

Digital Library Trends from COVID-19

Leading librarians share data on ebook and audiobook usage, lessons learned, and best practices for responding to increased demand

June 24, 2020

#alavirtual20



Digital Library Trends from COVID-19

Presenters:

Steven V. Potter, CEO and Library Director
Mid-Continent Public Library System, Independence, MO



Anne Kennedy, Library Consultant
The Ohio Digital Library Consortium, Columbus, OH



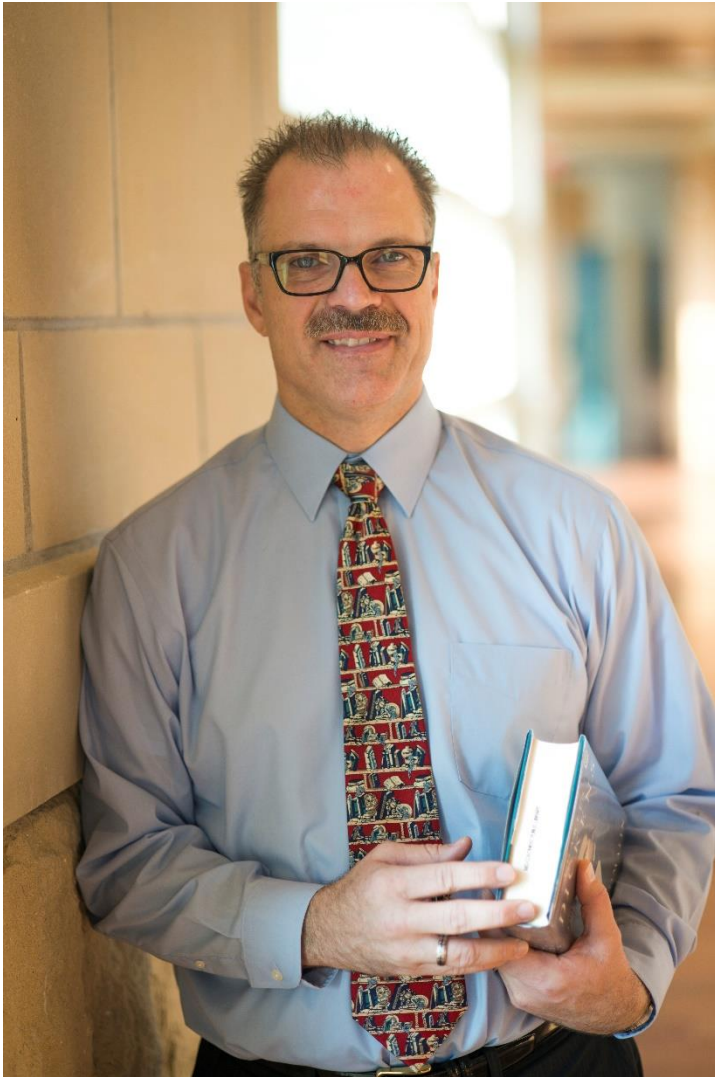
Kady Ferris, Electronic Content Librarian
Multnomah County Library, Portland, OR



Moderator:

Karen Estrovich, Senior Regional Manager, Public Libraries
OverDrive, Inc., Cleveland, OH

Steven Potter, Mid-Continent Public Library, Independence, MO



Steven V. Potter is the CEO and Library Director of Mid-Continent Public Library. Since joining the system in 1988 he has lead achievements including the largest public genealogy library in the U.S. (The Midwest Genealogy Center). In 2014 MCPL received the National Medal from the Institute for Museum and Library Service.

Steve coauthored “The Purposed Based Library” and in 2015 was named Public Administrator of the Year by the Greater Kansas City Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration. Steve is an adjunct professor for the University of Missouri. He holds an MLS from the University of Missouri-Columbia and an MPA from the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

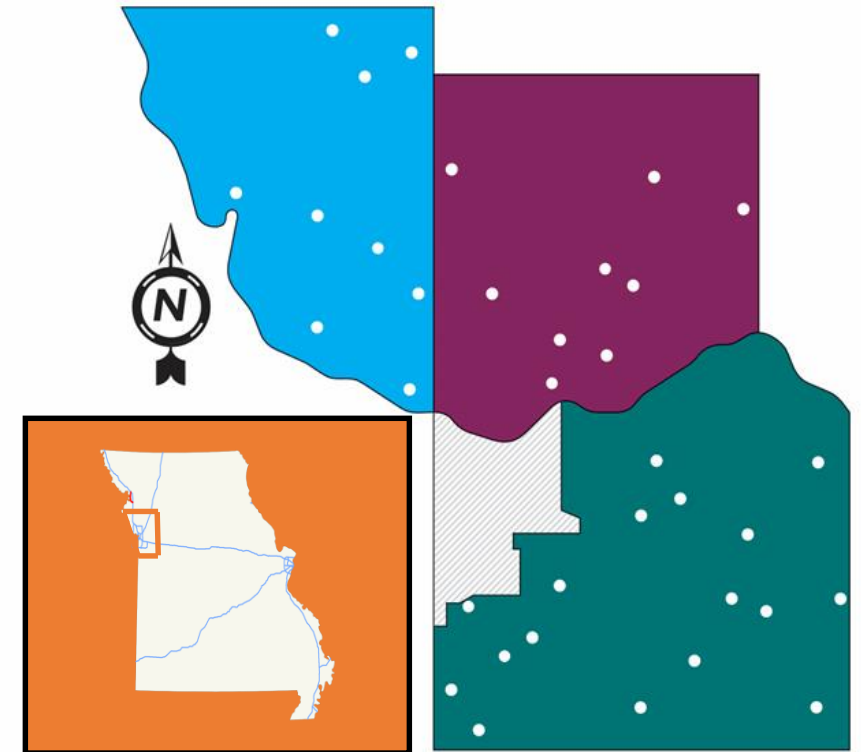
<https://www.mymcpl.org/>

<https://twitter.com/mcplmo>

<https://www.instagram.com/mcplmo/>

Mid-Continent Public Library Basics

- 805,000 Residents
- 1,349 Square Miles
- 35 Library Locations
- 336,000 Active Accounts
- Just under \$4 in service for every \$1 in tax revenue

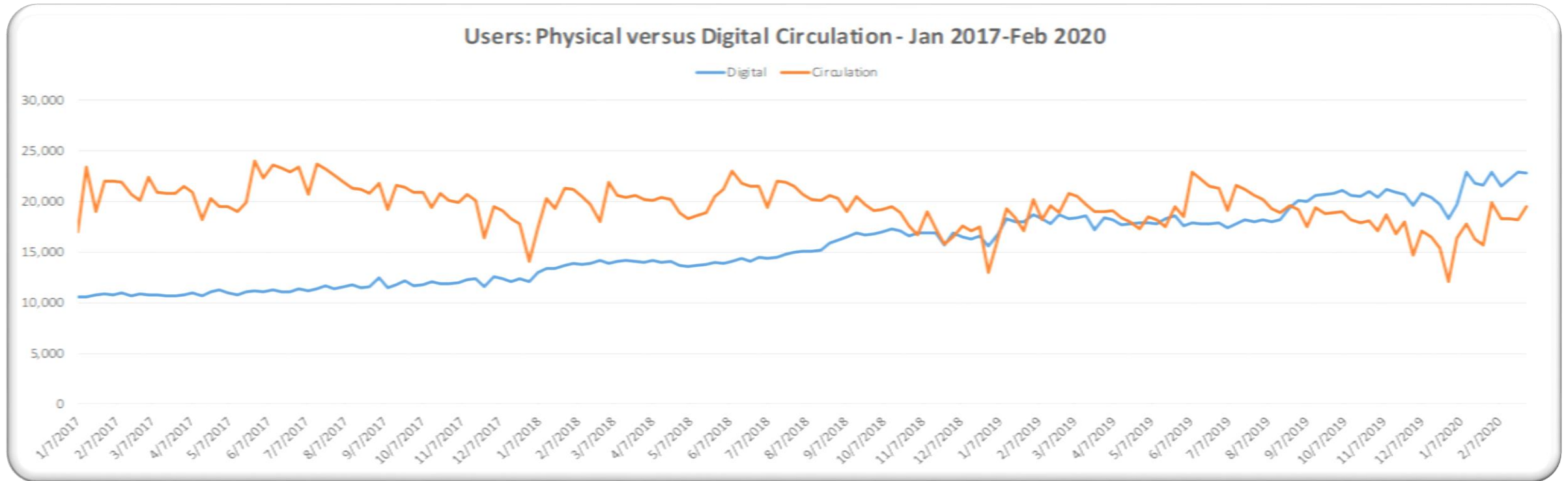


The world was already changing

In February, we noticed that users of digital circ outpaced users of physical circ on a monthly basis

Even more importantly, the activity started to correlate and mirror, but with digital users on top

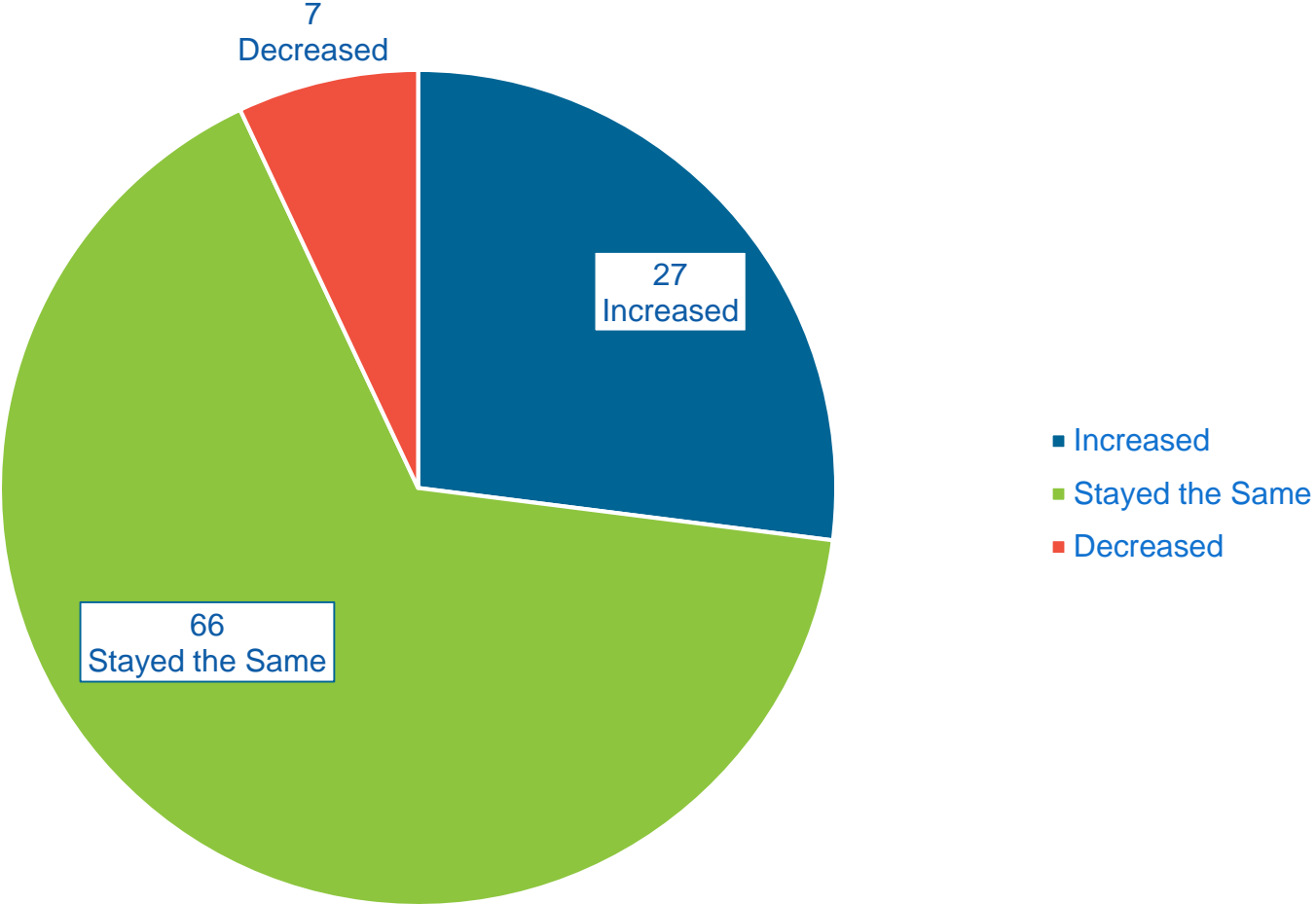
And then came Covid-19!



