

Racine Public Library Report for April 2026 Board Packet

Executive Director's Report - March

Prepared by Nick Demske

Spring arrived last month and the library is full of new life to celebrate. March continued--like February--to be a month of big challenges, but a month of major wins as well.

This library is like a family, and with that we get the joys of family and the challenges, too. It was a month full of **significant payroll and HR problems**. We've started to have in-person meetings with both departments and are actively resolving the issues that emerged. It was a month that started out with a continued spike (from late February) of **patron incident reports**. We had to close a few hours early one Friday because of **a major wind storm that knocked the power out** for nearly the entire downtown neighborhood. Lizzie and the whole staff did a fantastic job on communicating and following our **newly approved emergency procedures for power outages**, and it was great to have them handy.

Three days later, **half the state got hit by a blizzard**. While many libraries in our system closed for the day--especially libraries in smaller communities that don't have the plows and infrastructure we have in Racine--enough staff members managed to dig themselves out of the snow to come here and **keep the building open** for the public. Which was good, because we saw a lot of activity that day--in part, no doubt, because nearly everywhere else had closed. **Enormous thanks to those staff members** who came in that day and kept the organization running, even during the storm.

Despite these challenges, though, the RPL continued achieving fantastic things for our community. Our **3rd annual Digital Literacy Fair**, in conjunction with around 18 community partners, took place last month, drew in over twice the amount of people who came last year (150+), and was by all accounts a huge success. Our **seed library** opened for the season! The RPL hosted a **large community meeting** which represented the first in-person gathering towards getting the **Boys and Girls Club** a presence in Racine. Many important community leaders were present, as well as local and national Boys and Girls Club leaders. The event was organized by a young community leader, **Nalah McWhorter**, and one of the results of the evening was a feasibility study which is now being conducted for this effort, and should be completed mid May.

Our **Participatory Defense Hub** got some fantastic press coverage, including both an audio spot and an online article featuring the great leaders of the hub and one of their success story cases. After months of being closed for a refresh, **our sensory room was reopened**. I happened to know a local journalist would want to do a story on that, so I reached out to him and connected him with **Ashley, our social worker, and Keiko, our head of youth services**, and **an article** highlighting the reopening was published **in the Racine County Eye** (it was published Apr 1, so we will include it in next month's press highlights).

Beyond these wins right here for our community, **I was also honored to be chosen as one of two library workers in the whole state to represent Wisconsin in a lobbying effort in DC** last month organized by the national organization **COSLA (the Chief Officers of Library Agencies)**. My lobbying partner and I visited the offices of 4 House Reps and both Senators to advocate for support of the **Institute of Museum and Library Services**, as well as the **Library Services and Technology Act**

Maybe most importantly, in March we were able to organize **a retreat for all the supervisors in the organization** (there's 10 of us total), the first time this has happened since at least prior to the pandemic. We organized this retreat--which was held at OS Projects art gallery downtown--in large part because we have at least **two supervisors retiring this year---Chris Tobias, our head of circulation, tech services and extension; and Corey Hayslett, our bookmobile supervisor**. Chris will have retired after 38 years with the RPL before you all even read this report. His last day is April 10. Corey will be with us through the middle of May.

While two retirements of long time staff members is a big deal no matter what because of the succession planning it requires, we organized this retreat because **we are trying to seize this moment of transition to rework our org chart**. The retreat went extremely well. Everyone contributed great ideas, 3 break out groups drafted 3 potential new org chart structures and we discussed position descriptions, some title changes, and even shuffling departmental ownership between certain supervisors, to make the structure make more sense on paper and in practice. This will be a huge effort and decisions at this level are ultimately the discretion of the board. **I will be bringing these issues to our F&P committee and the full board multiple times over the next few months** and I look forward to discussing it all more in detail with you.

The RPL is a pillar of this community, but **we've also built a national reputation in the field** which I'm extremely proud of having earned. Even with the big challenges we and other libraries face--**the RPL is in an era of huge accomplishments**. This would not be possible without a world class staff, but it also wouldn't be possible without a high-functioning, values-aligned board. **Thank you all for your service** to this community and for continuing to steward this library into its current rock star status!



Two RPL teams created two entries for the **RAM's annual "Peep Show"**. The Programming Committee created a peep Arthur w/ library card, and the Digital Services and Innovation team created 3D printed peeps enjoying a story time. They both were amazing, and Peep Arthur even received an award!

Deputy Director's Report - March 2026

Prepared by Lizzie Hjelle

Projects & Updates

For anyone who visited the library in March and thought “Wow, it’s busy in here,” you were spot on! We saw a particular increase in foot traffic and reference interactions in March, continuing an upward trend in use of the library building and many of our in-house services over the past several months, as well as a year over year increase from 2025 Q1 values. For example, in 2026 Q1, the library saw an **11% increase in phone calls, a 9% increase in foot traffic, and an 18% increase in printing/scanning/faxing** compared to 2025 Q1. For those less excited by data than I am - this all points to the library continuing to fulfil its role as a vital resource and increasingly generating positive impact for the greater Racine community.

Speaking of value, I am also pleased to share that we have completed calculations for the RPL’s 2025 return on investment! In 2025, the Racine Public Library received \$4,432,755 in public funds. Those public funds were used to provide \$16,247,420.96 worth of library services to the community, which is just over a 20% increase in value of library services compared to our 2024 calculations. All in all, this adds up to a **266.53% return on investment in 2025!** I would be remiss not to mention that this impressive ROI is only possible due to the dedication, care, and expertise of our wonderful team here at RPL.

This month, an interdepartmental subcommittee of the Library's Programming Committee began working on a welcome packet for new library card holders this month! This initiative is in support of our annual budget goal to increase our registered cardholders, and will provide a quick reference point for new library cardholders so they can make the most of the Racine Public Library. The document will include information about the library’s circulation policies, patron services, library locations, contact information, and more.

Continuing Education

- 3/13: Blue Cloud Analytics Training (Prairie Lakes Library System) - 2 hours
- 3/13: Neuro-Inclusive Libraries: Rethinking Access, Engagement, and Belonging (NY State Library)- 1 hour
- 3/17: How Libraries are Addressing Mass Incarceration (American Library Association) - 1 hour

Social Worker's Report - March 2026

Prepared by Ashley Cedeno, Library Social Worker

The purpose of the library social worker's monthly report is to document and analyze the social services provided within the library setting. This report tracks key aspects of the social worker's role, ensuring accountability, identifying trends, and improving services.

Patron Interactions

Summarizes the number of interactions with patrons. "SWK" interactions include social service appointments by phone or in person, as well as interactions with local community resource organizations. "General" refers to library assistance of patrons not social service related. Starting in 2025, the distinction between the two is relayed in the below chart. Bus Passes do not count towards patron interaction totals.

