



Customer Comments

February, 2018

The following comments were received by the Library during the month of February, 2018. Where the customer requested a personal reply by phone or email, it was provided. Customer comments and responses are posted on the Library's website.

Port Angeles

Comment: I just had a great experience today with the staff showing me how to check out items without my library card handy. I had gotten my items, when all of a sudden, it hit me; it would be awesome if the library had a bottle filling station!

Response: Thanks for your kind remarks. We're happy to say that, thanks to a generous donation, the PA library be installing a water bottle filling station later in 2018.

Received by e-mail

Comment:

I am an avid user of the NOL's system and utilize the interlibrary loan service extensively. You provide a great service.

One item I would like to point out. The NOL's bar code stickers appear to be placed at random on the back of the book cover often covering important text that would be valuable to the reader. I just finished a book that had a wonderful quote by James Baldwin completely covered by the bar scan sticker. I was tempted to peel the sticker off so I could access the quote.

Are the people applying the bar code stickers not literary people? Are they not given direction as to what area of the back cover would be most appropriate to place the sticker in order to not cover up important text? This appears to be a problem with many of the books I borrow from the library. Please respond to this request with what corrective action the library may consider.

I fully support NOL's and I am a supporter of friends of the library as well in Sequim and Port Angeles. Thank you and I look forward to your response.

Response:

Thanks for your interest in this complex area of materials processing. We realize that the placement of barcodes on items may look random, but there is actually a lot of thought behind it, and a lot of effort goes into optimizing access to cover information – within the many, very significant constraints that exist. Here's some of the factors that have to be considered:

For the convenience of the patrons and staff who must locate the barcode in order to checkout materials, we endeavor to be as generally consistent as possible in affixing barcodes, so that they are always in a familiar place. We need to avoid placing the NOLS barcode too close to the publisher's barcode, as this leads to a lot of confusion for customers using self-checkout, often resulting in materials not getting properly checked out. So the generally consistent location we've chosen is on the back of the item near the top right.

In the past, when the library's automated self-checkout system was originally installed, barcodes had to be uniformly placed in a very precise location to ensure readability by the scanners; a template was actually used to make sure the barcode was in exactly the position required. As the automated system evolved, the scanners became more flexible and the template was dropped from use, although many of the items barcoded using the template still remain in circulation.

The Library's current practice is to continue placing the barcode on the back of the item, as close to the historical (template) location as possible, while making every effort to not obscure important text or other information. Due to the limited amount of "real estate" on the back of most library books, this can be quite challenging. For smaller materials, space is at an even higher premium. There are also other information access priorities that need to be considered. For instance, is it better if readers can read jacket "blurbs" or see the author's picture? (NOLS generally prioritizes synopsis information on materials over items like author pictures, praise comments, or other quoted text). Finally, barcode placement also has to accommodate various processing requirements. For example, the barcodes cannot be in the way of other library stickers, spine labels, or tape, and can't obscure publishers' barcodes (which staff need to be able to access).

Library workers are most definitely literary people! As readers ourselves, and in the interests of great customer service, we take barcode placement seriously.

(The obscured quote the customer was interested in reading was provided).

Comment:

Suggestion - I love that you have gear that people can borrow. I saw that you have telescopes, but no microscopes. My kids would love to be able to look at cells of things they find, and I'm sure other kids would, too. Is that something the library could acquire?

Response:

At the moment the library is pretty much at capacity with regard to the number of cool things we offer for checkout - things are much more complex and costly than books to acquire, process, store, and circulate.

We agree that microscopes would be great – in fact they are one of the top 5 or so favorite items on the future NOLSGear wishlist. (In the meantime watch for some interesting checkout-able musical instruments coming out later this year. . .)