

Racine Public Library Report for May 2026 Board Packet

Executive Director's Report - April

Prepared by Nick Demske

The flowers are blooming and the library is bursting with life this spring, too. April was an action-packed month. Here are some of the highlights:

- Right after I returned from the congressional lobbying trip in DC, Lizzie and I both headed out to Minneapolis for the biannual **Public Libraries Association conference (PLA)**. We made a lot of connections and had three full days of learning about best practices from our peers all over the country.
- Towards the end of the month, Becky and I both had our first experiences ever going to the **Wisconsin Public Library Association conference (WAPL)** in Elkhart Lake. Aside from getting to attend the keynotes and breakouts, I also was there to attend the quarterly **SRLAAW (Systems and Resource Library Administrators Association of Wisconsin) meeting**, and **I was part of a presentation** put on by 4 members of the Wisconsin State Library Standards Revision Committee. It was (shockingly) a packed breakout session with around 50 people in the room and it went very well.
- The **3rd Annual Local Author Showcase** took place and, again, it was planned to be on the same weekend as our **Friends of the Library big Spring Book Sale**. Between the two events, the library was filled with people and activity that weekend. The **RPL Foundation** even tabled at the author's fair event and signed people up for their newsletter and annual mailer campaign. The FOL made over **\$5,600** during the three days of their book sale.
- Our local elections resulted in some new members of city council. I joined other department heads throughout the city for a **new alder meet and greet** in April, as well as the swearing in ceremony for the newly elected (and re-elected) alders.
- Lizzie and I met with another **strategic planning consultant** and received a proposal from them afterwards. That makes 3 proposals that we've solicited and received thus far. We intend to solicit 2 more before bringing a recommendation to the board.
- The current head of **Wisconsin Center for the Book** reached out to us for the RPL to help them lead a **project with PBS**. For America's 250th birthday, PBS is apparently doing a series where every episode focuses on the literary culture of an individual state, called **Reading Road Trip**. The RPL has been invited to contribute significantly to that episode. It's a pretty exciting opportunity and a great honor to have been tapped for this, out of all the libraries and other literary organizations in the state. To see episodes in the series, visit: <https://www.pbsbooks.org/readingroadtrip/#episodes>

The list goes on of good things that happened at the RPL in April. But I'll just note two more major moments that took place.

As I briefly mentioned at last month's board meeting, we got some great surprise news last month. When our annual Racine Community Foundation investment statement arrived, there was an extra page attached to it. Neither Becky or I were expecting this, and it seemed a little too good to be true, so I actually reached out to the RCF to make sure it wasn't a mistake. They confirmed that it wasn't and that it had just slipped through the cracks to inform us---but we had become the beneficiaries of a fund that a woman named Marilyn Rothschild put into her will (**The Marilyn Rothschild Fund**). Marilyn had passed away at the age of 100 and---while no one who currently works at the library seems to have known her personally--her obituary says she was a Friends of the Library member. **As of Dec 2025, the fund was valued at \$1.6M** and the RCF says that by 2029 it should be paying out about \$75K annually for the library. We are incredibly grateful to Marilyn for her generosity and for seeing the library as a worthy place to invest in, as one of her last acts. Thank you, Marilyn.

Lastly--April was the month that **our most veteran employee, Chris Tobias, retired**. Chris started working at the library when he was in high school and he contributed so much to its success over the years. Chris was known as an **incredibly hard working, dependable and deeply knowledgeable** member of our team. Our newly created Wellness Committee was able to organize a send off party for Chris, not just for current staff, but we invited former RPL employees who worked alongside Chris as well. Chris is already dearly missed--he was a pillar of our team--but we're also really happy for him and we know he certainly earned his retirement. **Happy trails, Chris!** (he'll be spending a lot of his retirement hiking :) .

As always, thank you all for serving on the board and helping make the RPL's service to the community possible!



The State Public Library Standards presentation at WAPL.



Me and some library and DPI colleagues at WAPL.

Deputy Director's Report - April 2026

Prepared by Lizzie Hjelle

Projects & Updates

- Circulation - I officially took over as Interim Circulation Supervisor on April 9th, and I am very grateful to our competent and dedicated circulation team for keeping things running so smoothly during this transition time! Much of my time has been spent on supervisory duties for this department, including statistical tracking/gathering, scheduling, and an initial needs assessment for the department.
- Programming - I continued to work with the library's Programming Committee to foster ongoing program evaluation in support of our annual goal to increase our average program attendance. RPL has experienced a decrease in average attendance over the past 3 years, and the committee has a renewed investment in addressing this trend by refocusing their energy into quality programming.
- All-Staff Training Day Preparation - Preparation for RPL's annual all-staff training day came to a head this month. The Leadership Team designed a significant overhaul of the previous format, content, and schedule of the day after soliciting staff feedback. The training day will be held on Friday, May 15th.

Deputy Director Continuing Education

- Public Library Association Conference - PLA - 24 hours
- Domestic Violence: A Conversation with Dr. Carolyn West - Ryan Dowd - 1 hour
- The Power of Boundaries - ALA - 1 hour
- Navigating Disability in the Workplace Series: Focus on Autism Spectrum Disorder - Wisconsin DWD - 1 hour

Staff Continuing Education

- Staff completed a total of 109 hours of Continuing Education in April.

Social Services Report - April 2026

Prepared by Ashley Cedeno, Library Social Worker

Patron Service Interactions

Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Social Service	82	83	66	69								
General Library Support	186	167	110	135								
Incidents Supported or De-escalated	20	27	38	29								
Return Plan	0	1	2	0								
Total Patron Interactions:	288	278	216	233								

Social Service Needs Addressed

(Social Service Total above)

Category of Need	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aging and Disability Resources	7	3	4	6								
Applying for Benefits/Financial Assistance	7	9	6	7								
Clothing/Laundry			1									
Domestic Abuse			1									
Education		3	3	3								
Emotional Support	1	8	8	6								
Employment	16	9	7	2								
Food Insecurity	3	4	2	2								
Healthcare	3	2	4	8								
Housing	10	7	13	7								
Internet/Hotspot		2	1	1								
Legal	8	8	1	5								
Mental Health	2	5	2	1								
Re-entry Services	4		1									
Refugee/Immigration Support			1	2								
Sensory Room	3	7	7	5								

Sexual Assault Services												
Substance Use				1								
Transportation	12	16	4	13								
Veteran Services												

Bus Pass Program

Transportation need met:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Medical/Healthcare	45	41	36	28								
Mental Health	3		1	2								
Employment	12	18	27	16								
Housing	2		4	4								
Re-entry Support	3	5	7	2								
Education	5			1								
Financial/Benefits related	10			1								
Legal/Court			1									
Other			2	2								
Total Bus Passes Distributed	80	64	78	55								

Programming Reports

Coffee and Conversation

- 4/23- Participants: 6
- 4/10 (staff)- Participants: 7

Community Resource Fair

- Continued efforts to coordinate next Community Resource Fair on 5/1/26

Program Sponsorships

- 4/15- LIFT WI Credit Clearing Clinic
- 4/15- Job Center, Career Navigator: Resume and Job Search Help

