

## ReadsinMA – Additional Comments

CONCERNS: Most of our patrons did not use the online logging feature. They had difficulty understanding how to access it and often had to consult us to find out their log-in information midway through the summer. We had a really hard time conveying the instructions, despite the ability to e-mail any of the group that had shared addresses with us. There was nowhere to indicate simply that someone had logged ten or more items or hours. The fact that the review field was required in order for items to be saved in a list created frustration for people who just wanted to type a list. We now know that typing anything, including a hyphen or asterisk, would have allowed them to do that, but some just gave up because they couldn't get their kids to say anything about the books. I have more, but you don't want to read a lengthy list, I'm sure, so I'm sending the big ones.

FAILURE: For some reason we had less people choose to do their logging online. Last year we had about 2/3 of those who registered log online this year only about 1/2 of those registered logged online. I still like the idea of the online logging!

FAILURE: For the time and effort it took to set up, I don't think there was enough return. Though I encouraged kids and parents to use the website for reviews and entries, and did an easy drop down for ratings, I still had only three kids take the time to use it. Because none of them opted to share their reviews publicly, I felt it was a negative to have the "no reviews" marker on each of the program sites. In the end everyone seemed to prefer to write the read titles in the paper log. A lot of the information offered to gather on each patron was not really useful to my size of library. The most useful component was the email capacity which I used several times for reminders and got good feedback on. I'm tempted next year to just keep everything on paper cards and gather

FAILURE: I still have difficulty moving around the sites - and help (other than Maureen bless her!!) was hard to get thru Evanced. I'll keep at it. Our branches used it not at all.

FAILURE: It has not caught on with great success at our library for the children's program, though we have had a number of people say they would "check it out." I think that part of this stems from lack of promotion on our end.

FAILURE: It took me a long time to understand and use the software comfortably. I was on Massyac all the time asking questions.

FAILURE: My kids just don't use the computer for summer reading.

FAILURE: No one in my program used it.

FAILURE: Our patrons seem to prefer the paper registrations over on-line registrations.

FAILURE: Staffing constraints make it impossible to monitor the program.

FAILURE: This program was offered, but not used in my branch.

FAILURE: We hardly used it--only to input all registrants. Didn't work with our method of logging. Hard to record how many "days" of reading, without doing a review each time.

FAILURE: With the way the system is set up, however, it is harder to make it clear to users to log both hours and reviews -- many of my teens got frustrated using the review interface.

FAILURE: We offered it, and publicized it, but no one signed up for it.

FAILURE: I did not really use it or promote it. I need a website that is quick and easy for people to use. I lose kids when the sign in is too complicated. I also would like to have PR materials with the information about readsinma.org to make it easy for everyone to use.

FAILURE: I had purged the records from last year but when children tried to register, they some times would pick the same username as last year and couldn't use it, even though the records from last year didn't exist anymore. The other concern that I had was that the set up for prizes is still not working for our library's needs. Last summer, kids were eligible for too many prizes, this summer they weren't ever eligible and we had to look at how much time they had read. Overall though, the online program worked well this year as patrons were used to it or new to the program and hadn't ever used anything else.

FAILURE: We were very sorry not to be able to use it this summer due to staff & budget cuts. Patrons missed it also. Numbers (without it) were way down.

FAILURE: It wasn't very popular. There were so many components of the program that it was hard to get all the different parts across to families. I think the simpler the program is, the better.

FAILURE: Still hard to figure out a way to combine online and paper registration, especially for children

FAILURE: Three signed up on-line. None of these participated.

FAILURE: very little usage

FAILURE: Very low use. We decided to use it at the last minutes so I don't think we promoted it enough and we still kept using paper as well

FAILURE: We did not even go on the site.

FAILURE: We did not have many patrons use ReadsInMa despite the link from our website.

FAILURE: We found the program to be very hard to set up We used the online program as an auxiliary means of registering participants and for record keeping. We inputted all the info.