Year/Month	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025			2026		
					SWK	General	Total	SWK	Gen	Total
January		24	56	137	68	125	193	124	186	310
February		20	71	249	69	74	143	131	167	298
March		28	129	287	66	68	134	159	110	269
April		61	119	290	60	124	184			
May		34	80	215	86	65	151			
June		36	137	222	93	30	123			
July		39	111	238	95	120	215			
August		42	211	197	91	152	243			
September	6	33	159	211	177	192	369			
October	15	40	189	271	130	235	365			
November	15	52	180	201	76	70	146			
December	19	40	118	131	54	49	103			

**prior to mid-2023, non-swk interactions were not tracked*

Need/Concerns

Displays the frequency of assistance provided across categories of patron need.

Aging and Disability Resources	4
Applying for Benefits/Financial Assistance	6
Clothing/Laundry	1
COVID-19	
Domestic Abuse	1
Education	3
Emotional Support	8
Employment	7
Food Insecurity	2
Healthcare	4
Housing	13
Relating to Incident Report or Crisis	38
Internet/Hotspot	1
Legal	1
Mental Health	2
Re-entry Services	1
Refugee/Immigration Support	1
Sensory Room	7
Sexual Assault Services	
Substance Use	
Transportation (not including bus passes)	4
Veteran Services	
Library Social Work Expertise requested	7
Return Plans	2
General Library Assistance (Non-swk)	110
Communication w/ community org	36

**General: Anything that falls under this category are interactions I have with patrons that do not relate to social services, such as assisting patrons with printing, certain reference questions, etc during desk*

coverage or rounds. These interactions also get reported under the general library data gathering of interactions.

****Relating to Incident Report or Crisis:** Anything that falls under this category are interactions I have with patrons that either directly result in an Incident Report, or in which I speak to a patron regarding their suspension, meet with a patron prior to the end of their suspension, or any other incident that occurs that may not result in an Incident report.

Bus Passes

Tracks the distribution of transportation assistance, ensuring proper allocation and identifying demand.

Total bus passes distributed this month:

Year/Month	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
January		27	0*	123	80
February		45	0	59	64
March		54	10	54	78
April		72	93	77	
May		99	86	80	
June		126	81	51	
July		101	97	93	
August		111	95	83	
September	62	107	66	64	
October	72	118	132	95	
November	44	18	62	68	
December	31	0 *	83	62	

*=No bus passes available

Continued Education (CE) or Training

Documents professional development efforts, such as courses or certifications completed.

- NA

Programs

Information on programming events led by or assisted by the Library Social Worker.

- Coffee and Conversation

- 3/26- Led by Social Work Intern. 6 participants.

Other/Miscellaneous

Captures additional relevant activities or observations that do not fit under the other categories.

- March 31st- Met with a social work student who is currently an intern at Portage County Public Library, who sought my library social work expertise. This student intern is currently completing their BSW Field Placement at this library, without supervision from a social worker. I provided insight into library social work, answered questions they had on programming, service delivery, ethics and other unique challenges that library social work roles face.
- My proposal for the National Association Social Work Conference in Washington DC this year was approved! I will be co-presenting with two other Library Social Workers (from New York and South Carolina) on how social workers can leverage their libraries to serve their clients. Presentation title: From Shelves to Support: Reimagining Libraries as Partners.
- Continued efforts in the **Safety Committee (SC)**-weekly meetings focused on reviewing incidents and improving library safety protocols. As safety-related concerns arise, my role as a library social worker continues to be a valuable resource in addressing these issues
 - 38 interactions related to safety and security
- Continue to host and supervise a BSW Carthage Social Work Student: **Field Placement/Internship**- The purpose of the internship is to provide an under-grad level student with hands-on experience in a nontraditional social work setting, while learning to apply social work values in a community based environment.
 - Library Social Worker provided weekly one-hour supervision
 - During the month of March, supervision of the social work intern has continued to require significant time and support as the student works toward achieving their learning goals and on-site responsibilities.

Marketing Report - March 2026

Prepared by Shay King, Head of Business Development

Overview

Marketing update

Our Cycle 2 bookmarks for April and May programs are in distribution. Following the same format as the previous cycle of bookmarks, this set includes a Youth Services, TeenScene, Adult Services, Innovation Lab, and All-Ages bookmark. We continue to distribute the 2026 all-year Senior and Social Services bookmarks.

After analysis from our Teen Librarian that the Cycle 1 teen bookmark's minimal aesthetic to have low appeal to teens (despite high uptake from adult caretakers), we redesigned the bookmark. The new "maximalist" look is tailored with teens' preferred aesthetics in mind and comes with a secondary "special edition" created in collaboration with local teen Josué Torres. To find a copy of the special edition, please stop into TeenScene. To grab any of our other bookmarks, visit any service station in the library building or Bookmobile.

Digital accessibility update

The library's leadership team has approved the Head of Business Development's draft of high-priority changes recommended to improve the library's digital accessibility. Progress towards this plan so far has included:

- Training the library's leadership team on accessible document formats,
- Auditing our webpages for redundant and outdated pages to remove or merge,
- Remediating webpages and public documents to follow accessible header logic,
- Evaluating the library's newsletter and social media creation processes, and
- Briefing supervisors and planning evaluations and training for all departments.

Training and development

- 2026 KnowBe4 Security Awareness Training: First week of March, 30 minutes — Head of Business Development, Marketing and Outreach Assistant
- All Staff Meeting: March 20, 90 minutes — Head of Business Development
- BadgerLink's Public Library Resources: March 20, 30 minutes — Head of Business Development

Viewership and Engagement

Press and Advertising

In March, the library was referenced in the media [at least 18 times](#).

Website

2026 Views & Visitors

2026	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
Views	27,193	24,185	25,526										76,904
Visitors	7,686	7,190	7,294										22,170

March's most-viewed pages

- [Home](#) - 13,542 views (up from 12,902)
- [Calendar](#) - 1,849 views (down from 2,801)
- [Library GO!](#) - 556 views (up from 516)
- [Hours & Locations](#) - 424 views (down from 445)
- [Job Opportunities](#) - 324 views (up from 200)

Changes

- Job Opportunities has replaced Use Your Library as the #5 most-viewed page (despite not having posted any new jobs in 2026).

Google Business Listing

- **Current rating:** 4.5 stars, 208 reviews
- **March Google profile views:** 2,819
- **March appearances in search results:** 1,115
- **March calls:** 480
- **March direction requests:** 765
- **March website clicks:** 2,416

Newsletter

2026	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Open rate	38.6%	30.4%	31.1%									
Click rate	1.3%	.9%	.7%									
Current recipients	25,366	25,376	25,390									

To sign up for our newsletter, visit RacineLibrary.info/newsletters.

Social Media

Facebook

Current followers: 7,677

March views: 13,191

Instagram

Current followers: 1,578

March views: 152

TikTok

Current followers: 1,032

March views: 240

Technical Services and Circulation Activities Report - March 2026

Prepared by Chris Tobias, Circulation and Technical Services Supervisor

Circulation Report of March Activities 2026

RPL circulated a total of 35,137 in March of 2026. 32,416 items from Main and 2,721 items from the Bookmobile. February's circulation was 32,876. Approximately 8,748 holds were placed and filled. 10,113 items loaned from our collection to other libraries, and 8,026 received for RPL patrons. 371 new library cards were issued during the month of March. Circulation for Home Delivery Services was 2,423 in the month of March.