Community Engagement

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Communication/Collaboration with Community Organization	20	21	36	20								

Trainings and Professional Development

- 4/15 (1 hour)- SFTC: When Social Security Goes Digital
 - *Over the past year, more than 100 million digital Social Security accounts have been created. While this shift has improved access for some, it has also introduced new and significant challenges for others. Accessing SSA services—whether by phone or in person—has become increasingly difficult, and the move toward digital systems is creating additional barriers for people without reliable internet, digital literacy, or accessible technology.*

Highlights

Social Work Intern Supervision

- This month, supervision of the social work intern has continued to require significant time and support as the student intern works toward achieving their learning goals and on-site responsibilities.
 - Intern has continued to host weekly open office hours
- Direct supervision is a structured, regular meeting between the social work supervisor and the social work student to ensure clinical competence, safety, and professional development. It involves reviewing cases, providing feedback, and supporting ethical, client-centered practice. These direct supervision meetings are in person, usually an hour long.
 - Hours of Supervision this month: 4

Sensory Room

- 30 Sensory Room Reservations in April

Impact stories

While helping a patron on the 2nd floor, I noticed repeated loud banging coming from across the space. Upon approaching, I observed a young child banging a book while his mother sat nearby. After giving the situation some time for it to resolve on its own, I stepped in. I informed the mother that, while the area they were in is not designated as a quiet space, we still ask to maintain a volume level that is considerate of others. I then introduced her to the library's sensory room on the first floor, explaining that this is a space designated to accommodate higher levels of noise and includes a variety of tools to support sensory regulation. While the child was nonverbal, the mother immediately expressed interest. I walked her and her son to

the sensory room and provided a brief orientation. Her son quickly became engaged with the lights and sensory tools, and the mother expressed her appreciation for this option. The family remained in the space for more than an hour.

This interaction highlights the importance of offering inclusive, flexible resources! Rather than defaulting to enforcement (which can sometimes require patrons to leave the building), we were able to meet this family where they were by providing a meaningful alternative. This approach supported the needs of the child and also reinforced the library as a welcoming and accessible space for all.

Other/Misc.

- NA
-

Marketing Report - April 2026

Prepared by Shay King, Head of Business Development

Overview

Marketing update

Cycle 2 bookmarks (April and May) and Cycle 3 bookmarks (June through August) for programs are in distribution. The Cycle 3 set includes a Youth Services, Adult Services, Innovation Lab and All-Ages bookmark but omits a Teen bookmark. We also produced a summer-only brochure featuring special summer programs — Summer Reading, Summer Scares, America's 250th and Pride programming — that takes up the equivalent of about three bookmarks. We continue to distribute the 2026 all-year Senior and Social Services bookmarks.

Summer program marketing took additional time and energy this season due to the huge number of programs compared to normal cycles. This batch also contains a higher proportion than normal of new programs, further expanding the work needed to set up promotions without existing templates. For a brief highlight of the numbers:

- Summer 2025: 75 on-time submissions
- April-May 2026: 55 on-time submissions
- Summer 2026: 97 on-time submissions (315 distinct program dates)

Also capturing a lot of focus is the marketing team's preparation to transition into the broader community engagement department. While Elkid's job description (Marketing and Outreach Assistant) remains the same, the proposed shift for Shay's role from Head of Business Development to Head of Community Engagement comes with the need to transition them from a heavy marketing workload with light management responsibilities to a light marketing workload with heavy management responsibilities.

To prepare for this change, we're 1. Simplifying existing processes, 2. Looking into mechanisms to internally boost marketing capacity, 3. Transitioning some projects from the Head of Business Development's plate to the Marketing and Outreach Assistant's.

Digital accessibility update

The digital accessibility deadline for an institution with a service population the size of the library's has changed from April 24, 2026, to April 26, 2027. This doesn't inherently alter the timeline by which the library will pursue its digital accessibility plan, as completing the plan entails a longterm process of training, evaluation and remediation. Although the deadline has changed, the community's need for accessible services has not.

The following progress was made in April:

- Head of Business Development trained the library's staff on accessible document formats

- In the process of ensuring all new or revised public-facing documents follow accessible header logic
- Initiated scheduling with supervisors to evaluate and prioritize their departments' digital resources
- Continued adaptation of the library's newsletter to accessible formats
- [Hours & Locations](#) webpage now follows accessible header logic
 - Library GO! webpage retired due to outdated and redundant content. Necessary content is captured on Hours & Locations webpage. Reinstating remediated page to occur at later date.
- Library Board & Board Meeting webpages merged into the [Library Board webpage](#), which now follows accessible header logic. Board meeting documents now live primarily on the [City of Racine's legistar profile](#), which has implemented a column for accessible meeting documents.

As a bonus: Ongoing conversations about digital accessibility have also led to renewed visibility and focus on accessible services generally throughout the library staff.

Training and development

- None in April.

Viewership and Engagement

Press and Advertising

In April, the library was referenced **in the media [at least 11 times](#)**.

Press highlights

- [Racine Public Library's sensory room reopens after maintenance updates](#) - Racine County Eye, April 1
- [Racine Art Museum PEEPS art exhibition winners announced; show runs through April 18](#) - Racine County Eye, April 2
- [Racine Art Museum announces award-winning PEEPS-inspired art](#) - Journal Times, April 3
- [Safe sleep awareness event in Racine](#) - Journal Times, April 14

Website

2026 Views & Visitors

We changed the way we calculate total visitors in this report. Previously we had been adding the total visitors from each month, which resulted in duplicate visitors being counted; the total visitors here now represents the total unique visitors January through April.

2026	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
Views	27,193	24,185	25,526	23,882									100,786
Visitors	7,686	7,190	7,294	7,122									25,034

April's most-viewed pages

- [Home](#) - 12,993 views (down from 13,542)
- [Calendar](#) - 2,054 views (up from 1,849)
- [Library GO!](#) - 503 views (down from 556)
- [Hours & Locations](#) - 411 views (down from 424)
- [Borrow from the Library](#) - 384 views (up from 308)

Changes

- Borrow from the Library is a new addition to the list, bumping Job Opportunities off the list.

Google Business Listing

- **Current rating:** 4.5 stars, 212 reviews
- **April Google profile views:** 2,701
- **April appearances in search results:** 1,124
- **April calls:** 491
- **April direction requests:** 853
- **April website clicks:** 2,203

Newsletter

2026	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Open rate	38.6%	30.4%	31.1%	31.7%								
Click rate	1.3%	.9%	.7%	.8%								
Current recipients	25,366	25,376	25,390	25,409								

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

Social Media

Facebook

Current followers: 7,799

April views: 85,186

Instagram

Current followers: 1,577

April views: 153

TikTok

Current followers: 1,032

April views: 373

Technical Services and Circulation Activities Report - April 2026

Prepared by Lizzie Hjelle, Interim Circulation Supervisor

Circulation Report of April Activities 2026

Chris, Circulation and Technical Services Supervisor, officially retired at the beginning of the month, and I officially stepped in as interim Circulation Supervisor on April 9th. Chris and his nearly 4 decades of expertise were dearly missed as I prepared this report in his stead!