INSIGHT: A kid doesn't necessarily have to write a book review to get a prize in person and they can jot them down on their paper log as they go on rather than at the computer. On the other hand, it is harder to lose a computer than a log and it is easier to keep track of someone's reading online.

INSIGHT: Fewer teens signed up with online program.

INSIGHT: For a population of our size, registration on line in the library was a problem. Too many people for a couple of computers. At home registration OK. Did not really have enough time to keep up with reviews.

INSIGHT: Great concept but it didn't get as much use as I expected. It was the first year we participated so maybe next year the online usage will go up.

INSIGHT: I did advertise the program on our website and I devoted a whole panel of the summer brochure to registering on-line. I also talked it up to all the patrons who came in and I did a whole Summer Reading talk to all the kindergarten students who come to visit the library on a field trip in June. I send a brochure home with each child.

INSIGHT: I'm vowing to integrate this into our program for 2009. After 2 years, I've got the hang of this now and it's time to add an online component. We are currently in the beginning stages of putting together a proper web site. Things move a bit slower in this small town.

INSIGHT: Last year many registered online but few continued. I think they missed the personal interaction, and decided to emphasize that this year. Seemed to work better for Bedford.

INSIGHT: This was our first year using ReadsInMA.org for children. I only had one parent express concern about it being online. We did have major problems the night of our summer reading sign-up. We had three laptops going and it was extremely slow. People ended up leaving without registering and planned to do it at home. We're not sure if it was the wireless or the website. A teen volunteer sign-up online with no problem right before the start of our children's event. I did like using the program though and I think the more that we use the more people will sign-up. I still am frustrated by the not being able to customize the messages. I think that this makes all of your notices look the same and it is too bad. Overall, I think that this is a great program.

INSIGHT: This year was the first year we used ReadsInMA.org, I think it was a little complicated because it was the first year. The more we used it the easier it became.

INSIGHT: We did not have too many people register on their own. Last year I had more time and added all the participants myself but I could not do that this year.

INSIGHT: We did not put as much into it this year and so it was not as effective for us.

INSIGHT: We found that our participants did not visit the library as much last year with the online component. This year we encouraged them to visit the library and our participation numbers increased tremendously. Last year's total participation was 1505, this year we had a total of 1916 participants.

INSIGHT: Would like a prize inventory component. A negative aspect for us is the lack of personal interaction. Also, the "X" logo reminded some staff of a swastika, and they didn't want to use it. The spelling of expected "X-pect" was also a negative for us.

INSIGHT: \*The library does not have computers for public.

INSIGHT: Several families loved using it. Quite a few started to use it, then stopped and ended up using manual lists. I am not sure why. I thought it was worth the trouble of getting it started. There were some irritating things about it: mostly when people made mistakes on it, they had no recourse except to notify me to readjust things.

INSIGHT: enthusiasm of and personal touch with patrons down

INSIGHT: So far my children seem to prefer filling in their log sheets but I do try to promote the program.

INSIGHT: We did not trust this system this first year we used evanced. Next year?

INSIGHT: We limited the online program so that incentives were not offered but reviews were encouraged and displayed in our youth department. Most families still preferred the paper logs which allowed them to earn prizes and donate 50 cents per hour read to the WolfTalk Educational Foundation ("A One Hour Read For a Wolf in Need").

INSIGHT: We only had 10 sign up for this service even though we explained how it worked to each participant as they signed up. As mentioned previously, we only offered incentives with the paper logs.

INSIGHT: We had some issues with when weeks began and ended. ReadsInMA was Monday to Sunday, we promoted Sunday to Saturday. We'll know better next year.

INSIGHT: Teens had to have e-mail in order to log in.

INSIGHT: Last year I made every one register on line. This year I did not. I had hoped people would remember how to do things but very few did. They forgot the passwords every week. I got very good at resetting them!! Thanks for making the web site so inviting.

OTHER COMMENTS: theme was fun & adaptable.

OTHER USES: We had a database - Amazing Animals- attached to our homepage for ReadsInMA. Kids who used it really had fun. We used paper & online; would like to just use online next year. We plan to use it for other things throughout the coming year.

