

HOOPLA COMMENTS

- Dear Martha,
I am disheartened to hear that ImagineIF may be discontinuing Hoopla for patrons. Since the service was offered we have become frequent users, and all of our kids have accounts too. Here is what we love about Hoopla:
 - No wait list for their materials
 - Extensive collection of audio books and ebooks
 - Kids section with huge selection of early readers, youth chapter books, and nonfiction titles
 - User friendly, very easy to navigate and check out, no second or third step necessary to start enjoying your materials

I would gladly pay to subsidize keeping this resource, or give to a fundraiser towards increasing the library's materials budget. From what I have read, hoopla does not offer individual accounts. Correct me if you know otherwise. We have tried Epic, but Hoopla was far superior.

One question I wondered about is if the data can be analyzed to see what types of titles are being checked out the most- music, movies, ebooks, or audio. Does Hoopla offer tiered subscription levels? Could the library just pay for patrons to use ebooks and audiobooks, and lower the cost impact on your budget? There are so many other places for people to get movies and music from (YouTube, local TV, Netflix, Spotify, many free online places too). I have not found a similar platform to find ebooks and audiobooks. We are familiar with Montana's Library to Go and we use it too, but it is not nearly as large of a collection and the wait times are quite long in many cases.

After the COVID epidemic began, we chose to educate our kids at home and continue to do so. Hoopla offered us the ability to access materials instantly, and not have to wait weeks for desired titles to come in, many times after the interest or need for that particular resource passed. Please do what you can to find a way to keep Hoopla part of what you offer the patrons of Flathead County's library system. It's been an amazing resource, we are very grateful for all the time we've been able to use it over the past months. Thank you for the good work you and the staff do on behalf of the public who want to learn, be informed, and grow. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out. Sincerely, Marcie Bochman

- I'm so sad to lose Hoopla. I understand the decision. I just don't like it. I just found it this year and have triple my reading because of it. It is used friendly and convenient compare to montanalibrary2go. I was not successful using the later but I guess I'll be giving it another go... Stephanie Tinney
- Hi Martha,
I recently read your notice regarding the discontinuation of the Hoopla service from ImagineIf library. While your explanation is clear that the financial cost is large, this will be a huge loss for the community as well as our family. We use Hoopla on a daily basis for homeschooling as well as recreational audio books. I wonder if there is some way to apply a small fee per use or a fee per use over a predetermined

number of titles? I know that I would be willing to pay a fee for this excellent service. Charging a small fee might also encourage patrons to be more frugal with checkouts. Possibly educating the local community on the use of Hoopla could also reduce the cost. For example, I was not aware that this service was a fee per use regardless of whether the book is actually read or not. Is it possible to reduce the monthly book limit to 5 per month rather than 10 per month to reduce the cost? Or to set a limit per household? Thank you for reading and for your diligence, Kelly

- Dear Mrs Furman,
As a homeschooling family we have really appreciated the ability to use Hoopla. It seems like many more titles are available (particularly audio titles) and available more quickly than in Overdrive. It also seems that there is much better access to classical literature titles that are often unavailable in hard copy at the library. It sounds like the library is not able to afford to provide this service any longer which is disappointing. I'm wondering if there is another, more affordable, option available that would provide similar services? Thank you for including the homeschooling community in your plans. Sincerely, Niki MacLean

- To whom it may concern -
We are a homeschooling family in the Flathead valley and we regularly use library resources in our daily schooling. Overall, we have been highly disappointed in our ability to obtain resources through the imagineif library system. Wait times are ridiculous and it's very frequent that you don't even have the resources that I'm looking for. In addition, we have regularly borrowed audiobooks that have scratches and are completely unusable. Hoopla has been one of the only bright spots in our local library usage. We use hoopla on a daily basis in our home (primarily for audiobooks). It has been an invaluable resource for us and the thought of losing it has been incredibly disheartening for our family. Wait times on other resources are months and months long which makes it completely impossible to use resources for planned units and regular study. Hoopla has been one of the only options to bridge this gap. We would be happy to contribute to a fund designed to continue offering Hoopla or pay a nominal yearly fee for access. I hope you understand the intrinsic value and depth of audio and ebooks offered by this service. In our experience it is unmatched in physical or other online services. I truly hope that you are able to find a way to continue offering this service to the Flathead valley. Thank you for your time. Jaime Petro

- I understand the decision to get rid of Hoopla due to the expense, but one thing that has made it so nice is the access to many more books that are just not available immediately through the library. Is there a way to request to purchase more copies of eBooks for us instead? We have a couple of book clubs and use Hoopla so our lower income members can participate, but this year, if they were not on Hoopla, we were left waiting for a copy of books for 2-3 month, which doesn't work for a once a month book club. I would love to see if there were a way to keep it, or offer some other alternatives. Martha Artyomenko

Response from Interim Library Director, Martha: Hi Martha, Thank you so much for reaching out. I can definitely see why Hoopla was so useful for your book club, and I apologize for the cancellation. We tried many methods of managing Hoopla before canceling it, and unfortunately each way we looked at it we were up against the high costs. The Hoopla pricing model just doesn't fit into a budget of our size.