RPL circulated a total of 33,879 items in April of 2026. 31,490 items from Main and 2,389 items from the Bookmobile. March's circulation was 35,137. Approximately 7,831 holds were placed and filled. 9,305 items loaned from our collection to other libraries, and 7,144 received for RPL patrons. 495 new library cards were issued during the month of April. Circulation for Home Delivery Services was 2,524 in the month of April.

Consortium sorting / AMH activity:

- April statistics will be reported next month due to an issue with the AMH computer requiring maintenance at the time of writing.

Technical Services Report of April Activities 2026

A total of 1,144 items were cataloged and processed for the library catalog.

Digital Services and Innovation Activities Report - April 2026

Prepared by Melissa Donaldson, Head of Digital Service and Innovation

Programming

The Innovation Lab continued to provide engaging and impactful programming opportunities for the community this month. Staff hosted 12 programs, serving 154 participants across a variety of technology- and STEAM-focused topics. These programs offered patrons opportunities to build digital literacy skills, explore emerging technologies, and engage in hands-on learning experiences in a welcoming environment. The strong participation numbers reflect the community's continued interest in accessible technology education and creative learning opportunities offered through the Innovation Lab.

Patron Tech Help in the Innovation Lab

The Innovation Lab continued to serve as an important technology resource for the community by providing direct assistance and hands-on support to patrons. During this reporting period, staff answered 752 technology-related questions, helping patrons navigate devices, software, internet resources, printing, and other digital services. In addition, the Innovation Lab completed 77 3D print requests for patrons, giving community members access to emerging technology tools and creative learning opportunities that may not otherwise be available to them.

Patron Technology Use

The Innovation Lab and public technology spaces continued to see strong community usage throughout April. A total of 10 patrons reserved and utilized the podcasting studio, demonstrating growing interest in creative media production and digital content creation opportunities offered by the Library. In addition, 1,636 public computer sessions were recorded during the month. Of those sessions, 730 were completed by library cardholders, 284 by users accessing computers with student IDs, and 622 through guest passes. These numbers highlight the continued demand for accessible public technology resources and the Library's role in providing equitable access to digital tools and internet services for the community.

The Library continued to provide essential internet access to the community, with 7,009 Wi-Fi connections recorded within the building during April, reflecting the ongoing demand for reliable public internet and digital connectivity services.

Digital Resources

Digital collections remained a heavily utilized resource for patrons in April, with a total of 12,814 digital materials checked out through the Library's online services. In addition, the Library recently launched a new streaming service, [Biblio+ Streaming](#), which allows patrons to create a free account and access a variety of streaming video content online. This new service expands the Library's digital offerings, providing additional entertainment and educational resources that patrons can access from anywhere.

The Library's digital learning and research resources continued to support lifelong learning, workforce development, and information access for patrons throughout April. Ancestry.com Library Edition recorded 159 unique searches, helping patrons explore family history and genealogical research. Patrons also earned 84 certificates on LinkedIn Learning, demonstrating continued engagement in professional development and skill-building. Mango Languages recorded 78 learning sessions, supporting language acquisition and cultural learning for community members. In addition, 137 searches were performed using Data Axle Reference Solutions, providing patrons with valuable business, consumer, and research information resources.

Continuing Education

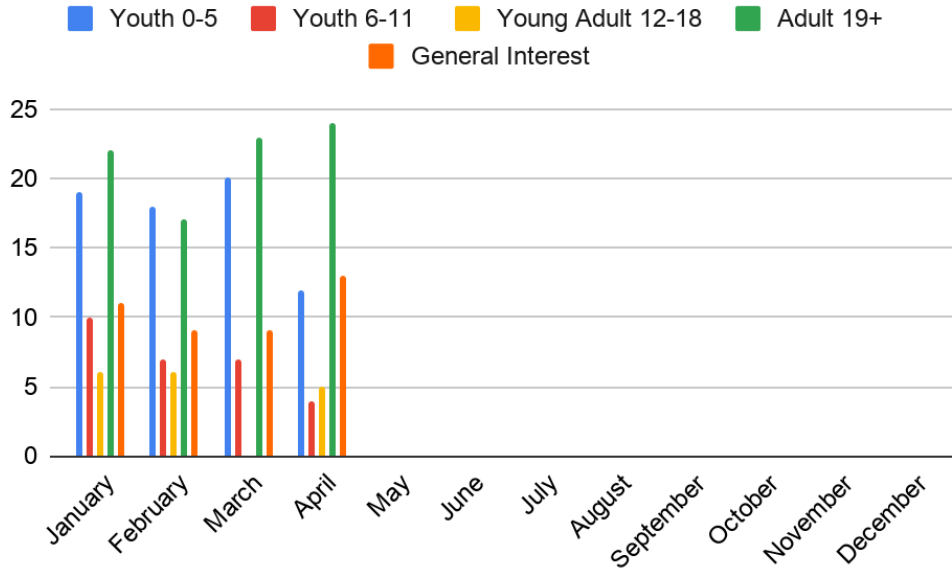
Continuing education remains an important priority in ensuring staff continue to grow professionally and stay current with emerging trends in libraries, technology, and information services. During this reporting period, Melissa completed 80 hours of coursework through the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee School of Information Studies. This ongoing professional development supports the Library's commitment to innovation, lifelong learning, and providing high-quality services to the community.

2026 Year to Date Library Services Statistics

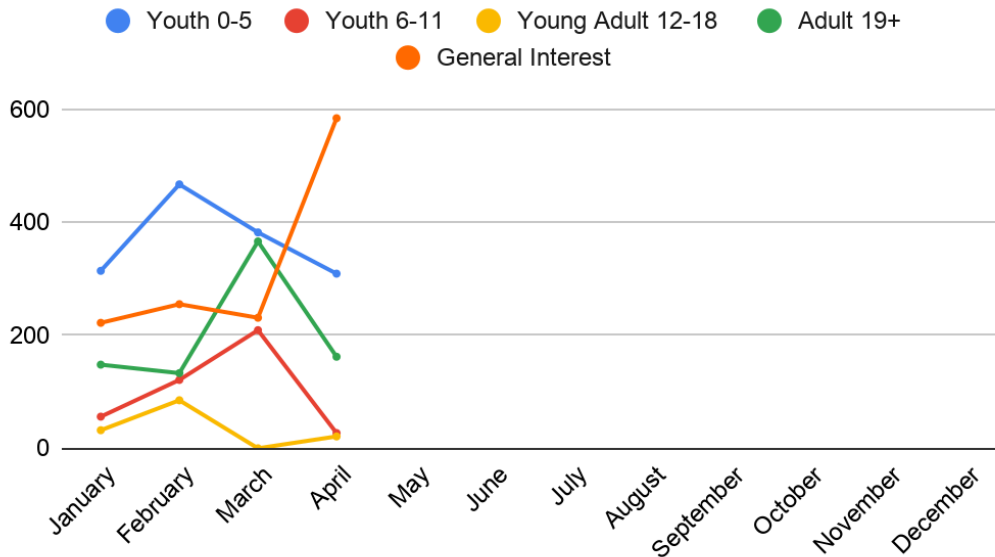
Library Programming Statistics

In March, the library hosted 58 programs attended by a total of 1,103 patrons.

