EPUB 3 rendering engine optimized for use with apps on tablets, smartphones, and other mobile devices.

With Radium SDK, Library Simplified is building a commercial-grade, open ebook reading platform for libraries and “wrangling the different back-end systems and content repositories—OverDrive, 3M [Cloud Library], Axis 360 from Baker & Taylor—as our acquisitions modules,” English said. Once developed, the open source platform will enable library patrons to borrow ebooks seamlessly from multiple distributors using a single app or interface.

It is important for libraries to embrace open standards such as EPUB 3 and, more generally, for the field to be active in discussions regarding international technology standards, English said. Specialized ereader

platforms—most notably the Amazon Kindle—facilitate commercial “lock in,” with customers continuing to use the platform, in part, because it would be difficult or impossible to transfer prior purchases to a competitor’s product. By contrast, open standards such as EPUB 3 facilitate competition; lower barriers to entry for device manufacturers, software developers, and content providers; and reduce the costs that consumers pay for switching devices or providers.

Finding ways to make ebook access as simple as possible is vital for libraries, English contended. Frustrating experiences can push patrons away and have a lasting impact on their perception of library ebooks.

“We want to increase readership by removing these barriers,” he said. “Many times, when I talk to people about this project, I ask them, ‘Do you borrow ebooks from the library?’ And they say, ‘No, but I tried, and then I went to Amazon and just bought it.’”

As well, libraries are facing new competitors in the form of ebook subscription services, such as Scribd and Oyster. English said he doesn’t believe that the threat from these services is as dire as some believe, since their business models currently depend on subscribers reading 12 ebooks or less per year—a slow pace for most regular library users.

“For Internet users who read ebooks, online bookstores are the first stop,” English told *Hotline* in December, citing Pew Internet and American Life Project research. “Asked where they start their search for an ebook that they wanted, 75 percent of ebook readers start at an online bookstore or website. Only 12 percent start at the library.... That stuck with me and that’s something I’d like to see turned on its head—I’d like to see 75 percent of ebook

News in Brief

Tyler Public Library, TX, received grants from the **Texas Book Festival** totaling \$2,480.91. The money will fund the library’s high-interest/low-vocabulary literacy collection.

St. Louis County Library has been named a **Top Place to Work** by the **St. Louis Post Dispatch**. The library was honored for its third consecutive year.

University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, received a grant of \$187,082 from the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**. The money will fund the preservation of its historic audio and moving image collections.

LibQUAL+ announced the winners of its **2014 In-Kind grants: Mzumbe Universi-**

ty, Morogoro, Tanzania, and the San Diego Law Library.

SirsiDynix Support Center was named one of the world’s top ten support sites by the **Association of Support Professionals (ASP)**. It will be featured in ASP’s book of best practices.

EBSCO Information Services launched its **Frick Art Reference Library Periodicals Index**. The database includes 150 prominent art history periodicals indexed and held by the Frick Collection, based in New York City.

Britt Public Library, IA, has been named an accredited public library by Iowa Library Services. The accreditation is valid through June 30, 2017.

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readers start at their local library,” English said.

LAUSD Passed Record Budget, Expected To Hire

School libraries across Los Angeles may soon open their doors again now that Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) superintendent John Deasy’s budget proposal of approximately \$6.64 billion passed June 24. It “will more than double the number of new teachers to 1,200; increase [the number of] librarians, nurses, and counselors; reduce class sizes; increase tutoring; and improve parent education efforts,” according to the *Los Angeles Times*. The budget represents the largest bump in funds since the 2008 recession, when the district laid off more than 10,000 employees and cut services and programs.

On the table is the possibility of restoring school library services to every elementary and middle school in LAUSD for the 2014–15 school year. However, libraries would not be open every day, nor would they all have certified school librarians.

Monica Carazo, a public information officer for LAUSD, told *Hotline*, “All in all, the staffing of [our] school libraries...is going in the right direction.”

According to Carazo, high schools will see one FTE teacher librarian added (out of 84 schools, only 13 have a shared teacher librarian); middle schools will see 15 new district-funded teacher librarians, plus 25 more in 2015–16 and ten more in 2016–17; and elementary schools will receive the equivalent of a three-hour library aide for each school. It is unknown whether some schools will purchase additional hours of library aide time over this basic allotment.

Prior to the budget approval, LAUSD had 349 library aide posi-

Rowling Posts New Harry Story on Pottermore

J.K. Rowling (pictured) is at it again, with a new post on her Pottermore website—an online expansion of the world of Harry Potter after the end of the seven-book series—that revealed her latest entry on Harry.