Consortium sorting / AMH activity:

- In March circulation staff inducted 83,188 items through the automated material handler (AMH).
- Annual maintenance and cleaning was performed by Lygnsoe System on March 17th.

Technical Services Report of March Activities 2026

In February TSD staff placed orders for 1529 items and received 394 previously ordered items. A total of 1136 items were cataloged and processed for the library catalog.

The Spring opening of the Seed Catalog took place on the 21st with over 10,000 seed packets prepared.

Digital Services and Innovation Activities Report - March 2026

Prepared by Melissa Donaldson, Head of Digital Service and Innovation

1. Summary

In March 2026, the Digital Services and Innovation (DSI) team demonstrated a strategic pivot from individual troubleshooting toward high-impact community engagement. While **tech help sessions decreased by 9%** (717 vs. 788 in March 2025), this trend is influenced by two primary factors:

- **Capacity Constraints:** The department is currently operating **with one less full-time staff member**, naturally limiting the total number of one-on-one sessions that can be facilitated.
- **Strategic Outreach:** Staff resources were intentionally redirected toward large-scale programming and school outreaches, resulting in a combined reach of **797 participants** across 18 events.

Despite the reduction in total tech help volume, the team's community footprint has expanded significantly, reaching nearly 500 people through centralized educational efforts.

2. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Metric	March 2025	March 2026	Change (%)
Total Tech Help Sessions	788	717	-9.0%
DSI Programming & Events	16	18	+12.5%
3D Print Jobs Completed	96	84	-12.5%
Laser Engraved Projects	6	7	+16.7%

3. High-Impact Programming & Outreach

The DSI team successfully expanded its presence beyond the library walls this month, focusing on digital literacy and youth STEM engagement:

- **3rd Annual Digital Literacy Fair:** This signature event drew **150 attendees** and served as a vital hub for connecting the community with essential digital resources.
- **DSI Programming:** The team hosted **16 programs** with a total of **471 participants**, averaging 30 attendees per session.
- **Gifford K-8 STEAM Fair Outreach:** Marking the return of specialized outreach initiatives, staff interacted with **176 people**. Using Dash and Ozobot robots, the team provided hands-on coding and driving experiences for students.

4. Service & Staffing Trends

- **Melissa:** Balanced increased individual support (**+70.7%** year-over-year) while supporting the logistical surge in programming.
- **Tati:** As a key contributor, Tati provided **197 tech help sessions**, playing a vital role in maintaining service levels while the department operated with a vacancy due to the medical leave of a staff member.
- **Matt:** Continues to lead technical production, managing **87% of all 3D printing tasks** (73 of 84 jobs) and 351 tech help sessions.

5. Conclusion & Recommendations

March 2026 was a milestone month for community reach. By engaging nearly 500 people through programs and fairs, the DSI team has proven that group-based education is an efficient way to scale expertise, especially while managing a staffing vacancy.

Strategic Recommendations:

1. **Staffing Recovery:** Return tech help volume to 2025 levels while sustaining the current programming momentum. This should be fixed as soon as the staff member returns from medical leave.
2. **Sustained Outreach:** Build on the success of the Gifford K-8 engagement by scheduling quarterly school-based STEAM outreaches.

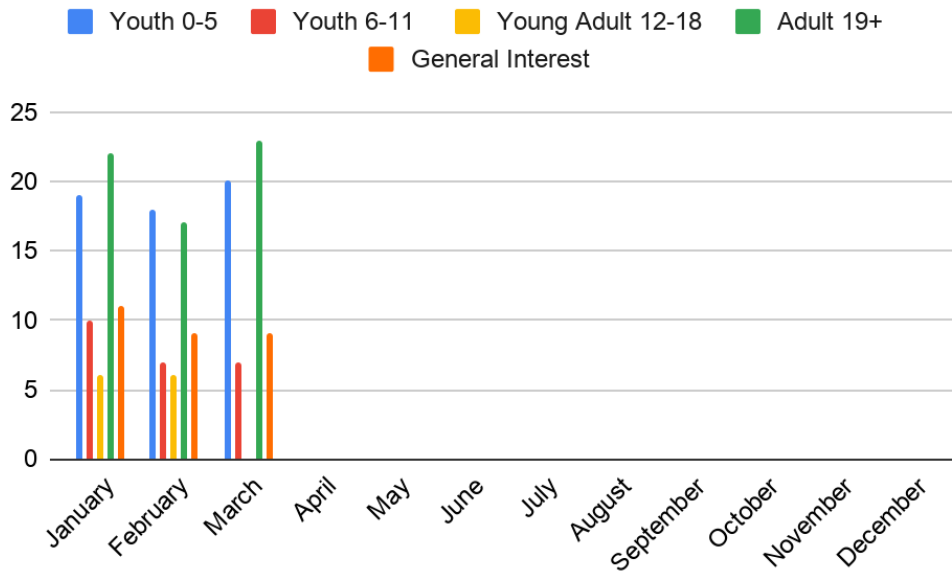
2026 Year to Date Library Services Statistics

Prepared by Chris Tobias, Matt Jerke, and Lizzie Hjelle

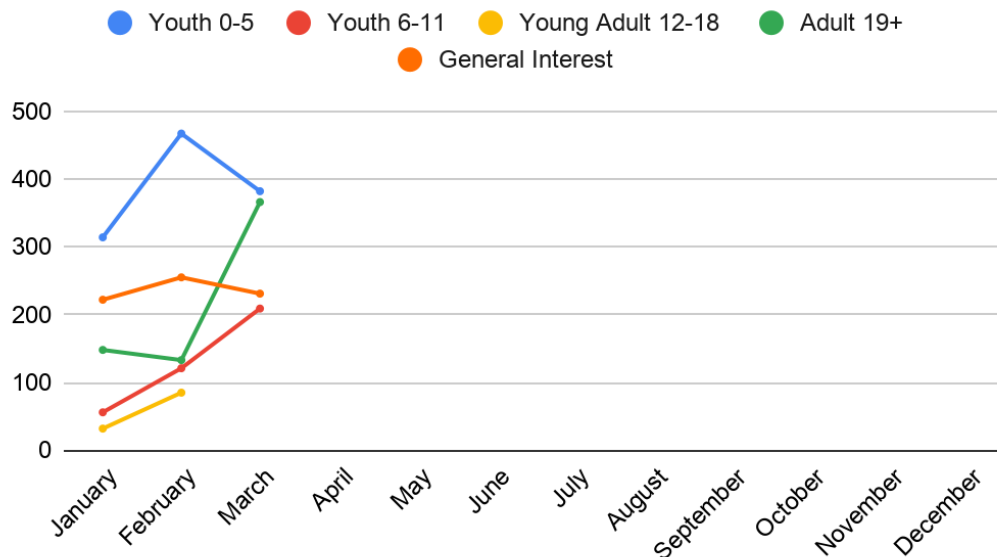
Library Programming Statistics

In March, the library hosted 59 programs attended by a total of 1,188 patrons.