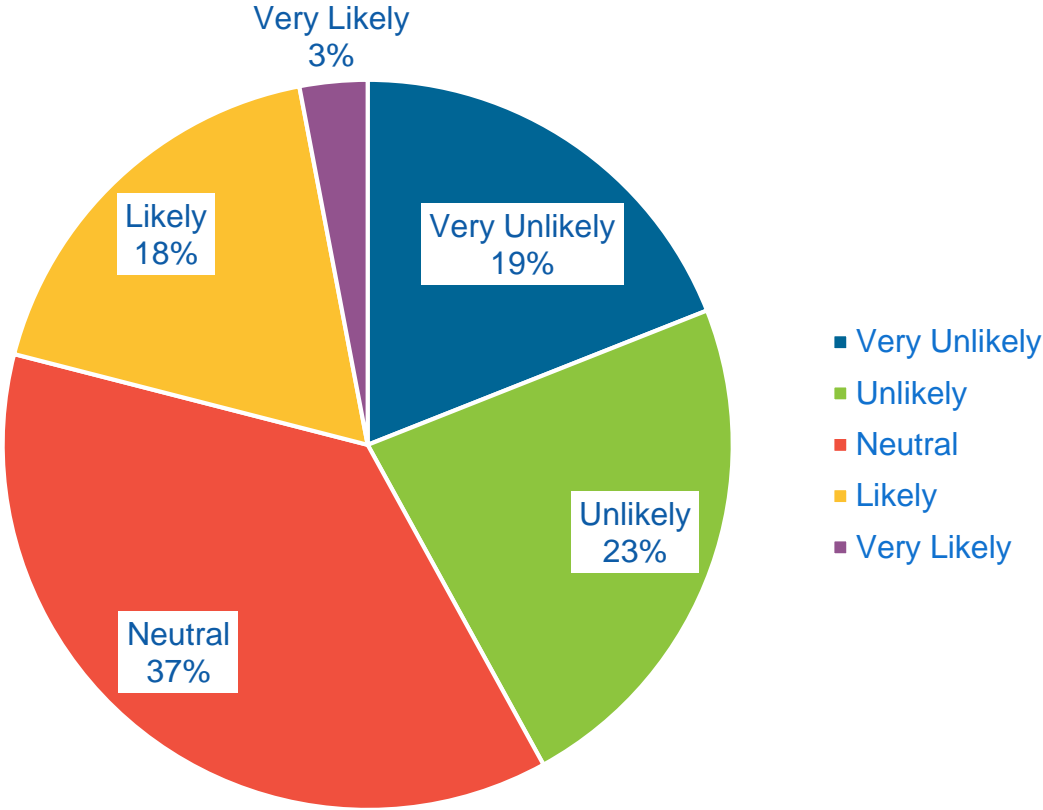
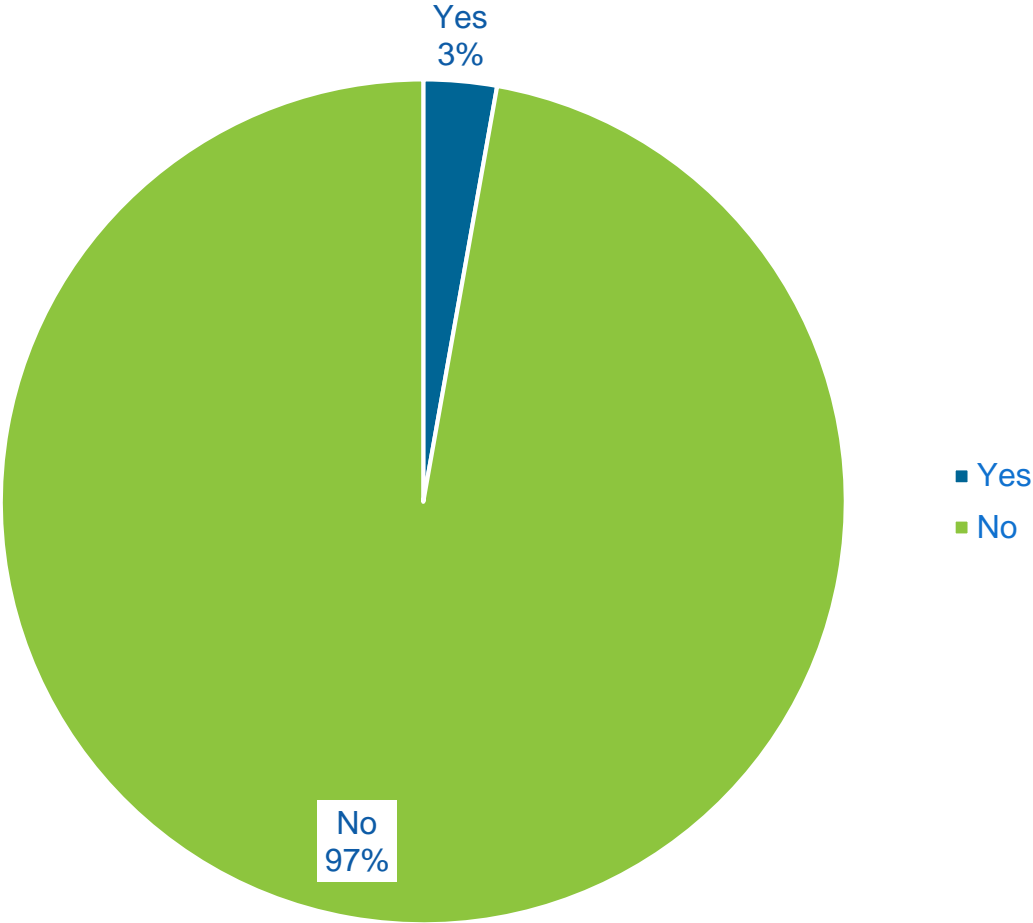
MCPL Customer Use Survey

- Started in early April
- The pilot was with our customers and Cincinnati-Hamilton County
- Surveys sent to 5,000 customers each week
- 36 percent of respondents are people who primarily used digital delivery before Covid-19
- Enlightening about how customers are using libraries during Covid-19
- Could be foreshadowing how people will use libraries post Covid-19

