



PBS Books - Latest News

MAR
27

PBS Books Launches A National Library Engagement Program

Last Updated by Cheryl Spitale Jones on Apr 02, 2019 at 9:52 am



PBS BOOKS LAUNCHES A NATIONAL LIBRARY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM AFTER LISTENING TO THE VOICES OF LIBRARIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Detroit, MI; March 20, 2019 –

A new nationwide survey by PBS Books reveals a strong interest among libraries in digital and other content that fosters an interest in reading and connects their communities to the world of authors and literature. The Library Engagement Survey was conducted by PBS Books, which since 2014 has engaged a national audience in unique book-related experiences, from coverage of national book festivals to interviews with the world's most important authors, which spark a curiosity in and a lifelong love of reading and learning.

The survey was part of the PBS Books' Library Engagement Program, a new national initiative sponsored by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, to build and enhance working relationships between libraries and their local PBS stations around the love of books and reading.

To determine the best way to serve libraries nationwide, PBS Books held a dozen interviews with librarians in late 2018, and then developed a Library Engagement Stakeholder Survey. The survey received an overwhelming response; nearly 1,000 library personnel from 44 states and Washington, D.C., participated in a survey.

The results are clear; libraries are eager to take advantage of PBS Books programs and trust PBS Books as a partner. According to the survey, 92% of libraries have a social media presence, and a majority said they were interested in having access to quality social media content to share and utilizing an archive of more than 650 high quality digital PBS Books videos. The survey also showed that 70% of libraries participated in activities related to *The Great American Read*, a series that aired on PBS in 2018 and promoted viewer participation. This indicates libraries' interest in utilizing PBS content about books to spark community engagement. Most libraries reported that they would be interested in programs that allowed them to screen PBS shows, to provide digital access to author interviews and other literary content, and to highlight significant things happening at libraries.

Rich Homberg, President and CEO of Detroit Public Television which manages PBS Books, said "This is such an exciting moment for PBS Books. We see all the ways we can strengthen libraries and impact communities across the country. PBS meets our audience in living rooms across the country. PBS Books takes it a step further and goes into their community and meets them in their library. Now, the fun begins."

PBS Books is launching a series of Library Engagement programs based on the feedback from the survey. See more below. To be involved in the Library Engagement Program and partner with PBS Books, visit: www.pbsbooks.org.

Survey Detailed Results

The survey was completed by library personnel in various roles, but the majority work in administration. From 818 discrete zip codes, the respondents reported that 70% of their libraries have 25,000 registered library card users or less, 20% serve between 25,001 and 100,000 registered card users, and less than 10% serve over 100,000 registered card users. Nearly half of all library respondents use the following three Integrated Library System (ILS): SirisDynix Symphony, Innovative iii, and Polaris. More than 80% of libraries reported that General Attendance, Circulation, and Attendance at Special Events and Programs were Important or Very Important metrics to be focused on in 2019.

The majority of survey findings can be grouped into three summary categories: 1) Social Media and Video Content, 2) Libraries Relationships with PBS and *The Great American Read*, and 3) PBS Books and Programming Recommendations.

