

# Why can't my library buy more e-books and audiobooks?

**e-book and digital audiobook costs are too high for libraries, and access is limited.**

It's unsustainable for libraries to continue to purchase digital content this way.

## Publishers put limits on library e-books & e-audiobooks



Print books are owned by the library and can be used for decades until they're worn out.

**e-books and digital audiobooks are licensed—libraries don't own them.**

Plus, publishers put limits on how long the content can be used:

 1 or 2 years *or*  26 or 52 checkouts

Once that limit is reached, libraries need to re-purchase the license at the same inflated price if they want to keep offering it to their community.

## e-Content usage is increasing

In **2024**, a mid-size, suburban public library saw:



**25%**

increase in e-book circulation



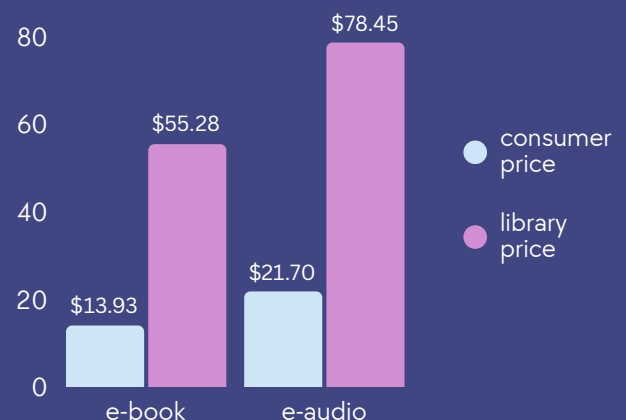
**15%**

increase in audiobook circulation

Source: Warren-Newport Public Library

## They're free for patrons to use, but not free for libraries to offer.

An average e-book costs a library **3.9x more** than what you would pay to buy it on your Kindle.



Source: ReadersFirst

The cost per circulation of an electronic title is **3.7x higher** than a physical title.



Source: Fremont Public Library

# Let's see some real-time examples:

*\*library costs reflect single user, 2-year limit agreement*

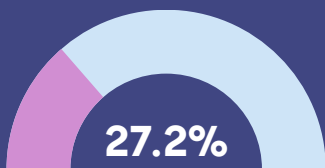


Format	Consumer Cost	Library Cost
	\$32.00	\$32.00
	\$16.99	<b>\$67.99</b>
	\$19.99	<b>\$84.99</b>



Format	Consumer Cost	Library Cost
	\$32.00	\$29.00
	\$14.99	<b>\$55.00</b>
	\$14.99	<b>\$95.00</b>

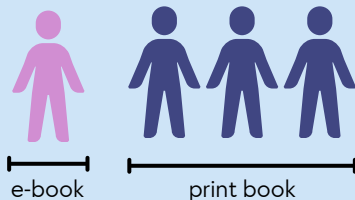
Sources: TS360, The Palace Marketplace, Amazon, and Apple Books



Source: LibraryJournal

Libraries spend nearly **one-third of their budget** on digital content so their patrons can enjoy these popular titles.

Three people could check out the same print book for **less than the cost of a single e-book checkout.**



## How does this affect my community?



### Hold wait lists will get even longer

Your wait times will increase



### You'll have limited options

Libraries can't afford to buy the content your community wants



### Libraries will reach their budget breaking point

Providing you with less for your tax dollars



## Illinois is known for its leadership in support of libraries, but...

if publishers continue to control the terms of digital content for libraries, we'll see an erosion of resource sharing across the state. **We will lose one of the best things that makes Illinois stand out in the national library landscape.**

## How you can help

### Keep borrowing e-content from your library

The numbers help us advocate for funding

### Stay informed and support your library-serving organizations:

American Library Association  
Illinois Library Association  
Reaching Across Illinois Library System