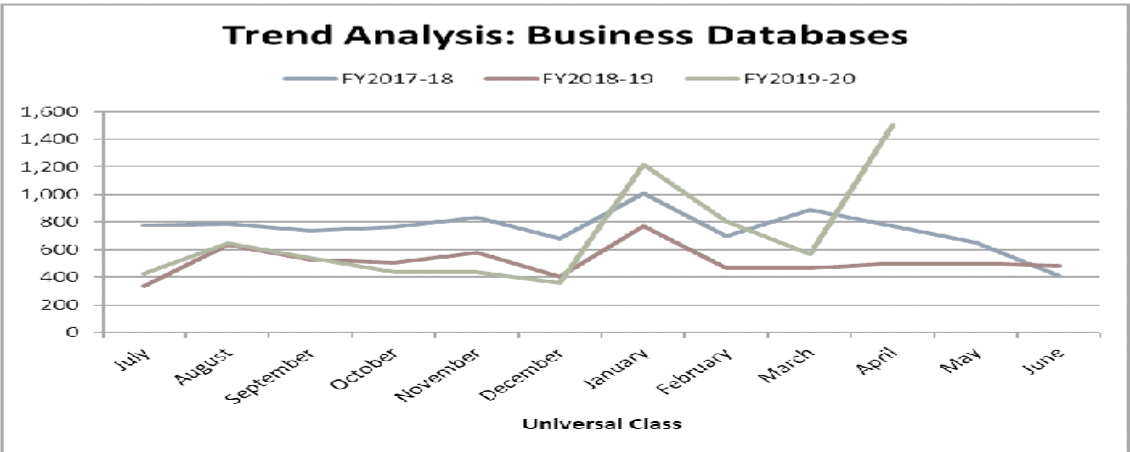
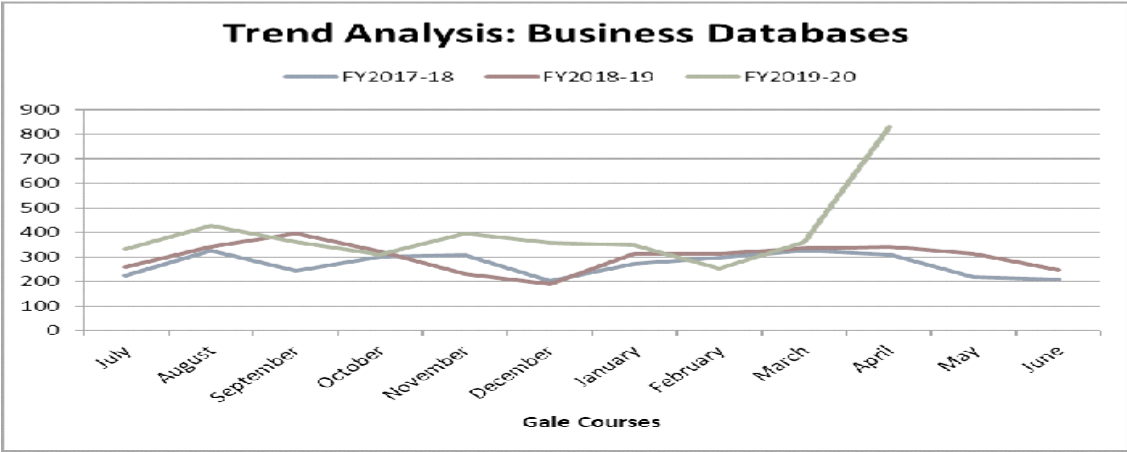
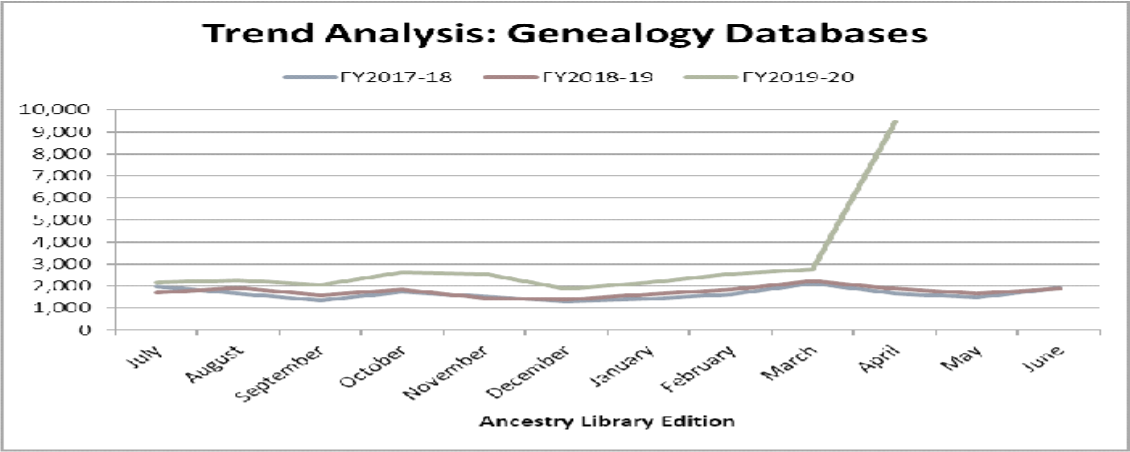
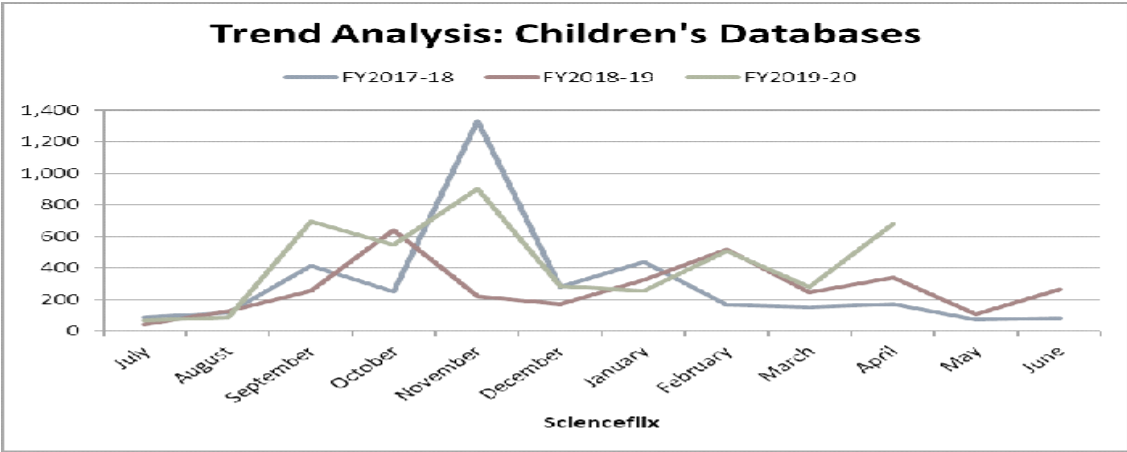
How has your awareness of library services changed?



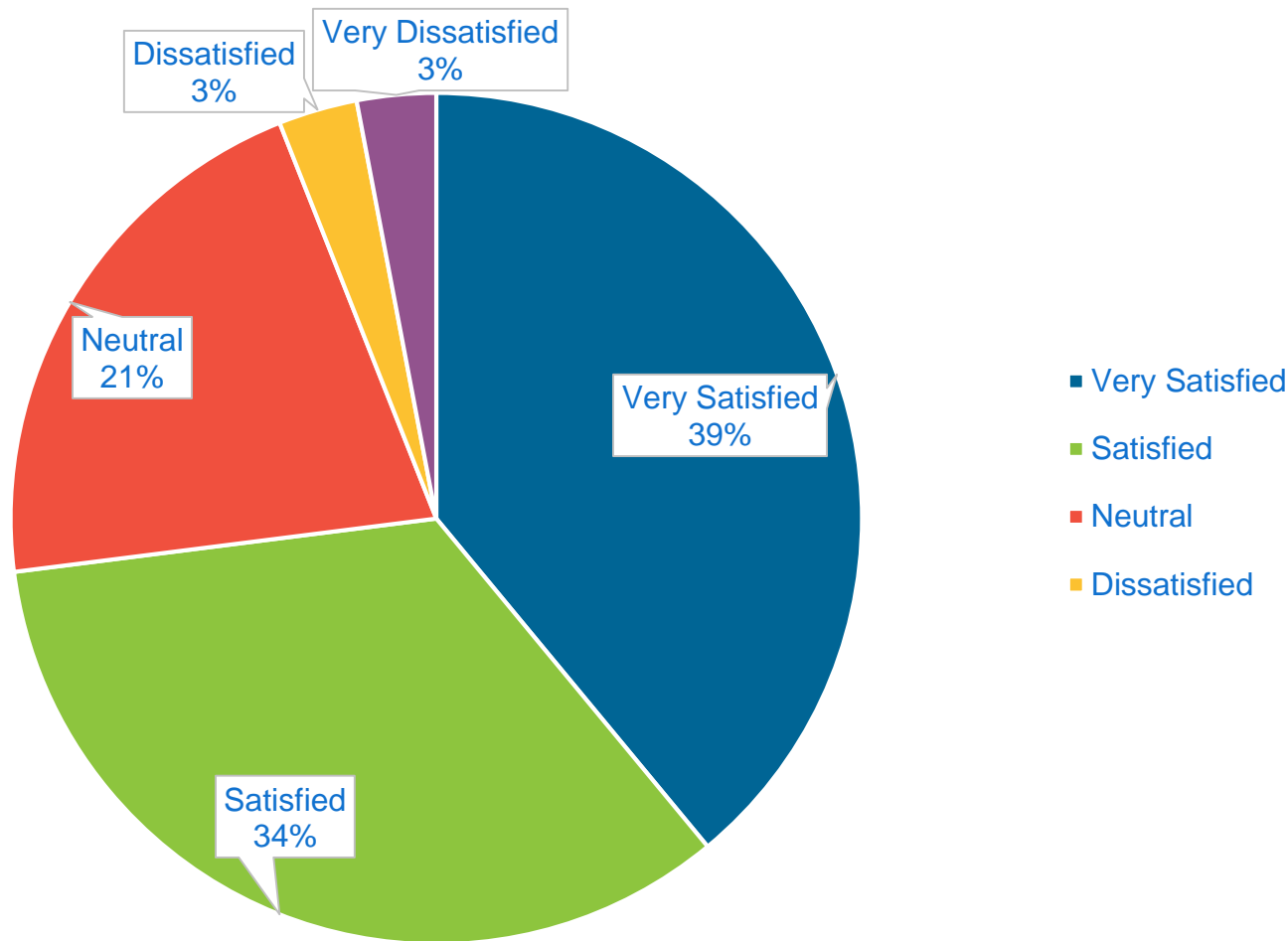
Have you attended virtual programs? Will you?



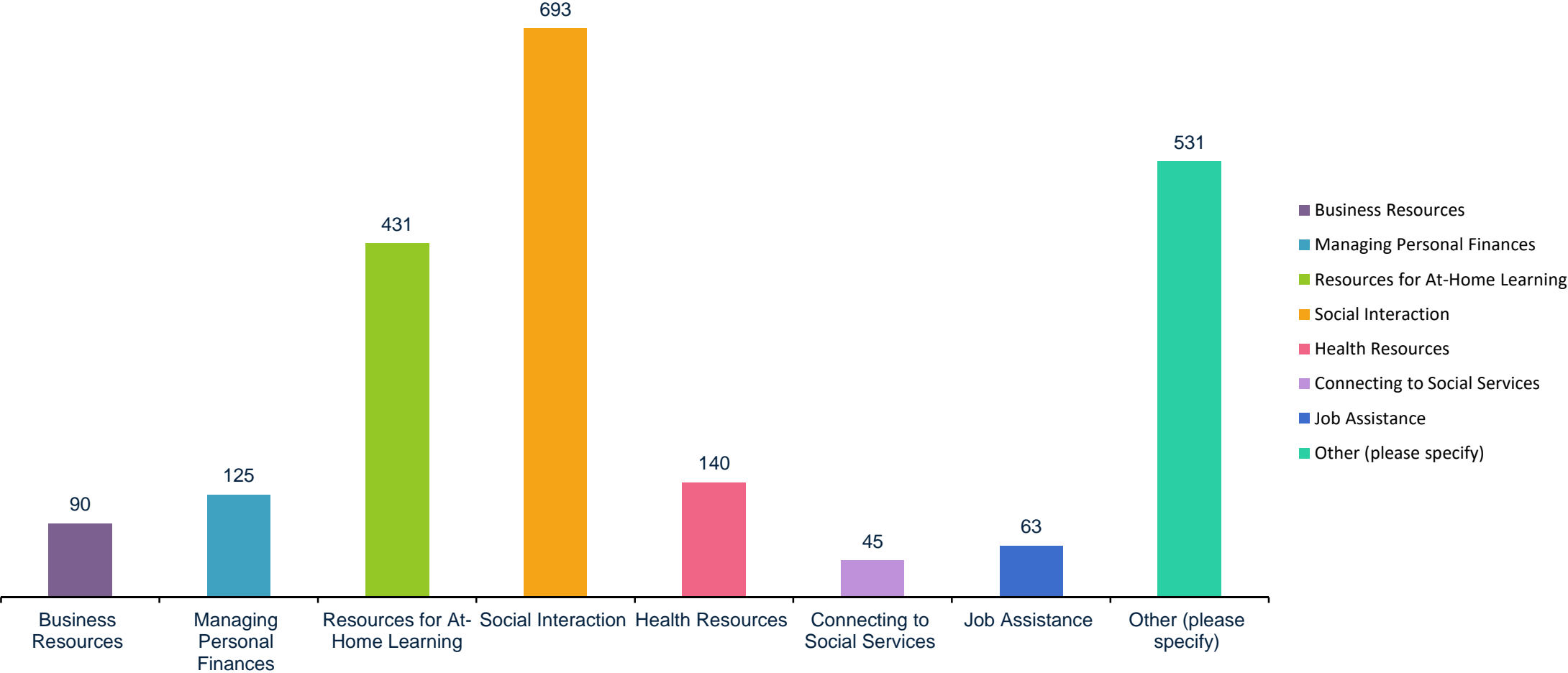
Use of online resources (databases)



How satisfied are you with the resources and services offered by the library?



What is your biggest need right now?



How have you been using your “new found” time?

There were lots, but these are the responses that well intersect with traditional library service responses.

