

MLA Condemns Macmillan Publishers eBook Lending Model

August 27, 2019

MLA calls on the library community and library patrons to contact Macmillan Publishers to express their objection to the company's new policy.

The Michigan Library Association (MLA) has joined the American Library Association (ALA) in denouncing Macmillan Publishers' new library eBook lending model. Under the new model, scheduled to take effect November 1, 2019, a library may purchase only a single copy of each new title in eBook format upon release, after which Macmillan will impose an eight-week embargo on additional copies of that title sold to libraries.

The embargo by Macmillan is the latest evidence of a troubling trend in the publishing industry to eliminate perpetual access in favor of limited licenses (e.g., need to repurchase after two-year license) and library licensing costs that are four to five times that of consumer purchases.

MLA believes Macmillan's new eBook lending policy will limit access to new titles by the patrons who depend upon libraries most, and that access to eBooks through public libraries should not be denied or delayed. Millions of people now use digital content as their preferred or only access to books, music and movies. Digital content is portable, accessible to people with print disabilities, available anywhere 24/7, and brokered by libraries to provide diverse options to our diverse communities. Libraries not only pay for books; they market them. Lost marketing means lost publicity and sales for publishers and authors.

Until the policy is changed, and the embargo cancelled, MLA will work with ALA to explore all possible avenues to ensure that libraries can do their jobs of providing access to information for all, without arbitrary limitations that undermine libraries' ability to serve their respective communities.

Furthermore, MLA affirms the principles that:

- All published works must be available for libraries to purchase and lend to library users.
- Access to and use of eBooks must equitably balance the rights and privileges of readers, authors and publishers.
- Digital content must be accessible to all people, regardless of physical or reading disability.
- Library patrons must be able to access digital content on the device of their choosing.
- Reading records must remain private in the digital age.

MLA calls on the library community and library patrons to contact Macmillan Publishers to express their objection to the company's new policy, using the contact information below.

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