2026 Number of Programs

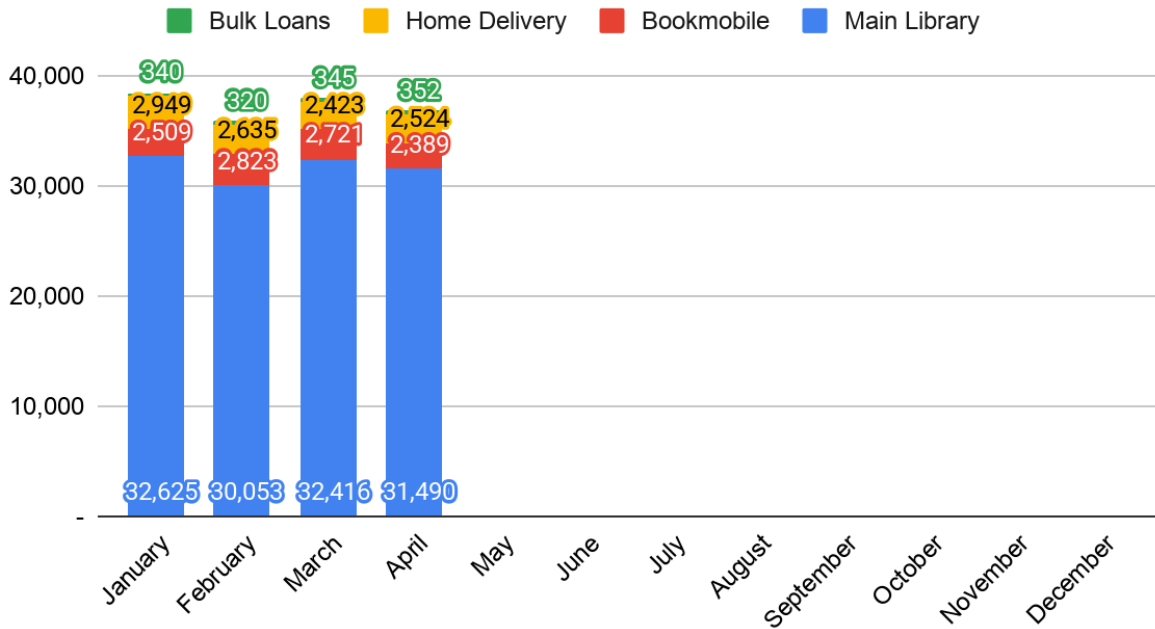


2026 Program Attendance

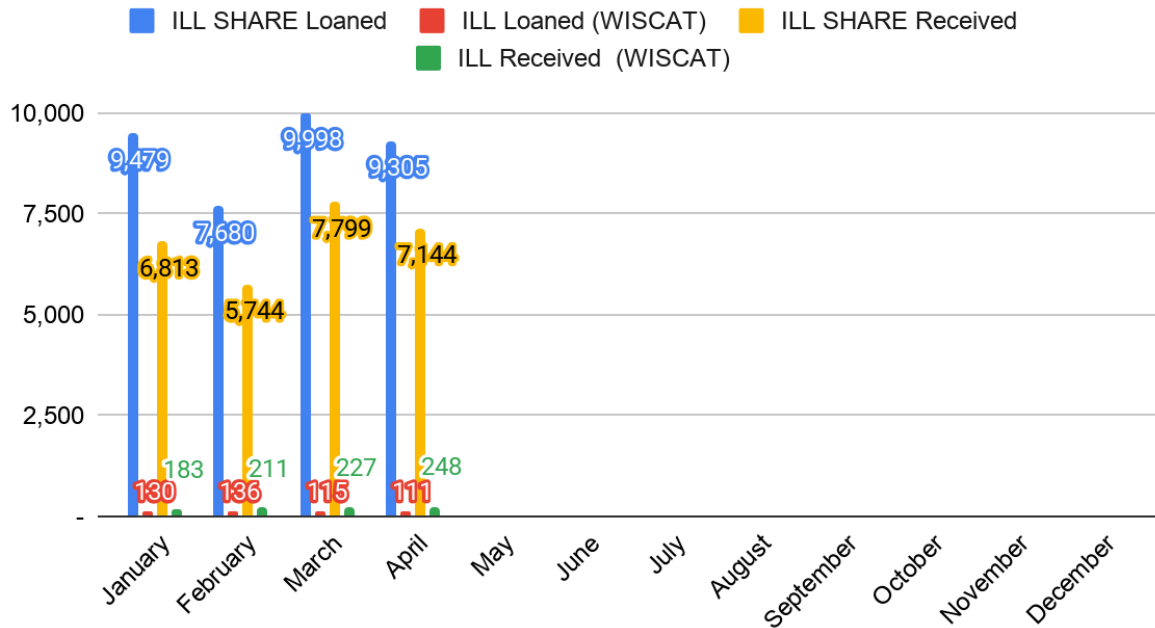


Physical Circulation Statistics

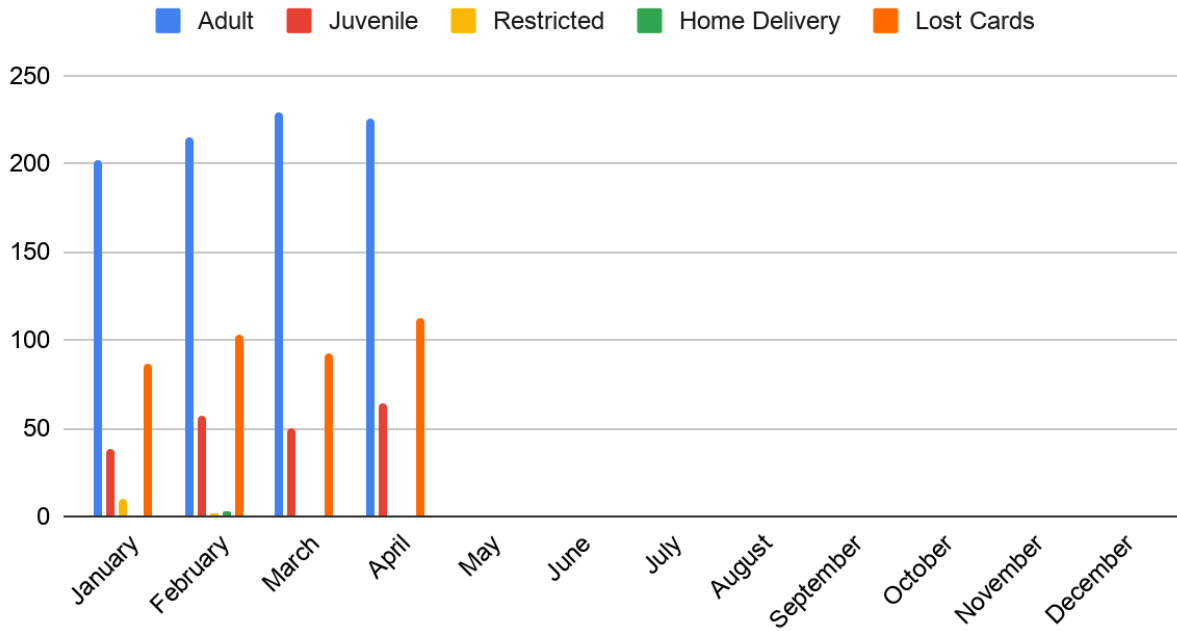
2026 Monthly Circulation



Interlibrary Loans 2026



2026 Library Cards Issued



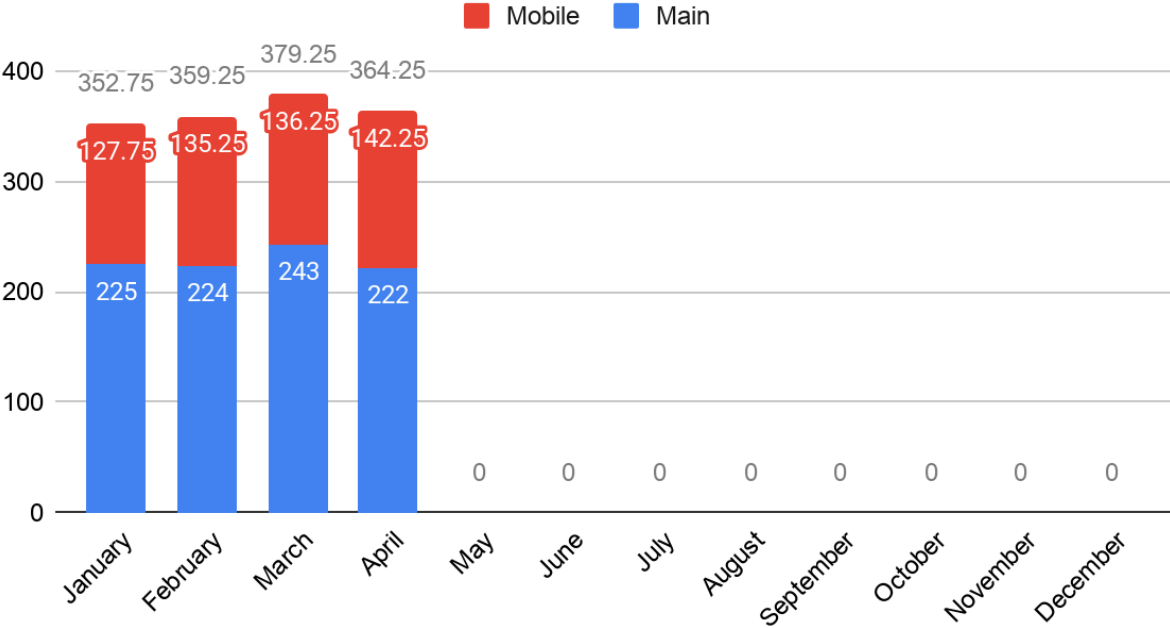
March Circulation by Municipality

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		

