Digital Books Take Roots in a Huge Truck

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Article published on December 3rd 2011 | Book Marketing

More than 75,000 people have joined e-book readers community, thanks to a huge 74-foot, 18-wheel tractor-trailer. The project called Digital Bookmobile moves coast to coast to promote downloadable eBooks, audiobooks, music, and video.

The Digital Bookmobile is operated by OverDrive - a leading full-service digital distributor of eBooks, audiobooks, music, and video. Founded in 1986, the company is based in Cleveland, OH. The project is intended to promote downloadable eBooks and audiobooks from the library to community members. It is hosted by individual public libraries in support of their download services.

This nationally touring vehicle is a high-tech update of the traditional bookmobile that has served communities for decades. Semi-tractor trailer vehicle is 8â€™ 6â€• wide, and 13â€™ 6â€• tall. Itâ€™s equ onboard broadband Internet connections, six interior PC computer stations, four exterior PC computer stations, one Mac, high-definition televisions and a Gadget Gallery with eight high-tech portable devices for demonstrations. Fully deployed, the clear set-up area needed is approximately 74â€™ long and 23â€™ wide.

According to the project team members, in the beginning, many visitors did not know what an eBook even was. Now, after three years of being on the road, many people are bringing their own devices and asking sophisticated questions about the process.

There is no cost for the Digital Bookmobile. Visitors can experience all the exhibits for free. Plus the digital downloads from the library are also free. The e-book truck travels with a knowledgeable team of digital library specialists. Each team member can help answer questions or perform demos of the service in a friendly, enthusiastic manner.

Project managers consider the best location to host a Digital Bookmobile event is at the host public library or school. They encourage to choose this location as it allows to be near DBâ€™s main target audiences â€“ library customers, library staff, and students.

The maximum number of attendees on the Digital Bookmobile has been experienced during the National Book Festival. It has had an average of 2,500 visitors in one day.

OverDriveâ€™s representatives say there isnâ€™t a specific geographic area or city that has a higher interest in the Digital Bookmobile. With the surge in eBook usage and mobile devices, all institutions are interested in raising the awareness of borrowing eBooks and more from the library.

The objective of Digital Bookmobile events is to increase new users and circulations through coordinated activities. Organizers seek to schedule events in conjunction with other planned library programs, such as book fairs and reading festivals. This should maximize patron traffic and increase community awareness about their digital media collection. Therefore, events do not have a strict schedule as the supplemental programs and events will vary from each location.

At this time, OverDrive is planning to continue the project through 2012.

Article Source:

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Article Keywords:
digital bookmobile, overdrive, ebook, library

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