



SYSTEM DATABASES SURVEY REPORT

Report for Member Libraries

Date: August 22, 2025

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from our mini survey on System-provided databases, conducted among OWWL member libraries. The survey evaluated the perceived value and funding priorities for four key databases: Consumer Reports, Mango Languages, ASL Inside, and Kanopy. We received responses from **34 member libraries** between August 13-21, 2025, providing valuable insights into database usage patterns and future planning considerations.

Survey Overview

- **Survey Period:** August 13-21, 2025
- **Total Responses:** 34 member libraries
- **Response Method:** Online survey via Google Forms
- **Databases Evaluated:** Consumer Reports, Mango Languages, ASL Inside, Kanopy

Key Findings

1. Database Value Perceptions

Kanopy emerged as the most highly valued resource, with 41% of respondents rating it as "Essential" and 44% as "Useful" (85% positive rating overall). This streaming service clearly resonates with patron needs.

Consumer Reports shows strong utility with 35% rating it "Essential" and 47% "Useful," though 12% of respondents were not familiar with the resource.

Mango Languages received consistent positive feedback, with 18% rating it "Essential" and 62% "Useful," indicating broad but moderate appreciation.

ASL Inside had the highest unfamiliarity rate at 21%, with those who knew it splitting between "Essential" (18%) and "Useful" (47%).

2. Promotion Patterns

Most libraries (56%) promote these databases "Occasionally," while 32% do so "Regularly (monthly or more often)." Only 12% promote them "Rarely," suggesting room for improvement in outreach efforts.

3. Funding Priorities and Sustainability

When asked about investing their own funds:

- **Consumer Reports:** 32% would prioritize funding, 41% neutral, 26% would not prioritize
- **Mango Languages:** 26% would prioritize, 47% neutral, 26% would not prioritize
- **ASL Inside:** 21% would prioritize, 44% neutral, 35% would not prioritize
- **Kanopy:** 44% would prioritize funding, making it the top priority for independent investment

4. Additional Database Requests

Libraries identified several desired additions:

- **Newspapers.com** (4 libraries)
Notes: Investigated in 2024. Low library interest and high cost made subscription unfeasible.
- **Ancestry.com / Genealogy resources** (3 libraries)
Notes: The System currently subscribes to Ancestry.com. Additional local history resources are available at [OWWL Local History Resources](#).
- **LinkedIn Learning** (2 libraries)
Notes: Ron will review pricing options for this resource.
- **Hoopla Streaming Service**
Notes: Previously investigated; low library interest and high cost prevented adoption.
- **Resources for Homeschoolers and Educators**
- **Music Streaming Options**

Detailed Analysis

Database-by-Database Breakdown

Consumer Reports

- Strong value recognition (82% positive ratings)
- Mixed funding commitment (32% would independently fund)
- Comments highlight cost-effectiveness concerns and patron demographics
- Several libraries noted patrons' excitement when learning about online access
- One library mentioned contract renegotiation hopes before discontinuation

Mango Languages

- Consistent moderate value (80% positive ratings)
- Lower independent funding priority (26%)
- One suggestion to consider switching to Duolingo
- Noted as beneficial educational resource

ASL Inside

- High unfamiliarity (21% not familiar)
- Strong value among those who know it (65% positive)
- Lowest independent funding priority (21%)
- Suggests need for better promotion and awareness

Kanopy

- Highest overall value rating (85% positive)
- Strongest funding commitment (44% would independently fund)
- Multiple comments about streaming popularity
- Mentioned as more popular than other services

Promotion and Awareness Challenges

Several key themes emerged regarding promotion:

- Libraries struggle to ensure all patrons know about available resources
- Integration challenges with the OWWL catalog
- Patrons often subscribe to commercial alternatives (Babbel, other streaming) unaware of free library options
- Suggestion for better integration within Evergreen catalog
- Need for ongoing staff training and resource awareness

Financial Considerations

Multiple libraries expressed budget concerns:

- Smaller libraries indicated these resources would be unaffordable without System funding
- Several noted that additional funding would significantly impact their budgets
- Strong appreciation for the cost-effectiveness of System-wide purchasing
- Recognition that these databases represent excellent value through collective purchasing

Conclusion

The survey results highlight both the value and challenges of providing shared digital resources across the OWWL Library System. Kanopy and Consumer Reports stand out as the most widely appreciated databases,

with strong perceived value and notable willingness among libraries to support them independently. Mango Languages and ASL Inside show meaningful but more moderate use, suggesting their future may depend on stronger promotion and clearer alignment with community needs.

A recurring theme is that awareness is often the limiting factor. Many libraries acknowledged that patrons simply don't know these resources exist or default to commercial alternatives. To address this, member libraries can take several concrete steps to strengthen the return on investment from these shared resources:

- **Enhance Promotion Efforts:** Increase promotion frequency, particularly for ASL Inside, which shows high unfamiliarity rates. Regular monthly promotion can improve awareness and usage.
- **Staff Training:** Provide staff refreshers on available databases, ensuring staff remain confident in recommending and demonstrating these tools.
- **Targeted Outreach:** Direct promotion toward user groups most likely to benefit from each resource.
- **Integration with Patron Interactions:** Actively highlight databases when patrons inquire about or mention purchasing commercial alternatives.

If libraries commit to these actions, the OWWL Library System will continue funding the current set of databases for at least one additional contract year, with another evaluation to follow. This approach ensures equitable access, maximizes System-wide investment, and gives libraries the opportunity to demonstrate the full potential of these shared resources.

Ultimately, the survey underscores the importance of System-funded databases in expanding access, reducing duplication of costs, and supporting diverse patron needs. With stronger promotion and engagement at the local level, these resources can continue delivering high value for libraries of all sizes.