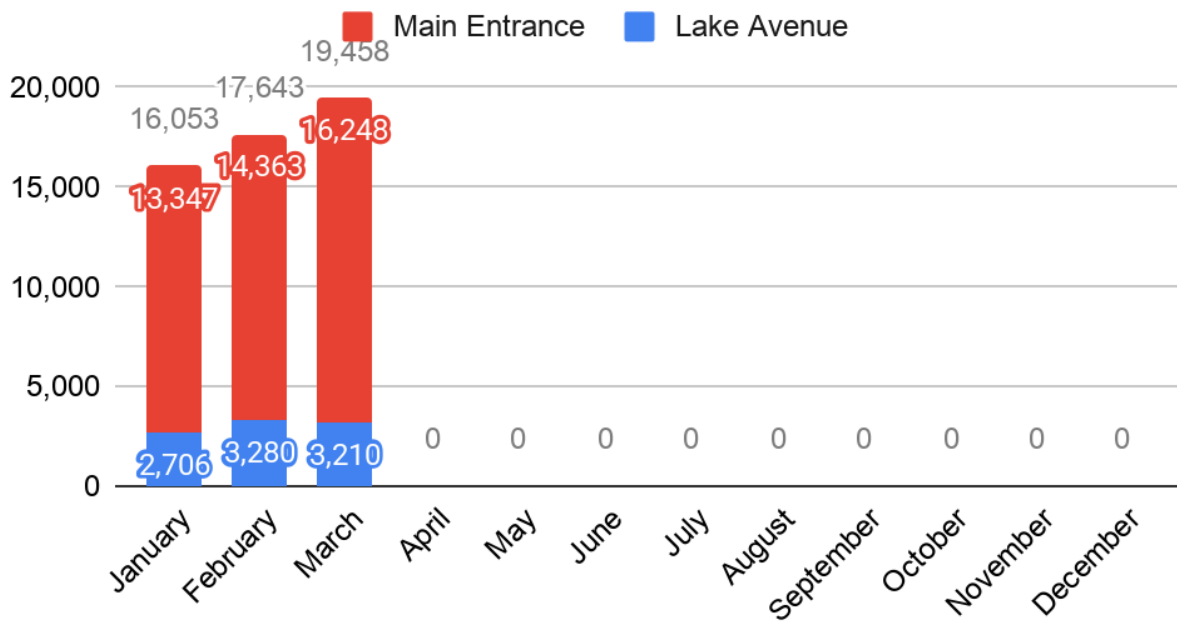
RANORWAYT	1	
RARACINEC	17,576	
RARAYMONDV	254	
RAROCHESTV	7	
RASTURTEVV	343	
RAUNIONGRV	73	
RAWATERFOT	4	
RAWATERFOV	17	
RAWINDPOIV	703	
RAYORKVILV	30	
RKBELOITC	1	
RKUNIONT	38	
WBNEENAHC	15	
WKMUKWONAV	3	
WOWISCRPDC	2	
WPWAUPACAC	16	
WWBLOOMFIV	6	
WWDARIENT	1	
WWEASTTRYV	4	
WWELKHORNC	4	
	123	
Total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