OTHER USES: Children did not choose to register on their but were entered by a volunteer to produce statistics.

OTHER USES: Many of our patrons used it for info about upcoming events but chose to have their kids use a traditional log to record their books.

OTHER USES: We used the software, but did not use the Wild Reads theme. We used our own.

Our patrons did not like using the online program. They had the choice, but most chose to do it on paper. Many of our patrons did not seem to feel comfortable going online. Whether they were just "lazy" or not comfortable with the technology, or just too busy...I'm not sure.

PRAISE: easier for staff, good for statistics.

PRAISE: Hi my name is Anna McGrath. This is the first time that the Rowley Library has used this program. We found it relatively easy to use. Obtaining information from the program using reports has been easy and informative. I am looking forward to pulling reports that will show us how many hours our patrons read. I have observed that most of our young people are enjoying keeping track of the minutes on line. The ability to review books has been an added bonus and has opened opportunities for us to interact with our patrons in a new way. I am looking forward to using this program and expanding it next year.

PRAISE: I found it easier to keep track of the kids online and the kids really liked putting reviews online.

PRAISE: I like the idea of an online reading program but I had no idea that we had teen participants from Grove Hall until I saw the spreadsheet. Because it's online and because teen prizes are "book bucks", we never actually see the teens in the library. I'm glad they're reading but it would be nice to see them.

PRAISE: I love it for record keeping. It's much easier than having to hand count all the paper registrations.

PRAISE: I loved being able to offer the computer component this summer; some parents and kids really embraced the concept and I really encouraged the kids to write reviews and print out their booklist to show their teachers. Some parents balked saying they wanted to keep the kids away from the computers during the summer. I would like to be able to categorize the reviews so you don't have to scroll through the whole list; maybe next year I will do a junior group (for picture books and early readers) and a chapter book group, but not too sure how to work that. I had problems with the e-mail component; need to figure out what went wrong with that. I think next year I will try to register the kids on the computer, right at the library; hopefully I will have the internet capability on another computer besides the checkout computer. I also hope I can cooperate with the schools more; one school in town has a passport program - so some parents are loathe to add another component to recording reading; however if they turned in their list with reviews of the books they read, along with the passport...perhaps it would be worth something extra for the child. My favorite thing each morning was reading the children's book reviews; my favorite review was from a little boy who said of his book, "I loved every page!"

PRAISE: I loved the on line component!!

PRAISE: Some children/parents definitely took right to it!

PRAISE: Technical support was very good. Kids who registered liked the online routine. Very easy report retrieval. We'll use it next year.

PRAISE: It was an excellent, easy to use program. Great and fast responses from the support staff whenever we needed assistance.

PRAISE: It was easier for staff to manage.

PRAISE: It was great to get some of the older kids involved, but I noticed that logging died-off after the initial excitement passed.

PRAISE: It was okay. The number of kids signing up and the number of kids actually following through with the program was pretty much what was expected.

PRAISE: It went so well, kids would do it from on vacation. (Some of them did so much reading, they never even went swimming.) One girl even reported from Taiwan! I loved reading the reviews the kids wrote.

PRAISE: Many good changes from last year.

PRAISE: Most children enjoyed keeping an online log, and everyone loved the reviews. Many children mentioned that they wished they knew the age of the reviewers.

PRAISE: Mostly our children who used it last year joined and used it online again.

PRAISE: Now that we had a 'dedicated' SRP computer, online use skyrocketed!

PRAISE: Parents and kids liked the idea they could register and create a record of their reading online.

PRAISE: Parents and young readers were able to register easily this year. This was our second year for online registration and everyone was quite eager to use the computer. We observed no hesitation on anyone's part. We only used ReadinMa for registration. Paper logs will always be used for participation purposes.

PRAISE: Patrons appreciated the ability to register for the program and log books on-line. It is extremely helpful for recording statistics.

PRAISE: Patrons still prefer our logs, the paper tracking system, even though I specifically pushed the 4th, 5th and 6th graders to keep track on-line. By the end, only a small number did this all summer long. For reporting purposes, though, it is great.