- 54 percent identified cooking
- 38 percent identified movies
- 13 percent identified reading
- 6 percent identified online learning

Anne Kennedy, The Ohio Digital Library Consortium



Anne Kennedy is a passionate advocate for ebooks and digital technology. She works as a Library Consultant at the State Library of Ohio and coordinates the Ohio Digital Library, a consortium of 181 library systems across the state.

Since the beginning of 2017 when she started with the state, the ODL circulation has increased by over 2.1 million. She checked out her first digital audiobook with a State Library of Ohio card in 2007 and has been listening (and reading ebooks!) ever since.

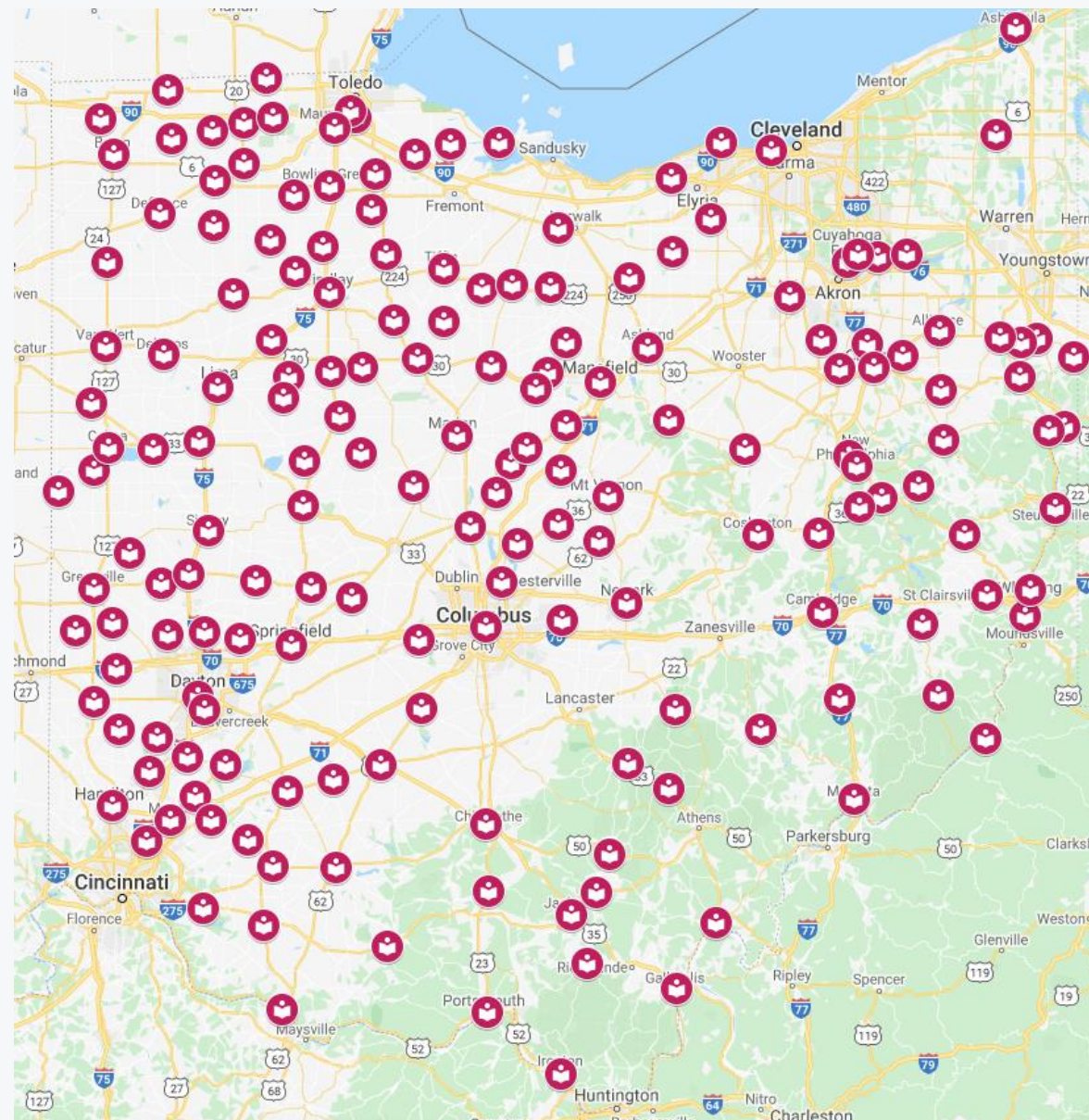
<https://library.ohio.gov/>

<https://twitter.com/statelibohio>

Ohio Digital Library

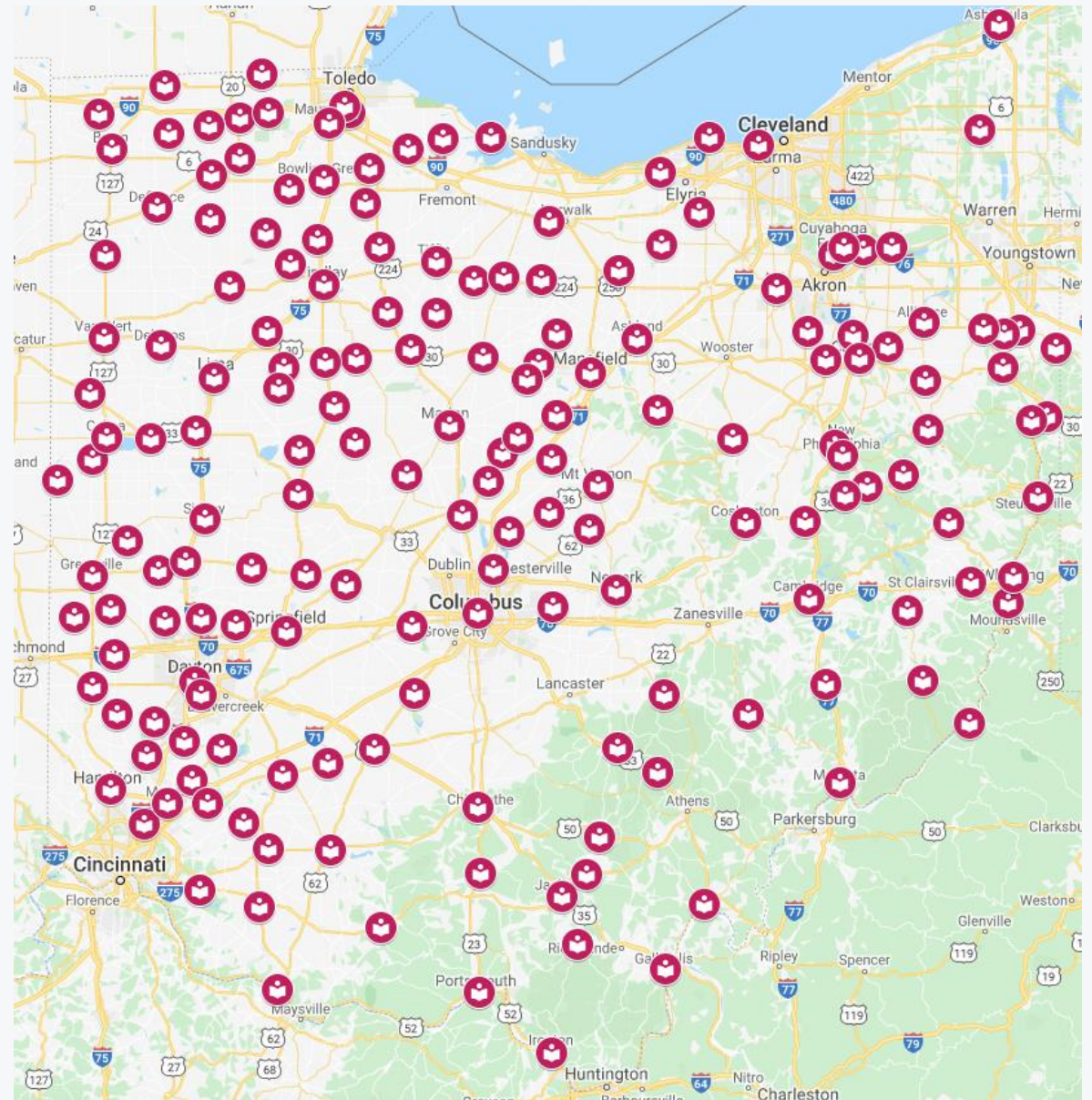
181 Library systems

- 174 public
- 3 academic
- 1 school
- 1 private
- 2 state administrative agencies



Ohio Digital Library

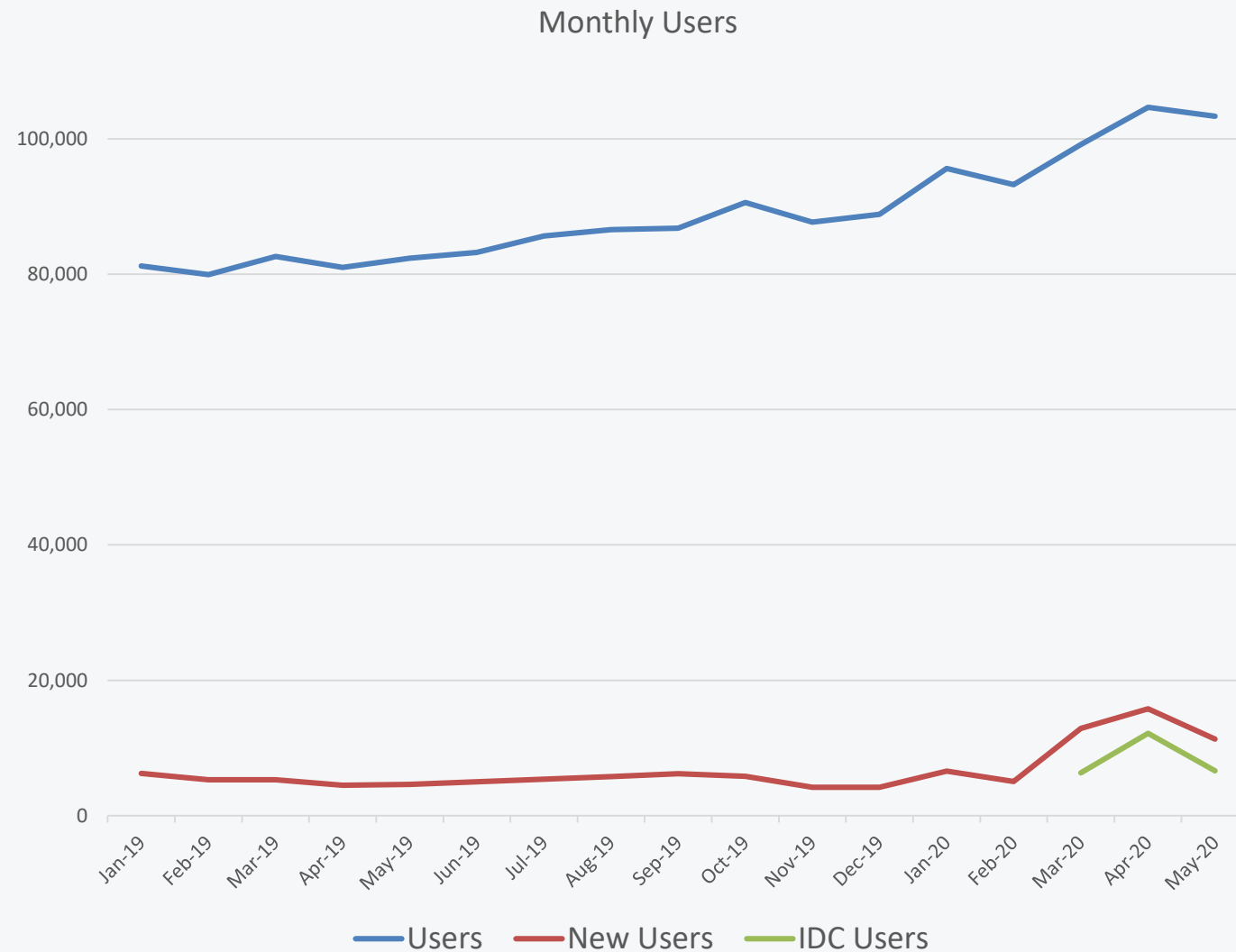
- The major metropolitan areas have their own OverDrive platforms
- 5 public library consortia within ODL
- ODL member libraries serve 4.5 million people
 - Largest member library serves 240,000 people
 - Smallest serves 880 people