Lewis and Clark Library in Helena also has Hoopla, but they are funded at around \$52 per capita while we only receive about \$22 when I last checked. It is just a very costly service, partly because eBook publishers don't stand to make money without cost per use models like this. MontanaLibrary2Go is part of a Consortium of member libraries, which keeps costs low, but we aren't able to regularly or reliably purchase multiple copies of titles on request because different libraries take turns purchasing books and they are already using a holds list and requests list to purchase. That model relies on libraries purchasing titles on a copy-by-copy basis (with one checkout at a time), and after a certain number of checkouts the titles expire and need to be repurchased.

That said, some titles on MontanaLibrary2go are set to "always available," so I wonder if those might be helpful for your club. If you do a search and limit it to "Available Now" and then click on a title, it will sometimes say "Always Available" below the title description. I can't find a way to see all of these at once, but it tends to be classic literature.

Here's an example of an audiobook

[Pride and Prejudice - MontanaLibrary2Go - OverDrive](#)

And an ebook:

[The Call of the Wild - MontanaLibrary2Go - OverDrive](#)

We are still looking for alternatives to Hoopla that will help meet the need for downloadable books. One option might be for us to explore another digital platform, like Baker and Taylor, the vendor from whom we get our print books. It would not be the same as Hoopla, but could help with the wait time on MontanaLibrary2Go, because it would be just for ImagineIF cardholders. If we can find another comparable service that we can afford, I will be letting everyone know!

I will also pass your comment along to our Board of Trustees, as it might help them to advocate for more funding for library collections. The library is funded by taxpayer dollars allocated by the County Commissioners, so you can also try reaching out to them directly to let them know your thoughts about library services.

Thank you so much again, and know it is my hope that we can eventually secure enough funding to continue providing popular services like Hoopla. Warmly, Martha

- Please do not cancel Hoopla. Can we do a fundraiser or something? I love it and it is vital to my daily life. I cannot afford audible or some of the other more expensive audiobook services. Libby is so limited and the holds are a mile long. Who has a CD or DVD player anymore? Plus then we would have to come into the library to do that and buy a player. Please, no. This has been such a hard time in our history with COVID and the isolation. Hoopla is a lifeline. Is there anything we can do to raise the money or cut something else? LR

Response from Interim Library Director, Martha: LR, *Thank you so much for reaching out. I can definitely see why Hoopla was so valuable to you, and I apologize for the cancellation. We tried many methods of managing Hoopla before canceling it, and unfortunately each way we looked at it we were up against the high costs. The Hoopla pricing model just doesn't fit into a budget of our size. Lewis and Clark Library in Helena also has Hoopla, but they are funded at around \$52 per capita while we only receive about \$22 when I last checked. It is just a very costly service, partly because eBook publishers don't stand to make money without cost per use models like this. We are still looking for alternatives to Hoopla that will help meet the*

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I am an accountant by trade and seek to understand this issue as it seems to be driven by finances. I have found in the course of business that when one thing needs to be trimmed it is often because the organization has gotten distracted from its initial mission and is spending money in other less important places.

As I look at the Imagine IF website, I wonder what the objective of our public library system is. Your strategic plan appears to have been derailed by COVID and it is a bit vague. The essence of it is to make the Flathead better via educational opportunities and resources to personally develop as well as foster community growth. Those seem to be in line with the general purpose of a community library. *Public Library Quarterly* states that "libraries serve as a conduit to access information and to learn." I can see that some of your programs heavily lean towards promotion of arts over other types of learning, for instance reading. This shows that the leadership must find this important, but I think this might be off task and that some of your programs might be better suited to the Hockaday Museum of Art, for example, take-and-make kits and Creative Bug's free art classes. Also, genealogy research access is an interesting asset to offer your patrons, but it does not necessarily serve to aid in educational opportunities for the less fortunate. I wonder how these fit with the primary focus of a community library.

In assessing the purpose of a library, *Libby* fits the bill, but the issue with that app is that the hold times are exceedingly long. That is why *Hoopla* offered a great alternative. While the selection is less than *Libby*, the on-demand feature is remarkable. Perhaps nixing the focus on the arts as well as personal shoppers, genealogy, and free wifi hotspots would allow funds to be allocated to better fit the model of what a community library should offer.

Thank you kindly for your time. LR

Hi LR,

Thank you so much for your thoughtful response and analysis. The arts-based activities you describe offer library patrons ways to engage in self-directed and hands on learning, both of which are key for gaining 21st Century skills. This style of program is common in libraries because it addresses new ways of learning as our society evolves, and directly ties back to our information resources and materials collections. Libraries, like schools, change and evolve as we learn more about how people seek and gain new skills and information.