2026 Number of Programs

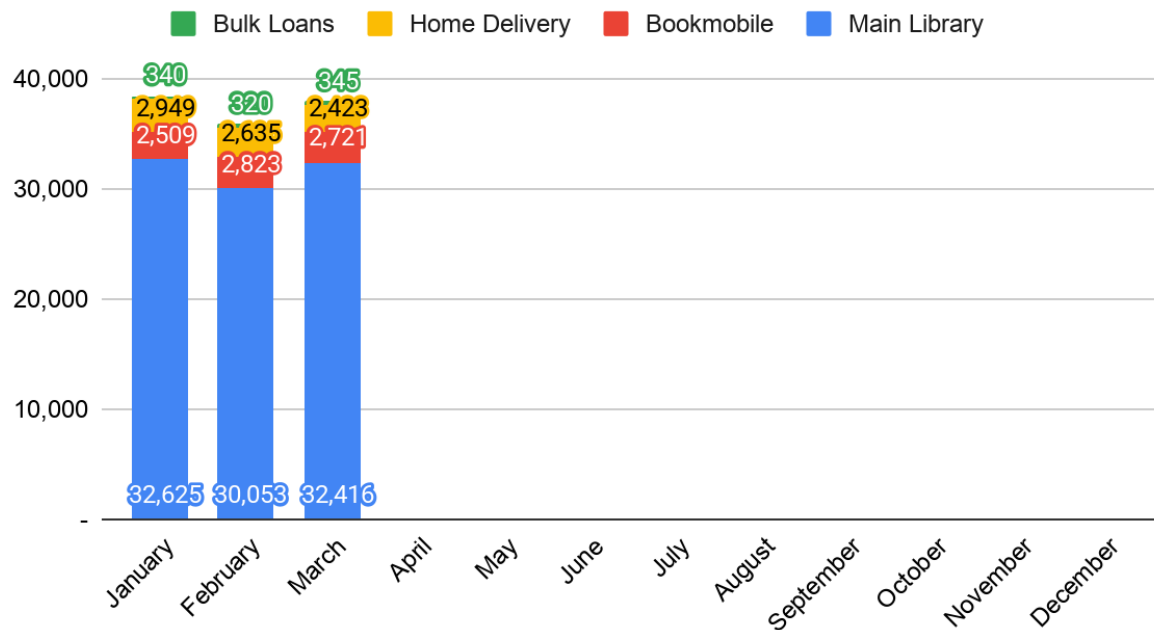


2026 Program Attendance

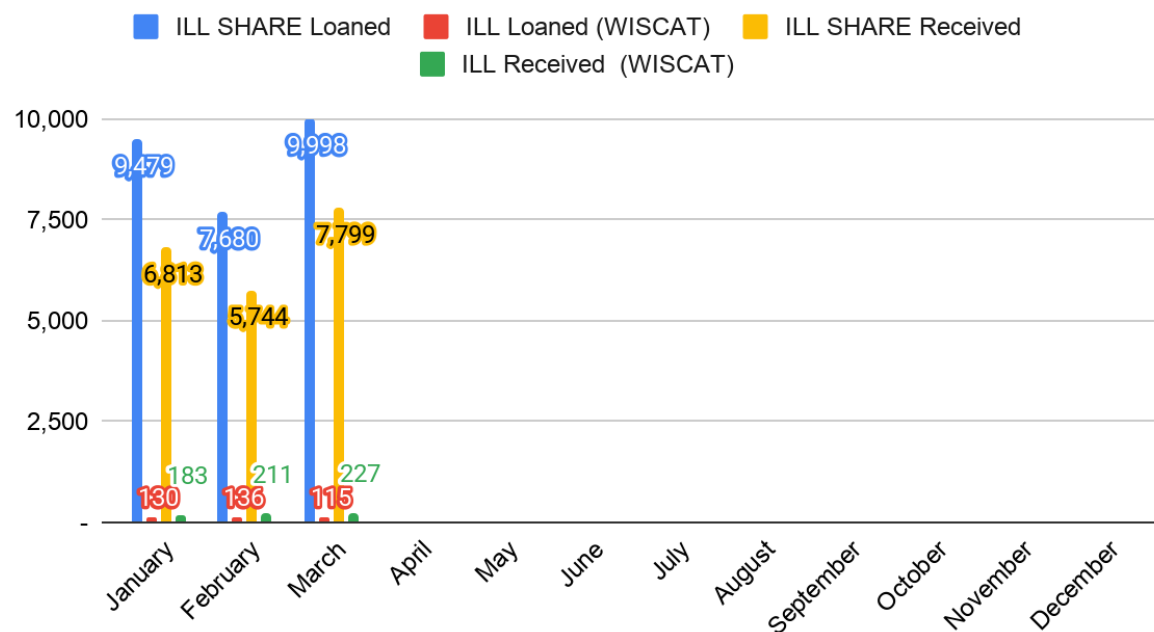


Physical Circulation Statistics

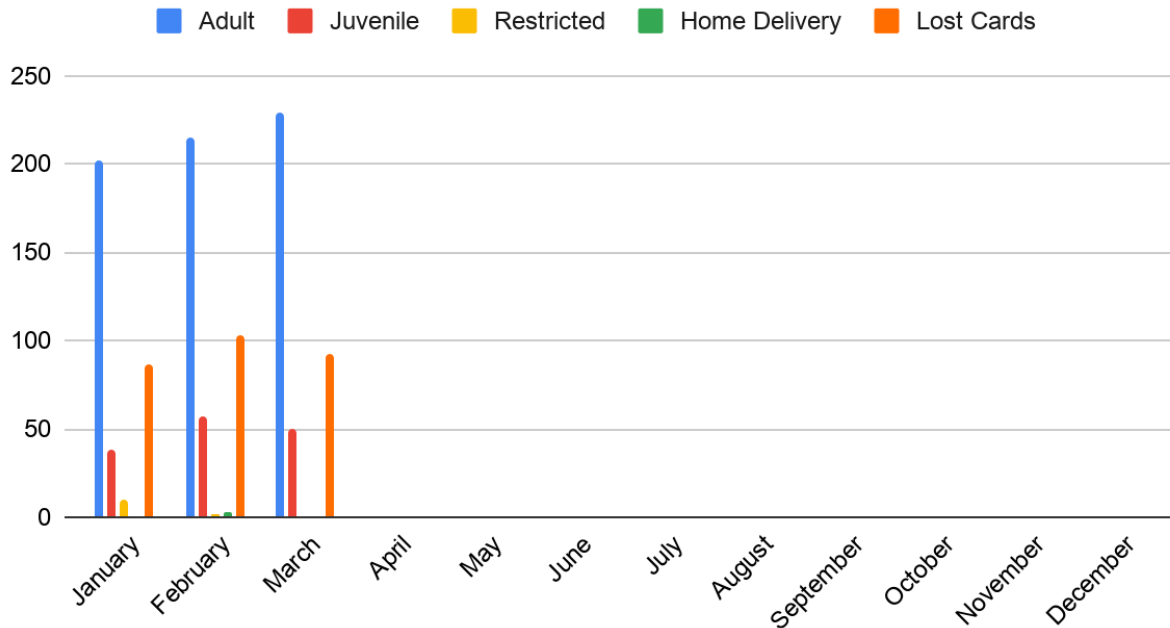
2026 Monthly Circulation



Interlibrary Loans 2026



2026 Library Cards Issued



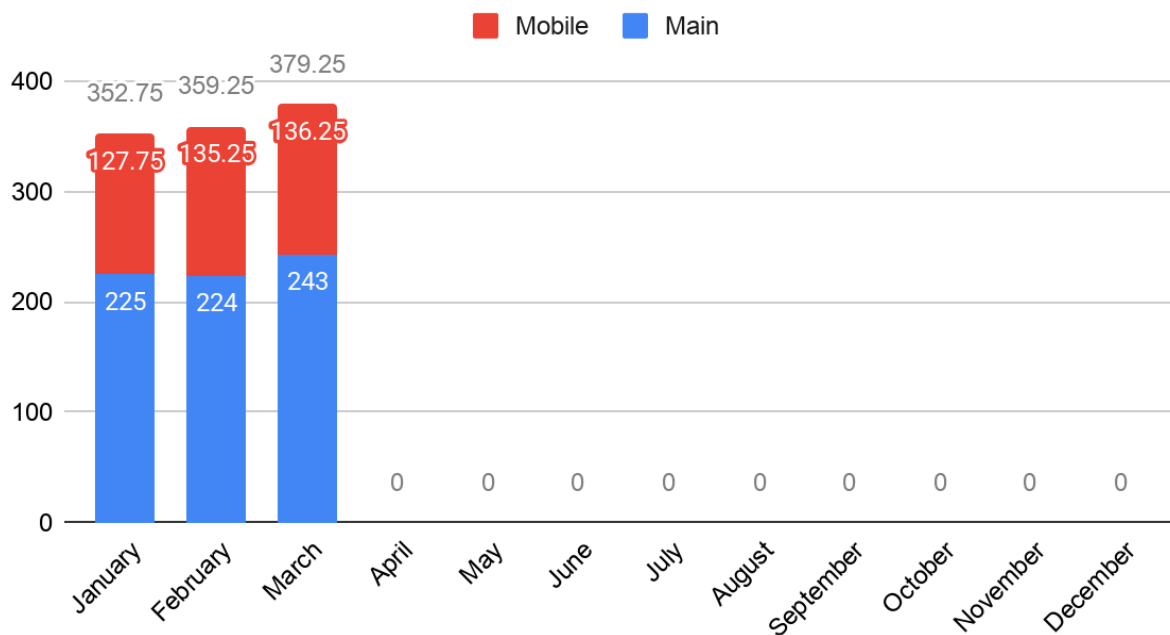
March Circulation by Municipality

Main		Bookmobile	
GTPLATTEVC	5	KNKENOSHAC	4
KNKENOSHAC	136	KNSOMERSV	1
KNPARIST	1	MICUDAHYC	2
KNPLEASPRV	35	RACALEDONV	598
KNSALEMLKV	13	RAMOUNTPLV	900
KNSOMERSV	44	RANORTHBYV	12
KNTWINLAKV	5	RARACINEC	774
MIBAYSIDEV	3	RARAYMONDV	19