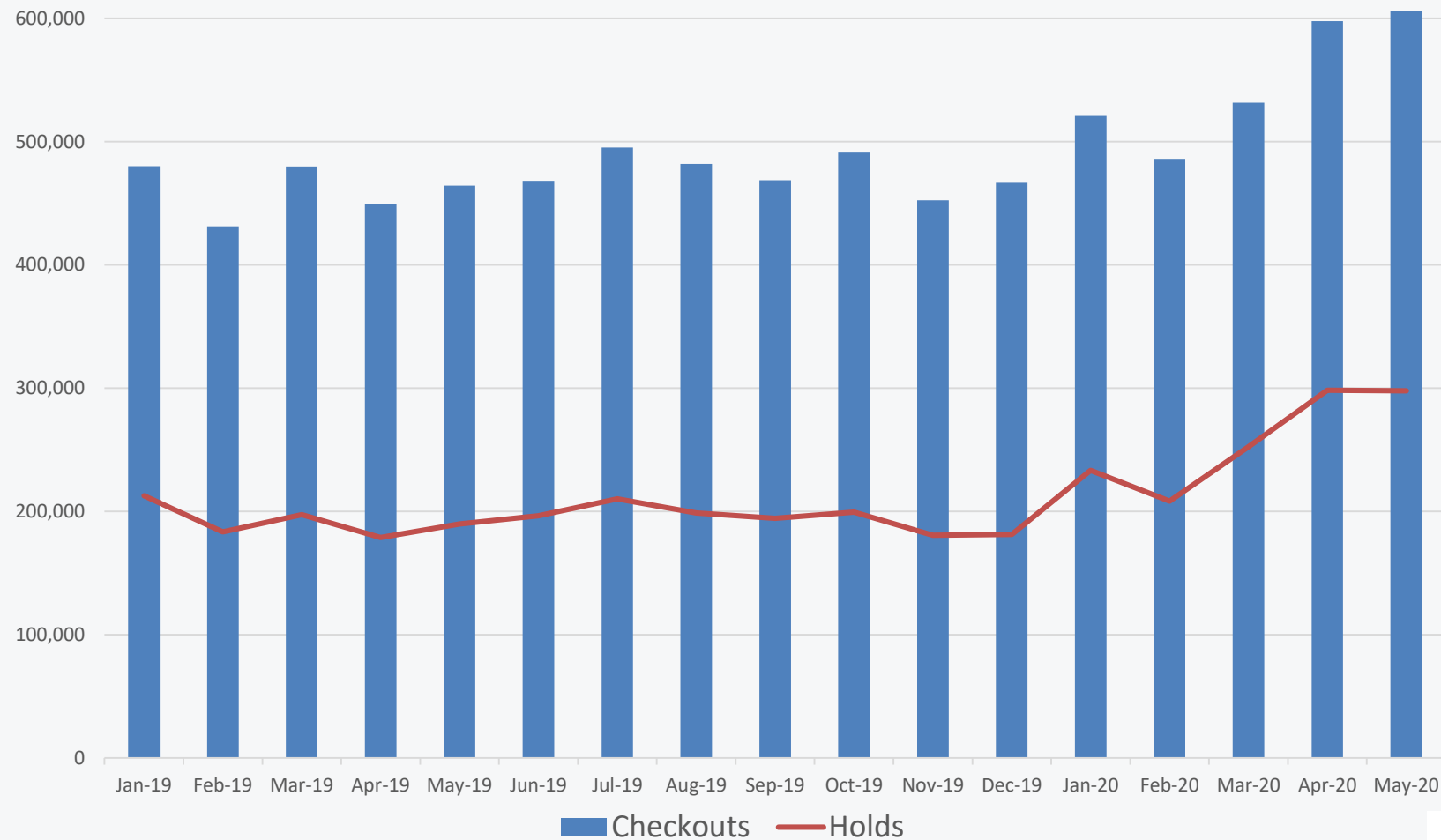
Ohio Digital Library

Instant Digital Card

- Began March 20, 2020
- Registrations to date:
 - 6,318 in March
 - 12,169 in April
 - 6,635 in May



Ohio Digital Library



Ohio Digital Library

Maximizing ODL's circulation

- Daily purchasing
- Simultaneous Use
- Cost-per-Circ

Maximizing Circulation without spending

- Curate, curate, curate

Kady Ferris, Multnomah County Library System, Portland, OR



Kady Ferris has been the Electronic Content Librarian at Multnomah County Library (Portland, OR) since 2014. She has experience in a variety of library systems including: academic, public, large, small, math, and water (really, those are kinds of libraries).

She is passionate about collection development and curation of e-books and audiobooks and managing digital streaming collections. In her downtime, she bakes, reads, and spends time with her husband and loud and lovely 3 year old.

<https://multcolib.org/>

<https://twitter.com/multcolib>

<https://www.instagram.com/multnomahcountylibrary/>

Multnomah County Library (Portland, OR)

- 19 physical locations serving a population of over 800,000
- Physical locations have been closed since March 14
- Over 3 million e-book and audiobook checkouts in 2019
- Fiscal year ends June 30th



Changing Limits & Lending Policies

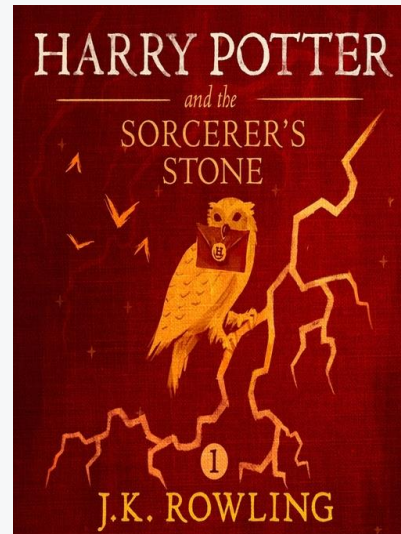
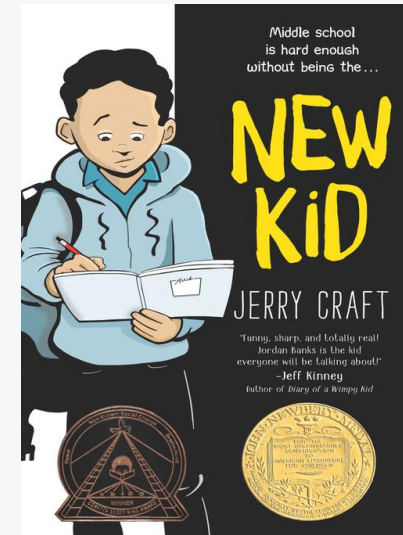
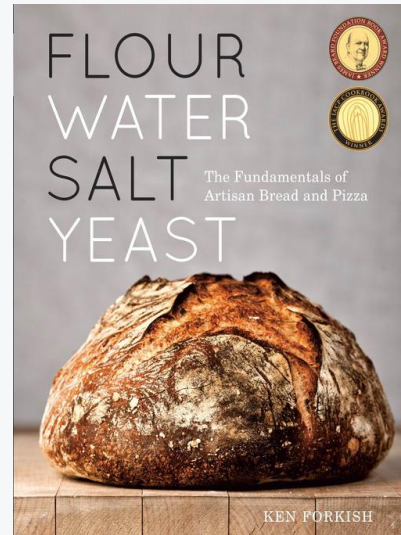
- Eliminating fines-based blocks to digital content
 - No risk of late, lost materials for eBooks/eAudio
- Checkout limit from 20 to 50 books at a time
 - Help offset no access to print/physical
- Instant Digital Card: New User can sign-up just with mobile number & Smartphone
 - Allowing use of Instant Card for 90 days to 6 months
- Seeking to meet demand by lowering holds ratios

Leveraging Access Models

- Introduced and promoted Cost Per Circ (CPC) to support immediately available collections with no wait
 - Added 24,000 titles in cost managed CPC
 - 20,000 are Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Ukrainian and other non-English titles
- Simultaneous Use collections to reduce holds
- PRH new 12 month licenses at 50% cost of 2 year unit
- Curate, curate, curate

So...What Are Readers Looking for and Borrowing the Most?