PRAISE: Sarah was instrumental in getting us online with ReadsInMA.org! She came out to the Millis Library and held my hand as we walked through the steps -- and then, whenever there was a problem (for example, when readers could not log their minutes online) she was able to correct the problem immediately! **BIG SHOUT OUT FOR SARAH -- you're the best!!!**

PRAISE: Several patrons from each of our programs (kids, adults and teens) used the online component only! Several patrons enjoyed writing online reviews. The system was very easy to use, and was consistently "working". I believe there was only one instance where a patron couldn't log on. The reporting function is very nice. Tech support was very helpful and responsive. I REALLY enjoyed the email component to send out event reminders, special announcements etc.!

PRAISE: Some of the children read constantly so that they could log in their hours. The kids enjoyed the on-line reading club.

PRAISE: Some parents and camp teachers used the online component of WildReads at home to look up summer programming at various branches. In the library, we were very busy with books, read aloud, crafts, and outdoor activities in the library park.

PRAISE: Teen program was very successful at using the online program. The Children's program was less so, partly because the online and paper programs didn't mesh well, there was some reluctance on the part of parents to

have children's info online, even though it wasn't public, and because parents rather than kids did the online component, and many were intimidated or not especially computer savvy. When the kids did it themselves they were fine!

PRAISE: The older kids were more interested in doing this. They seemed to be able to do it themselves without any guidance from the librarians.

PRAISE: This was our 1st year to use the on-line registration. Worked well - very easy!

PRAISE: This was our first year using this option and we had 43 kids utilizing this option. We were pleased with site and plan on using it again next year, in conjunction with the paper logs

PRAISE: Those who used it found it easy to do.

PRAISE: Twice as many teens participated this year as compared to last.

PRAISE: Very useful tool

PRAISE: Was wonderful to work with especially when running reports. Plan to use it next year for children as well as teens. Plus it was simple to use for my staff.

PRAISE: Very popular with our patrons, our volunteers, and with us! This was our first time using it and it worked well for us. Adults and teens used the book review segment and really liked it.

PRAISE: We had about a 15 percent increase in use of the online program this year over last summer, up to about 65% of kids who signed up used the online program. The new features added by Evanced made the program even easier to use than last year.

PRAISE: We had more users of the program than ever this year; I'm sure, at least in part, due to the economy.

PRAISE: We only used ReadsInMA this year, and while this might have reduced our total number registered (kids were also keeping a paper log for school), we were able to sell the on-line product for both to many kids and parents who loved it!

PRAISE: We used the online ReadsInMa for as a means for Teens to register online, log their items read over the summer, announce upcoming programs, and submit book reviews. The Teens enjoyed registering online and logging their books. Only three teens wrote & submitted online book reviews.

PRAISE: We were happy with the amount of participation for our first year. I found the program fairly easy to use, once initial setup was done. We loved the online reviews.

PRAISE: We received positive comments regarding patrons' ability to log their own books and read others' reviews. We also noticed that some of the reviews prompted others to request those books. Participants also enjoyed getting immediate feedback regarding the number of books or pages they had read and their eligibility for prizes. We also found that online participation encouraged attendance at story hours and other summer programs. We set up a very basic program for teen use of online reading program registration. It was very easy to use and the teens liked it. It also made prize distribution easy.

PRAISE: We did have one very surprising outcome of being online...we only had a handful of late entries (people coming in after the deadline and final party wanting their prizes) instead of the 20 or so we normally have. I guess computer deadlines are more effective!

PRAISE: I generally really liked the program. My teens especially enjoyed writing reviews online.

PRAISE: I did really like being able to add in catalog links and book covers to the reviews.

PRAISE: Although we used the program minimally, it was very easy to use, and we hope to expand use in the future.

PRAISE: Fun to involve technology and helpful with STATS.

