

The Catamount Library Network at Brooks Memorial Library

What is the Catamount Library Network?

A group of Vermont libraries that are banding together to form Vermont's first statewide resource sharing system. Initially, there will be five libraries: Brooks Memorial, Springfield, Waterbury, Ludlow, and Rutland. Brooks will be the first to "go live" in June 2013. Once the project is fully launched in September 2013, a patron will be able search one catalog to see what's on the shelves in all the participating libraries, and then request items directly from the screen. The items will be delivered to the patron's home library. In time, we expect many other Vermont libraries to join the network. Some are already lining up for 2014.



Why is Brooks Memorial participating?

The Catamount Library Network is a way to achieve two goals at once: contain costs and expand the selection of materials for library patrons. The project started as a conversation between Brooks Memorial and Rutland Free Library, who were both seeking cost-effective catalog and circulation systems. Vermont's State Librarian, Marty Reid, joined the conversation because of her commitment to helping libraries form partnerships for resource sharing. Three more libraries joined in, and the Catamount project began, with the vision of an eventual statewide library network. Most other states already have systems like this in place.

What changes will we see right away?

The catalog will be different, and you might find it easier to search than the old one. If you use account features, such as placing holds and renewing materials, you will want to take a few minutes to get used to the new screens and new account options; for example, if you opt for e-mail notifications, you will be able to decide how often you want date-due reminders.

There will be changes in checkout limits, loan periods, and fines. The standard loan period will be three weeks. Fines for adult materials will go up, but fines for children's materials will stay the same. All the participating libraries had to compromise to agree on these policies so that things will be consistent and clear as the network grows.

What changes will we see in the long run?

Over the course of the summer and into the fall, the other four libraries will come online. By the end of September 2013, we'll have a full 5-library catalog. That will mean, essentially, that our collection has grown from about 75,000 items to a quarter of a million. And we expect the CLN to grow quickly after that, bringing us closer to a truly statewide resource sharing network.