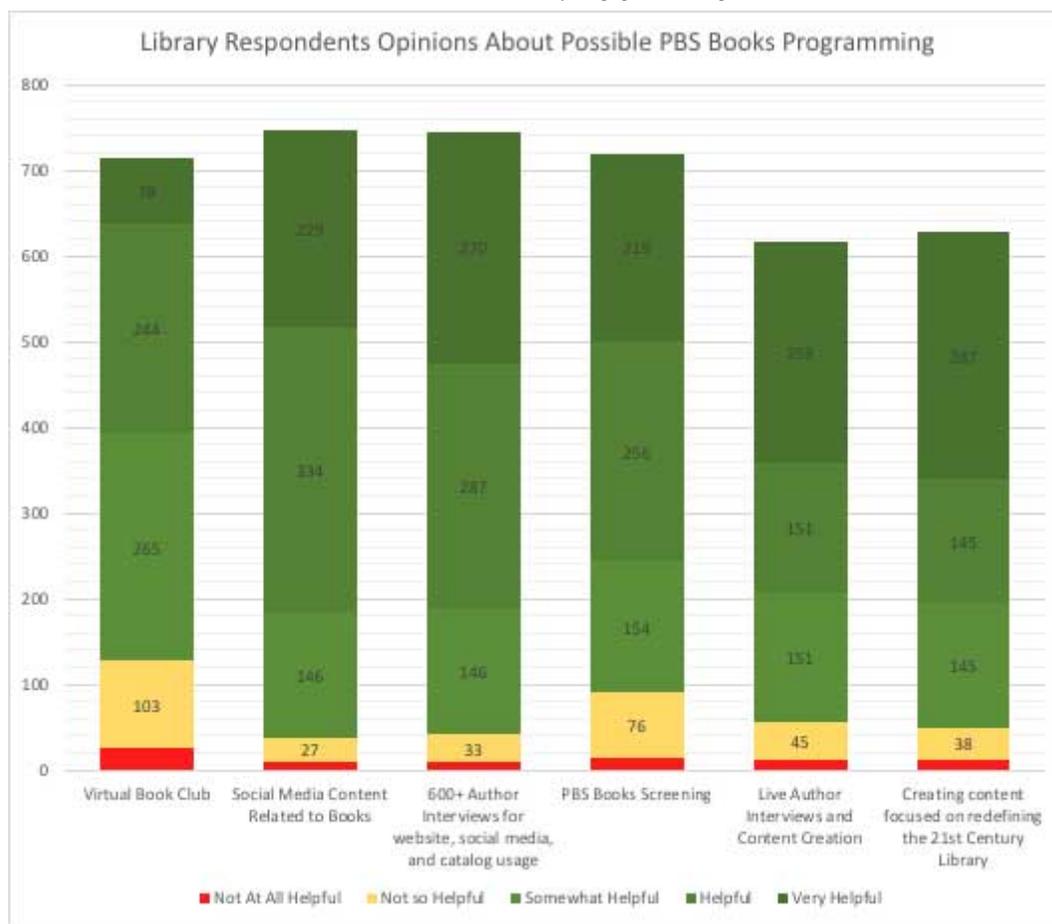
Social media is crucial in today's 21st Century, and in many ways, libraries are at the forefront of the digital age. In fact, 92% of libraries reported having a social media presence, of which 97% use Facebook, 56% use Instagram, and 54% use Twitter. Nearly 70% of libraries post at least several times a week. Approximately 85% of libraries are communicating with their communities using social media weekly. This identifies an opportunity for PBS Books to create quality social media content as a reliable and trusted source for libraries to use.

Video viewing comprises approximately three-quarters of all internet traffic; posting videos is an essential component of a social media strategy. Despite this, more than 55% of the libraries said that they never or rarely create their own video content. This presents another opportunity for PBS Books given that they make "video" book-related content, and have more than 650 videos from

recent national book fairs and festivals. It also means that there is a need to share some of PBS Books' best practices on how to capture digital content.

According to various surveys, PBS and libraries are "trusted" institutions in American society and are both considered shepherds of democracy. Despite their similar traits, less than 15% of libraries have a relationship with their local PBS Station. Of those libraries, 51 different local PBS stations were named, representing 30% of member licensees. In Fall 2018, PBS aired *The Great American Read* (TGAR), an eight-part series with viewer participation to select America's favorite novel from 100 best-loved novels. PBS targeted libraries as a key partner to activate its national audience. TGAR was a tremendous success. PBS Books survey showed that 70% of libraries participated in doing something related to *The Great American Read*. The top three ways libraries utilized *The Great American* was: A Book Display (54%), Social Media Through A Post or Repost (42%), and A Book Checklist (39%). The survey also captured numerous creative ways that libraries offered programs from having voting booths to having patrons dress up like their favorite character at an event.

For the survey, PBS Books developed a possible list of programming based upon interviews with senior library staff across the country; in the survey, libraries were asked if various programming opportunities would be helpful. Overall, an overwhelming majority of libraries reported that all of the programming opportunities proposed by PBS Books would be helpful. **Nearly 70% of libraries reported that producing social media content related to books would be helpful or very helpful;** an additional 18% said it would be somewhat helpful, totaling 86%. **About 7 out of 10 libraries (67%) said that 600+ author interviews, which could be shared on your website, social media, or catalog, would be helpful or very helpful;** an additional 18% said it would be somewhat helpful, totaling 85%. **Nearly 65% of libraries said that creating content focused on redefining libraries in the 21st Century would be helpful or very helpful;** an additional 18% said it would be somewhat helpful, totaling 82%. **On average, more than 6 out of 10 libraries said that creating live author interviews and content creation would be helpful or very helpful;** an additional 18% said it would be somewhat helpful, totaling 82%. See the chart on the below.



PBS is known to be a trusted brand. Showing the important element of “trust” and actual interest that the library respondents have in the work that PBS Books is doing, **42% of survey participants shared their email in order to receive more information about PBS Books.**

Only 25% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were familiar with PBS Books and what it does. Since PBS Books changed its name from PBS Book View Now in November 2017, it now has an opportunity to rebrand itself as it launches its library engagement program.

Library Engagement Programs

In response to the survey results, PBS Books Library Bureau Chief Heather-Marie Montilla said, “We are thrilled to receive so much input from libraries across the country in order to develop a robust program to best serve them. In many ways, libraries are the bedrock of our society, and we look forward to building relationships that strengthen libraries and enhance the important work they do.”

