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# News Release For Immediate Release

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## State Library Board Makes \$100,000 Grant for Downloadable E-books Oregon Digital Library Consortium will provide e-books on the Library2Go website

Salem—The State Library Board of Trustees has awarded a \$100,000 grant to the Oregon Digital Library Consortium to purchase an “opening day collection” of e-books that Oregonians will be able to check out and download in early 2010. The Consortium is made up of member libraries from throughout Oregon and makes available the Library2Go digital library (<http://library2go.lib.overdrive.com>) to about 3 million Oregonians from their local public or community college library website. Currently Library2Go offers downloadable audio books and videos for adults and children. The Consortium will match the grant from the State Library with \$26,000 from their own budget. About 5,000 e-books will be purchased initially, with more purchased after the opening day collection is established.

The e-books will be in the EPUB format which is quickly becoming the standard format for e-books. They can be read using a Sony Reader and many of the new e-book readers that are being introduced, with the exception of the Amazon Kindle, which can only read books purchased from Amazon. Library cardholders from participating public and community college libraries will be able to go to the Library2Go website, “check out” the e-book to their computer, and transfer it to their e-book reader. When the loan period is up, the e-book expires from the computer and is available for someone else to check out from their Library2Go site.

“E-books are here, and libraries don’t want to be left behind in being able to offer this exciting new format,” said Oregon Digital Library Consortium Chair Heidi Nowak, librarian at Klamath County Library. “More and more library users are going to want the ease and convenience of downloading their books. New screen technology makes e-books much easier to read than reading off a computer screen, and you can even enlarge the print if you need to.”

The lowest priced e-book readers, like the Sony Reader Pocket Edition, begin at about \$200, and lower priced readers are expected to hit the market next year. State Librarian Jim Schepke is serving on a task force of state librarians exploring how public libraries can purchase low cost e-book readers that could be loaned to library users who can’t afford to buy one. “Libraries have always provided all formats of media to everyone, regardless of their income,” said Schepke. “We’d prefer that everyone have the option to check out e-books from their public library, whether they can afford their own e-book reader or not.”

E-books offer a lot of advantages to libraries. They cost less than hardback books (they currently average about \$12 each). They never wear out. They can’t be stolen and have no late fees. Library users check out their e-books to their own computer and they are returned automatically, saving staff time. They are also a greener alternative, because trips to the library can be reduced, and the books themselves do not have to

be printed and transported. Another advantage is that libraries can pool their collection budgets, like the members of the Oregon Digital Library Consortium do, to share one collection that can be made available to all patrons. This makes e-books an affordable option for smaller libraries that can share the cost of the collection with larger libraries, and make the same large collection available to their patrons.

The Oregon Digital Library Consortium will be receiving the grant from the State Library in early 2010 and will begin to select and purchase the collection early in the year. They hope to have the opening day collection available by sometime in March.