

## Starting a New Chapter at the Library

Change is hard. If you have been anywhere near the library or our website within the past month, you have seen that we are experiencing some immense changes. These are not changes that involve breaking up bricks or heavy machinery, but trust me they are just as big.

Since 1996, the library has been using the same circulation/cataloging system. In technology terms, that is a long time. For comparison, there have been 7 different versions of the Windows operating system in this same time period. This integrated library system (ILS) is crucial to all of our daily activities here at the library. It is how we catalog all of our items; it is how we keep track of who has what book out...basically it is the nerve center of our entire operation.

Obviously, we did not enter lightly into the decision for change. We know that change is hard. It is hard for our patrons and it is hard for our staff. However, there were many items that we simply couldn't do in the old system.

For example, it was created before email was a big deal in communications. As some of you know, the library therefore could not notify patrons via email about overdue items, holds being available, etc. For the past few years, we had been telling our patrons about a 3<sup>rd</sup> party product called Library Elf. This service allowed patrons to get notifications via email, and I know it has made many of your lives easier.

While we are still happy if our patrons want to continue to use Library Elf, it is no longer a necessity. Our new system allows us to email overdue notices, hold pickup notices, and a notice that is sent 3 days BEFORE your item is overdue to remind you to bring it back or renew it if possible. If you would like to sign up for this new feature please either stop into the library or call the Reference desk at 379-1266.

However, with any new change there always is a give and take between what you gain and what you have to give up. That last part is that hardest thing about change. I know many of you search our catalog, log into your account, use Library Elf and you absolutely knew how to do all of those things. Then we went and changed it! Now you have to click in a different spot, enter your entire library card number and are forced to enter a pin. While these may seem like subtle changes to some, it can be rather disconcerting to those who had the old way down pat. I know we have been able to help many of you get reconnected, however if you are still unable to do the things you used to do, please let us know. We do have help pages up on our website: [www.barth.lib.in.us](http://www.barth.lib.in.us), but do not hesitate to call or come in to get some one-on-one assistance.

Hopefully most of you will find these changes to be for the better. We have already had many compliments about the new catalog and how much easier it is to use. This system will also allow us to roll out several more enhancements for the future. For example, do you wish that you could search the library's holdings and keep track of your library account on your smartphone? Let me just say, "there's an app for that."

*Jason Hatton is the Library Services Manager at the Bartholomew County Public Library*