



CASE STUDY

Ride & Read initiative brings BiblioTech to the riders of San Antonio.

Bibliotech Digital Library is the first all-digital public library in the US and has been open since 2013. Bibliotech selected cloudLibrary™ by bibliotheca for a partner to provide quality digital content when launching this unique community hub. The following is an interview with Laura Cole, BiblioTech Administrator, on how they use the unique features of cloudLibrary™ to reach more people in the community.

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cloudLibrary™
by bibliotheca



Laura Cole
BiblioTech Administrator



easily access digital content



download and sync is seamless

2013

2015

2017



first branch opens



second branch opens



third branch to open

38,334,650
Total ridership
VIA transit for FY 2016



3 military base libraries



58 middle and high schools



jury room of courthouse



county jail and detention center



future partnerships



BiblioTech
First all-digital library in the United States



VIA
City of San Antonio Public Transit System

6



cloudLibrary™ kiosks in VIA transit stations
+ 6 additional planned for 2017

350,000

circulated eBooks

100,000

registered users

328

NEW patron sign-ups in four short months

percentage of total new users signed up via kiosks

8%

VIA onboard Wifi access

Tell us about the Ride&Read program.

BiblioTech and VIA Metro Transit partnered to bring Bexar County's all-digital public library to the traveling public with the new Ride&Read program. This new partnership brings VIA on board with BiblioTech's mission to enhance education and literacy, promote reading as recreation, and equip residents with necessary tools to thrive in our modern landscape. cloudLibrary™ iOS kiosks were installed at six VIA transit and information centers throughout 2016, with an additional six planned for 2017. The on-board Wi-Fi access on the buses allows riders to easily download and read on-the-go, without the need to visit the physical library. VIA determined which stations were most heavily trafficked and had the best space for the service. VIA knew the areas where they wanted to increase and encourage ridership and benefited from this partnership with press attention within the community as well as inside the transit world.

Ride&Read is exciting because it transforms the notion of a bookmobile. You don't sit around and wait for the bookmobile, the bookmobile becomes a part of your everyday commute. Think about how transformative that can be for a community, when they do not have to go anywhere for an education. Education is in front of them all the time.

Hard work and communication brought it all together.

Having cloudLibrary™ discoveryTerminals installed in many locations throughout the community, we knew one of the hindrances of spreading more kiosks across the county was that people needed to be able to sign up for immediate access. We were fortunate that at the same time we were talking with VIA about the Ride&Read program, bibliotheca was rolling out the patron self-registration functionality directly from the cloudLibrary™ app. This now opened many more opportunities for us, because we could attract and instantly serve new users on-the-go. bibliotheca was also working on the iOS kiosk license that could keep the app opened in full screen on an iPad and allowed for registration, browsing and downloading on the spot. We worked with a vendor named Armodilo to select a highly secure iPad kiosk that would be ideal for well trafficked public transit stations. The timing was perfect for us.

"The concept for BiblioTech has always been to get the library out to where the people are instead of getting people into the library."

"The overarching goal for BiblioTech is to make the library inescapable. We want to make the library part of people's everyday experience - something they use so frequently, they start to take it for granted, such as a quick visit to Starbucks."

What has the outcome been so far?

We installed the first three iOS cloudLibrary™ kiosks in transit stations in September 2016 and an additional three in December 2016. So far, we've had over 328 new patrons sign-up for a library card in just a few short months, not including patrons who registered through the cloudLibrary™ app. This accounts for 8% of our total new users signed up with BiblioTech, which is very exciting to see this early in the program adoption. I expect those numbers to build exponentially as we start to roll out more kiosks in the community. These numbers indicate huge potential in this program from my perspective.

I'm so grateful to bibliotheca for the design of the cloudLibrary™ platform. The process to download books and to access materials is so easy and seamless. We even had a patron call the branch from the bus because he was so excited to be able to check out books from the library while he was on his morning commute. Stories and experiences like that warm my heart. That's exactly what we want. We want to make it easy for people to read. That's going to build up and change who we are as a community.

What challenges or hiccups did you encounter?

This solution is not a set-it-and-forget-it project. They do require regular maintenance and service checks for the iPads. Some of the factors are out of our control and are down to the Wi-Fi service inside the transit stations, but an interruption in service has been very minimal as we ventured into this new service offering.

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What advice would you give to other libraries considering this type of partnership?

- | Make sure that you have a good relationship with your community partner.
- | Be sure to have a clear understanding of who you're dealing and what you want to achieve through the partnership.
- | Make sure you both have something to gain, so when you put some skin in the game, you're prepared to invest in this partnership because you know the outcome is going to be beneficial.
- | We executed an informal letter of agreement on the partnership to make sure we both understood our mutual responsibilities and that we'd both be able to back out if we didn't feel it was working out.

What do you look for in a partnership?

BiblioTech has the tendency to look at unlikely partners. They might look unlikely at first, but the fact of the matter is that there are a lot of different entities in our community that have an interest in having a well-read population. We will continue to look for those partnerships and find the right people; we do not need to do everything all by ourselves. Because we do not have a lot of extra money floating around to achieve some of our goals, we realize there are other organizations out there that have similar goals in mind to partner with. While we might have the manpower and infrastructure to provide these digital services, other organizations may have a way to get the money to invest. With so many partnership opportunities out there, it's just a matter of taking them on one at a time.

How BiblioTech got started.

My team and I were charged with exploring what an all-digital public library might look like. When I started investigating the public use of digital resources at libraries around the country, I heard similar responses. They would say that people really like the digital services, but they just don't know they are there or that their digital collections and services were not promoted heavily enough. Realizing that these were things that could be addressed, we moved forward.

I made calls to library vendors to see who would be interested in helping us build the first all-digital public library in the US. Some eBook vendor responses were not helpful and questioned our ability to pull this off, but luckily the cloudLibrary™ team responded to



Laura Cole, along with other library and community members celebrate the opening day of Ride & Read.

this challenge with enthusiasm and genuine interest. After going through the RFP process, we selected cloudLibrary™ as the clear fit for our mission and we've been truly satisfied ever since.

We opened our first branch in 2013 in a low-income section of San Antonio where digital access was very limited. Our second branch opened in 2015 and a third branch will open in the summer of 2017. Given the versatile nature of digital resources, we've also partnered with key players in the community to connect with users in new ways. We offered access to the BiblioTech digital collection at 3 military based libraries, and the central jury room of the courthouse. We have outreach programs at 58 middle and high schools, as well as the county jail and the juvenile detention center. Since opening in 2013, we've circulated close to 350,000 eBooks and we have more than 100,000 patrons.

Resources:

Via Metropolitan Transit, San Antonio, Texas website. *Ride&Read* program.
<http://www.viainfo.net/BusService/BiblioTech.aspx>

BiblioTech Digital Library, Bexar County, Texas. Website.
<http://bexarbibliotech.org/index.html>

cloudLibrary™ by bibliotheca, Website.
<http://www.bibliotheca.com/cloudlibrary>