Building Usage Statistics

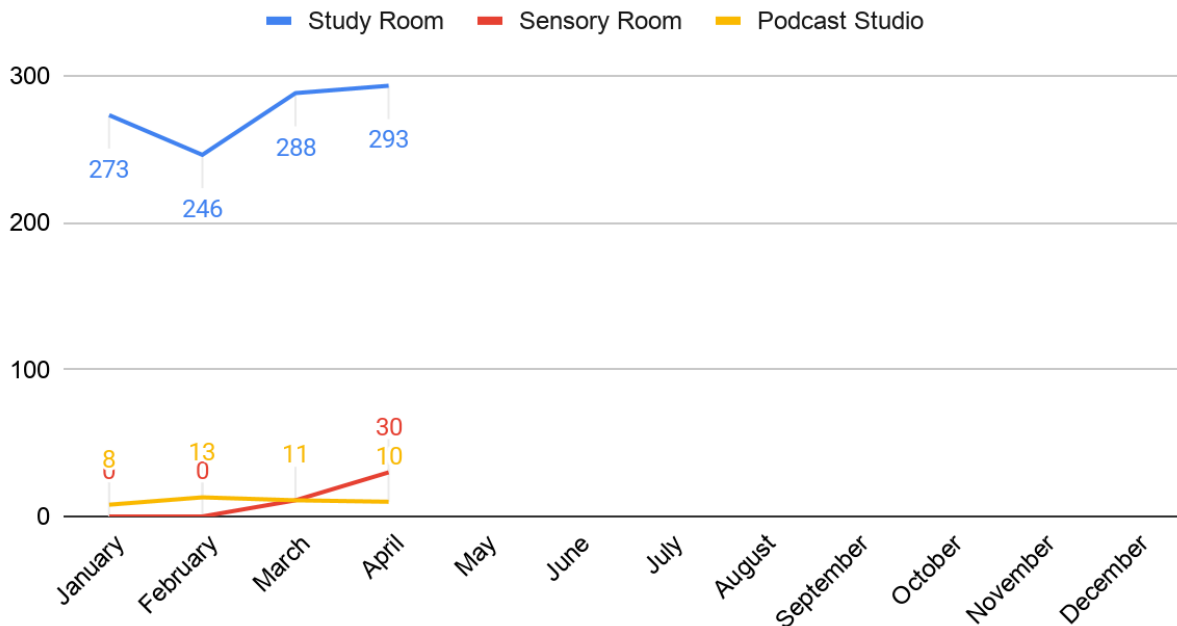
Hours Open 2026



People Counter 2026



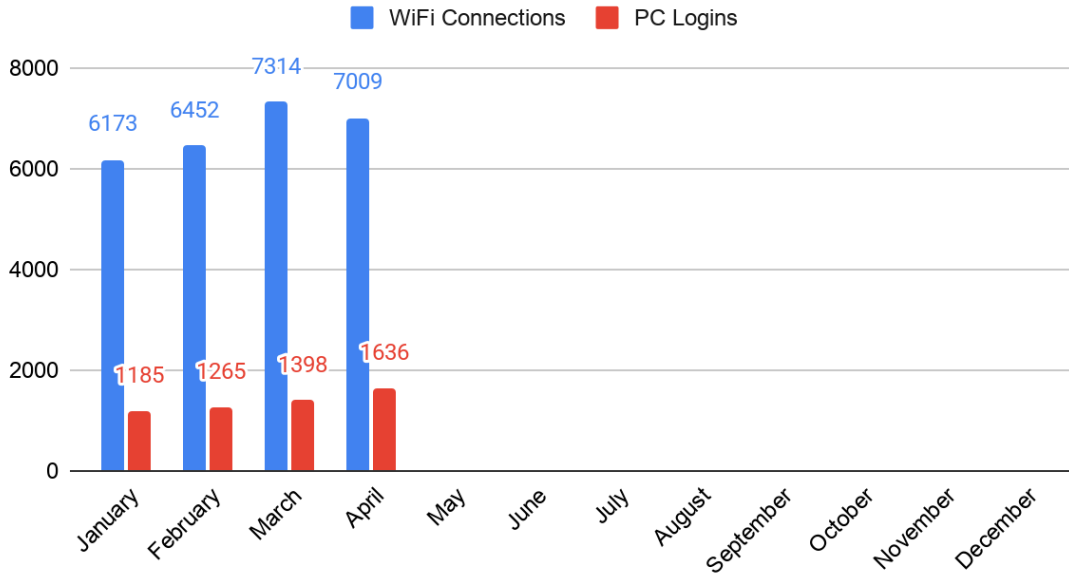
Public Room Use 2026



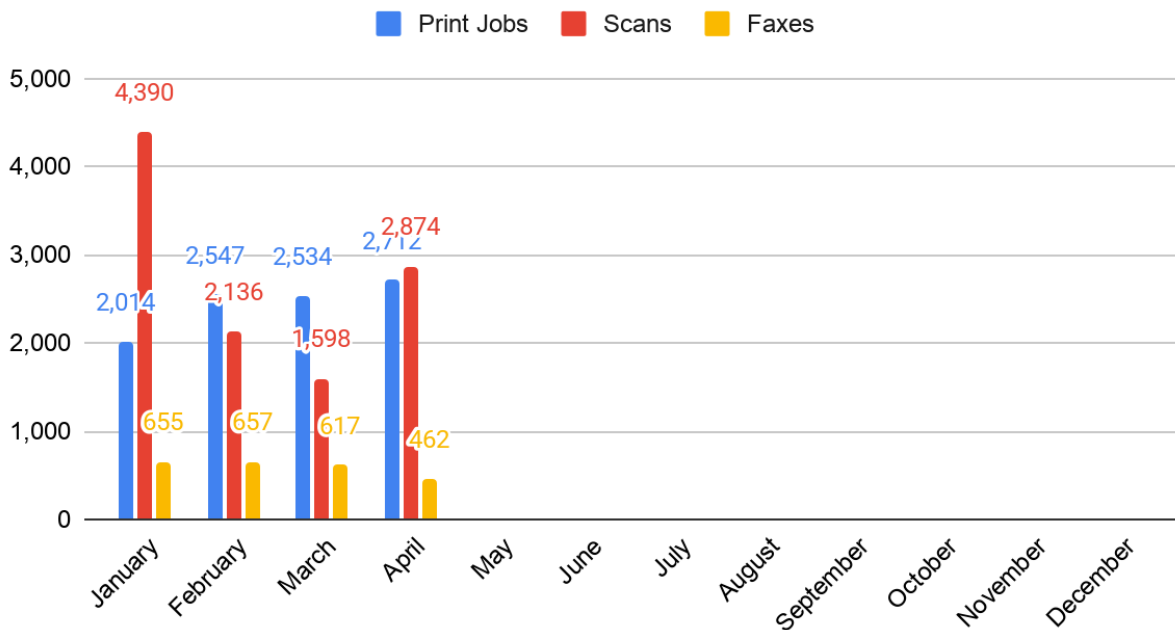
*Sensory Room was closed for maintenance August 2025 through March 2026