MIFRANKLIC	13	RASTURTEVV	207
MIMILWAUKC	14	RAUNIONGRV	2
MIOAKCREEC	4	RAWINDPOIV	202
ONMINOCQUT	3	Total	2,721
RABURLINGC	36		
RABURLINGT	4		
RACALEDONV	6,605		
RADOVERT	9		
RAELMWOODV	111		
RAMOUNTPLV	5,999		
RANORTHBYV	155		
RANORWAYT	1		

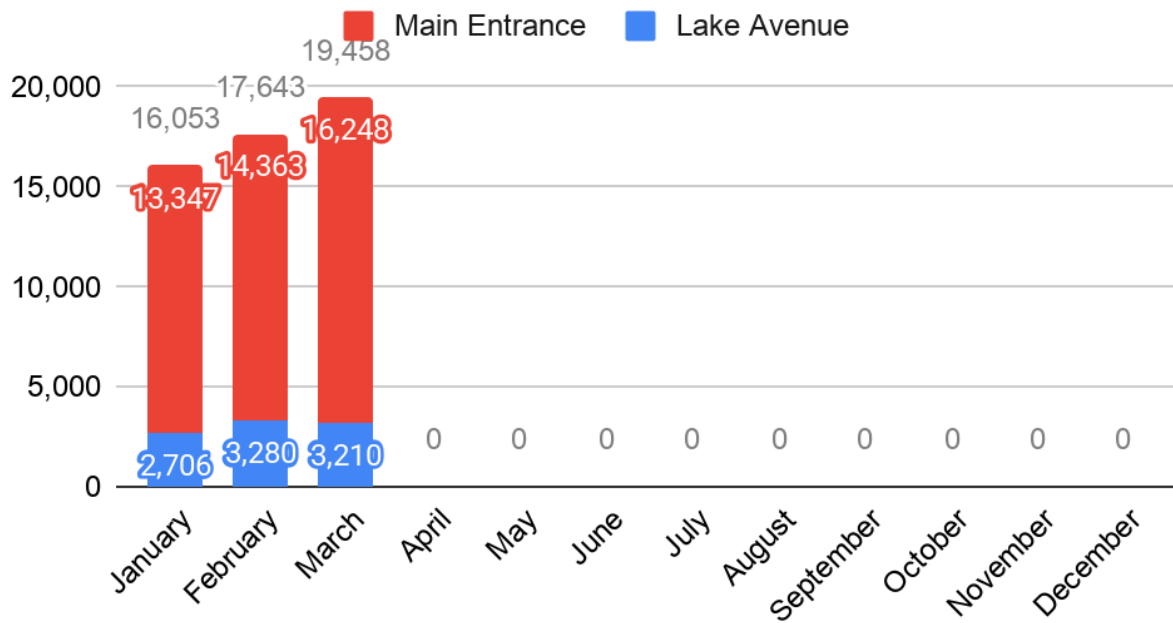
RARACINEC	17,576		
RARAYMONDV	254		
RAROCHESTV	7		
RASTURTEVV	343		
RAUNIONGRV	73		
RAWATERFOT	4		
RAWATERFOV	17		
RAWINDPOIV	703		
RAYORKVILV	30		
RKBELOITC	1		
RKUNIONT	38		
WBNEENAHC	15		
WKMUKWONAV	3		
WOWISCRPDC	2		
WPWAUPACAC	16		
WWBLOOMFIV	6		
WWDARIENT	1		
WWEASTTRYV	4		
WWELKHORNC	4		
	123		
Total	32,416		

