



SimplyE™ Open Source Reading Platform

A simple primer on the benefits of an open source reading platform



What is SimplyE?

SimplyE is an open source ereading platform developed by libraries, for libraries. SimplyE simplifies the user experience of finding, borrowing and reading an ebook from the library.

Why SimplyE?

Libraries provide an array of digital content services from a variety of vendors. These independent ebook services have very different user interfaces and varying degrees of platform compatibility. They offer separate catalogs representing only a particular vendor's content. Each service has a different way of onboarding a user and a different interface for authenticating a user against their public library account. None of them integrate national, state and local collections, which a library often uses to serve their patrons.

SimplyE eliminates all this. **It provides:**

- A unified catalog of a library's econtent, which may consist of purchased vendor content from locally curated content, a regional or state managed collection, from Overdrive, Bibliotheca, Access 360 or RBdigital.
- Free content from Public Domain or open-access collections.
- A simple and consistent means of borrowing and downloading a book, logging into your library or applying for a library account.
- A highly accessible interface for reading books either online or offline via a mobile device.

Why Open Source?

Open source software is a term used for licenses that allow for copyright holders to allow their creations to be free to download, free to use, free to view, and free to adapt and improve. SimplyE (formally Library Simplified) was released under the Apache 2.0 license as part of its IMLS funded requirement. While some components of the mobile application clients contain proprietary commercial licensing around the DRM or mobile platform native libraries, the application code is completely open source. Many of the documents associated with it that are specification related are released under Creative Commons licenses 0.0 license. Community members are encouraged to give back to the community the benefits of their work if they build and extend SimplyE.

What benefits does Open Source provide my library or consortia?

Apart from the aforementioned benefits of SimplyE as a technology, an open source technology platform provides many benefits. Some key benefits are

- Software stability and continuity
- Roadmap input and control
- Better value at a lower total cost

Software stability and continuity comes about because the motivation of the software developers is to create value; not profit, market share or some form of financial return. If a primary author or community manager goes away or ceases to operate, the technology is still available and free to use,



extend and maintain. For libraries this means that their budgets and operations are not at the mercy of some external factor beyond their control. The transparency of the code base reduces risk for libraries and their engineering staff, who have direct access to the source code, and design as well as access to developers, management and development processes.

Roadmap input and control is real. It is not simply a wish list or customer management platitude. It is possible because at anytime a library needs enhancements they can either build consensus in the community for that enhancement, share in its development cost or simply code the enhancement and contribute it back to the community at large. Since the software is developed by its users, there is no risk that the users’ needs will conflict with the developer’s profit motive.

Better value at lower costs is achieved because the cost of the product is distributed and shared amongst contributors and not duplicated between accounts as one off “Vendor customizations”. Value and benefits from enhancements and roadmap features are shared by all.

How can I contribute to the SimplyE community?

There are many ways to contribute and not all require an engineering capacity.

Coordination	Contribution	Specifications	Translations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bug tracking • User research • Advocacy • Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial • Code Contribution • Bug Fixes • Enhancements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development • Adoption (internal and external systems) • Documentation • Advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrections • Additions

Can you provide some examples how institutions have contributed to date?

The New York Public Library, Connecticut State Library, the IMLS, and Mellon Foundation - All provided financial support for paid staff to develop and launch the platform.

Biblioboard and The Canadian Electronic Library - Commercial library service providers who adopted OPDS protocol and specifications to integrate their services into the platform.

Datalogics (Commercial integrated service vendor) - Provided engineering support to debug and enhance and extend the server software.

Sony DADC - Provided its DRM software development kit for free and paid for integration into mobile clients.



Who else can I speak to about this?

There is a community of SimplyE consortia and libraries implementing SimplyE for their region and state library as a shared service.

Amigos	Califa	Connecticut State Library
<p>Christine Peterson</p> <p>4901 LBJ Freeway, Suite 150, Dallas, TX 75244-6179</p> <p>972-851-8000 800-843-8482 (Toll Free) 972-991-6061 (Fax) https://www.amigos.org</p>	<p>Paula MacKinnon</p> <p>2471 Flores Street San Mateo, CA 94403</p> <p>650-356-2131 866-209-5439 (Toll Free) 650-356-2131 (Fax) califa@califa.org</p>	<p>Eric Hansen</p> <p>786 South Main Street Middletown, CT 06457</p> <p>860-704-2224 860-704-2228 (Fax) https://ctstatelibrary.org/</p>
Marina Libraries (MD)	Minitex	The New York Public Library
<p>Michael Blackwell</p> <p>23250 Hollywood Road Leonardtwn, MD 20650</p> <p>301-475-2846, x 1013</p>	<p>Valerie Horton</p> <p>222 21st Avenue South Minneapolis, MN 55455-0439</p> <p>612-624-4002 800-462-5348 (Toll free) 612-624-4508 (Fax) https://www.minitex.umn.edu/</p>	<p>James English</p> <p>5th Ave and 42nd St New York, NY 10017</p> <p>212-621-0520 www.librarysimplified.org</p>