- Non-English books! (+150%)
- Kids books! (+136%)
 - Thanks, J.K. Rowling.
- Humor books! (+82%)
- Classics! (+84%)
 - Thanks, Duke Classics.
- Cookbooks! (+76%)

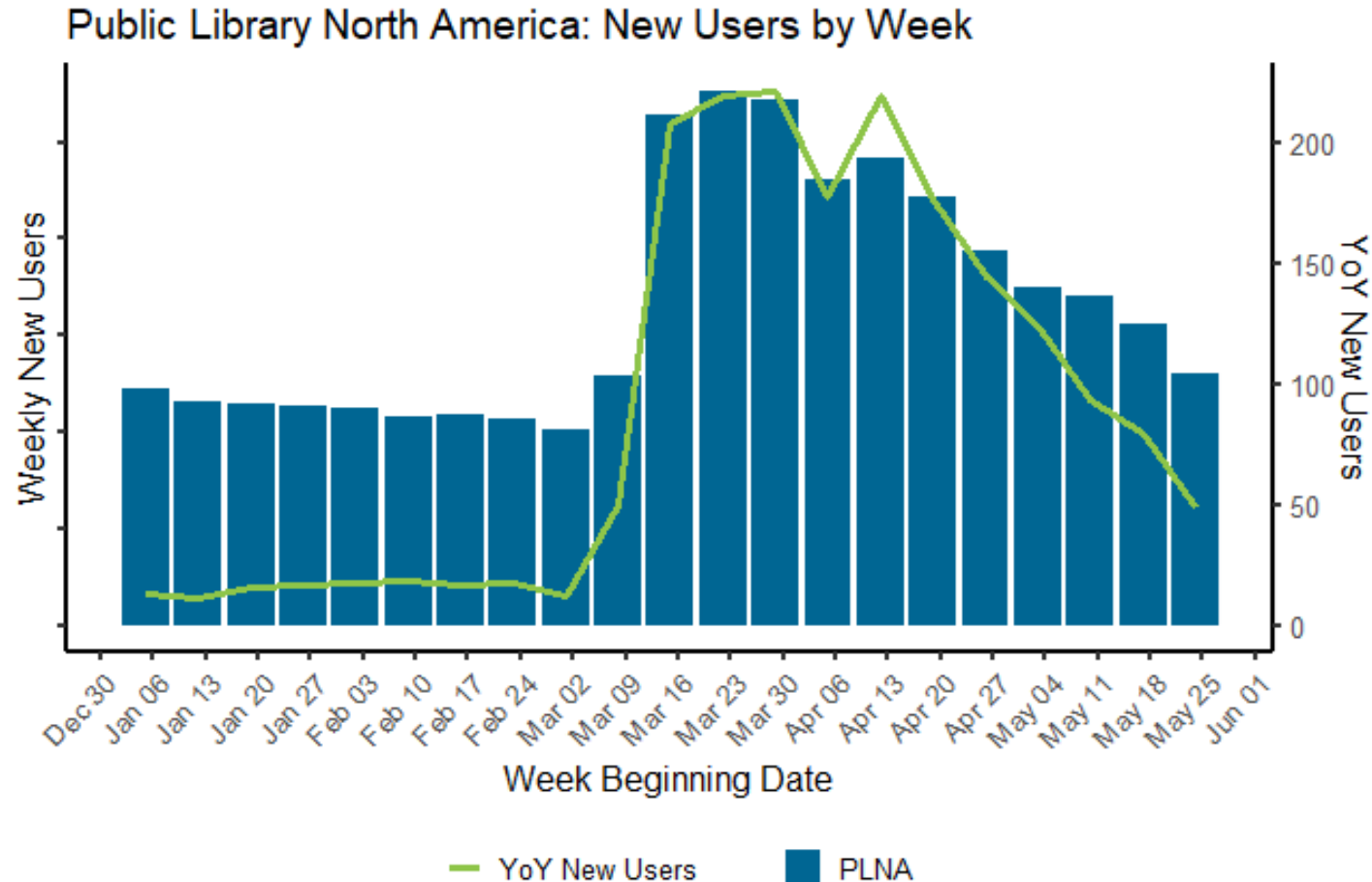


Karen Estrovich, Senior Regional Manager, OverDrive



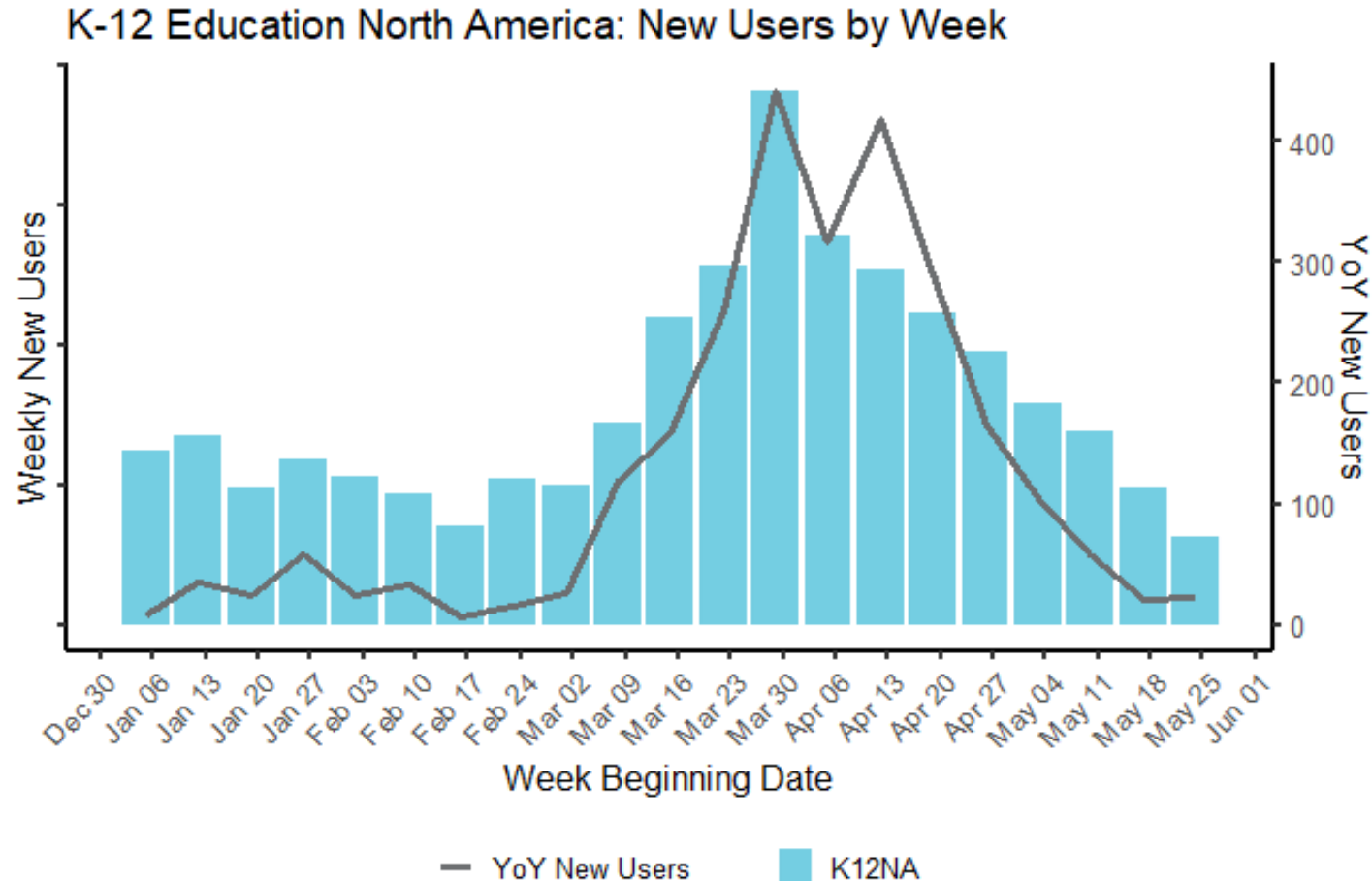
- 15 year career at OverDrive and developed early and ongoing collection development tools and merchandising best practices for public library teams
- Partner with public librarians to develop outreach campaigns to promote books and reading to target audiences in their communities.
- Director for OverDrive US and Canada Public Library collection development and account management teams.

Digital Library Trends from COVID-19



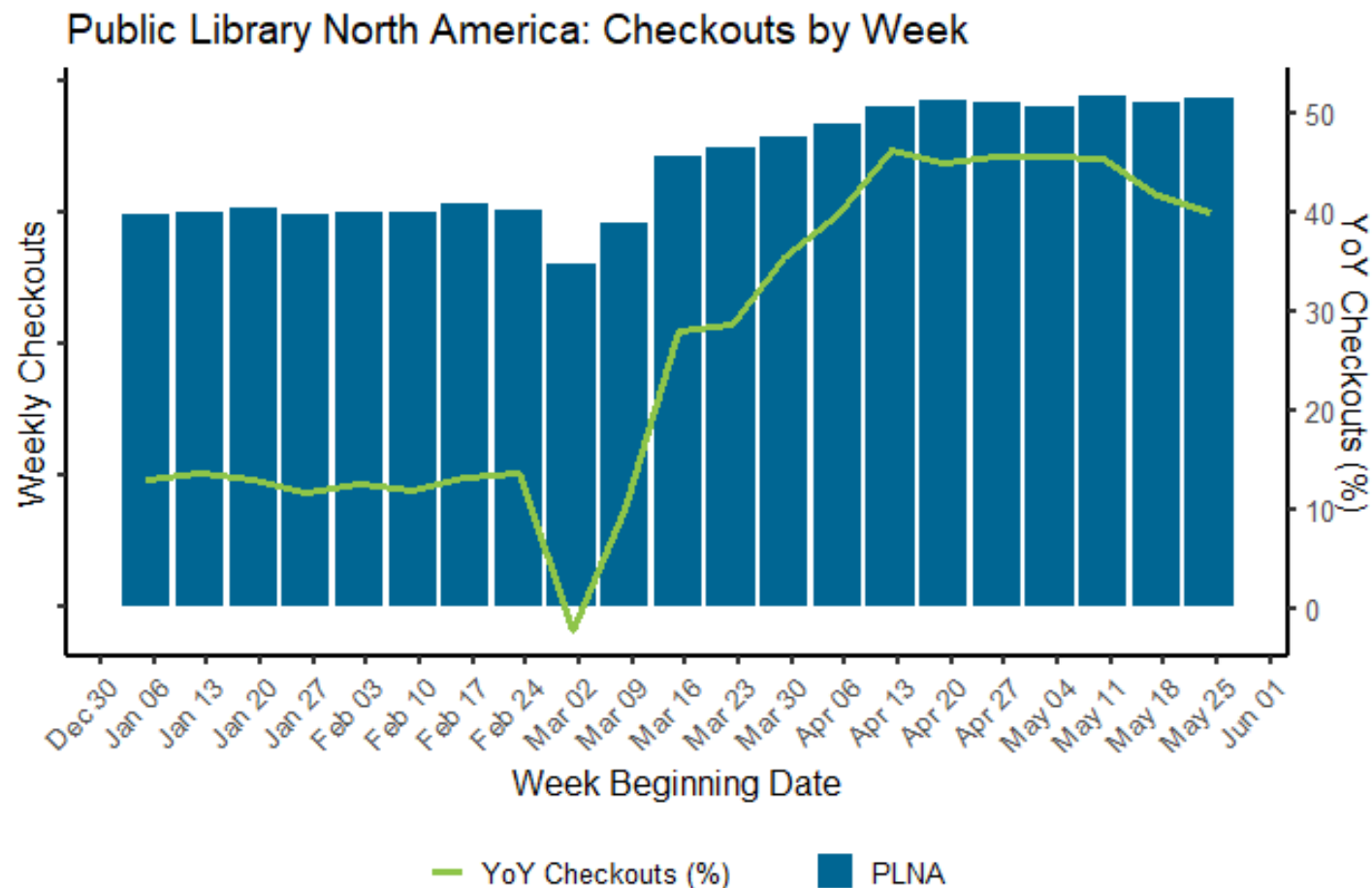
- Dramatic spike in **first time new users**
- Libraries report new users requiring more help-desk and onboarding support

