**Zip Books Open Forum:**

**Troubleshooting Current Problems due to COVID-19**

**Tuesday, October 20, 2020**

**11 AM – 12:30 PM**

**Chat Notes**

***Discussion on handling Zip Books returns:***

* From Judy : Julie - What did you mean by offering returned books to other ZipBook libraries?
* From msalcido : Hi Julie - How does offering returned books to other ZipBook Libraries work?
* From Monica Wilmot (Placcer County) : @Judy and @msalcido - if you don't add the returned Zip item to your collection you can email the NorthNet ZipBook ListServ the list of your items so other Zip libraries can add the items to their collection. (Hope this is helpful).

[NOTE: The Zip Books listserv is [zipbooks@listserv.plsinfo.org](mailto:zipbooks@listserv.plsinfo.org)]

* From Maria Salcido - RIverside Public Library : Thank you Julie. So how would we ship the items?

[NOTE: Mercy clarified that the shipment of items would be taken care of by the library discarding the item. However, due to the cost and time involved, libraries can use local shipping resources, such as the delivery services provided by their cooperative system. Contact lists by cooperative system can be requested from Mercy so that discards list can be shared within a specific group if preferred. Michael Thompson at Sacramento Public Library also shared that they will use Link+ to send those discard items to other participating libraries. It’s an easy way to move those books around without increasing any expenditures.]

* From Monica Wilmot (Placcer County) : Thanks, Julie. That was helpful. We're about to start up again and adding ZIPBOOK at the beginning of the title seems like it may be a helpful option for us.
* From Monica Wilmot (Placcer County) : Did any of the libraries accept Zip returns through the book drop pre-pandemic? How did it work for you? Any suggestions on best practices?  
  [NOTE: Michael shared that even though they did not officially accept Zip returns through the book drop they still got about a third returned that way. In the email that they send patrons and on the gift receipt they do ask patrons to make sure the gift receipt is visible when returned in the book drops.]
* From Bea Bjoerklund : @Monica: We did not, but people put them there anyway. I actually am really happy about our switch to accepting it there. We now let them know early to wrap them in something and write zip on it (aka the book needs a note on the outside) so the book drop staff can route them to me instead of donations. It's increased our returned items  
  [NOTE: Bea also shared that she started emailing instructions along the lines of “You recently received a Zip Books email, this is how you return it…” and that has helped them with getting more items returned properly.]
* From Monica Wilmot (Placcer County) : Wrapping them is a great idea. We're planning on adding them to the ILS and having the ISBN as the temporary barcode - hopefully that will help circ staff be able to check if it's Zip or donation. <- That's the thought anyway.
* From Mary Alvarez-San Benito County Free Library : Regarding the lost Zip Books: We here temporarily stopped accepting donations so that there is no mix up with returned Zip Books.
* From Bea Bjoerklund (SBPL) : @ Mary - We're not accepting donations. That is not stopping people from putting donations in there
* From mthompson : I've asked our branches to send most donations my way and we'll review it before handling as a donation
* From mthompson : We are not accepting donations either.
* From Jon Andersen - Ontario City Lib. : We attempt that too, but not all purchases come with the gift slip option depending on the source. We tell people to return them directly to a staff member now. (We've opened by appointment since mid July)
* From Mary Alvarez-San Benito County Free Library : Yes, I realize that. Fortunately, there are not as many donations being dropped off as before. We are although a smaller community and word of mouth helps with communicating that we are not accepting donations. :)
* From Bea Bjoerklund (SBPL) : I've received books with the gift slip inside them before, but those frequently get overlooked in the return and end up in donation anyway.
* From Monica Wilmot (Placer County) : Julie - how large were the envelopes you used?  
  [NOTE: Julie indicated that they were pretty large plastic mailing envelopes that they found on Amazon, about 8 or 10 by 15 inches so most of the books ordered will fit in them. For those that don’t, patrons will usually wrap the package around the item using a rubber band. They’re currently working on figuring out a way to get those envelopes to patrons but for now they’ve been asking patrons to label their returns as Zip books.]
* From tjohnson : Great idea about using envelopes, Julie.

***Discussion on wrapping up Zip Books programs:***

* From Margaret Thordsen : I'm very interested to hear how everyone else is planning to graciously wrap up the program. Has anyone else given some thought to this?

[NOTE: Mercy shared that the Zip Books Administrative team is also working on finalizing procedures to help libraries with this and will hopefully be sharing that with everyone soon. Libraries are encouraged to also explore if it’s possible to continue their programs by finding other funding sources or partnering with local programs.]

* From Mary Alvarez-San Benito County Free Library : Great question @Margaret Thordsen! I am curious too
* From Katie (Placentia Library) : I can share what we have done.  
  [NOTE: Katie shared how they combined their Zip Books request form with their library’s [“Tell Us What to Buy” form](https://www.placentialibrary.org/tell-us-what-to-buy), which gave them the freedom to determine if a request should be processed through Zip Books or another means. This would stay the same even when the program ended.]
* From Katie (Placentia Library) : We changed our information on line.

[NOTE: Mercy also suggested using social media or your notification emails to give patrons an early heads up that the program will be ending in June. Siskiyou County also makes their allocation known on their website so patrons are always aware of the funding availability throughout the year and know when it’ll be put on hold.]

***Other Questions:***

* From dtaylor : Our Cataloger here was wondering why DVD are not aloud. We have patrons that don't read but love watching movies and we don't have a lot of those.  
  [NOTE: Mercy clarified that this is a policy set forth by the State Library and that DVDs is not part of the original vision for the program. This is unlikely to change given that the program will most likely be ending in June. However, if libraries are able to supplement their Zip Books program with local library funds, they are welcome to expand their program parameters to allow DVDs so long as you indicate
* From Judy : Will the recording link be sent to everyone? I would like to share with other staff.
* From C.ngiddens : Will all listserve participants have access to the recording? My employee who works most with ZIP books was unable to attend today and she really needs to hear this. When will that be coming? Thanks.  
  [NOTE: Mercy will be sending out the link to the meeting recording later this afternoon or tomorrow morning. This and the links to previous session recordings will also be made available on our Zip Books website under the Resources section.]
* From Fiona (she/her) : We're in a similar position to Sacramento (the program has become wildly popular since the beginning of the pandemic and we will run out of funds before the end of the program year). Is there any chance of getting additional funds like FY19-20?  
  [NOTE: Mercy clarified that at this point we do think we’ll be able to provide supplemental funding to libraries, but this is not generally done until the Spring once we have a better idea of where the overall program budget stands. The Zip Books Administrative team is still working on how to streamline the process and the finalized details will hopefully be shared in the next month or so.]
* From Jon Andersen - Ontario City Lib. : I forget if it was Julie...someone mentioned the Amazon chrome extension...can you explain what that extension does with regards to the invoices/reports?  
  [NOTE: Mercy indicated that the extension is just another way to generate the Order History report. Instructions are included in the monthly email but you would need to use the Google Chrome browser and download the extension. If you find that recent orders aren’t included in the report, then you may need to log out of your Amazon account and clear your cookies, then log back in and try it again.]

***Other Suggestions:***

* From Mary Alvarez-San Benito County Free Library : What type of social media is being used to advertise Zip Books? I would suggest creating a Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and maybe have an employee create a Snapchat to post photographs/flyers
* From Mary Alvarez-San Benito County Free Library : We have an Outreach Coordinator that posts all of our programs and we try to share these posts throughout on our personal accounts to reach even more patrons. It definitely helps!