Technology Statistics

WiFi Connections & PC Logins 2026

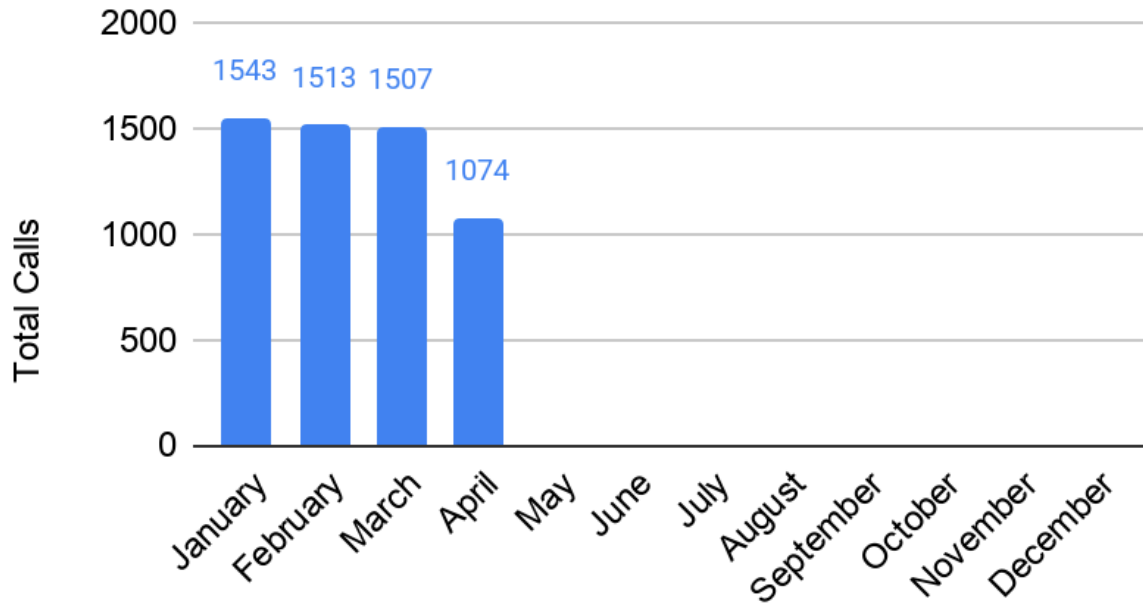


Printing, Scanning, & Faxing 2026

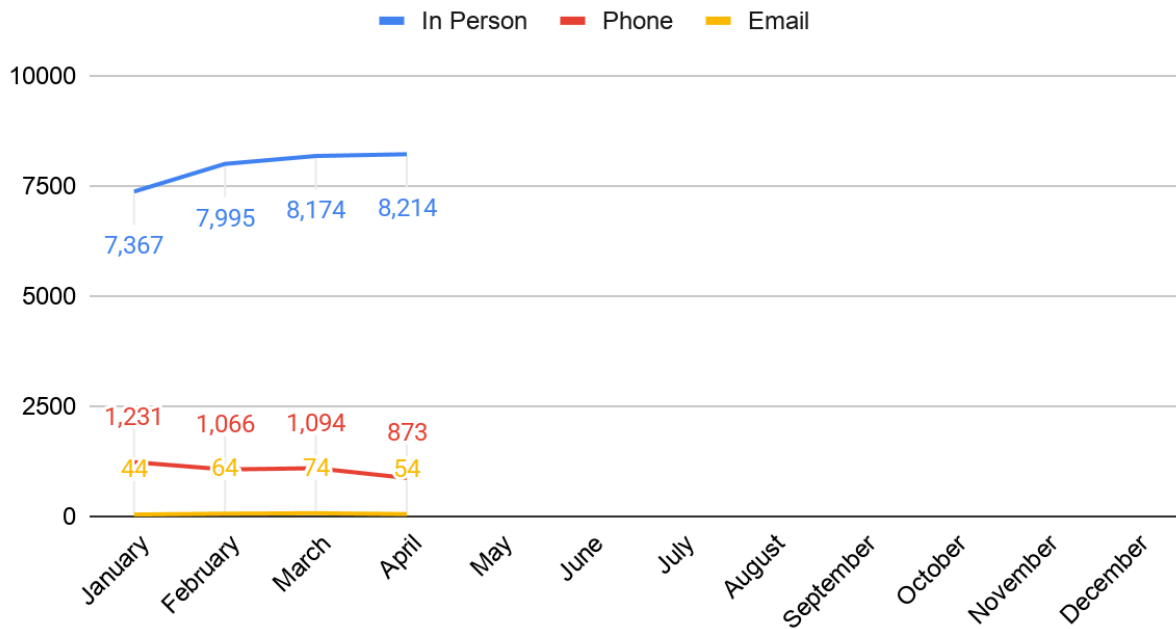


Reference Statistics

2026 Call Center : Number of Calls

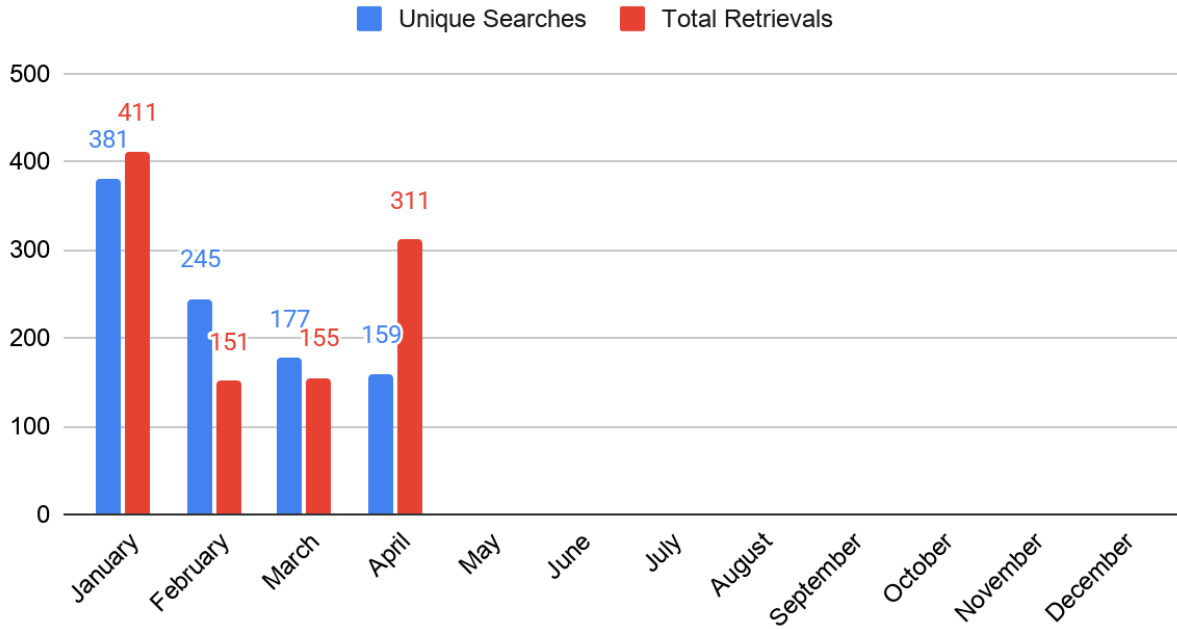


2026 Reference Interactions