Digital Library Trends from COVID-19



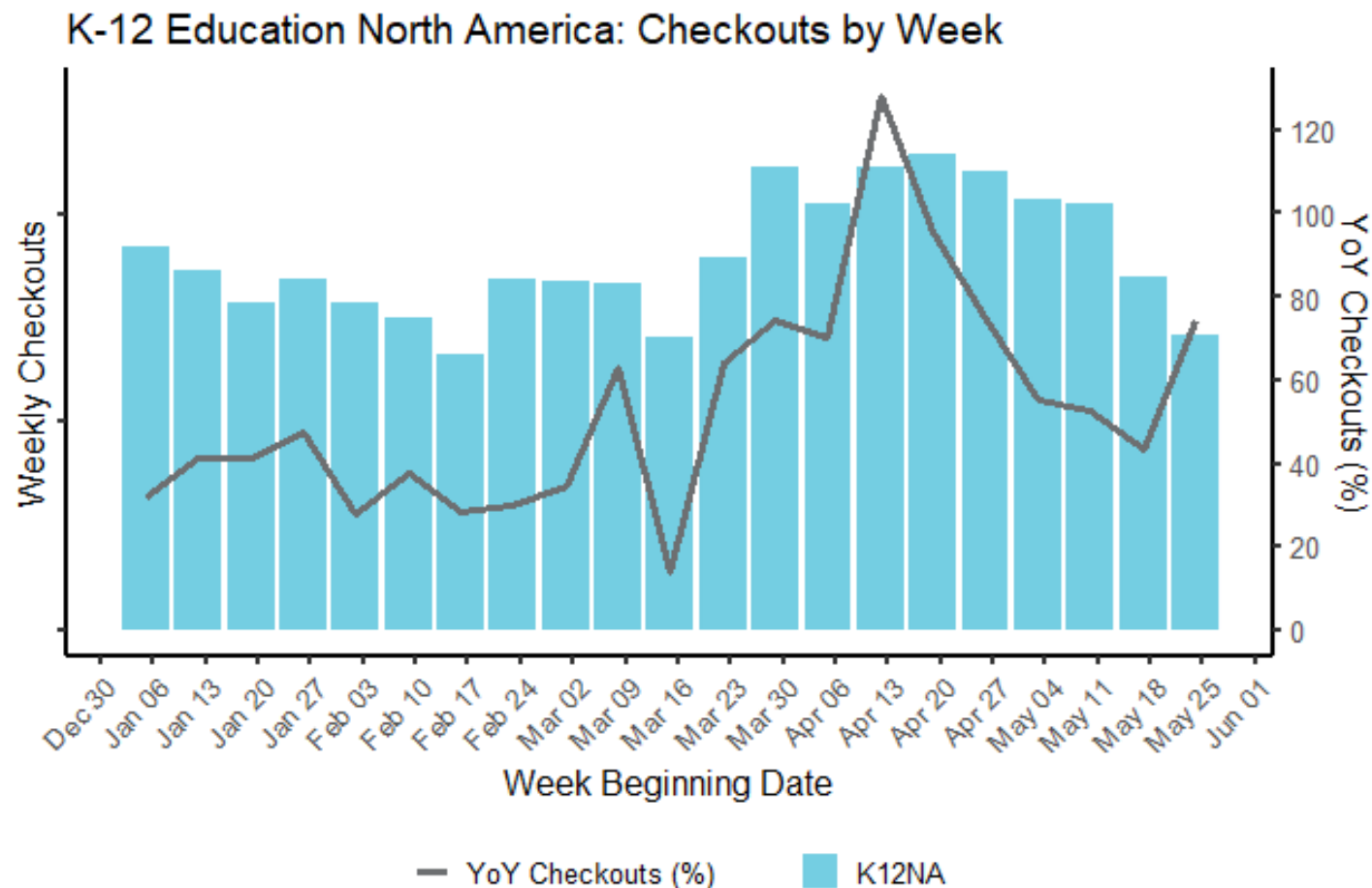
- Sora reading app with access to no costs simultaneous use titles drives surge of K-12 readers
- Students use Public Library Connect to access eBooks from local public libraries

Digital Library Trends from COVID-19



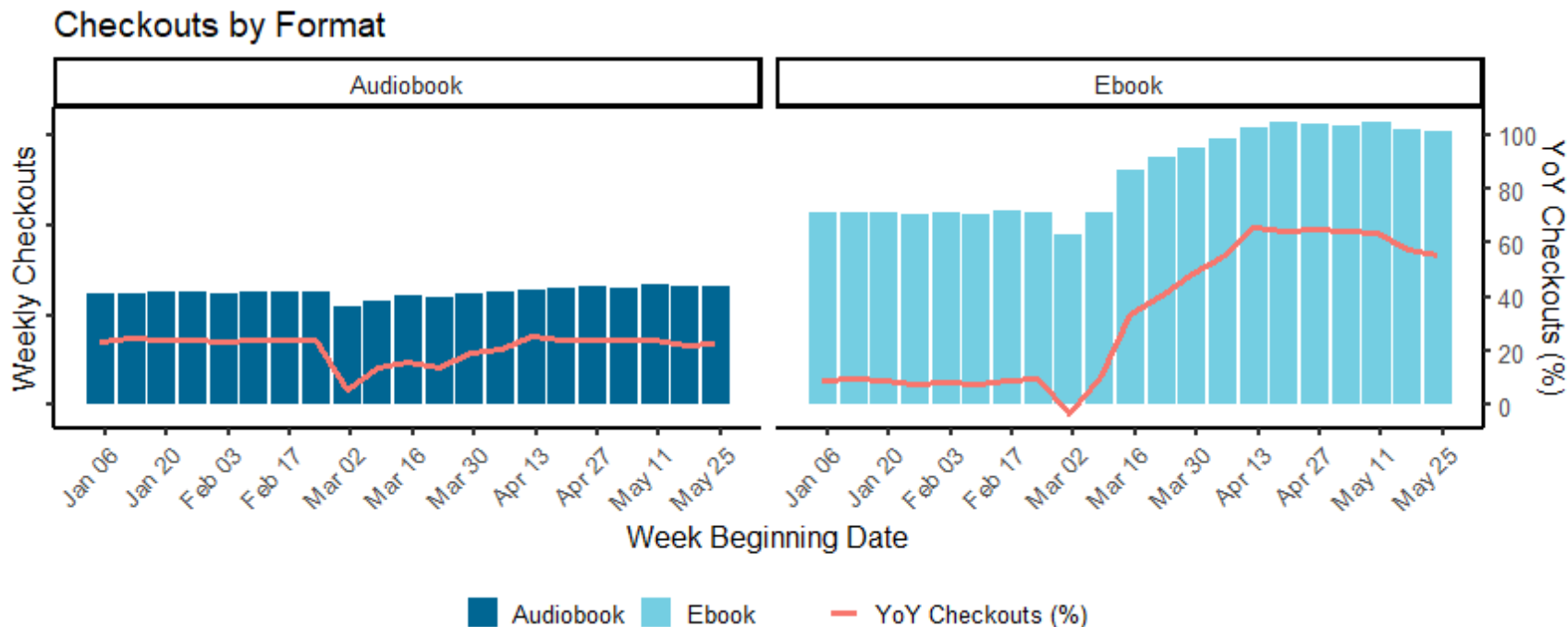
- Digital book **checkout** growth rates more than **doubled** since March 16, 2020
- **Continued** elevation of circulation of titles persists through May.

Digital Library Trends from COVID-19



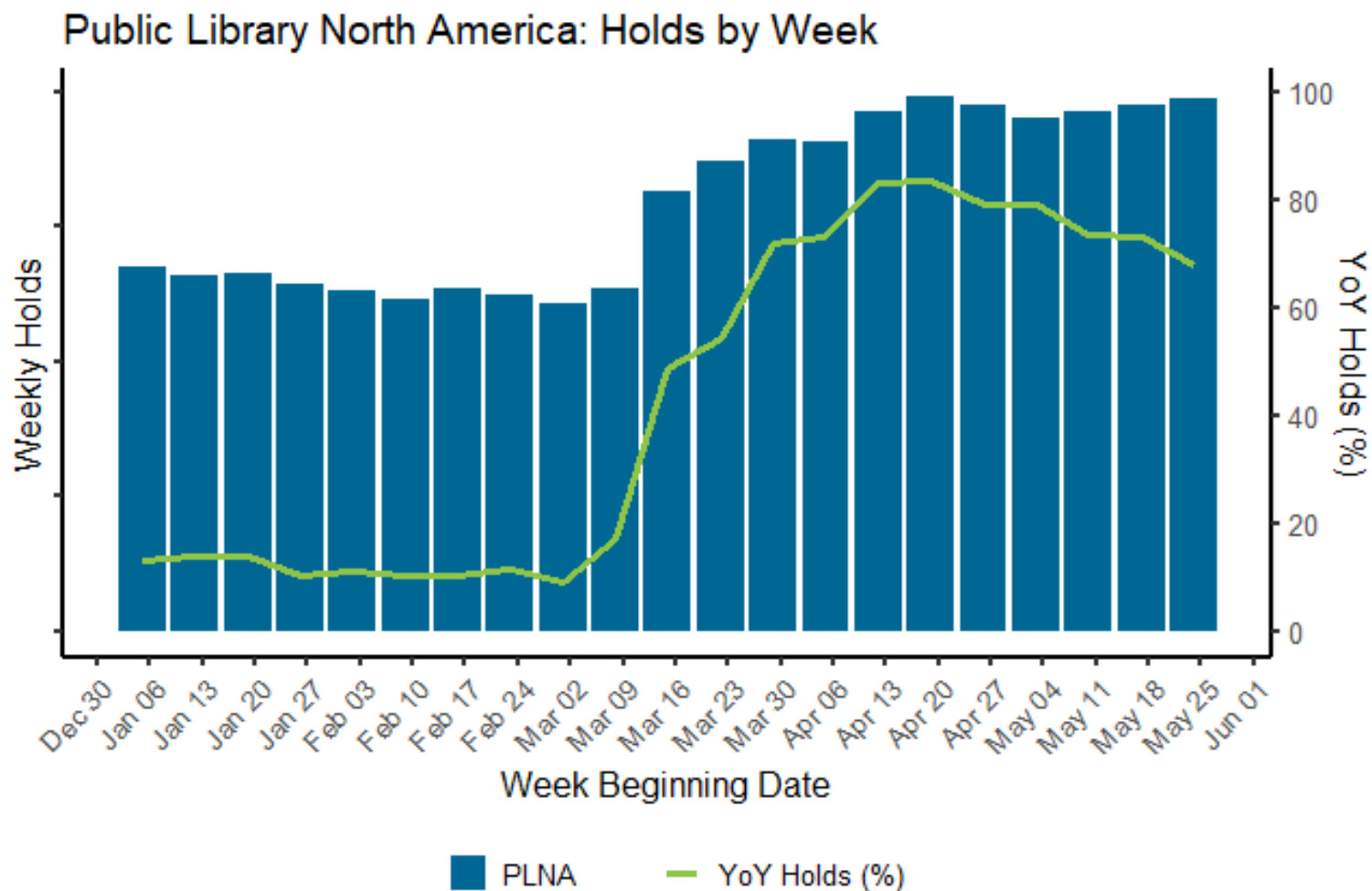
- Distance learning for home-bound students drive dramatic increase for eBooks
- Simultaneous access and classroom sets provide inventory to support school demand