In response to library feedback, PBS Books has developed a multi-faceted Library Engagement Program:

- **PBS Books: Library Showcase (2-3 Minute Highlight on a Library)**

This feature will highlight various aspects of exemplary libraries, illustrating unique things libraries are doing in urban, suburban, town, and rural communities.

- **PBS Books: Public Spaces (2-3 Minute Video Tour of a Library)**

PBS Books will capture these special places through a virtual behind-the-scenes tour in a short video, as part of its *Public Spaces* series.

- **PBS Books Library Stream: Capture Book-Related Content**

The PBS **Books Library Stream** aims to assist libraries in capturing book-related content, helping libraries to amplify their local and national impact through livestream and video creation. In order to accomplish, PBS Books will: 1) create book-related content at libraries, 2) connect local PBS stations with libraries, and 3) develop a best practices tutorial with recommendations of different techniques that can be used by libraries to capture and maximize their local programming.

- **PBS Screening Room**

PBS Books will facilitate PBS national screening events at libraries across the country in partnership with local PBS stations through the **PBS Screening Room**. PBS Books will aim to provide two shows per year prior to their national airing, as well as coordinate live-speakers related to the programming, if available in select markets.

- **PBS Books Station Relations**

PBS Books aims to be a connector for libraries to their local PBS station through **PBS Books Station Relations**. PBS Books will help libraries to craft their conversation, identify the right person to speak to, and provide an introduction.

- **PBS Books List**

PBS Books List is a monthly book list produced by PBS Books to correspond with national PBS programming for adults and children/YA.

- **PBS Books: Social Media Accelerator**

PBS Books has developed a social media strategy in order to offer high quality book-related content to libraries, to engage a national audience, and to build its brand. PBS Books looks to share libraries' social media content through likes, re-posts, and retweets.

- **PBS Books Video Book Club**

Through our revised website, PBS Books is offering options for libraries to utilize our archive of 650+ author interview videos through a *video enhanced book club*.

Components of the above program are being piloted in select cities across the country, while much of the programming is being offered to all libraries across the nation. Libraries interested in receiving free PBS Books resources and in being a Library Partner can [SIGN-UP HERE](#). For questions email hmontilla@pbsbooks.org.

Currently, PBS Books is looking toward year 2 and 3 of its Library Engagement Program; as appropriate funding is secured, PBS Books aims to offer:

- **PBS Books: Book of the Decade**

Leveraging the success of The Great American Read, PBS Books will create an opportunity for people across the country to engage in more PBS programming and vote for the best book of the last decade.

- **PBS Books Master Class**

PBS Books will offer exclusive access to PBS programming with a scholar or expert providing a new examination of the material through a livestream.

- **PBS Books Read Along**

PBS Books will produce a 30 minute livestream show called **PBS Books Read-Along** for libraries to complement current PBS Kids programming; it is aimed at engaging children (ages 2.5 to 5 years of age) in storytime with singing, dancing, and other hands-on exploratory activities.

Survey Methodology

The survey was developed by PBS Books and conducted using web-based tool SurveyMonkey from December 14, 2018 through January 30, 2019. The survey was completed by 952 library personnel throughout the United States, representing the opinions of libraries in 44 states, Washington DC, and Hong Kong. Overall 818 discrete zip codes were reported. There were 15 zip codes reported by respondents that actually have between 2 and 4 libraries, and had between 2 and 4 respondents. Thereby, indicating that the survey results could represent at least 818 libraries and as upwards of 850. The target audience for this survey was public libraries of which there are around 9,000 nationwide, and an additional 7,500 branch buildings. Some school librarians and academic library personnel completed the survey. The survey results are nationally representative of the US public libraries.

About PBS Books

PBS Books engages a national audience in unique book-related experiences that spark their curiosity and encourage a life-long love of reading and learning. As a champion for literacy and community engagement, PBS Books is dedicated to strengthen libraries and local PBS stations, bolstering relationships that create important synergies. Since 2014, PBS Books brings together public media, the publishing industry, and some of the most important voices, influences, and cultural institutions in America today. PBS Books is:

1. A driver of the daily conversation around books, writers, reading, and big ideas;
2. A ready partner for major literary-focused events and organizations;
3. A key conduit to libraries and national and local literacy organizations
4. A connector to important daily and important PBS programs and initiatives.

PBS Books most recently created digital content at the Miami Book Fair in November 2018; it was a huge success with more than 222,000 video views and nearly 1 million social impressions and growing. The coverage was shared in all 50 states and in 26 countries around the world. Through the generosity of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, PBS Books was supported to develop a model library engagement program, utilizing PBS Books and its resources to strengthen libraries across the United States. More information about PBS Books is available at www.pbsbooks.org or by following PBS Books on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



[Download the full report. \(PDF\) \(1.8 MB\)](#)

< previous post

2019 AWP Conference & Bookfair

next post >

Sarah Vowell Speaker Series Live-stream