Multnomah County Library joins Oregon officials in support of net neutrality

Multnomah County Library is joining Oregon elected officials, community organizations, business leaders and students in voicing resounding support for the call to restore net neutrality.

In late 2017, the Federal Communications Commission voted to repeal the law that restricts internet providers' ability to speed up or slow down access to certain content or products. The rollback is set to go into effect June 11.

"Staying connected in today's world shouldn't be reserved for those who can afford access. Too many people are on the wrong side of the digital divide, being shut out of jobs,
services, health information and vital connections with family and friends,” said Multnomah County Director of Libraries Vailey Oehlke.

On Friday, May 25, the Multnomah County Library Hillsdale branch in Portland, Ore. hosted a discussion led by Oregon Senator Ron Wyden and Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici about the urgent need to recognize net neutrality as a key equity issue that will have lasting impacts for everyone.

“In the 21st Century, an open and fair internet isn’t a privilege – it’s a necessity,” said Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici. “We must stop the Federal Communications Commission from rolling back important Net Neutrality protections. . .I urge everyone who cares about protecting fair and open access to information to make their voices heard.”

The U.S. Senate voted on May 16 to reinstate net neutrality rules but now the issue moves to the House. Congresswoman Bonamici is joining in the fight to force a vote on the legislation.

High school students are also weighing in. One student noted that net neutrality joins gun control as one of the top issues high schoolers are discussing today. Julia Young, a senior and student body president at Wilson High School in Portland, Ore. added:

“As I go into college, I will be studying Applied Biology in Global Resource Systems, which involves sustainability and environmental innovation. It is absolutely crucial that my classmates and I have access to transparent environmental data, and if internet providers are able to choose what information I can access quickly without extreme costs, then my academic career and later work experience will be compromised.”

Complementing the effort to protect net neutrality, Multnomah County District 1 Commissioner Sharon Meieran highlighted an effort to expand broadband in Multnomah County. “Access to reliable high-speed internet is needed for basic equity and inclusion. Kids and families need internet access to file a job application or complete required school homework. That's why the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners just approved funding to study the feasibility of providing publicly owned high-speed internet services at cost to our community.”

Multnomah County Library, Oregon's largest provider of free internet sessions, is also a member of the Digital Inclusion Network, a regional group of organizational partners committed to reducing barriers to digital access and getting devices into the hands of those who need them most.
“Libraries have a role at the forefront of the discussion about net neutrality and digital equity,” said Oehlke. “We can give patrons free access to internet in our libraries, but to truly make change, we need to ensure everyone in our community can connect and participate in our digital world from anywhere.”

Library hosts poetry reading with Street Roots vendors

On Sunday, April 29, over a dozen Street Roots vendors shared their poetry to an enthusiastic audience at the Central Library, in celebration of National Poetry Month. Street Roots Vendor Program Director Cole Merkel served as the emcee for the poets, and Executive Director Kaia Sand led a Q and A with the vendors. The crowd included both long-time Street Roots readers and supporters, library patrons and visitors. The event ended with a standing ovation for the writers.

The event grew out of a successful outreach collaboration between the library and Street Roots. Central Library staff visit the Street Roots office a few times a year to connect with vendors and share information about library services and programs.

“Many of the vendors know their customers through Street Roots. Having this poetry reading gave readers and community members a chance to connect with them. It was a wonderful experience for everyone involved,” said Central Librarian Kate Schwab, who helped organize the event.
St John’s Library hosts annual El Día de los Niños y Día de los Libros celebration

On Saturday, April 21, St. Johns Library invited the community to celebrate the annual El Día de los Niños/El Día de los Libros (Children's Day/Book Day). The event brings people from diverse backgrounds together to celebrate and enjoy learning about each other's cultures.

The festive event drew more than 900 attendees, with every child in attendance (approximately 300) receiving a free book, courtesy of The Library Foundation. Families enjoyed several literacy activities such as Spanish storytime, a Latin American Scavenger Hunt, in addition to making crafts like Venezuelan masks, Panamanian kites, Guatemalan worry dolls, Mexican mandalas and Spanish fans.