Digital Library Trends from COVID-19



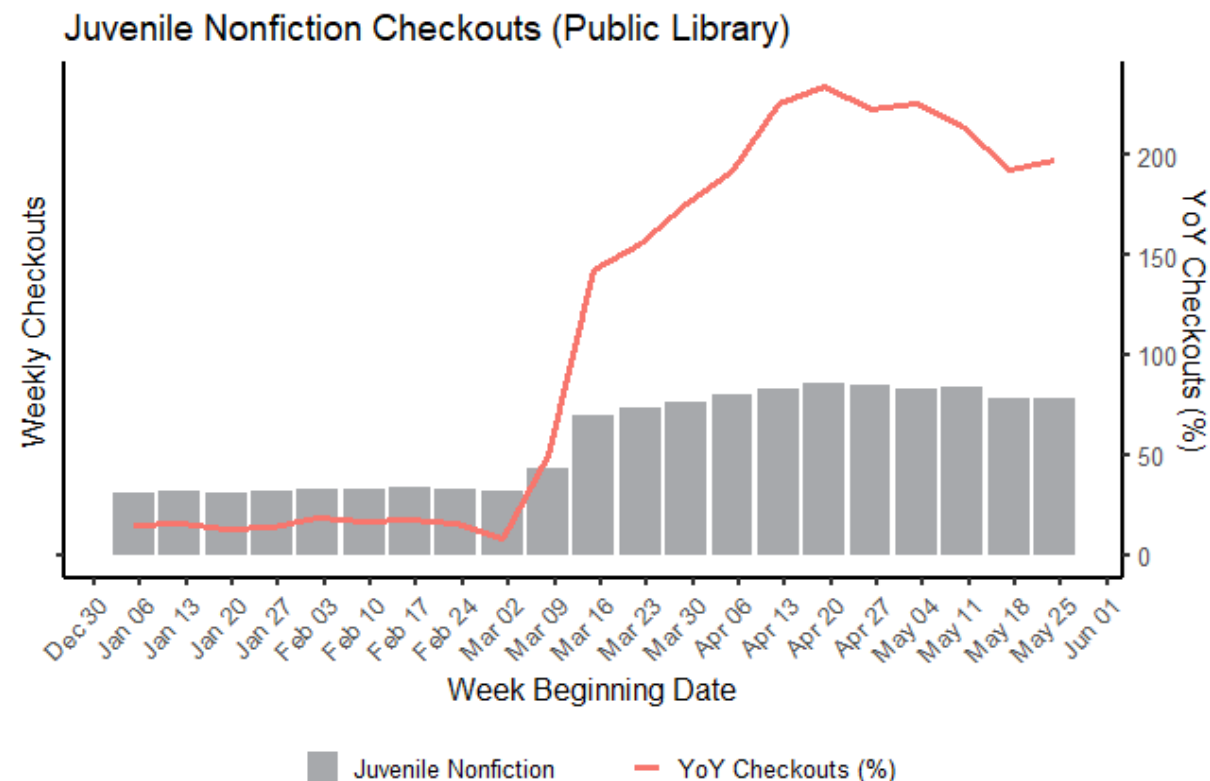
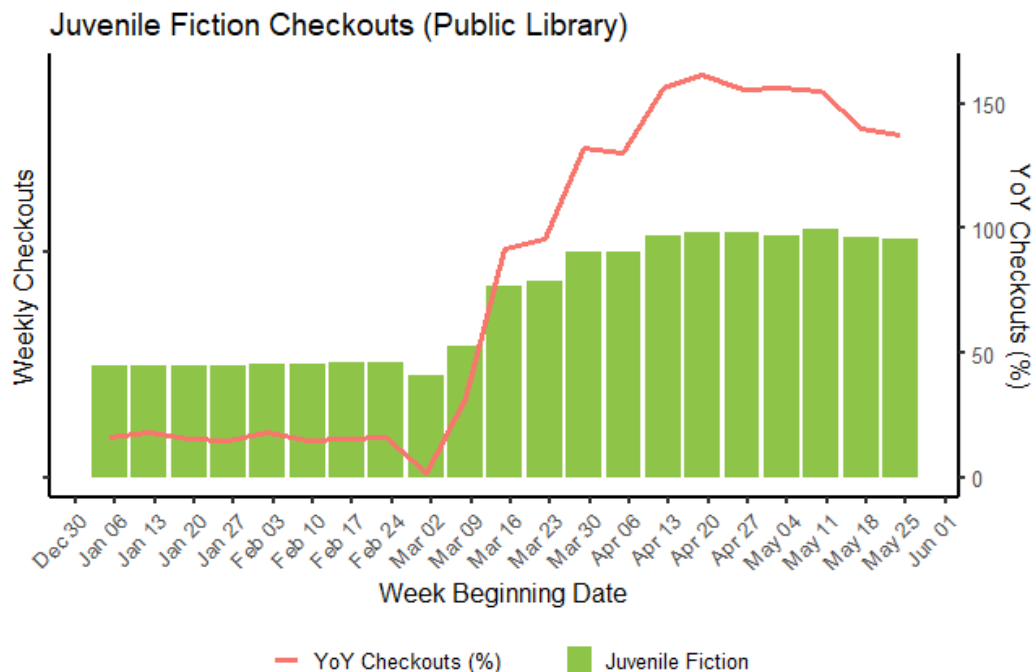
- Ebooks demonstrate dramatic spike
- Audiobooks slower growth, departure from prior periods
- Shelter-in-place orders resulted in ... drop in commuter activity and drop in audiobook demand

Digital Library Trends from COVID-19



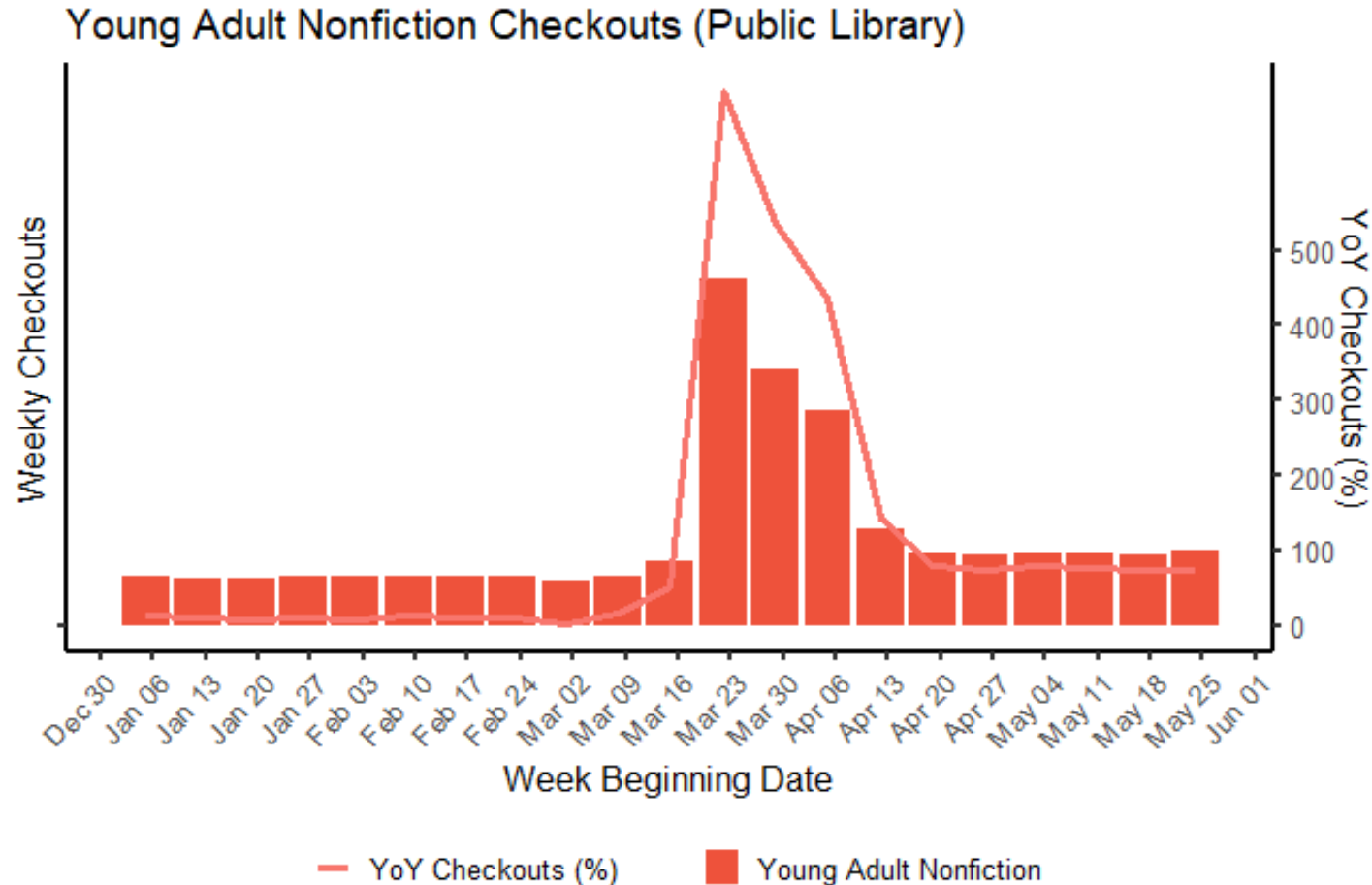
- Readers join wait lists in record numbers in sync with circulation growth
- Even with dramatic increase: many libraries are managing demand with purchasing of different access models/features.

Digital Library Trends from COVID-19



- Demand for **juvenile fiction and non-fiction** content experienced record checkout growth, this is where **audiobooks** still have steady growth.

Digital Library Trends from COVID-19



- Demand from **middle and high school students** for remote reading and class sets created urgency for public libraries to respond to the demand for **Young Adult Nonfiction ebooks and audiobooks**.

Key Takeaways

- Pre-pandemic public libraries and schools were already at record YoY circulation growth trend and in some cases digital books out-performing physical checkouts
- Immediate demand for at home learning resources when schools closed with a clear indicator that public libraries are responding as best they can with digital
- To meet surge libraries responding with increased access: up checkout limit, remove card blocks, onboarding new users with Instant Digital Cards

Key Takeaways

- Help satisfy demand by leveraging Simultaneous Use and Cost Per Circ models
- Curate, curate, curate!
- Options to expand audience with new content categories: ie. world languages
- Audiobook growth flattened (vs. pre-COVID 30% growth), eBook growth spiked
- Record circ and new users are driving record holds
- Single largest increase in demand is for Young Adult Nonfiction: the teens are here!

Digital Library Trends from COVID-19

- What are some things that surprise you from the data?
- Tell us about some specific ways your community was affected by COVID-19?
- What does this mean for your digital collection looking ahead?

Digital Library Trends from COVID-19

To contact any of today's presenters:

#alavirtual20



Steve Potter
spotter@mymcpl.org



Anne Kennedy
AKennedy@library.ohio.gov



Kady Ferris
kadyf@multco.us



Karen Estrovich
kestrovich@overdrive.com