

# Massachusetts eBook Pilot Project

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## Press Release

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The Massachusetts Library System (MLS), in cooperation with its vendor partners – Baker & Taylor and BiblioLabs – is delighted to announce the launch of the MA eBook Project. Beginning November 21, 2013, 51 pilot libraries will begin to offer eBooks to their communities for a six-month pilot project to explore different models for eBook lending, different platforms and user experiences. “This is a direct response to our member libraries throughout Massachusetts who have made it clear that eContent is a statewide imperative. This project is our first step aimed at fixing that problem for our entire state and the wide range of libraries we serve,” said Gregory Pronevitz, Mass. Library System Executive Director. “It is heartwarming to see this project launch after so much work from our member libraries and from staff here and at Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.”

**Baker & Taylor** will make more than 3,000 eBooks available to pilot libraries via its Axis 360 digital media circulation platform. Axis 360 is a state-of-the-art digital content circulation content platform. It offers a fully ADA-compliant eBook solution distributing titles in multiple formats including Blio and standard ePub and PDF formats. The Collection Development Task Force can select from more than 500,000 eBook titles via the Title Source 360 acquisition tool. “We are on the cusp of greatly expanded access to eBooks in Massachusetts,” said George Coe, President of Baker & Taylor’s Library & Education division. “We are pleased to lend our experience in collection development, library technology and digital materials to this exciting and worthwhile partnership, and are excited about the breadth of digital content it will bring to all libraries and patrons in Massachusetts.”

**BiblioLabs** will make over 30,000 compelling eBooks and other materials available on an unlimited multi-user basis to pilot libraries via its BiblioBoard platform. BiblioLabs was selected for this project because of its unique model that not only does away with checkouts and waiting lists for eBooks, but features as a publishing platform for libraries with special collections to make those collections easily available to patrons. BiblioLabs offers Massachusetts libraries an innovative and award-winning eBook content platform that gives users the ability to access hundreds of curated collections of books, images, documents, artifacts, ephemera, audio and video related to specific themes. This brand-new multimedia experience is built around high-resolution primary source historical content and a growing library of contemporary publisher content including children’s books, graphic novels, comics and contemporary non-fiction. Users can access BiblioBoard on a web browser, or the award-winning native apps for iPad, Kindle Fire HD, Nexus 7, or Galaxy Tab. Mitchell Davis, an entrepreneur who was also the founder of Amazon’s CreateSpace (formerly BookSurge), is inspired by the spirit of library entrepreneurialism in this project. “We are working with Massachusetts as a true business partner. We are engaging with publishers who want to license content to libraries in a patron-friendly way. We have been pleasantly surprised by the number of publishers who are behind this movement, and who believe this is the future of libraries,” says Davis, founder and Chief Business Officer of BiblioLabs.

The pilot project, involving multi-type libraries, was conceived by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioner's (MBLC) Statewide Resource Sharing Committee to respond to growing interest in the Massachusetts library community to explore new models and to expand the reach of eBooks for Massachusetts library users. Three member-driven task forces representing the 51 pilot libraries are making major contributions to content selection, promotion and sustainability for the pilot project and beyond to statewide eContent efforts. The automated resource sharing networks in Massachusetts have also been essential partners in their work with pilot libraries and the vendor partners on authentication.

The MA eBook Project is made possible through funding from the Mass Library System and through federal funds provided by the Institute for Museums and Library Services (IMLS) and administered by MBLC. MLS received \$150,000 from the IMLS grant to administer the project. MLS is contributing \$165,000 to the total funding available to cover costs for platform fees, content and promotional materials. MBLC has made eBooks and the technology the focus of its FY2015 Legislative Agenda for Massachusetts.

### **About the Massachusetts Library System**

The Massachusetts Library System provides services to nearly 1,700 Massachusetts libraries of all types and sizes throughout the Commonwealth. As an MBLC funded collaborative, it fosters cooperation, communication, innovation, and sharing among member libraries of all types. The Mass Library System promotes equitable access to excellent library services and resources for all who live, work, or study in Massachusetts. To learn more, visit <http://www.masslibsystem.org>.

Contact: Deb Hoadley  
MA eBook Project Leader  
508.357.2121 x309  
[dhoadley@masslibsystem.org](mailto:dhoadley@masslibsystem.org)

### **About Baker & Taylor**

Baker & Taylor, Inc. is the world's largest distributor of books, digital content and entertainment products. The company offers cutting-edge digital media services and innovative technology platforms to thousands of publishers, libraries and retailers worldwide. Baker & Taylor also offers industry-leading customized library services and retail merchandising solutions. Charlotte, N.C.-based Baker & Taylor is majority owned by Castle Harlan Partners IV, L.P., an institutional private equity fund managed by Castle Harlan, Inc., a leading private equity investment firm. To learn more, visit <http://www.btol.com>.

Contact: Jenny Johnson  
Baker & Taylor  
704.998.3190  
[Jenny.Johnson@baker-taylor.com](mailto:Jenny.Johnson@baker-taylor.com)

## **About BiblioLabs**

BiblioBoard® is the PatronsFirst mobile library of digital collections of books, images, articles, audio and video from leading publishers around the world that are curated by subject and accessible from anywhere with no check outs, returns or multi-user limits. BiblioBoard is transforming access to information by providing a world-class mobile and web user experience that thrills library patrons and is sustainable for publishers. To learn more, visit <http://www.BiblioBoard.com>.

Contact: Carolyn Morris  
Vice President Digital Products  
603.244.6925  
[carolyn@bibliolabs.com](mailto:carolyn@bibliolabs.com)  
<http://biblioboard.com/>

## **About the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners**

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) is the agency of state government with the statutory authority and responsibility to organize, develop, coordinate and improve library services throughout the Commonwealth. The Board also strives to provide every resident of the Commonwealth with full and equal access to library information resources regardless of geographic location, social or economic status, age, level of physical or intellectual ability, or cultural background. To learn more, visit: <http://mblc.state.ma.us/index.php>

Contact: Celeste Bruno  
Communications Specialist  
617.725.1860 x 208  
[Celeste.bruno@state.ma.us](mailto:Celeste.bruno@state.ma.us)

## **About the Institute of Museum and Library Services**

The mission of the Institute of Museum and Library Services is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. We provide leadership through research, policy development, and grant making. IMLS supports key issues of national concern. To learn more, visit: <http://www.imls.gov>