

OverDrive

All libraries and systems in Wisconsin can search, place holds, checkout, and download digital books, audiobooks, music, and video. The vendor the state subscribes to via the [Wisconsin Public Library Consortium](#) (WPLC), is called OverDrive. The site that patrons access to see the titles purchased by Wisconsin libraries is [Wisconsin's Digital Library](#). There are approximately 30,000 licensed titles as well as hundred of public domain titles available to Wisconsin residents with additional titles being added monthly.

To try and meet patron demand for the OverDrive program, the Wisconsin Public Library Development Team in conjunction with the LSTA Advisory Committee has allocated over \$2.5 million in the last three years for added content to the statewide collection. Public library systems have also contributed to the statewide collection. NWLS and its member libraries have invested over \$160,000 in the last three years to aid in the growth of the OverDrive collection.

Advantage

Since the statewide collection of titles available is in high demand by the state's 5.7 million people, there are long wait lists for a majority of the titles. To help alleviate the wait for patrons, OverDrive offers subscribers a program called Advantage. Advantage participants purchase extra copies of previously purchased statewide titles that become available only to those patrons residing within that public library system's boundaries. This reduces wait times for patrons and increases turnaround for titles.

As of 2013, NWLS has paid for all Merlin library members to participate in the OverDrive Advantage program. Next year, libraries must decide if they will participate or not at the reduced buy-in that NWLS arranged for them. If a library participates, their amount goes into a general pot of money that a designated Selection Committee will monthly divide to select and order titles. Libraries do not select the titles themselves, so there will not be any specific titles tied to a library. Anyone who fails to participate next year their patrons will not have access to the Advantage titles anymore, but still will have access to the statewide collection.

The selection of titles, as mentioned above, is done by a committee of three librarians as well as a Holds Manager feature in the programming. The titles that are chosen can be either without checkout limits as well as some from publishers that require checkout limits (called metered access). If a metered access title hits the limit of checkouts, it is no longer available as an option to patrons. Metered access titles can be re-purchased after their checkout limit has been met. As of this writing (August 2013), the Advantage account selectors have purchased 310 ebook titles with the listing growing every month. Next year, participants have agreed to begin adding audiobook titles alongside the ebook titles.

NWLS has dedicated \$12,000 to the startup of this Advantage project. In 2014, the Merlin Advantage partners agreed to contribute another \$15,000 in added content split between NWLS at 80% funding and member libraries at 20% of funding. In 2015, the contribution is expected to be at \$18,000 of added

content with funding coming from NWLS (33%) and member libraries (67%). It is expected that by 2016 every participant will pay 100% of their costs to the program so NWLS will end subsidizing it. The formula for participation is based on 50% of library service population and 50% Advantage use (library patron checkouts) divided among the participants for the determined budget line.

While patrons may come across OverDrive titles in the Merlin catalog serendipitously, the Merlin catalog only offers a glimpse of what is available from OverDrive and does not interact with the OverDrive vendor (except in authenticating patrons). All searching, holds, checkouts and downloads must take place on the OverDrive site. Librarians encourage patrons to log into their account once they access the OverDrive site so they have access to both the statewide and Advantage titles equally. This has helped to eliminate much confusion and frustration for patrons.