Rowling’s post, written as an observation-driven gossip column by the familiar reporter Rita Skeeter, who plagued Harry in the books, ties into the real-life World Cup fever running rampant. However, in Pottermore-world it’s World Quidditch Cup fever taking place in the Patagonia region of South America. Harry is a silver-streaked 34-year-old married to Ginny Weasley, a reporter at the *Daily Prophet*, with two kids, James and Albus. Harry, still known as “The Chosen One,” is now an auror in the Ministry of Magic and sports a new scar on his cheek that conjures speculation. And still intact are Harry’s trademark round wire-frame glasses from when he was 12.

Rowling has been posting entries about the World Quidditch Cup final since March 2014, and this latest snapshot of Harry shows him and many of his familiar wizard cohorts as “no longer the fresh-faced teenagers they were in their heyday, but nevertheless recognizable”—Ron

Weasley and Hermione Granger, now married, also have two kids. Ron, who quit working at the Ministry of Magic, now runs the enormously successful joke emporium for wizards with his brother, George, and Hermione is the deputy head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement.

Rowling touches upon the postscripts of other favorite characters, such as Neville Longbottom and Fleur Delacour, and provides a who-married-whom rundown, similar to a high school reunion.

The old gang from Dumbledore’s Army are still an object of fascination in Rita’s eyes but not necessarily in the eyes of the film series star, Daniel Radcliffe, who when asked about Rowling’s latest 1,500 word Pottermore post and if it would lead to further film work for him, was quoted in the July 9 *UK Guardian* as saying:

“My inclination is to say ‘no’ because I don’t think it’s even a hypothetical at the moment. What she’s written—and I haven’t read it yet but I will—I understand it’s a very short piece. And he’s 10 years older than I am now.”

Radcliffe, age 24 and currently starring in the BBC series *A Young Doctor’s Notebook* and the Broadway play *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, said, “We can’t be doing these characters when we’re 40. So there has to be a line drawn.”

Rowling’s first published adult novel, *The Casual Vacancy* (Little, Brown, 2013), is about an unexpected council seat vacancy in an idyllic English countryside town and the class war and disruption that ensue. Under her pseudonym Robert Galbraith, Rowling writes a mystery series about PI Cormoran Strike. Returning to the bosom of YA fantasy, the author has scripted the new fantasy film *Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them* (Warner Bros.), featuring the swashbuckling character Newt Scamander, to be released in November 2016.



tions—with just 40 paid for by the district—to support the 18 primary centers, 469 elementary schools, 85 middle schools, 84 high schools, and 28 span schools in which various grades are at one site, according to statistics provided by LAUSD.

The number of school librarians has also significantly dwindled over five years, from 1,253 in the 2007–08 school year to 804 for 2012–13, according to the California Department of Education.

World Book Night U.S. Suspends Operations

After three years, World Book Night (WBN) U.S.—an effort to encourage adult literacy by giving away free books—will cease operations for the foreseeable future, owing to a lack of sustainable funding.

“The expenses of running World

Book Night U.S., even given the significant financial and time commitment from publishers, writers, booksellers, librarians, printers, distributors, shippers...are too high to sustain,” the organization stated in a July 2 press release.

WBN was first celebrated in the UK and Ireland in 2011; in 2012, it expanded to the United States and Germany. This year, World Book Night U.S. distributed half a million volumes. Some 25,000 volunteers handed out the books, and 2,330 U.S. bookstores and libraries signed up to act as a home base for registered givers to pick up copies.

Additionally, publishers of the 30-plus books chosen for annual distribution fronted the cost of printing WBN editions, while authors waived royalties. Individual donations and grants made a huge difference as well. But as the organization stated,

“We can’t carry on without significant, sustainable outside funding.”

For individuals who submitted entries to WBN’s essay contest, not to worry. The group’s staff is staying on (unpaid) throughout the summer to judge the best essays by volunteer givers about their WBN experience. The ten best citizen, bookseller, and librarian essays will be designated as winners, with a grand prize winner from each category. Winning essays will be anthologized into a special WBN ebook. It is unclear whether World Book Night UK/Ireland will also be suspended. After one year of participation, Germany pulled out of WBN in 2013.

Sally Thomas of Hayward Public Library, CA, used the WBN program to seed her “Book-to-Action” series, which pairs a book’s themes with targeted action in her community. Thomas said the library will continue to organize civic engagement activities associated with the Book-to-Action program, but that the demise of WBN is a real disappointment.

“Book givers and book recipients alike experienced World Book Night as a true community-building event,” Thomas told *Hotline*. “Like thousands of other volunteers across the country, we’re still holding onto the hope that it can make a comeback. To the World Book Night team: thank you for the tremendous gift you presented to so many readers.”