PRAISE: Love it, love it, love it. If we ever lose it, I will be BEYOND upset! Seriously. It has made a huge difference in our summer reading program, especially in attracting teenagers and kids grades 4 and up. Participation from kids grades 4 to 6 is definitely higher than before the online program.

PRAISE: My teen patrons had no problems using the web site - they were completely self-sufficient.

PRAISE: Patrons are warming to it. We have "early adapters" who loved it and others who couldn't be bothered.

PRAISE: The patrons who participated really enjoyed the book review section.

PRAISE: This was our second year and patrons felt very comfortable using the online component. We received positive feedback about recording online and then coming in once a week to "check in". It certainly made it easier for us!

PRAISE: We loved ReadsInMA. Some patrons still do not have at home computers and hesitated.

RECOMMEND: This was our first year using it, so registration was a little slow. The only complaint I received from the teens is that they wish when they entered minutes read, and they got beyond 60 minutes, that it would automatically convert to hours. Our program was set up that hours were primary and minutes secondary.

REQUEST: 148 of our 1,455 participants registered themselves online. We registered the rest online. About 25 children re-registered themselves, after registering here, so we had to continually check for duplicate registrations, and delete them. 213 children kept track of their reading online. At least 6 of these children "cheated," by entering outrageous numbers of hours read per day. So, we had to frequently double-check the log totals. Is there any way to put some kind of message on an individual's record, like "Please see the Children's Librarian before entering any more hours." or "Please do not allow this child to collect prizes before talking to the Children's Librarian."? Also, is there any way for us to re-create our own paper reading log (15-minute squares & 10-hour blocks) for kids to use as part of the online program, rather than entering total number of minutes read per day?

REQUEST: I would have preferred brighter colors.

TRAINING NEEDED: It would be great at the end of the summer to have a way to download all of the reviews so that we could create an archive of book reviews for each summer for teens to refer back to over the year.

TRAINING NEEDED: Also, I would have liked to be able to have more than just two logging types -- I had teens earning a different amount of points for hours spent reading, events attended, and reviews written, but I didn't have an easy way to log all three.

TRAINING NEEDED: my only complaint was that it didn't display what the title of the books were.

TRAINING NEEDED: Plumb Library, a small library, looked to be a very technology savvy library as many of the towns around us did NOT use the system. We only had one small issue with the reviews section, (private vs. public) but it was explained to us thoroughly, we understand it's being tweaked.

TRAINING NEEDED: I attended the workshop, but will have to wait until next year to give it a try.

TRAINING NEEDED: I did not use the program, but saw lots of emails from librarians having problems with different aspects of it.

TRAINING NEEDED: I simply ran out of time to explore it myself and introduce it to others.

TRAINING NEEDED: It would be nice if there was some way of letting the readers know when they have reach their goal and completed the program

TRAINING NEEDED: It would be nice to have a printing format.

TRAINING NEEDED: People were confused about the sign-up part. They did not realize that they had to click a tab first (Children's, Teen, etc.) before clicking "Sign Me Up". This was with written instructions on flyers and even after I put bold red font online instructing them to click a tab first. On a positive note, it was great being able to post messages to the readers and send group emails. The children seemed to love posting reviews also.

TRAINING NEEDED: The http address is too long and difficult for patrons to remember. The site overall was easy to use.

TRAINING NEEDED: The Teen component did NOT go over; will rethink the approach for next year.

TRAINING NEEDED: There was little interest (15) but an increase of 10 over last year, several of those who registered did not log reading time or titles read. Several did not find the box to check about making the reviews public. Perhaps this would be better at the top of the form.

TRAINING NEEDED: This was the first year I did the online - children signed up for the wrong programs - I need to make the ages stand out better

TRAINING NEEDED: This was the first year we offered ReadsInMA online program. Most patrons still preferred to keep track of their reading progress on paper logs. They thought is was more convenient. Being our first year, we saw some unexpected results from our "program set up" choices. Hopefully, we can clear up these issues before next year.

TRAINING NEEDED: We question why children's book ratings could not be viewed by other kids unless they wrote a review. This would be nice for libraries that don't have the time to review reviews.