The event's success is sustained by the positive relationships built by library staff with community members throughout the year. Local educators promoted the event in schools, and the St. John's Boosters and St. John's Community Center promoted the event among local businesses. This year, La Familia Mendoza provided rodeo demonstrations, and the St. John's Ballet Folklorico donated performances with mariachi music and traditional dances. The event was also staffed by 25 volunteers of all ages, several of whom were bilingual.

The Dia de los Niños/Libros celebrations took place at several library locations. Each event offering the library an opportunity to demonstrate its value within the community as a vibrant, multi-cultural, family-friendly institution and resource. It also helps families feel welcomed and comfortable using the library's many services all year long.
Meet Josh R., selections and acquisitions clerk

For Josh, helping library patrons is all about getting the materials they want into their hands in the shortest amount of time. As a part of the selections and acquisitions team, he’s been a part of several changes that are impacting how the library purchases and distributes materials.

“Today, libraries are competing with Amazon and other entities. Our patrons want the newest materials and quickly. We have to adapt.”

A few years ago, the library’s Collections and Technical Services Team re-designed their workflow to help meet the demand. It wasn’t uncommon for it to take 4 to 6 weeks for new materials to reach library shelves. Each part of the process — unboxing, sorting, cataloging — taking too much time. Thanks to a new workflow, patrons now get materials in three days or less.

“We’re constantly changing our work and changing the way we think about our work. It’s an exciting time to be at the library. We are re-examining what it means to build a collection in the age of modern libraries.”

Josh has a passion for literacy and working with people. While attending a technical high school in Portland, he lost interest in his automotive major but found his way into the school library, where he became a teaching assistant. Directly after high school, he joined Multnomah County Library as a page (now called access services assistant), checking in books and shelving holds.

He wanted to get to know more about each neighborhood, so he began subbing at different library branches, meeting the community and staff at each location. With a curiosity to know more about the technical work of the library, he transitioned from working at a branch to his behind-the-scenes position on the Technical Services team.

Day-to-day, Josh diligently focuses on being a good steward of the library’s resources and helping manage the collections budget. He orders materials from book and media vendors, ensuring the library is getting the items needed, at a good price, and when possible, having
them pre-processed so they can get into the hands of library patrons as quickly as possible. He is constantly evaluating any changes in how collections budgets are spent and determining whether there are collections that need attention. He also provides internal customer service, buying materials for the library's youth and adult outreach programs, such as Books 2U, Summer Reading, and the Every Child Initiative.

“I enjoy feeling connected to the library, even though I don't interact with the public as much as I did working in a branch. I'm proud that our library works hard to deliver the materials that patrons ask for. We respond directly to people and let them know if their suggested items were purchased, and if they were, how to place a hold on the item. Every time our library makes a change to improve our system for the better of our patrons, it’s gratifying. I know we're making a difference.”

Summer Reading — Libraries Rock!

Multnomah County Library kicks off summer with its annual Summer Reading program on Friday, June 15. This year, every public school district in Multnomah County is participating in the fun Summer Reading game that encourages reading and literacy activities throughout the summer, while school is not in session. The library anticipates approximately 100,000 youth participants, babies through 12th grade!

The Summer Reading program also draws more than 800 volunteers—mostly youth—to the library. Volunteers help patrons with the game and ensure a positive experience at the library, while also gaining valuable skills, earning school service hours, and giving back in their own neighborhood.

More information about the Summer Reading program is available at multcolib.org/summer-reading.
Teddy bear reunited with young Hollywood Library patron

In April, a well-loved teddy bear was left behind at Hollywood Library. The library, community members and even local media shared the story in hopes of finding the teddy bear's owner.

After more than a month of waiting, Teddy was reunited with her owner when two-and-a-half-year old Juniper came with her dad to the library. Teddy was originally Juniper's great uncle's bear — making him about 50 or 60 years old! Juniper was thrilled to have Teddy safely returned to her.