Study: Journal Bundle Discounts Vary Widely

A new study of the economics of the “big deal” bundles offered by large academic publishers suggests that variations in pricing for different institutions mean that they are a better deal for some schools than others.

Led by University of California (UC) Santa Barbara economics professor Theodore Bergstrom and published in the *Proceedings of the National Acad-*

People

Toby Graham was promoted to University Librarian and Associate Provost at the University of Georgia, Athens. He was previously Deputy University Librarian.

Rosalyn McGarva was named Director, Bandon Public Library, OR, following the retirement of **Deirdre Krumper**. McGarva previously held the same title at Dallas Public Library.

Dawn Mogle retired as Assistant Director at Lake County Public Library, Merrillville, IN. She has worked in the field for 43 years.

Iris Weinshall was named Chief Operating Officer of the New York Public Library. She was previously Vice Chancellor of Facilities

Planning, Management, and Construction for the City University of New York.

Todd Williams was appointed Director of Waverly Free Library, NY. He was previously a Teacher at ChemungValley Montessori School in Big Flats, NY.

Columbia University made the following hires: **Elizabeth Call**, previously Head of Reference and User Services at the Brooklyn Historical Society, was named Public Services Librarian at the Burke Library; **Robb K. Haberman**, previously Adjunct Assistant Professor at Fordham University and the College of Staten Island, was named Associate Editor for the John Jay Papers project at the Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

In Memoriam

Rita Dworkin, a retired librarian at East Meadow Public Library, NY, died on July 4. She was 85 years old.

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emy of Sciences (PNAS), the study found that bundle prices, which are not generally made public, “differ drastically between institutions.” To learn about the typically confidential pricing plans, the research team first had to file Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to publicly funded universities throughout the United States to get the contracts the schools had signed for bundled journal deals with six publishing houses—Wiley, SAGE, Taylor & Francis, Springer, Elsevier, and Emerald—and three nonprofit publishers—American Chemical Society, Cambridge University Press, and Oxford University Press.

To judge how good a deal these subscribers were getting, researchers used the “cost per citation” of a given bundle of journals, to address the regular bundling of highly cited journals with others that are rarely used. For example, in Elsevier’s Freedom Collection, which includes 2,200 titles, the bottom 50 percent are responsible for just five percent of the citations.

The study found that publishers charge different institutions differently for access to their journals, with large institutions that grant many PhDs paying more, on average, than their smaller, less research-driven counterparts. According to some commercial publishers, those variations are similar to the tiered pricing practiced by some nonprofit publishers. In addition, the PNAS study found that even at discounted prices, commercial journals don’t provide the same level of value to research institutions as to nonprofits. The study also points out that the reluctance of some librarians to drive hard bargains may help to keep prices up, a problem exacerbated by the secrecy that often surrounds bundle pricing. The study cited the California Digital Library as an example of “bargaining [that] has led to significant price reductions.”



Spirits “soared” on June 22 with the opening of the new **South Branch** (pictured) of the Clinton-Macomb Public Library (CMPL), MI, in a space that once housed a pool hall and a video rental store. A suspended art glass sculpture entitled “Soaring” made by Pyro Art Glass Studio was commissioned by the Friends of CMPL and serves as a focal point of the 19,600 square foot building. The facility, designed by Bloomfield Hills–based firm TMP Architecture, is three times the size of the previous library, which was situated in leased space two blocks away. The \$5.78 million structure features a full-service drive-up window; an automated materials handling system; a café; dedicated spaces for children, teens, and group study; a computer nook; conference rooms; and a quiet study space, along with room for a future media studio.

Built in 1929, the **Six Mile Regional Library**, Granite City, IL, is nearing the end of a \$2.6 million renovation that included the gutting of the interior of the 17,150 square foot building while also addressing exterior concerns. The three-story project, designed by Trivers Associ-

ates and led by Korte & Luitjohan Contractors, encompasses a new youth section covering ages pre-K to young adult, a conference room, and a local history room, according to *Illinois Business Journal*. The building now features upgraded HVAC, plumbing, and electrical systems, an elevator, and new restrooms throughout. The 90,000-item collection is back in place, with a grand opening scheduled for mid-August.

The new 26,000 square foot **Moorestown Library**, NJ, is finally ready for its close-up. Rubbing up against the new 20,000 square foot town hall, the two-story facility was 15 months in the making and light-years away from its predecessor. The library now features state-of-the-art amenities, including a 20-seat computer lab and a cafe for the lobby area. Designed by Ragan Design Group, with 22-foot-high ceilings, the building incorporates a teen space with a soundproof media room for television viewing and video games and a children’s area with a “crooked house” element, along with a collection of over 100,000 items. The library and town hall combined cost \$11 million.

Photo by Mike Robinson

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