I agree that there are many ways for us to shift resources to make our services more responsive to the community. I can offer the following information about the specific services you mentioned:

The Wi-Fi hotspots allow patrons without internet access to use our digital resources, making our online information offerings accessible to everyone

Personal shopper is a pandemic accommodation that is lightly used but necessary for those whose health status prevents them from visiting the library

The genealogy database is obtained through a consortium purchase through the state, which keeps costs low

All of our decisions are made through a mission driven focus, which is "Providing safe and fair access to books and information." This tagline will be made prominent on our new website which will be launched soon. Our programs tie into collections and build critical learning skills that lead back into reading and information seeking.

I will pass your comment to our Board of Trustees, and again thank you so much for reaching out. Comments like yours help us understand community needs and desires as we continue to develop our services. Warm regards, Martha Furman

Thank you for your thoughtful reply. I also would like to add the intangible effect of your library's investment in Hoopla. The books that I have enjoyed in the last year have changed my life. I am grateful for something positive in what has been a hard year. I was never much of a reader. I always preferred numbers, and I did not have parents available to read to me as a child. The first time someone read a chapter book aloud to me was in the fourth grade. My teacher, Mrs. Leuken, read the book *Where the Red Fern Grows*. The act of being read to touched me and left me aching for that class instead of thrilling over math class, which was my norm. My parents both worked outside of the home, and I was the classic latchkey kid of the 80s. This connection via reading made a new school and environment and the loneliness bearable.

I discovered Hoopla this last December in a time of isolation and melancholy. To say 2020 was a hard year is to point out that the sky is blue (ignore the smoke for a moment). I have listened to 37 books in 2021 thus far. I have created an online group and often discuss the books with those friends. In a world where the news fractures even families, books are a safe talking point and something I am passionate about. I just finished *Ben-Hur*. Since I was not a reader and leaned more towards numbers, many of the classics like this one have been undiscovered until now. Whenever I finish a book, I write a summary in my journal about why I think a book has remained an enduring classic. *Ben-Hur* was published in 1880 and uncovered a depiction of the Holy Land and the incredible multi-culturalism in the first-century. *The Red Badge of Courage* stands the test of time as a classic because of the author's powerful imagery despite the fact that he never saw a battle first hand. *A Wrinkle in Time* testifies to the triumph of good over evil. *A Tale of Two Cities* tells of self-sacrificial love. *Pride and Prejudice* reminds us that the traits we abhor in others we often possess. All of these books and countless more were read to me on your Hoopla app. All of these books left me enriched and a changed woman. These books captured the magic of Mrs. Leuken reading to me for the first time and left me feeling whole again. I will be sad to see it go. The 38 books that I have enjoyed this year cannot be taken from me, and for that I am thankful. Thank you for your time and letting me enjoy these months with your service. LR

- Hi, I recently heard that you are going to have to discontinue Hoopla. I am devastated as we have just LOVED having this resource in our homeschool and it personal reading. We often struggled with finding the books prior to this and having everything at our finger tips has been invaluable.
Would you please consider continuing it? I have talked to so many people who aren't aware of Hoopla and I'm wondering if it can be promoted to so more people are able to enjoy it and therefore, justify the continue expenditure?
Thank you for your time! We love all the library offers to homeschoolers! Moriah

Hoopla Comments from Facebook

Carol Hooper Strauch

Thank you for offering it this past year. We really enjoyed it, but I can see how the financial impact is too much to absorb.

Taylor R Williams

it seems like you made a very fiscally responsible decision that benefits the majority - thank you for doing such a good job on behalf of the flathead valley library users

Sally Kyes Conner

What Taylor said! Wise decision!

Jessie Bebb

Really enjoyed it but completely understand the financial crunch.

Jeni Felts

That is a bummer. I love hoopla. However, the numbers don't lie and yours show a responsible decision is being made for the big picture. I am still sad though.

Ringo Davenport

I never used Hoopla because it was a pay per use which seems inconsistent with the concept of library. I didn't like to think that y'all would have to pay every time someone checked it out. I encouraged others I knew not to use Hoopla for the same reason.

Molly McCabe

Thanks for your transparency. (And I understand - even though I do use Hoopla and have enjoyed it immensely over the past year +)

Brooke Cantu Block

I am new to Hoopla & love it. I understand your decision but am very disappointed not just for myself but also my kids.

Martha Artyomenko

This makes me really sad, even though I understand, I think Hoopla has been such a great addition to the library. It enables many people to read books that otherwise they do not have access to.

Cherilyn DeVries

Thank you for being fiscally responsible and explaining your decision!

Kayla Wells

This makes me sad. I understand being fiscally responsible but Hoopla has been such a huge asset.