

Resolution No.: 17-821  
Introduced: July 16, 2013  
Adopted: July 23, 2013

**COUNTY COUNCIL  
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

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By: Council Vice President Rice, Councilmember Leventhal, Council President Navarro, and Councilmembers Andrews, Ervin, Berliner, and Riemer

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**SUBJECT:** Equitable access to e-books for Montgomery County Public Libraries

**Background**

1. Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) serve 721,385 (as of the end of FY 2012) cardholders from all parts of a large, diverse county.
2. MCPL strives to deliver materials in all available formats to meet the interests and requirements of those patrons.
3. The demand for e-books in Montgomery County is increasing exponentially. There was an 88% growth in e-book checkouts between 2010 and 2011, and an 87% growth in demand between 2011 and 2012. The trend shows no signs of slowing down.
4. Through actions of the County and its budget process, the Council approved an additional \$300,000 in the Fiscal Year 2014 MCPL operating budget to address customer demand for e-books. This budget item supports the MCPL's Strategic Goal #1: "Strengthening Our Communities' Passion for Reading, Viewing and Listening by diversifying our collection to meet the evolving needs of our residents."
5. The needs of Montgomery County library users, as with users of libraries around the country, are being severely hampered by the actions of the book publishing industry. According to the March 4, 2013 pricing comparison from the Douglas County, Colo., library, which compiles such statistics monthly, the top book on the New York Times fiction best seller list is unavailable to libraries in e-book format. Nine of the top 15 books on the fiction list are not available to libraries as they are to consumers. The #5 fiction book, *A Week in Winter*, by Maeve Binchy, costs libraries \$80.85 to license, while consumers pay \$12.99 to license use of the same book. These prices place a strain on the MCPL budget and limit the access of e-books to library patrons.
6. The American Library Association, of which MCPL is a member, has consistently protested this discriminatory behavior by publishers.


**Action**

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

The Council believes that patrons of the Montgomery County Public Libraries should have equitable access to e-books at fair prices.

Therefore, the Council urges the General Assembly, the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Federal Trade Commission to examine this issue and seek any appropriate remedy so that County library users will have the access to materials in a reasonable and non-discriminatory manner.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Handwritten signature of Linda M. Lauer in cursive script.

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Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council