

**Report of the Digital Content Working Group to the ALA Executive Board
Annual Conference June 2021
Submitted by Kelvin Watson and Leah Dunn, co-chairs on June 17, 2021**

This marks the end of the two-year appointment for the members of the ALA Digital Content working group. During its inaugural appointment period, libraries saw a worldwide major disruption of access to print and electronic library resources and unprecedented demand for those resources. The working group pivoted to capitalize on the immediate need for change brought into higher visibility by the events surrounding the pandemic.

As a result, The Digital Content Working Group position paper, [“The Need for Change: A Position Paper on E-Lending by the ALA Joint Digital Content Working Group”](#) was published by ALA on June 1, 2021. It was accompanied by a [press release](#) from the ALA office and it was also picked up as an article [“ALA Working Group Calls for Change in the Library E-book Market”](#) by Publisher’s Weekly in their industry news section. It was also published as the article, [“Waiting in vain: The behind-the-scenes challenges that impact your ability to access ebooks and other digital content from your library”](#) in [ilovelibraries.org](#). The working group is currently also fielding questions from other interested media outlets such Public Libraries Online.

In addition to the position paper, the Digital Content Working Group continues to reach out and collaborate with other ALA affiliates and advocacy groups. It shared its work with the Core Ebooks Interest Group in February 2021. It also collaborated with PLA on a letter to aggregators on ebook lending models that was sent to publishers on June 2, 2021.

Co-chairs Kelvin Watson and Leah Dunn would like to thank the [working group](#) for forging ahead during the challenging circumstances under which the working group had to focus its efforts in the midst of dramatic and quickly changing circumstances in libraries and the publishing industry. It would especially like to thank Michael Blackwell and Alan Inouye for consistently keeping the position paper project on schedule. If ALA would like the working group to move forward, we would particularly endorse Michael Blackwell as someone who could transition easily into a co-chair role for the working group. Next steps would include actively engaging in conversations with the Big 5 publishers as well as streaming media publishers, particularly in light of the recent acquisition of Kanopy by Overdrive.