



PRESS RELEASE

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The New York Public Library and LYRASIS Announce Next Steps in National E-Book Collaboration

Following a nearly two-year collaboration to empower public libraries to have more control over their e-book delivery platforms, both organizations are expanding their efforts while pursuing the mission on two separate tracks.

June 11, 2021 – The New York Public Library (NYPL) and LYRASIS have announced that, following a two-year collaboration to empower public libraries around the country to gain control over their e-book delivery platforms, they will be expanding their efforts on delivering a library driven library empowered ebook platform, pursuing two different opportunities towards the same goal.

The NYPL will continue to improve, enhance, and perfect its e-book reader SimplyE, developed by the Library and released in 2016 to offer the public easy and direct access to browse, borrow, and read hundreds of thousands of free e-books, and libraries the freedom to organize, deliver, and curate their e-collections. During the 2020 pandemic, for example, the NYPL—which has about 250,000 SimplyE users—utilized the app and its flexible curation capabilities to support a virtual book club partnership with radio station WNYC (that generated over 80,000 checkouts in 11 months) and to deliver timely reading recommendation lists (such as the Black Liberation Reading List or 2020 Election Reading list). Currently 250 library systems, including the NYPL itself, use SimplyE, and while all will continue using it, the NYPL will shift its focus on development and on New York patrons (especially considering the new needs of a city coping and recovering from crisis) and will no longer look to grow that number.

LYRASIS, a leading non-profit delivering hosted solutions and technology support to libraries, partnered with NYPL in April 2019 to offer cloud-based hosting to public library systems looking to implement SimplyE, ensuring that libraries large and small could adopt the platform. Still committed to that mission, LYRASIS will continue to engage with libraries across the country and work to make e-reading more accessible, developing its own e-reader utilizing SimplyE's open-source code and offering broad tech support and cloud hosting of the entire platform. About 100 library systems will work with LYRASIS on their new app, which will offer

books from The Digital Public Library of America's (DPLA's) Book Exchange, and for all the other major distributors in the market today.

Robert Miller, CEO of LYRASIS, says, "We are proud of our work with NYPL and DPLA to support public libraries in their missions to bridge the digital divide and connect their patrons and communities with trusted content and knowledge. As home to hundreds of individual library users and five key State Libraries in our phase 1 release, LYRASIS will continue working to develop, enhance and expand adoption for SimplyE/Library Simplified in an effort to increase access to tens of thousands of users. The work we have done together with NYPL to this point has strengthened the SimplyE platform and expanded access to e-books for hundreds of thousands of readers across the country."

"From the beginning, this collaboration was about supporting public libraries and their patrons, and ensuring that free e-books are increasingly accessible to people across the country," said **Tony Ageh, NYPL's Chief Digital Officer**. "We are proud of how far we have come and how much we have learned, and are grateful to our partner LYRASIS for their critical contributions, allowing us to engage hundreds of library systems. While circumstances and priorities have changed for both NYPL and LYRASIS, prompting us to follow different paths, we both still share the same overall goal: to get books in the hands of those who need them. At NYPL, we are excited about our decision, following the 2020 pandemic and the clear and growing need for digital tools, to dive deeper into our SimplyE app, and to ensure that it is the best product possible.

About LYRASIS

LYRASIS, a US-based non-profit membership organization, partners with over 1000 member libraries, archives, and museums to create, access, preserve and manage digital information, while building and sustaining collaboration, and enhancing technology. For more information, please visit www.lyrasis.org.

About The New York Public Library

For 125 years, The New York Public Library has been a free provider of education and information for the people of New York and beyond. With 92 locations—including research and branch libraries—throughout the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island, the Library offers free materials, computer access, classes, exhibitions, programming and more to everyone from toddlers to scholars, and has seen record numbers of attendance and circulation in recent years. The New York Public Library receives approximately 16 million visits through its doors annually and millions more around the globe who use its resources at www.nypl.org. To offer this wide array of free programming, The New York Public Library relies on both public and private funding. Learn more about how to support the Library at nypl.org/support.