Building Usage Statistics

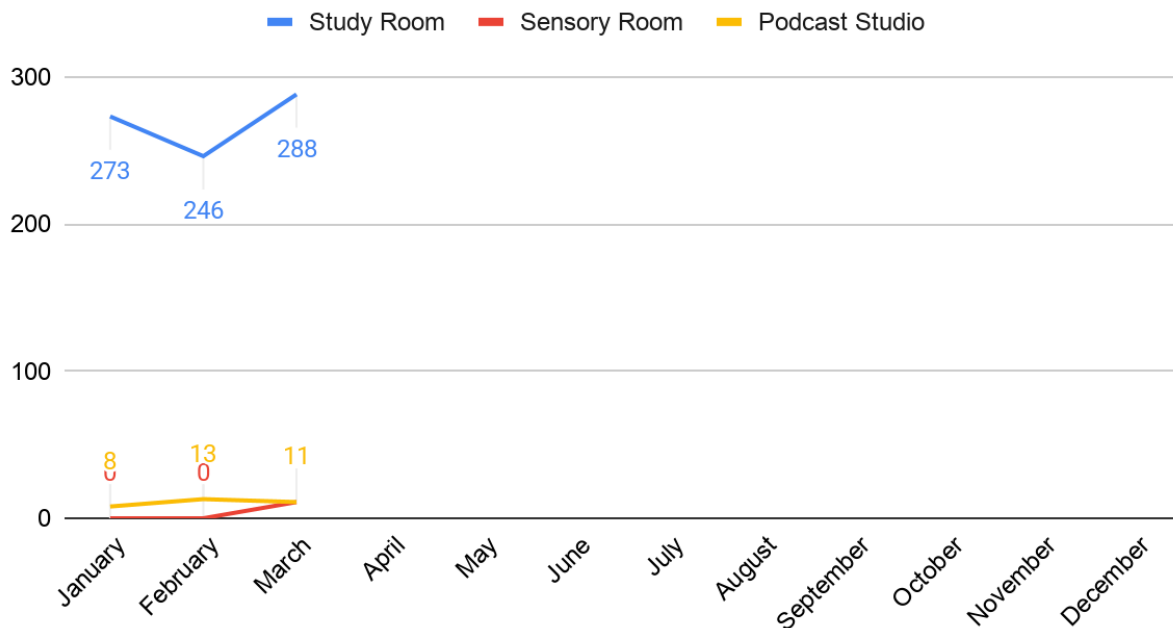
Hours Open 2026



People Counter 2026



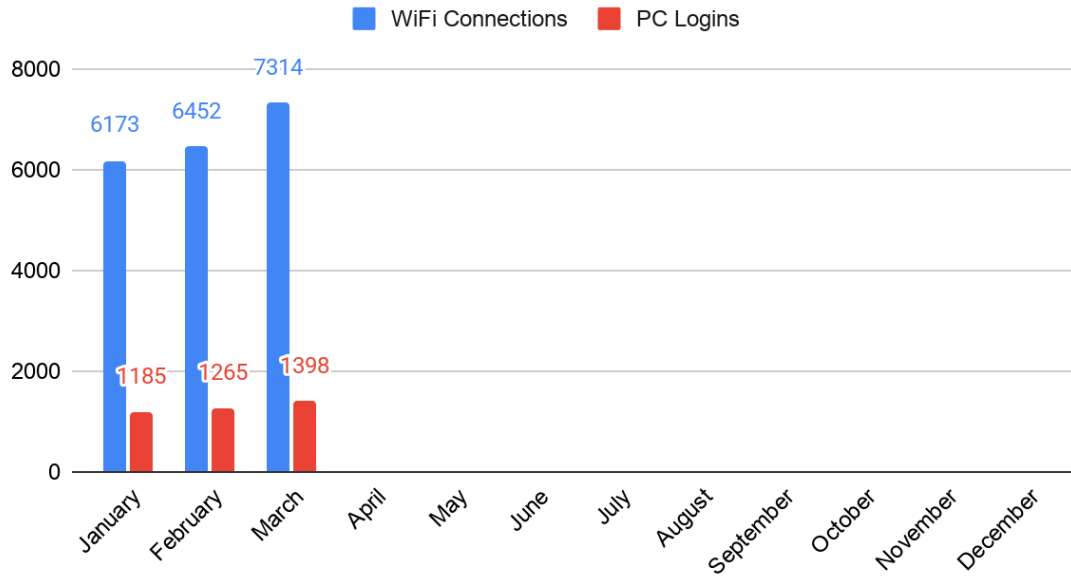
Public Room Use 2026



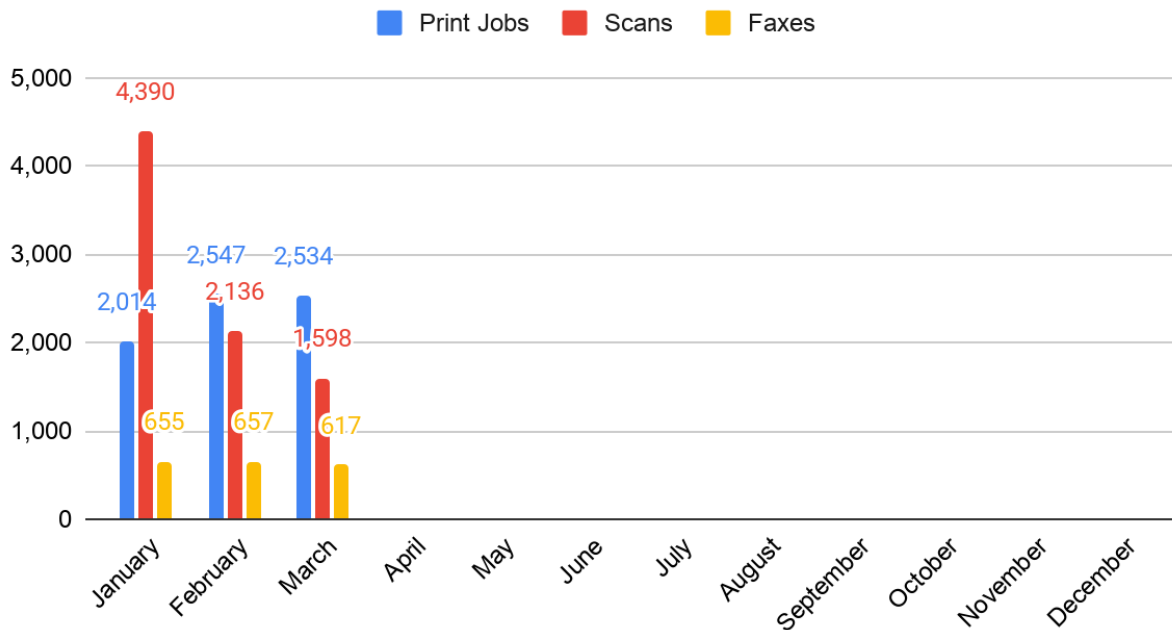
*Sensory Room was closed for maintenance August 2025 through March 2026