Patron comments

“I am writing to tell you that you have a lot of great staff members here at the Central Library - from the man or woman at the Information Desk, to the Librarians on each floor. I have been interacting with your staff for about twenty years, and many of them have been very helpful to me. One of the things that is different about many of them is that they are frequently very helpful. I work all over the World, as a World Missions Pastor, and they have helped me over the telephone or in person, with me sometimes calling the Reference Desk from overseas. Some of the things they do for me include:

(1) Helping me find books or other materials, here at the library, that are suitable for projects I am working on;
(2) Helping me to scan paperwork;
(3) Making appropriate and helpful suggestions;
(4) FREQUENTLY looking up information for me on the computer;
(5) Often giving me more time on the computer when I need it to finish legal or business work;
(6) Letting me know what events are here at the library; and
(7) Helping me to print and make copies.

I think you have the best staff in the world, and I have worked all over the world, including in libraries. I do not think you all know how good you are, and how much I, along with others, appreciate your kindness. THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH!” — Central patron, June 1
“The librarians here [at North Portland Library] are very helpful. They are instrumental to my business start-up. Always willing and ready to help. Thank you all! Keep the good work going.” — Catherine, May 30

“My wife and I have been very impressed with the level of help and quality of help we have received at [North Portland Library]. I have received help on the computer and doing faxes. [No] matter what you need the staff are willing and eager to be of assistance. They are very polite and friendly. They helped my wife in more things than I can count. I just can't say how much we value and appreciate their assistance. God bless them. P.S. Most libraries are not this good at service!” — Frank, May 30

Four fast facts

- Checkouts of digital content — including e-books, streaming audiobooks, music, movies, and digital magazines — has nearly tripled over the past five years.
- Adult media (including Blu Ray and DVDs) is the highest circulating collection in the library with 1.9M checkouts in FY17.
- The library added over 100 albums by local artists into its inaugural Library Music Project collection that launched in June 2018.
- The library is Oregon's largest provider of free broadband internet access.

In the news

- Multnomah County Libraries to Have Naloxone Available (OPB Think Out Loud, June 6)
- Librarians emerge as unlikely players in battle against opioid epidemic (Oregonian, June 1)
- Wyden, Bonamici announce new fight for net neutrality (Portland Tribune, May 25)
- Peep the Library's Photo Archive of Portland's Black Community (Portland Mercury, May 18)
- Portland Library Presents a Historical Portrait of Black Life (The Skanner, May 17)
- North Portland Library to Present ‘Juneteenth: Words Along the Way’ (The Skanner, May 14)
- Teens can learn Shibori tie-dye (Gresham Outlook, May 15)
# Upcoming events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Going Bananas or Over the Moon: Supporting Emotional Literacy</td>
<td>Wednesday, June 13</td>
<td>5:30 pm</td>
<td>Gresham Library</td>
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<td>Protecting Yourself Online</td>
<td>Wednesday, June 20</td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>North Portland Library</td>
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<td>Digging for Dinosaurs</td>
<td>Saturday, June 16</td>
<td>12:30 pm</td>
<td>North Portland Library</td>
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<td>Music in Action! / ¡Música en acción!</td>
<td>Thursday, June 21</td>
<td>11:00 am</td>
<td>St. Johns Library</td>
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<td>Citizen Activism 101: Making Change Happen</td>
<td>Saturday, June 16</td>
<td>2:30 pm</td>
<td>Central Library</td>
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<td>Re-Imagining Home: A South Asian Youth Panel</td>
<td>Saturday, June 23</td>
<td>2:30 pm</td>
<td>Midland Library</td>
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<td>Free to Read: A Juneteenth Celebration</td>
<td>Sunday, June 17</td>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
<td>Kenton Library</td>
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<td>Slavery and Race Laws in Early Oregon</td>
<td>Saturday, June 23</td>
<td>3:30 pm</td>
<td>Kenton Library</td>
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<td>Shibori Fabric Tie-Dying</td>
<td>Tuesday, June 19</td>
<td>1:00 pm</td>
<td>Gregory Heights Library</td>
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<td>Border Collie International Performing Canine Team</td>
<td>Tuesday, June 26</td>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
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