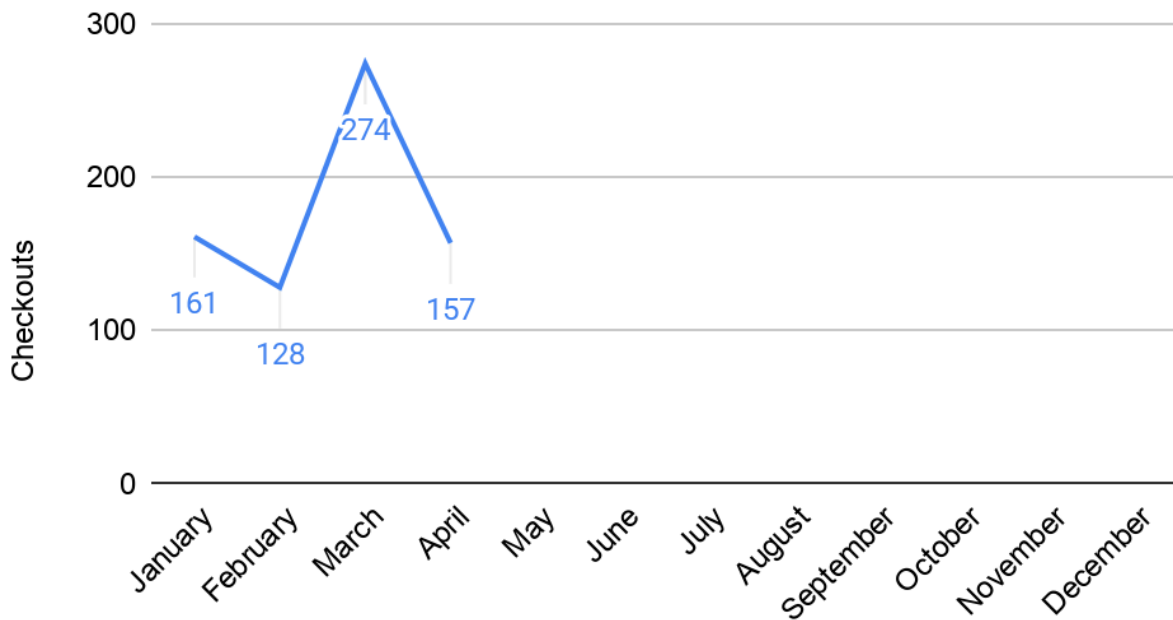


Digital Resource Usage Statistics

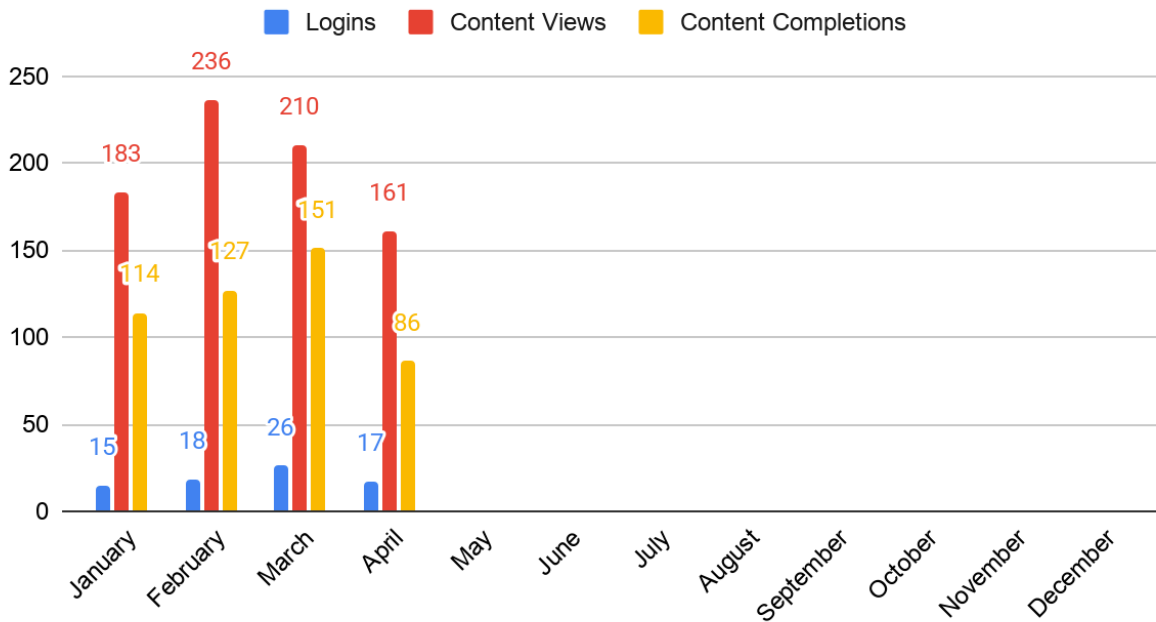
Ancestry Usage 2026



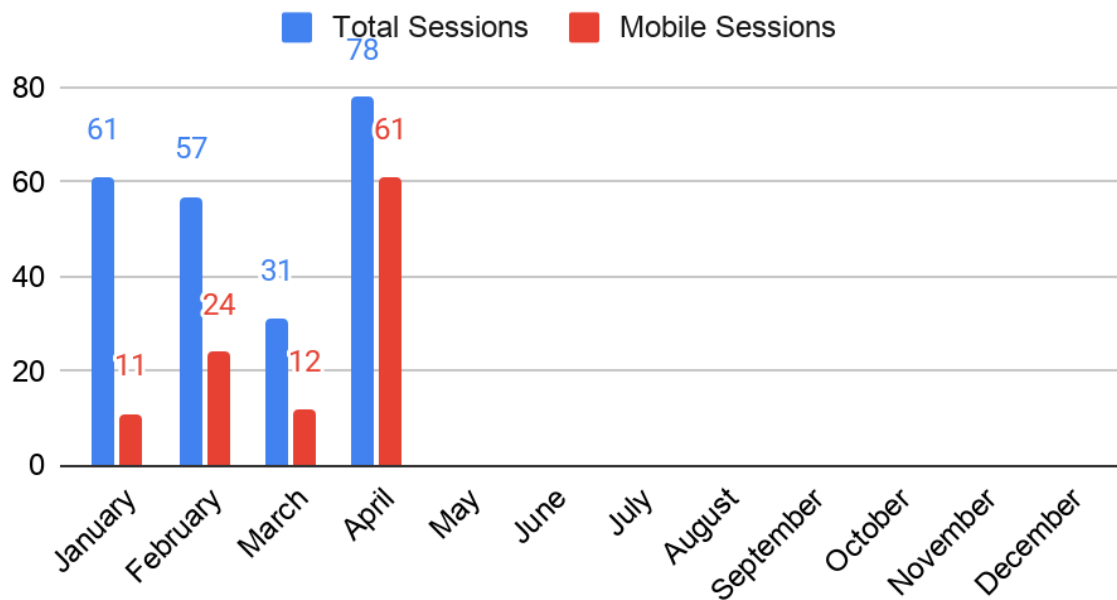
Comics Plus Checkouts 2026



LinkedIn Learning 2026



Mango Languages 2026



Overdrive (Libby) Downloads 2026