Technology Statistics

WiFi Connections & PC Logins 2026

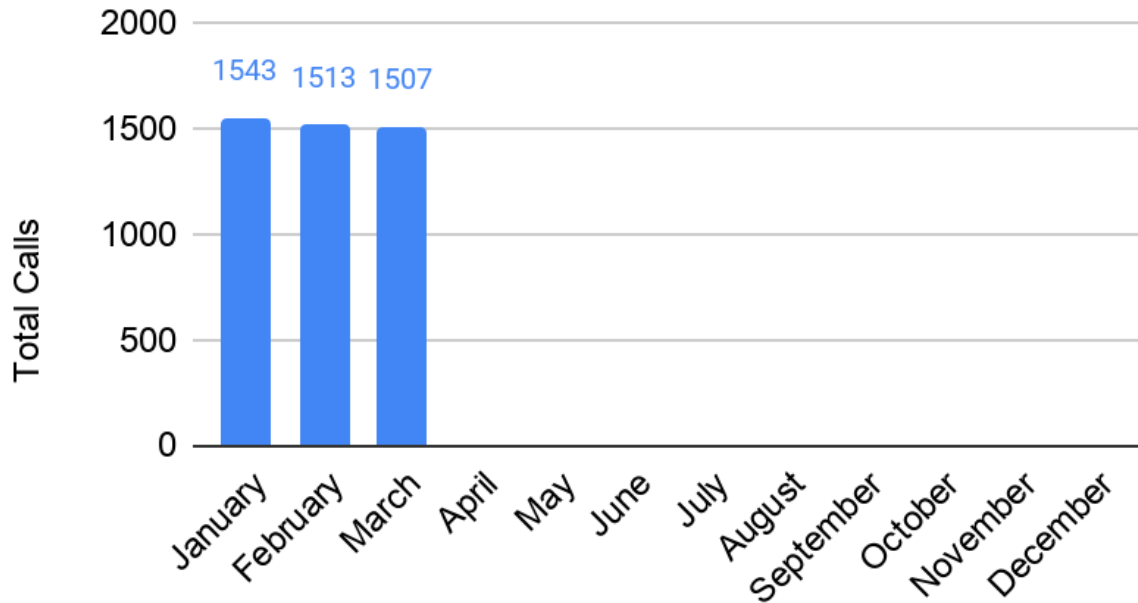


Printing, Scanning, & Faxing 2026

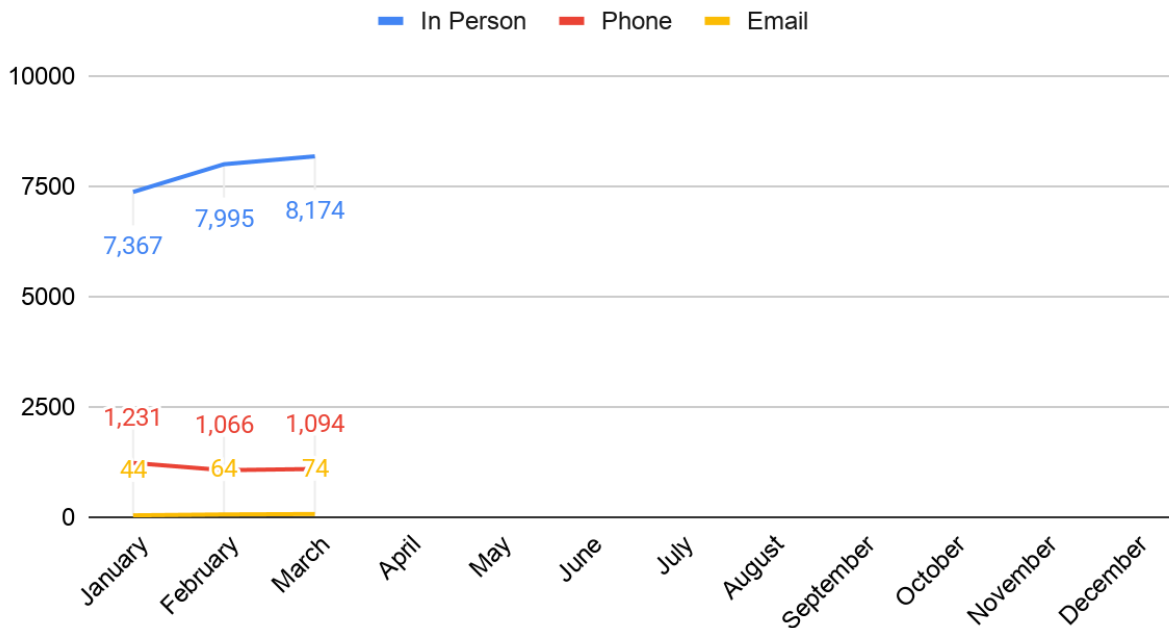


Reference Statistics

2026 Call Center : Number of Calls

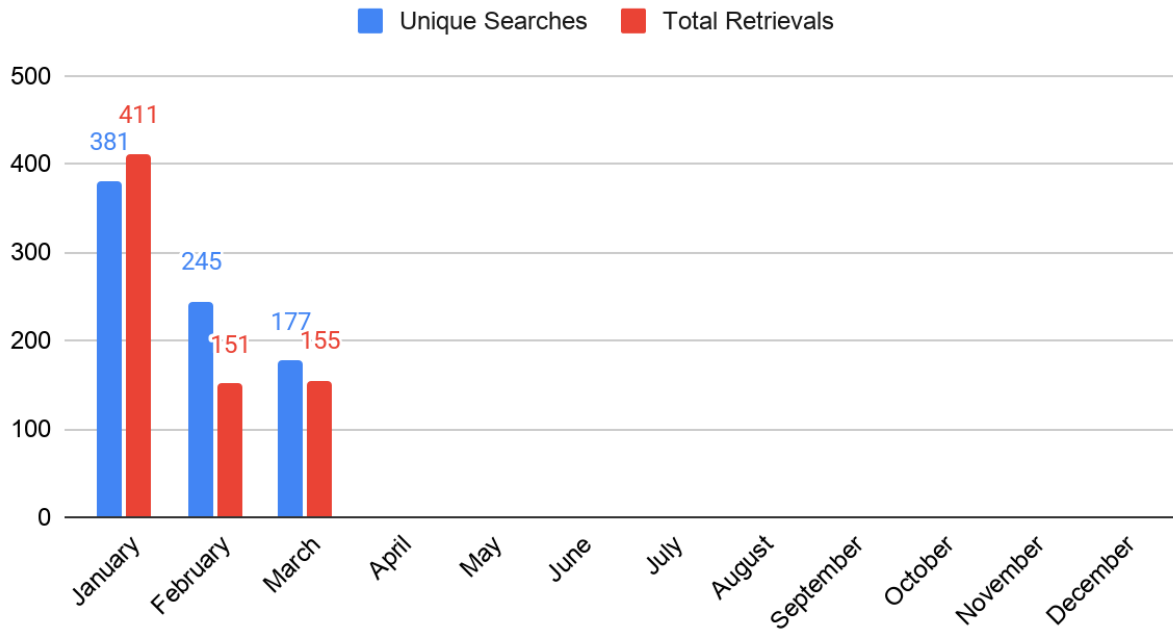


2026 Reference Interactions

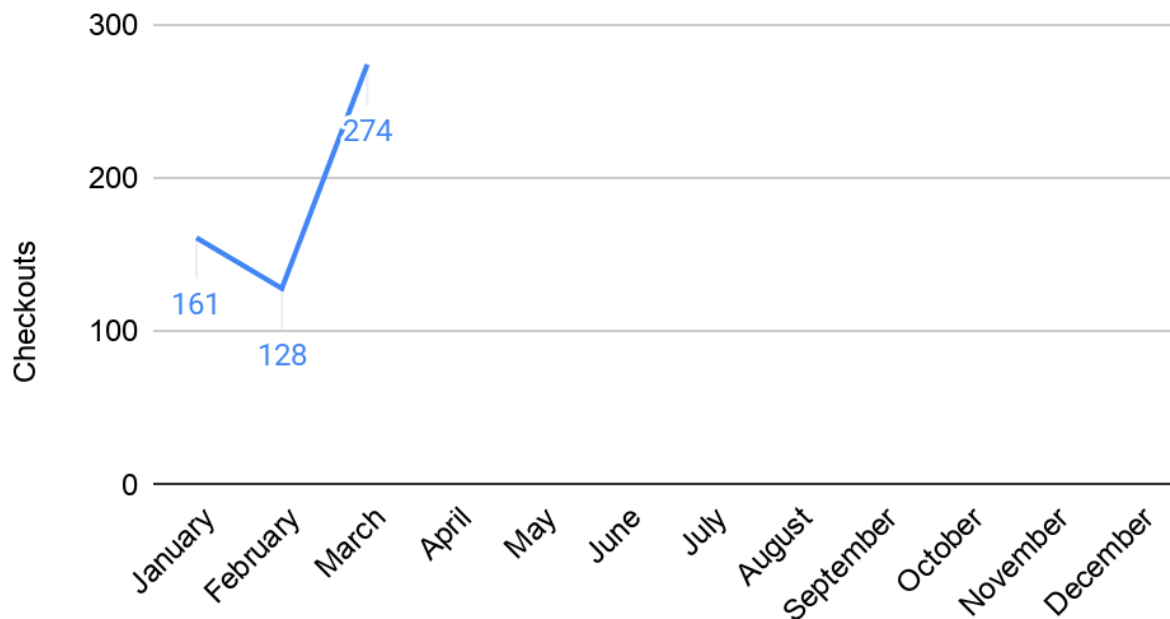


Digital Resource Usage Statistics

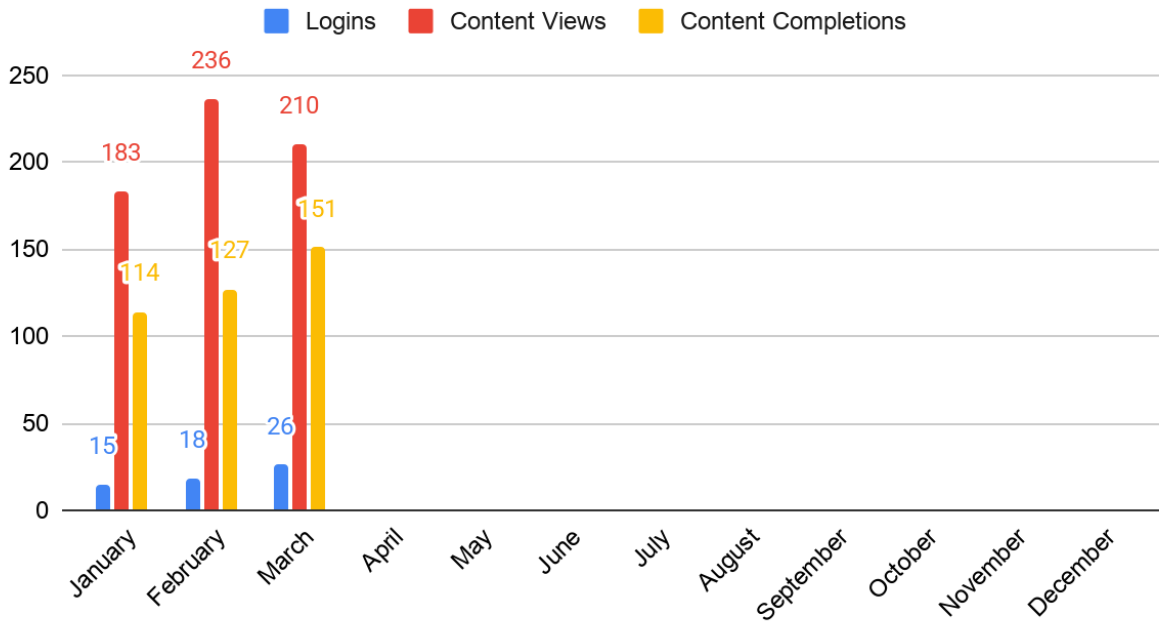
Ancestry Usage 2026



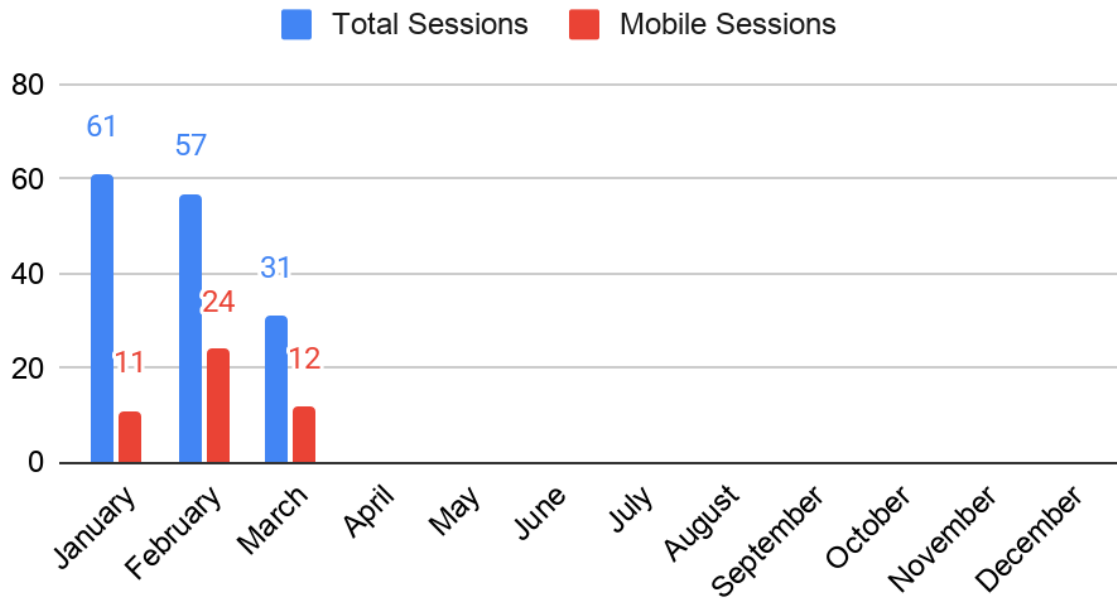
Comics Plus Checkouts 2026



LinkedIn Learning 2026



Mango Languages 2026



Overdrive (Libby) Downloads 2026

